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Qur'ān in vernacular

Folk Islam in the Balkans

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for Peter Damerow

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PREFACE

In the period between 1951 and 1953 — one of the darkest periods in modern history of Eastern Europe, when Stalinism was still in its full glory — extensive ethnographic field-research was carried out among some Muslim communities in north-Eastern Bulgaria (the region of Deliorman, Dobrudzha). It is somewhat ironic that the end of this research project happened to coincide with Stalin's death (which occurred on 5th March 1953) and Beria's later execution (in December of that same year). The field work was conducted by a team of ethnographers from the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences.¹ In order to avoid any political impediments (resulting from potential 'trespassing' the ideological agenda of the then ruling Communist party), the scholars focused on rather safe topics of investigation, such as history of the settlements and their geographical positions, family genealogies, material culture, traditional crafts, means of subsistence, life in collective farms, etc. — topics quite remote from religious issues. All efforts were made to prevent the word 'Qur'ān' from surfacing. Just like the Bible, the Qur'ān was not available to common folk and did not circulate in the public domain. In fact, possession of religious literature was banned by constitutional law. Nonetheless, the word 'Qur'ān' did surface in this ethnographic research project. True, it did not denote the holy book itself but referred rather to a specific genre of spiritual songs and chants in local folklore tradition. Perhaps no one (apart from the scholars carrying out ethnographic fieldwork) could possibly predict that the realm of popular folk songs would present itself as a potentially 'unsafe' issue within this otherwise innocent ethnographic research project.

The project in question was meant to provide data regarding one of the most enigmatic ethno-confessional minorities of Bulgaria, known as 'Aliani'/'Alevi' (which means, the followers of Ali; that is, Shi'ites). Unlike the prevailing majority of Muslim believers in Bulgaria who are Sunnis, the 'Aliani'/'Alevi' *Bektaş and Kizilbaş* are representatives of the heterodox branch of Islam. From the point of view of the Orthodox (Sunni) Muslims, the religious beliefs and customs held and practiced by Shi'ites *Bektaş and Kizilbaş* adherents are considered to be a corrupt version of the 'right faith'. Moreover, Shi'ites and Sunni Muslims have normally been discouraged from intermarriage; they do not share sacred sites or common customs, or venerate the same saints. This tension between Sunni and Shi'ite Muslims in the Balkans is remarkable in view of the clandestine

¹ The Bulgarian ethnographers involved in this research project were Vasil Marinov, Zakharii Dimitrov and Ivan Koev. The results of their fieldwork were published in 1955 in Sofia, in the second issue of the *Bulletin of the Ethnographic Institute and Museum* (Bulgarian Academy of Sciences). Their collective study was

traditions of sacred/ritual landscapes shared by both Muslims and Christians, which have been existing in the region for centuries.

At the same time, in Bulgaria the ‘Aliani’ *Bektaş and Kizilbaş* minorities have enjoyed a status much different from that of the Sunnis. While Sunnis were often described as ‘Bulgarian Turks’, or ‘Bulgarian Mohammedans’ [‘Българо-Мохамедани’], the Shi’ites were just referred to as ‘Aliani’, often without any further adjectives emphasising their religious affiliation as Muslims, or their ethnic affiliation as Turks. In the light of the above, it is worth noting that the mother tongue of *Bektaş and Kizilbaş* believers is Turkish (although many of them are bilingual and speak impeccable Bulgarian). This is also the case with the Sunni Turkish minority, the members of which converse between each other predominantly in Turkish, while Bulgarian is used mainly for administrative purposes. On the other hand, Pomaks (Bulgarian-speaking converts into Islam, living predominantly in Rhodopes, Pirin and Rila mountain regions of the country) represent yet another case of a distinctive ethno-confessional Muslim minority. Elsewhere I have argued that, together with Pomak Muslims living in Greece and the Slavonic speaking Muslims of Bosna and Herzegovina, Pomaks of Bulgaria represent a case of sub-national identity which is unique for the Balkan ethno-confessional landscape. As far as anthropological study of Pomak and Bosnian Muslim communities in the Balkans is concerned, I suggested that the term *Slavia Islamica* ought to be introduced and applied here. This term would function as counterpart to other corresponding terms used to signify the Christian cultural paradigms functioning in the region: *Slavia Orthodoxa* (denoting Slavonic speaking Orthodox Christians), and *Slavia Catholica* (denoting Slavonic speaking Catholics). As for the Slavonic-speaking Muslims in the Balkans, rarely have they been a subject of interest for ethnographers and folklorists in the 19th and early 20th centuries, to say the least. In the second half of the 20th century, however, the picture drastically changed. Muslim Pomaks and Turks have become the focus of many ethnographic and folklore research projects, and each time a different agenda was pursued in the course of the field work carried out by various researchers. Often — but not always, as the current publication will argue — this agenda was influenced by political circumstances. However, starting from the end of the 19th century up to the present day, the Balkans have seen instances of diligent, devoted scholarly work on Muslim cultural heritage carried out by researchers who pursued academic tasks exclusively (such as Lyubomir Miletich, Stoyu Shishkov, Tihomir Djordjević, Milenko Filipović, etc.), thus laying a sound foundation of respectable scholarship of Islamic studies in the region.

The team of scholars investigating the Aliani *Kizilbaş* community in the early 1950’s were obviously confronted by many thorny religious issues. While describing local customs and folklore

entitled “Contribution to the study of modes of life and culture of the Turkish population in North-Eastern Bulgaria”; see V. Marinov *et al.* [1955: 96-216].

tradition, they pointed out that each house had a musical instrument and at least one member of the family who could play it. They also went to the trouble of describing the content of some of the songs, as well as the means of their oral transmission. For instance, after reporting that a local Aliani *Kizilbaş* singer of tales had learned the songs from his grandfather (Ibish Murtafov [Ибиш Муртазов]), the ethnographer offered a summary of one song, obviously the one that intrigued him most, sung during the *mohabed* [мохабед] gatherings:

The singer also sung one wise song of *Tariqat*, in which it was said that man was created from four components, earth, fire, air, and water. Four books² speak about what is known about air, earth, *Sharia*, *Tariqat*, righteousness and truth. *Tariqat* is a burning fire, and wealth in material goods were given by Adam to mankind, whereas reasoning was given by Allah. When one goes towards truth, one makes sacrifices. At the end of the song, a question was asked about what is known regarding the destiny of the each human being [Marinov *et al* 1955: 111].

Певецът изпя и една мъдра песен за “тарикат”, в която се казва, че човек е създаден от четири неща: пръст, огън, въздух и вода. Четири книги отговарят какво знаят за въздуха, земята, за шариаха, за тариката, за правдата и истината. “Тарикат” е горящ огън, имането — материалните блага били дадени от Адам на човека, съзнанието — от Аллаха.³ Когато се отива към правдата, дават се жертви. На края в песента се запитва какво се знае за съдбата на всеки човек.

The ethnographer also explained that this kind of sacred vocal music was to be performed by both male and female members of the Aliani *Kizilbaş* community, as there were no gender restrictions imposed upon those singing the “wise chants of *Tariqat*”. It was stated that, “The songs were sung by both men and women” [“Песните се пеят от жените и мъжете”].

What is even more fascinating is the fact that, as the ethnographer implies, the above information was given by the head of the local village council (the so-called ‘Predsedatel na Selsuveta’ [Председател на Селсъвета]), by the name of Hyusein Merdanov [Хюсеин Мерданов]. During the period of Socialism, a position like this was usually taken by a Communist Party member. Most remarkably, it was also the local counsellor, Hyusein Merdanov, who claimed that “these songs are called by our people *Qur’ān*” [“тези песни нашите ги наричат *куран*”].⁴ Obviously, in the above context this term did not refer to the Muslim holy book but rather to local oral tradition, and in particular to songs on religious themes. Needless to say, due to political circumstances, no one in the local villages actually possessed a copy of the *Qur’ān*, just like their

² The same concept of ‘the four holy books’ is registered among Muslim believers in the western region of the Balkans, in Bosna and Herzegovina.

³ In the original Bulgarian text the name of Allah [Аллах] is not spelled with a capital letter, which is characteristic for publications from the Communist period (including academic ones). In a similar way, the initial letter in words ‘*Bog*’ [Бог] and ‘*Gospod*’ [Господ], denoting in Bulgarian ‘God’, ‘Lord’, were also not capitalised; the same implies for the name of the Mother of God (including the appellation ‘the Holy Theotokos’ [Света Богородица]), which were likewise spelled with the first letter appearing in lower case. Even rules of orthography were harnessed to function within Soviet anti-religious propaganda.

⁴ For further information, see V. Marinov *et al.* [1955: 111-112].

Christian counterparts had no Bibles, and the word *Qur'ān* [кypan] in these contexts refers to the *idea* of the book rather than to the book *per se*. This is why in Eastern Europe one can talk about the “folk Qur'ān” in the same way that we refer to the “folk Bible”. Holy Scriptures were performed rather than being held and read. Not only did they co-exist and intertwine at a popular level, they also produced a certain common oral metatext. Anthropological, ethnographic and folklore field-research in the Balkans shows how this elaborate metatext was manifested in vernacular traditions of Judaism, Christianity and Islam. There were favourite themes and motifs, such as Creation of Adam/Adem, the Flood-story with Noah/Nuh, the sacrifice of Abraham/Ibrahim, etc. which were shared by the adherents to all Abrahamic faiths.

Samples of these shared “oral Scriptures”, sequestered in various small Muslim settlements in Bulgaria and elsewhere in Eastern Europe, are presented in this publication. Most of these accounts were given by people who never held the *Qur'ān* in their hands, but who believed firmly that their orally transmitted stories, inherited from their parents and grandparents, stem straight from the Holy Book of all Muslims. Moreover, in their accounts one could witness the century-long existence of numerous vernacular counterparts to some major Islamic exegetical writings, such as Al-Tabarī's *History of Prophets and Kings*, Al-Tha'labī's *Lives of the Prophets*, or Al-Rabghūzī's *Stories of the Prophets*, to mention just a few. Sometimes the folk narratives are strikingly similar to these writings, repeating them verbatim on many occasions. The challenging question as to how my storytellers “knew” of writings of the above mentioned Islamic exegetes is still an open one. The present publication is my first attempt to offer some plausible answers to it.

INTRODUCTION

The first (thing) created by God was the Pen.
Al- Tabarī

The vernacular counterparts of Holy Scriptures are phenomena conventionally excluded from the scope of Biblical and Qur'ānic scholarship. Even if taken into consideration, they are treated with extreme caution. They often may — and usually do — trigger resistance, and even admonition, among both theologians and specialists in religious studies who tend to interpret them as a mere deviation from the canonical written text. Although it is generally admitted that the sacred — canonical — written text of the Bible emerged from a certain oral culture, hardly ever is the evidence from living contemporary folk traditions taken into account in modern scholarship. Extra-canonical, vernacular counterparts of Holy Writ are hardly ever accepted as reliable and worthy evidence, revealing various stages in the process of the emergence and development of the canonical text. In Biblical criticism, ancient oral tradition is regarded as controversial data of little or no significance. Still, some steps have been recently made in a new direction by scholars studying Gospels as “eyewitness testimony” (e.g. the work of Richard Bauckham); Bible also became a subject for anthropologists (such as Edmund Leach and Mary Douglas) and folklorists (Francis Lee Utley, Alan Dundes). This approach to the sacred text is much more difficult to justify and defend in the area of Qur'ānic studies. The pioneering work of John Wansborough, H. Schwarzbaum, and Norman Calder remain exceptional. In general, it is fair to say that oral counterparts of Holy Scriptures have so far been undervalued in both Biblical and Qur'ānic studies.

In my view an unyielding break with this long-dominant scholarly tradition is badly needed. Ethno-hermeneutics as a new discipline is emerging. My work is devoted to this new approach to the religions of the Book — the Bible and the Qur'ān. One of the key issues concerned is the transmission of Holy Scriptures in the vernacular, and their contested convergence at a popular level. Although it has been generally accepted that a long-lasting process of transformation and conversion from *lingua sacra* to *lingua franca* must have taken place, we still lack evidence as to how exactly this course of action ensued. It is my conviction that anthropological analysis of oral tradition holds the key to the much needed methodological breakthrough. This, in turn, would allow us to appreciate the opposite trend — i.e. the emerging of vernacular exegesis, as well as its eventual surfacing from the ‘low’ themes, ideas and concepts spelt out in *lingua franca*, and the ways in which they ascend to ‘high’ theological discourse, ultimately maintained and defined by *lingua sacra*.

Exploring the encounter between the Holy Scriptures and ethno-poetics, I focus upon phenomena of popular faith which exemplify correspondences and correlation between the written accounts of the Bible (both canonical and apocryphal versions) and the Qur'ān, on the one hand, and their oral rendition through the vernacular language(s) on the other. In doing this, I examine the relationship between the holy books and their oral counterparts, and the ways in which certain ideas travel from one realm to another.

I have argued elsewhere that vernacular versions of Holy Scriptures not only show a connection between the written canon and local oral traditions, but also represent the unfolding of a certain oral Ur-hypertext, the earliest existence of which preceded the actual formation of the Biblical text itself [Badalanova 2008]. In fact, the Bible represents only one among many of the subsequent metamorphoses of this oral Ur-hypertext, traces of which can be found in later Jewish tradition (i.e. in Midrash and Aggadah), in Christian tradition (i.e. in apocryphal texts, as well as in Patristic writings) and in Islamic tradition (Qur'ān and Hadith) respectively. It can be further argued that these written offspring of the original oral Ur-hypertext have their folklore counterparts, which never ceased to exist in vernacular traditions of the three Abrahamic religions.

It was this Ur-hypertext that provided the fabric and created the framework from which written texts of the Bible and the Qur'ān eventually emerged. Moreover, this Ur-hypertext not only fostered and nourished the corpus of texts which later formed the written body of the Bible and Qur'ān, but also survived to the present day in oral traditions of many religious communities as clusters of verbal and ritual texts constituting the framework of their belief systems. Slavonic oral tradition represents one such case. Recent anthropological research in the Balkans and Eastern Mediterranean region provides ample evidence supporting this statement. Thus, some literary (i.e. apocryphal Old Testament) texts, the first written versions of which can be traced back as early as 2nd-1st cent. BC (such as *The Book of the Secrets of Enoch the Just*, for instance), parallel oral (folklore) texts recently recorded. The fabric of these texts demonstrates that a certain cultural continuity exists among both men of letters and illiterate believers for centuries; in this, the oral and the written modes of knowledge transmission, together with that of the visual arts (i.e. iconography), display many facets of the main Ur-hypertext.⁵

Together with the written text of the Bible and Qur'ān, another Bible and another Qur'ān existed among the peasant communities in Eastern Europe, which were orally transmitted among the illiterate believers and which changed their appearances at every new performance. Unlike their written counterpart, these unwritten Holy Scriptures were extant in many oral versions. Some of them were first registered during the 19th century and published in a number of ethnographic and

⁵ Further on this discussion, see Badalanova [2008].

folklore collections.⁶ Anthropological field research in the region of Eurasia indicates that traces of these texts can still be found in indigenous oral traditions; furthermore many new versions can be encountered. These may either reflect canonical or apocryphal accounts of the Bible, or Qur'ān and Hadith, or offer alternatives to them, thereby revealing a previously unknown, cluster of folklore texts related to the Holy Scriptures.

Analysis of the present collection indicates that “the Folk Qur'ān” never offers a word-for-word reproduction of any of the canonical scriptural stories. Instead, the accounts put forward a specific frame of reference incorporating a local system of religious beliefs together with some universal cultural concepts. Often narrators compress and abbreviate the text of the Qur'ān, joining fragments together into a single story-line; in this way, different segments of the holy book of Muslims are condensed and pressed together into one tale which can vary at every new performance.

The present study also reflects a scholastic tradition, not well known to Western scholarship, which has influenced my research methodology. It has its roots in theoretical attempts to detect and define the thesaurus of folk religion, made in the Soviet and post-Soviet periods in Eastern Europe. This academic tradition is based on the semasiological strategies of an analytical approach to popular faith, represented by an ethnolinguistic trend in the humanities and introduced in the early Sixties by a leading Russian scholar, Nikita Tolstoy. His methodology was closely connected with that of his colleagues from the Moscow-Tartu Semiotic School (Boris Uspensky, Yuri Lotman, Viacheslav Ivanov, Vladimir Toporov, Eleazar Meletinskii, etc). This methodology described the “grammar of the ritual text”, and especially the conventional vocabulary of vernacular faith, as well as popular beliefs and traditional religious ceremonies. In Tolstoy's works, the concept of “culture” was treated within the framework of “confession”; the term “folk spiritual culture” or “vernacular devotion” came to denote religion at a popular level. At the same time, terms such as “folk faith”, “folk religion” and “customary Christianity/Islam” were all used by representatives of the Moscow-Tartu Semiotic School to signify folk religious narratives, songs and rituals. They were implicitly referring to Russian religious philosophy from the turn of the 19th-20th centuries, and to the concepts of S. Bulgakov, P. Florensky, G. Fedotov, and N. Berdiaev in particular, who defined some aspects of Russian popular faith and folk religiosity. The concept of “folk/peasant faith” was defined by terms such as “religious anthropology” and “religious cosmology”. After Perestroika, Berdiaev's terminology was conveniently used by many scholars in Eastern Europe as a model for further theoretical deliberations. Still, the terminology used by Nikita Tolstoy and his colleagues from the Moscow-Tartu Semiotic School deserves special attention. It not only derives from a particular scholastic tradition but from a specific historical period in the annals of Eastern Europe

⁶ Some of them are included in the present publication; see texts Nos 4, 30, 32, 33, 34, 35.

— the period of Soviet atheism. It epitomized a coded language amongst a circle of scholars that enabled those using it to write about popular religion even when the actual concept of religion was banned, not only as a subject of academic interest, but as a personal choice. In other words, the formulaic expression “folk spiritual culture” is representative of a crypto-terminology related to the ways in which this particular community of intellectuals continued to work in the area of religious studies even during the period of the most severe persecutions against Christianity, Judaism and Islam in the Soviet Union. The term of “folk spiritual culture” provided a necessary — that is, politically correct — tool that made it possible for religious studies to survive during the Soviet Period. In this striving for terminological coverage, the adjectives “popular” and “folk” accommodated a much-needed epistemological alibi for academic scholarship. Thus the study of popular religion was presented as “folk spiritual culture”, which was *sui generis* applied semiotics.

A parallel anthropological approach to the phenomena of popular faith existed in other Slavonic countries. In Bulgaria, during the last 20 years, a large number of articles concerned with the folk parameters of Islam emerged (most of which are listed in the bibliography), such as the studies of Todor Ivanov Zhivkov, Evgeniya Mitseva, Ivanuchka Georgieva, Lyubomir Mikov, Stoyanka Boyadzhieva, Galina Lozanova, Vanya Mateeva, Plamen Bochkov, Vasil Garnizov, etc. Unfortunately, their work is not well known to Western scholarship.

This study intends to investigate the indigenous ethno-confessional concepts and religious categories of devotion among Muslim communities in the Balkans, a region which once was a part of the Byzantine Commonwealth and, later, of the Ottoman Empire. Incidentally, in both Empires the heterodoxies — be it Christian or Muslim — were banned, each time for different reasons. My work aims to show how heterodox Muslims and heterodox Christians found their way towards inter-faith communication (in many cases venerating the same sacred sites and sharing festivals). At the same time, this study conceptualises specific belief systems and ritual practices constituting the ethno-confessional identities of both orthodox and heterodox Muslim communities and of the individuals which belong to them. Of particular importance is the concept of the “holy book” and “holy text”, and the relationship between the oral and the written, as well as the local ethno-hermeneutics of the holy book. Related to the issue of the perception of time are rituals marking its division and life-cycle customs. This is embedded in the local social institutions and in their indigenous cultures (systems of symbols, sacred texts, etc.), as well as in oral traditions. Orality is held as sacred and story-telling and singing of religious texts are regarded as sacred performance.

CREATION OF THE WORLD AND MANKIND

Text No. 1

What did Allah create first of all?

What did Allah create first of all?

Allah created the ram¹ first of all, since He — Allah — was to send the ram to Ibrahim [Abraham],² was He not? God³ sent it from the sky, from above. He sent it so that Ibrahim would not slay the child, [that's why] Allah sent it, He sent the ram to him, and he sacrificed the ram and released the boy.

First of all, Allah created the ram, then He created the angels,⁴ he created the *melyaikes*⁵ from fire — from the hottest fire.⁶ So these angels — the *melyaikes* — were [made] of fire, and then man was created from soil.⁷ Allah created him from soil with His own hand.

Кое създаде Аллах най-първо

Кое създаде Аллах най-първо?

Овено създаде Аллах най-първо. Нали Той изпрати го Аллах на Ибрахим овено, Господ го изпрати от небесата, от горе? Изпрати го — да не заколе Ибрахим детето — прати му Аллах овено му допрати. И той закла овено и освободи момченцето.

Най-първо Аллах създаде овено, после създаде тия ангелите, мелайкетата ги създаде от огин. От най-горещия огин. И тия ангелите, мелайкетата са от огин, а сетне човека е от земя напраен, го създаде Аллах от земя с Неговата си ръка.

This text was recorded in 2005 in the village of Gorno Kraishte (county of Belitsa, Blagoevgrad region, South-Western Bulgaria). It was narrated by a seventy-nine-year old Muslim man, known among his fellow villagers as Ismail Mechkarski (or Ismail Redzhep Mechkar). The storyteller was born in 1926 in the nearby village of Babyak. He attended school for four years and became a woodcutter in the local forest; he then married a Muslim girl from the neighbourhood and settled in Gorno Kraishte. The field-research was part of the author's work on the project *Folk Religion in the Balkans*.

Text No. 2

When Allah created the Earth

Now, when Allah created the Earth, it was quaking, it was quaking, and it couldn't calm down. Then He created the mountains.⁸ He created the mountains and they pressed down upon it, and when He placed the mountains upon the Earth, the Earth calmed down.⁹ Then the angels, the *melyaikes*, asked Allah, "Is there anything stronger than a mountain?" He answered, "Yes, there is." The answer is, "There is — the iron which digs into the mountain."

They asked, "Is there anything stronger than iron?"

"Yes, there is. It's the fire that melts it."

"Is there anything stronger than fire?"

"Yes, there is. Water extinguishes it."

"Is there anything stronger than water?"

“Yes, [there is]. Wind.”

The wind. (Look, we see on television what happens in the sea, [the wind] lifts and raises it and overturns ships and everything.) The wind.

The [angels] ask again, “Is there anything stronger than the wind?”

“Yes, there is.”

“What is that?”

“The gift.”

Whatever we give to each other, this is the strongest of all! It is the strongest of all! Whatever one gives with one’s hand, we call it *Sūdūka*.¹⁰ A gift. [When you give something] to another person, or to a poor man, or to other fellows, and many others like them, that’s the strongest. The gift. That’s the strongest.¹¹

Когато създаде Аллах земята

Сега, когато създаде Аллах земята, тя се люляше. Клатушката се, не се успокояваше. Тогай създаде и планините. Създаде планините и [те] я натиснаха. Като сложи планините на земята — и земята се успокои. И тия ангелите, мелайкетата, питаа Аллах: “Има ли нещо по-силно от планините?”

Той казва: “Да, има.” И отговор е: “Има, желязото рови планините!”

Те казва[т]: “Има ли нещо по-силно пък от желязото?”

“Да,” — вика, — “има, огиня го топи.”

“Има ли нещо по-силно от огиня?”

“Да. Водата го гаси.”

“Има ли нещо по-силно пък от водата?”

[Той казва:] “Ветере.”

Ветере — ето, нали гледаме по телевизията какво става с морято? Вдигаа, вдигаа — и кораби обрща, сичко обрща! Ветере.

Тия питаа: “Има ли нещо по-силно от ветере?”

[Той казва:] “Да. Има.”

“Какво е?”

“Подаръка.”

Кой какво си дадеме — това е най-силно от сичко! Най-силно от сичко това е! Кой какво си даде от ръката! Ние го казваме “съдъка”. Подарък. На друг човяк, на сиромях човяк, на други, на трети — това е най-силното, подаръка! Това е най-силното!

The above text was recorded in 2005 in the village of Gorno Kraishite (county of Belitsa, Blagoevgrad region, South-Western Bulgaria). The story was narrated by a seventy nine-year old Muslim man by the name of Ismail Mechkarski (or Ismail Redzhep Mechkar), who was a woodcutter. The storyteller was born in 1926 in the nearby village of Babyak; four years of schooling. The field-research was part of the author’s work on the project *Folk Religion in the Balkans*. The sound-recording of the above account is stored in the Hans Rausing Endangered Languages Project (HRELP) archives, at the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS), University of London.

Text No. 3

Adem was the first Prophet

[Question by FB:] Who was the first *Peygamberin*¹² [i.e. Prophet]?

[Ismail:] It was Adem [Adam], the one who created the world. Yes, Adem *allay salaam* [i.e. ‘peace be upon him’]. He, Allah, when He wished, He created all

creatures, and man was created last of all.¹³ He created all of creation, the Earth, the skies, He created all things, the sea, He created everything. Having created this, man's turn came to be created. He wanted to create man. [. . .] When He created [everything], Allah wanted to make man personally with His own hand; He made him with His own hand.¹⁴ With His own hand. So He sent there four great *melyaikēs* [i.e. angels]; these are the four great angels — Dzhebrail [i.e. Gabriel],¹⁵ Mekiaail [i.e. Michael],¹⁶ Israfil [i.e. Raphael]¹⁷ and Azrail [i.e. 'Azrā'il/ Azrael /Izrail],¹⁸ the [last is the] one who takes out our souls. These are the four *melyaikēs* He sent. Then, He sent Dzhebrail, He sent him to take [some] earth¹⁹ so that He could make man. It was written, what has remained of this earth and what was made from it afterwards. Everything about all things made from this earth is described [in the Qur'ān]. However, I can't remember everything exactly and I can't keep it in my mind since I'm an old man already.

That being so, He sent Dzhebrail²⁰. The earth didn't want to give herself²¹ to him, the earth didn't want to give herself. And [the earth] said the following, "I don't want to create [man from my elements], I don't want Allah to create imprudent humans²² [from me]. I don't want people to trample me. They will become sinful people, everything will become sinful."

So, that's what [the earth said]. And then he [Dzhebrail] went to Allah, who already knew what was going on, and He asked, "What's going on?"

He [Dzhebrail] answered, "Well, that's it, the earth doesn't want to give herself."

Then He sent another angel, Mekail,²³ He sent him now. The earth, however, didn't want to give herself to him either.

Then He sent another one, Israfil.²⁴ Israfil has a horn²⁵ there [in Heaven]. Day and night he stays there with this horn. Israfil waits to blow on it so that the Flood takes place. When Allah orders it, then there will be a Flood. He [the angel] always sits there with this horn, since his creation.²⁶ Yet the earth didn't want to give herself to him either...

Then He sent Azrail, the one who is supposed to take our souls out. The one who is supposed to take our souls out — He sent him. And he didn't bother to ask the earth, he just grabbed her. After he grabbed her, he took her there [to Allah].

So Allah asked, "How did you take her?"

Then he [Azrail] answered, "By force!"

"Since you are such a brute, since you are so cruel, I will appoint you to take away the souls of the people. You know no mercy".

And so he is going to be the one who takes our souls [at the moment of death]...

And then He made man²⁷ and people began to breed. Thus people were breeding. He made man, and from here —from his left rib (I can't remember whether it was from the left or right rib)²⁸ — He extracted *Azreti Havva*,²⁹ Eva.³⁰ She was created from there. Man and woman, and that was it... They were in Dzhenreto [i.e. *Cennet* (Turkish); or *Janna* (Arabic)].³¹ They were made in Heaven...³² And they ate from a tree...

But He had ordered [beforehand], "Don't eat from this tree!"³³ because then they will defecate, they will relieve themselves. And then they ate from this tree and they relieved³⁴ themselves, and they put some [of their excrement] here [gesturing: under one armpit] and then here [gesturing: under the other armpit] and here [gesturing: between their legs] and hair grew there.³⁵ Hair³⁶ grew [here and there] on us [i.e. mortals] and He chased us away,³⁷ Allah chased them away³⁸ from Paradise.³⁹

Адем — първият Пейгамберин

[*Question by FB:*] А кой е първият Пейгамберин?

[*Исмаил:*] Адем, тоа, който създаде света. Да, Адем алей селям. Той, когато [по]иска Аллах, сички създания създаде, човека е най-последно създаден. Създаде сички създания, земите, небесата — сичко създаде; морето — сичко създаде... Създаде — и сега идва [ред] да създаде човяка. Исква да създаде човяка. [...] Като ги създаде [всички създания], иска да напрати човека — лично Аллах го напрати си, Той си лично го напрати с неговата ръка. С неговата ръка. И прати [Аллах] — тия има четири меляйекета голями, [има] четири ангела голями: Джебраила, Мекяила, Исрафиля и Азраиля, който ни вади душите — тия четирите меляйекета прати [Аллах]; прати [първо] Джебраила, прати [го] да земе земя, да напрати човяка. То пише от тая земя какво остана и какво почна вяке, сичко описува от тая земя що стана. Я не мога да го помня така на акъла, оти съм възрастен вяче.

И като така, прати [най-напред] Джебраиле. Земята не ще да се даде. Не ще да се даде земята. Каза [земята] така: “Не ща да создам, за да създаде Аллах таков марлюкат, таков народ да ме гваца! Грешен народ ке станаа, сичко грешно ке стане...”

И така. И той [Джебраил] отиде [и се върна с празни ръце], а Аллах знае кво става; вика: “Кво става бе?”

Той [Джебраил] каа: “Ами така. Не ще да се даде,” — вика, — “земята!”

Той [Аллах] прати па [тогава] тоа ангел, па Мекаиле, прати па него. И на него не ща да се даде земята.

Прати па тоа — Исрафиле; има един рог там Исрафиле, той денонощно седи [с] тоя рог там. Исрафилето чака да свирне, за да стане Потопа. Когато го заповяда Аллах, тогава ке стане Потопа. Той седи редовно там, на тоа [рог], откак е създаден. И на него не ще да се даде [земята]...

Той [най-сетне] изпрати па [ангела] Азраиле, който ни вади душите. Който ни вади душите — изпрати го него [Аллах]; той не ще пита земята — грабна я. Като я грабна — и я однесе там [при Аллах].

Той му вика Аллах: “Как я,” —вика, — “зе?”

Пъ той [Азраил] вика: “Ми насила!”

“Щом си,” —вика, — “таков на[х]алник, таков жесток, тебе ке те назнача да вадиш душите на хората. Нема милост за тебе!”

И така, тоа ше ни вади душите...

И тогай веке [Аллах] направи човека и се заплоди народа. Заплоди се народа [така] — направи [Аллах] човека и тука от лявото ребро, от лявото [ли], от десното ребро ли беше, извади па азрети Хавва, Ева. Па нея [Аллах] я създаде оттам. Мъж и жена — и така... Те бяя във Дженнето, там във Рая бяя нап्राени... И тея като ядоа от това дърво... — [а пък] Той беше заповедал: “Да не ядете от това дърво!”, понеже ке се изходая по нужда и — тия лапнаа от това дърво и се изходи[х]а и намаза[х]а тука [под едната мишница] и тука [под другата мишница] и тука [между краката, при чатала] — и никна космето. Никна ни косме на нас и ни изпъди, ги изпъди Аллах из Дженнето.

The above text was recorded in 2005 in the village of Gorno Kraishite (county of Belitsa, Blagoevgrad region, South-Western Bulgaria). The story was narrated by a seventy-nine-year old Muslim man by the name of Ismail Mechkarski (or Ismail Redzhep Mechkar), who was a woodcutter. The storyteller was born in 1926 in the nearby village of Babyak; four years of schooling. The field-research was part of the author's work on the project *Folk Religion in the Balkans*. The sound recording of the above account is stored in the Hans Rausing Endangered Languages Project (HRELP) archives, at SOAS, University of London.

Text No. 4

A Pomak legend about how man and dog were created

God created the first man on Earth from clay,⁴⁰ in the way an angel showed Him. When man was created, they made him stand upright, yet he had no soul. At that very moment, the Devil⁴¹ passed by this place and when he saw man, he spat on him.⁴² The spittle fell on his belly and got stuck there. Afterwards the angel went to God and reported what happened. Under his order, they [the angels] took the soil from the place where the spittle fell and the remaining emptiness formed the navel. However, when God later put a soul into man and brought him to life, the soil with the spittle which had been thrown away became a dog.⁴³ That's why the dog now loves his master so much, even if he beats him.

Помашко сказание, какъ е сторень човѣкътъ и кучето

Първият човѣкъ на земята Господъ сторилъ отъ калъ тѣй, както му посочвалъ единъ ангелъ. Когато билъ сторень човѣкътъ, изправили го да стои правъ, ала без душа. Въ това врѣме прѣзъ това мѣсто миналъ дяволътъ и като видѣлъ човѣка, заплюлъ го. Плюнката паднала на корема и тамъ се залѣпила. Ангелътъ тогава отишълъ при Господа и му казалъ за случката. По негова заповѣдъ извадили прѣстъта от мѣстото, дѣто паднала плюнката, и останалата празнина образувала пѣпътъ. Ала когато сетнѣ Господъ турилъ на човѣка душа, та оживѣлъ, хвърлената прѣстъ с плюнката станала куче. Затова сега кучето толкова обича стопанина, си, па дори и тогава, когато той го бие.

The text was recorded in the village of Petkovo, (the former Ahu-Chelebi county, now Smolyan region), South-Eastern Bulgaria, Rhodope Mountains, by the local teacher Georgy P. Anastasov, who was given this account by the local Pomak storyteller Hasan Patiuovski. The text was published for the first time in Plovdiv in 1908, in the periodical journal *Rodopsky Napredŭk* (VI/1), page 142 (text No. 3). The story was published in the chapter "Folk Tradition from the area of Adrianopolis (Odrin) and the Rhodope Mountains". The journal was edited by the two local intellectuals, Stoyu Nikolov Shishkov and Vasil Dechev.

Text No. 5

Adem *allay salaam* was the first man

Adem *allay salaam* [i.e. 'peace be upon him']. [...] He was the first man created on Earth by Allah. After that, according to both the Bible⁴⁴ and Qur'ān⁴⁵, woman was created from the rib⁴⁶ of Adem *allay salaam*.⁴⁷

Адем алей селям е бил първият човек

Адем алей селям [...] Е бил първият човек, създаден на земята от Аллах. След това — както във и Библията, така и във Корана го дават, че жената е създадена от реброто на Адем алей селям...

The above text was recorded in 2005 in the marketplace of the city of Sandansky, Blagoevgrad region, South-Western Bulgaria; the story was told by a Muslim man selling potatoes. His name was Salih Hasan Tiber. The storyteller was born in 1958 in the village of Avramovi Kolibi, Yakoruda district, Blagoevgrad region. He graduated secondary school and the college of agriculture in the city of Bansko; due to financial circumstances, he had to become a lorry-driver and potato-seller. The field-research was part of the author's work on the project *Folk Religion in the Balkans*. The sound-recording of the above account is stored in the Hans Rausing Endangered Languages Project (HRELP) archives, at SOAS, University of London.

Text No. 6
About the apple

About the apple...⁴⁸ Why don't women have this thing here [pointing towards his Adam's apple]? When they [the first people] bit from the apple [i.e. the fruit of the forbidden tree in Eden], the man swallowed it, but the woman didn't. The woman spat it out,⁴⁹ and look at a woman now — she has no bone there... Because the man kept it [in his mouth], whereas she didn't swallow it but spat it out instead. That's why woman doesn't have this thing here, this bone in the throat...

За ябълката

За ябълката...

Защо ся жените немая ей-тука те това [сочи Адамовата си ябълка]?

Те [Адем и Хавва] кат са лапнали ябълката — мъжът я прогълтнал, а жената — не. Жената я е изплюла. И ся жената — виж! Тя няма това кокалче тука [на гръкляна]... Защото мъжа е задържал тука това, а тя не я е глътнала, изплюла я е. Затова жената няма тука това, я таа кост в гърлото.

The above text was recorded in 2005 in the village of Avramovi Kolibi (county of Yakoruda, Blagoevgrad region, South-Western Bulgaria). The story was narrated by an eighty six-year old Muslim man, known among his fellow villagers as Alyo Chalūmski, or Ali Chalūmov (Ali Mustafa Ali), born in 1919 in the same village; secondary school education. After World War II, when the Communist Party came into power, Ali was persecuted and sent to one of the regional internment (labour) camps (the Bulgarian version of the Soviet *GULAG*). The field-research was part of the author's work on the project *Folk Religion in the Balkans*. The sound-recording of the above account is stored in the Hans Rausing Endangered Languages Project (HRELP) archives, at SOAS, University of London.

Text No. 7
“You can eat anything here except for the wheat!”

Our ‘bibles’ [i.e. Holy Books] are the same. There is no difference. When God entered into Paradise, into the Dzhennet [i.e. *Cennet* (Turkish), or *Janna* (Arabic), meaning ‘Paradise’], Sheitan was also there. Then God said to Adem and Hava, “You can eat from everything here, but you shouldn't eat the wheat from the wheat-tree!”⁵⁰ [which is the ear of grain] from which we now make bread. Because, when you eat it you have to go to the toilet, yet there [in Paradise] there were no toilets. So far so good, but Sheitan said to Eva [Eve]⁵¹ first of all, “Eat from this, see what it tastes like.” Eva ate; so far so good. But then Eva also said to Adam,⁵² “Eat from this wheat, see what it tastes like.” As soon as Adem ate, he immediately felt [that he had done something he should not have done], because God had said not to eat [from the wheat]. He caught himself “here” [*storyteller indicating his Adam's apple*], and now men have a bone there which women lack. Having eaten, they needed the toilet. Where could he go? He had a hat on his head, didn't he? I don't know

what it was like then, but he hid whatever he could [*storyteller indicating his face and armpits and groin*]. This is where body hair grew. This is why Adem has a beard while women don't; Eva didn't do that [*touching her face*], knowing that her hands were dirty.⁵³

"Тука сичко ше ядете, само няма да ядете житото"

Нашите [Свещени книги], библиите са се едно, разлика няма. Кат влезе Господа в Рая, Дженнета... И тоз Шейтан беше там... Господа каза тогава на Адема и на Хавата:

— Тука сичко ше ядете, само няма да ядете ... житото на дървата, дето праим сега хляб...

Щото кат яде, трябва да отива у нужника. Там [в рая] нужник няма. Добре, ама Шейтан каза най-напред на Евата:

— Ежте тоз, вижте какво вкус има...

Евата еде! Добре, ама и на Адама сега казва Ева:

— Ежте тоз жито, виж какво вкус има...

И като яде Адема, той чувства сега, дето казал Бога “нема да едете” и държи тука [разказвачът се хваща за адамовата си ябълка] — и сега мъжете имат тука един гъгъ, жените го нямат...

И като еде, ма сега трябва нужник. Къде да отиде? Главата нали има калпак, тогаз не знам какво беше... , където мож да скрие [разказвачът показва лицето, мишниците и под корема], затуй космите излезли. И на Адем затуй излиза сакал [брада], а жените нямат. Защото Ева не го праи така..., знае, че мръсни ръцете.

The text was recorded in March 1987 in the village of Chernoglavtsi (the county of Venets, Shumen district, North-Eastern Bulgaria) by the late Bulgarian folklorist Evgeniya Mitseva. The story was told by Mehmed Ibryamov Yusek, born 1920 in the same village; four years of schooling, a builder and a peasant farmer. The transcription (in Bulgarian) of the original sound-recording is stored in the Archives of the Institute of Folklore (Bulgarian Academy of Sciences) under the following record number АИФ VIII, No 4, p. 109.

FRATRICIDE

Text No. 8

Why blood is not absorbed by the earth

Let me tell you the reason why blood is not absorbed by the earth... When Adem — you call him Adam — and Eve⁵⁴ [got together], she gave birth twenty times.⁵⁵ She had 40 offspring, and all of them were twins.⁵⁶ It came to pass, from Allah, from God, it came to pass, for the people to start breeding, to start procreating. To start multiplying... He [Allah] said to him [Adem], Allah said to him the following, “Adem, hey Adem, you should start marrying off the siblings to one another... But you will not [marry off] those who are twins... You will marry a younger girl to an older brother... As they should not have shared the same womb at the same time...”⁵⁷

They should not have shared the same womb at the same time, and they should not have been [born] together [and be of the same age]. There should be a switch over, older to younger and younger to older. That being so, he [Adem] decided that the younger brother [marries the elderly sister]...

But Allah created them in Paradise, Adem *allay salaam* [i.e. ‘peace be upon him’] and Eva [i.e. Eve], and Avva [i.e. *hawwā*]. You [Christians] call her “Eva”, we [Muslims] call her “Avva”. He created them in Paradise. So far so good. Yet He told them not to try [the fruit] from a certain tree.⁵⁸

But Sheytan [Satan] snuck in and came there [to the Garden of Eden],⁵⁹ that was the Devil, and he deceived them. “Come on! Have a bite!”⁶⁰

As soon as they had a bite,⁶¹ they defecated... They defecated... Having defecated, they wondered what to do with the excrement, and they applied it “here” [showing his cheeks],⁶² so that they couldn’t be recognised, and “here” [touching his hair],⁶³ and “here” [showing his armpits], and “here” [pointing between his legs]...⁶⁴ That’s why hair grows here and here and here and here... [...].

Initially, when she [*Hawwā’*] got pregnant [for the first time], it was in Paradise.⁶⁵ Azreti Havva [i.e. *Hawwā’*] got pregnant in Paradise. She got pregnant in Paradise. She gave birth to Kabil,⁶⁶ the name of her son, and Eklima, [the name of] her daughter.⁶⁷ The daughter was Eklima.

So, that is what [happened to Adam and Eve]. Then Allah chased them away from the Dzhendet⁶⁸ and they fell to Earth...⁶⁹ They fell to Earth and it is impossible to know how many years they spent separated.⁷⁰ Some say 300 years, others say this many and others say that many, but it is not known how long they spent separated there. Adem [i.e. Adam]⁷¹ and Havva [*Hawwā’*, i.e. Eve].⁷² Well, they got together in a certain place, there is a particular place which pilgrims visit when they go on Hajj, and it is called “Muzdelie”,⁷³ this place. In Muzdelie, that’s where Allah brought those two together. Allah brought them together, him [Adem] and his wife. Allah brought them together there. After the birth of Kabil [and Eklima], she gave birth for the second time,⁷⁴ and Habil⁷⁵ was born. [He was born from] the second pregnancy. The former was Kabil and the later one was Habil, and his sister, Liveza.⁷⁶ Those two [Habil and Liveza] were born together [as twins]. So far so good. Yet his sister Liveza was kind of short and rather plain. Well, she [Havva] got pregnant with Eklima⁷⁷ and Kabil in Paradise,⁷⁸ [whereas Habil and Liveza were conceived on Earth]. She [Eklima] was more beautiful, she was a heavenly woman.⁷⁹ At that time, Adem *allay salaam* had twenty sets⁸⁰ of [male and female] twins, altogether 40 children, and he began marrying them off to each other. An older brother to a younger sister, as well as a younger brother to an older sister, but making sure that they didn’t share their mother’s womb at the same time, that is, [their births] were separated in time [i.e. they were not twins]. That being so, he decided to marry Kabil to Liveza,⁸¹ the younger sister, and Habil to Eklima.⁸²

So far so good, but Kabil was not amenable, “I’ll take my sister [as a wife], because she is beautiful; I’ll take her [instead]. Why does my father separate me from her?”

He decided [to kill his brother Habil].⁸³ He took his brother Habil and carried him and carried him and carried him and carried him and didn’t know what to do with him... He didn’t know what to do with him...⁸⁴ And Allah sent two ravens there, two devils He sent. One [raven] took rest on the ground, and the other one took a stone and put it under him, since it didn’t know what to do in order to kill it [the other raven]. It wanted to kill it but didn’t know how... So the raven put one stone under [the other raven’s head] and hit it with a second stone from above and smashed it. It struck it on the head and the other raven died.⁸⁵

Having observed what happened there, while his brother was asleep, he [Kabil] put a stone [under his brother’s head] and hit him with another stone from above. When he hit him with the other stone, he killed his brother.⁸⁶ He murdered his brother and his brother died. The blood flowed and Allah then ordered this blood: “Until the Flood, the *Kayamet*”⁸⁷

takes place, the Earth will not absorb you!”⁸⁸ Then He [Allah] ordered the Earth, “You must not absorb the blood!”

Now, try and see! Blood is never absorbed by the earth, but if you throw water on the ground, it quickly gets sucked in. But as for blood, it dries on the surface. Since then, the ground doesn't take it in.⁸⁹ After that, he [Kabil] carried his dead brother for one year, without knowing what to do with him.⁹⁰ Then Allah again sent [a raven], he sent a raven there, and it dug and dug and dug a hole with its claw, and having dug it, [the raven] put the other one there and buried it with its foot. And He [Kabil] saw how it [the raven] buried [its dead].⁹¹ He then buried him [his brother in the same way].⁹² Then he turned black, just like a raven. His father [Adem] repudiated him and he [Kabil] ran off from there, from Mecca. From there he set off, running to the lands of Yemen, to the lands of Yemen,⁹³ towards this direction he ran away. So he escaped there. That's how [the first] murder took place.⁹⁴ Since then murder has existed, since then; that's how it originated.

And after that, after his having done what he did, he [Kabil] started another religion, the Christian religion. That was the one, Kabil, from whom the Christian religion started... [...]

When Adem's descendants reached the number of 40,000,⁹⁵ he died. He died when his descendants reached the number of 40,000, as many as a city. That's when he died...⁹⁶

По каква причина кръвта не я попива земята

А да ти кажа по каква причина кръвта не я попива земята... Когато Адем, вие викате Адам и Ева, тя имаше дваيسة рожбички, четиресе дядя, се близнета беше. Добре ама дойде му, от Алла[x] дойде, от Господ, за да се произведе народа вяке, да почва да се развъжда. Да почне да се развъжда... И каза му, Алла[x] му каза така: “Я, Адем! Ке земеш да си жениш братята един за друг... Ама па да не са лежали близнета, да не са били... По-малката — за по-големия... Да не са били на едно место, заедно да не са лежали на едно сърце...”

Те са на едно сърце лежали, обаче да не са и двете заедно. Да се мяняя: големия — за малкия, малкия — за големия. И той, като така [му нареди Бог на Адам] — реши така: малкия брат [да се ожени за малката сестра, а по-големият — за другата сестра]...

А Той ги създаде във Рая Аллах — тия, Адам алей селям и Ева, и Ава. Вие викате Ева, ние викаме Ава. Създаде [ги] във Рая. Добре, ама каза от едно дърво там да не накуса от това дърво.

Па Шейтанино се промушна, та отиде там, Гяволо, та ги излъга: “Де бе, де! Я лапнете!”

И като лапна[x]а — и се изходи[x]а [по нужда]... И се изходи[x]а... Кат се изходи[x]а, тиа двамата изходи[x]а се — тука шо да работа с боклука? Намажа[x]а го тука, да ги не познаа — и тука, и тука, и тука... И затова на нас ни никнаа косми тука и тука и тука... [...]

А то беше във Рая забременяла Азрети Хавва, във Рая беше забременяла [тя], беше забременяла във Рая. И се роди Кабил, [това беше] името на сино й, а на щерката — Еклима. На щерката — Еклима.

И като така [стана с Адем и Хавва], тогава Аллах ги изпъди веке от Джендетата, паднаа на земята... Паднаа на земята и не моа да се определи колко години са седели тия разделени. Едни викаа — триста години, едни викаа толко, едни викаа толко, ама не се знаа колко са седели разделени там. Адем и Хавва. Добре ама сбраа се, тука има едно место, са като идаа [х]аджиите, се казва там “Музделие” това место. “Музделие” — там ги сбра Аллах [Адем и Хавва], и двата. Сбра ги Аллах — и жена му, и той [Адем]. Там ги сбра Аллах. И кат се роди Кабил, след това втората рожба беше Хабиль. Втората рожба. Она беше Кабил, това па — Хабиль и сестра му Ливеза. Па[к] двамата се родиха [близнаци]. Добре, ама сестра му Ливеза беше малко по-късичка така и по-причавка. А оная [Хавва] беше забременяла Еклима във Джендета и Кабил във Джендета. Тя — по-красива. Джендетска жена. И като

така, сега Адем алей селям той има дваесе [мъжки и двадесет женски] рожби, четиресе дъца. И ги жени — по-големия брат за по-малката сестра. По-малкия брат — за по-голямата сестра, па[к] да не са лежали на едно място. Малко да има разстояние между тех. И като така, реши да ожени Кабилъ за Ливеза, за по-малката сестра. А Хабилю — па за Еклима.

Добре, ама Кабилъ не би съгласен: “Яз ше си зема мойта сестра, оти е красива! Яз ке си зема нея! Защо ме дели баща ми?!”

И реши [Кабилъ да убие брат си Хабилю]; и фана, зе брат му Хабилю, зе го и го носи, носи, носи, носи — и не знае що да го прае... Не знае що да го прае... И Алла[х] изпрати две врани там, джаволи, изпрати — и едната, като полегна онаа, онаа тури един камен отдол, нал не знае що да го работе, да го трепе; иска да го трепе, ама не знае що да го работе... Тя тури отдол камено враната и чукна с друг камен отгоре и му строши главата. Удари я по главата и умря оная врана.

Сега — видя той какво стана там и като брат му като заспа — той тури отдолу [под главата му] един камък и отгоре [с] друг камен го удари; и като го удари с другия камен, утрепа брат му. Утрепа брат му, умря брат му. И текна кръвта. И Алла[х] заповеда на таа кръв: “Додека стане Потопа, Каямета, да не те попива земята!” А на земята заповеда: “Да не попиваш кръвта!”

И ся — напраи проба! Кръв никогаш не се попива в земята! Изсипи вода — жабури ке оди в земята! А кръвта — отванка се съсири. Не я попива земята оттога. И след това го носи една година го носи мъртъв, не знаа шо да го работи. Тогава прати па Алла[х], прати враната там, та га изкопа, изкопа, изкопа една дупка със ногата, изкопа и другата [врана] тури там, та я погребя с ногата и виде той как тя я погребя. И той го погребя. И стана, црн стана като гарга. И баща му се отказа от него. И той почна да бяга оттам, от Меккетото, оттам почна да бяга за Йеменските земи. За Йеменските земи. Затам почна да бяга. И така. Бега натам. Така стана убийството. Оттогава остана още убийството — от това. И той почна веке като така, той почна веке друга религия, християнска религия, тоя, Кабилъ. Християнска религия почна... [...]

И тогава Адем, когато стана на четиресе хиляди неговото поколение, тогава почина той. Тогава почина, кат стана четиресе хиляди поколението. Като един град. Тогава почина той...

This text was recorded in 2005 in the village of Gorno Kraishte (county of Belitsa, Blagoevgrad region, South-Western Bulgaria). The story was narrated by a seventy nine-year old Muslim man by the name of Ismail Mechkarski (or Ismail Redzhep Mechkar), a woodcutter. He was born in 1926 in the nearby village of Babyak; four years of schooling. The field-research was part of the author's work on the project *Folk Religion in the Balkans*. The sound-recording of the above account is stored in the Hans Rausing Endangered Languages Project (HRELP) archives, at SOAS, University of London.

THE FLOOD⁹⁷

Text No. 9

Here is the second Adem!

[*Question by FB:*] Tell me about Nuh [Noah]⁹⁸...

[*Ismail:*] As for Nuh *allay salaam* [i.e. ‘Noah, peace be upon him’], when he couldn’t cope with people — it is [written] about him here [in the Qur’ān], when he couldn’t cope with people, when he couldn’t cope with people, he complained to God, he complained to Allah.

And Allah told him, “Eh, Yanuh [Noah], I will send”, He said, “a certain man. I will send,” He said, “a certain man. You should make a boat, you should make a boat!”⁹⁹

Then He sent this man, whose name was Yuvech-Unuk to him.¹⁰⁰ The name of this name was Yuvech-Unuk, and he was such an enormous man! He would eat 80 cauldrons

[of food] at one sitting. That's how enormous he was, this man. When he went to the forest to bring wood to Nuh to build the boat, he would go and uproot pine trees and deliver them to him [Noah], along with the roots. He would deliver them here and he would carry them on his shoulder. They built the boat. When they finished building the boat, Yanuh [Noah] cooked one little pot [of food] for this man, Yuvech, the one who could eat 80 cauldrons [of food], . He cooked it in a little pot, a tiny little pot,¹⁰¹ and that one said, "Yanuh, what is this?" he asked.

He [Noah] answered, "Well, I cooked our lunch."

"Wow, it's just enough for me to lick", he said. "That will be just enough for me to lick with the tip of my tongue."

"Have a go, lick it."

And he [Noah] served their lunch. He served their lunch and said to the other [man], "Now, say, *Bismil Araman Irait!*¹⁰² Now say", he said, "*Bismil Araman Irait!*"

The other one [Yuvech] said, "I cannot say", he said, "*Bismil Araman Irait!* I cannot say that."

The other one [Noah] said, "Please say, *Bismil Araman Irait!*"

The other one repeated again, ["I cannot say "*Bismil Araman Irait!*"]. Three times this happened.

Then he [Noah] said, "Now let's eat."

They ate and ate and couldn't finish [the food] in the pot.

"What is this, Yanuh [Noah], what is this kind of meal?"

"This meal is not a [simple] meal. This is *Bismil Araman Irait*. This is what fed you," he said. "This is what fed you."¹⁰³

After that, when he [Noah] built the boat, when he built the boat, he gathered and collected pairs of everything. Pairs of everything — man and woman, dog and bitch... Everything was in pairs. He invited everyone to get into the boat. Whoever believed Yanuh [Noah] got into the boat; but some of his sons, about whom I'm going to tell you later, didn't believe [him], together with others. They did not wish to get into the boat... So some got into the boat and some did not. When they got into the boat [he said to] one of his sons, "Come on, get into the boat."

He [the son] replied, "I'll climb up high [to a hilltop] so the floodwaters won't reach me."

So, after they got into the boat, Allah made the rain fall, and it fell and fell and fell and fell, the rain was falling, the rain was falling, and everything was covered by water. Everybody who remained outside, who did not believe Nuh, drowned. Everything was raised up by the waters, becoming a sea, everybody drowned. The son who climbed up high, the one who climbed onto the top of the hill also drowned, as the water reached its height. And the boat rose, the boat rose. When the boat rose on the water, then he ordered — Yanuh Peygamber [Prophet Noah] — gave this order, "No intercourse must take place!" No sexual intercourse, or there will be... [problems], because there would be panic on board if they start giving birth, and doing this and that... So there was not to be any intercourse. So far so good, but the dog and bitch couldn't obey the command [of the Prophet] and had sex. The cat then went to Yanuh [Noah] and denounced them. Nuh *allay salaam* went and quarrelled with them, he quarrelled with them, and he quarrelled with them.

They said, "It's not true. We didn't do that!"

"Well, good", and Nuh left them. The boat was big and he retired to his part [of the boat].

After that, they did it again. The cat again went and denounced them, it denounced them, and Nuh *allay salaam* came back and quarrelled and quarrelled again, and retired.

They said [once more], “It’s not true.”

So far so good, but when they did it one more time, the cat went to him [Noah] and said, “Come now and see, come now and see.”

He ran there, Nuh *allay salaam* and he caught them in this position. He caught them in this position.

That being the case, the dog prayed to Allah, both dog and bitch prayed to Allah to punish the cat. To punish it. And Allah punished the cat: “When you have intercourse, may the entire world hear you.”¹⁰⁴

Now look, when male and female cats are having sex, they screech and screech and everybody can hear them. Since then it remains for them to screech like this, to screech like this.¹⁰⁵

So far so good... Now, where is Nuh *allay salaam* going to reach dry land?

All the mountains were swollen with pride, the tall mountains, they were swollen with pride, [saying,] “I am big and Nuh *allay salaam* will land on me.” There was a mountain called Dzhudi, the mountain Dzhudi was its name, it was the smallest mountain.¹⁰⁶ So, the boat landed there on this mountain, on this small mountain, because it had declared, “I am the smallest mountain but I pray to Allah to have mercy on me so that Nuh *allay salaam* lands on me.” So, Nuh *allay salaam* landed on this small mountain.

And that was it. Now, it is said about Nuh *allay salaam*, “look, here is the second Adem [Adam]!”, since everything around has drowned, everything. So Nuh *allay salaam* is [believed to be] the second Adam, because since then the world was created anew. From these people there [in the boat], the world was created anew. Ahah! The world was recreated. [...]

And now it is said about this Nuh that he is the second Adam, the second Adem. About Nuh [is that said]. Yes. That’s all I can tell you about Nuh.

Его втория Адем!

[FB:] Я ми разкажи за Нух...

[Исмаил:] Нух алей селям, когато той не може да се справи със народа, има го, тука [в Корана писано] това го има, той не може да се справи със народа; като не може да се справи със народа, оплака се на Господ, оплака се на Аллах.

И Аллах му рече: “Ей, Янух, ше допрата,” — вика, — “един човек! Ке допрата,” — казва, — “един човек. Да напрааш един кораб, да напрааш един кораб!”

И той допрати му един човек, се казваше Ювеч Унук. Ювеч Унук се казваше тоя човяк. Ама какво бяше голямо човечище! По осемдесе казана изиждаше тоя чувяк. Такова, такова бяше грамаден чувяк. Като идеше на Нух Пейгамбера да носи матриалите, гората, да направаа кораба — иде, открати боро как си е со се корена и го докара тука. Го донесе тука, на рамото го донесе. И направиа кораба. Като направиа кораба, тогава тоя същия е, Ювеч, като изидаше по осемдесе казана, Янух свари едно гърненце. Свари едно гърненце, такова гърненце, па той вика: “Янух, какво е,” — вика, — “това?”

“Ами,” — вика, — “за обед съм сварил.”

“Е, това ке си го лижна,” — вика. — “Това ке си го лижна,” — вика, — “на края на езика.”

“Добре. Ай да го лижниш!”

И тури да обядвая. Тури да обядвая и му вика на него: “Де ся кажи ми: *Бисмилъ-араман-ираим!* Кажи ся,” — вика, “*Бисмилъ-араман-ираим!*”

Пъ той вика: “Я не мога да река,” — вика, — “*Бисмилъ-араман-ираим!* Не мога да река така!”

Той па му вика: “Де да кажеш *Бисмилъ-араман-ираим!*”

Той пак. Три пъти му повтори така.

Вика [Нух]: “Ай ся да ядеме!”

Ядоа, ядоа — и не можаа да го изеда [яденето в] гърнето.

“А бе какво е, вика, това бе, Янух? Я какво е това ядене?”

“Това ядене не е ядене, това е *Бисмилъ-араман-ираим!* Това те нарани,” — казва, — “това те нарани!”

И след това, като напраи кораба, като напраи кораба, избра и собра сичко [живо по] двойки. Сичко двойки — мъж и жена; куче — кучка, котка — котка... Сичко— двойка. И покани, покани сичко да се качаа във кораба. Който поверва по Янух — накачия се в кораба. Той неговите синове и тия, от неговите синове, ке го кажеме после — тея и тея не поверуваа. И тея не щеая да се качаяа... Некои се качия, некои се не качаа. И като се накачия в кораба, накачия се в кораба — един син негов [не пожела да се качи в кораба]: “Ела бе, да се качиш в кораба!”

Той [му отговори]: “Я ке се кача на една височина! Да не може да ме стигне Потопо, водата!”

И като се накачия в кораба, Аллах даде един дажд: капа, капа, капа, капа дажд, капа дажд, сичко се заля вода. Това, що беше останало [извън кораба], невервало на Нух — сичко се издави там. И се дигна сичко на вода. Море стана. Издави се сичко. Неговия син се качи на една баиря, се качи — и той се удави. Стигна и баиря водата. А кораба се вдигна. Кораба се вдигна. Кат се вдигна кораба на водата, тогава той заповеда — Янух Пейгамберина заповеда така: “Да нема сношение!” Да нема сношение един към друг, че ке се създаде голямо такова... Паника ке се създаде във кораба кат почнат да се раждаа, като почнаа това-онова... Да нема сношение. Добре, ама кучката и кучето не устоя на думата, напра[в]ия сношение. Тя отиде котката, та насвади на Янух, доноси. Нух алей селям отиде и се покара, покара им се покара, покара.

Тия викат: “Не е вярно! Ние не сме това направили!”

“Добре!” — и той си отиде Нух алей селям. Той бил голем кораба — бега си по другото отделение там.

След това па[к] направия [сношение кучето и кучката]. Тя па[к] оди котката, па[к] ги насвади. Насвади ги па[к]. Той дойде па[к] и се кара, кара им се па[к] и си отиде Нух алей селям.

Те казват, “Не е вярно!”

Добре, ама като направия [кучето и кучката] сношение [за трети пореден път] — и тя отиде котката и му каза: “Ела ся да видиш! Ела сега да видиш!”

И той — тича, отиде Нух и ги затече вярно на това положение. На това сношение затече ги.

Добре, ама като така, кучето се помоли, помоли[х]а се кучето и кучката, помоли[х]а се на Аллах за котката да а накаже. Да а накаже. И Аллах я накажа котката: “Когато правиш сношение — да те чуе цял свят да те слуша!”

И виж сега, когато праваа сношение котката и которока, [те] нали вряская, вряская — сичко да ги чуе! Оттова остана там тиа да вряская, да вряская тия.

И като така... Сега — като къде ше се презими Нух алей селям?

Ся сички планини се погордяа, големите планини. Погордяа се [и всяка от тях се хвалеше, като казваше]: “Яз съм голяма, ке се презими Нух алей селям на них!”. Една имаше планината Джуди. Планината Джуди се казваше, беше най-малка планинка. Добря, ама приземи се корабо на тая планина, на малечката планина. Понеже тя вика: “Аз съм най-малечка планинка, обаче моля се на Аллах мен да помилва, да се приземи Нух алей селям на мене!”. И се приземи на тая планина Нух алей селям.

И така. И сега викая на Нух алей селям — оттам после онова се издави, сичко се издави — оттам после викаа: “Ето втория Адем!” Втория Адам — за Нух алей селям, че

отгогава се произведе пак света. От тия хора там — пак се произведе света. Аха. Пак се произведе света... [...]

И сега викаа за тоя Нух — тоа [е] втория Адам. Втория Адем. За Нух. Да. Това мога да ти кажа за Нух.

This text was recorded in 2005 in the village of Gorno Kraishte (county of Belitsa, Blagoevgrad region, South-Western Bulgaria). The story was narrated by a seventy nine-year old Muslim man by the name of Ismail Mechkarski (or Ismail Redzhep Mechkar), a woodcutter. He was born in 1926 in the nearby village of Babyak; four years of schooling. The field-research was part of the author's work on the project *Folk Religion in the Balkans*. The sound-recording of the above account is stored in the Hans Rausing Endangered Languages Project (HRELP) archives, at SOAS, University of London. The digitalized sound-recording of this narrative has also been submitted to the ECHO website of the MPIWG.

Text No. 10

Nuh *allay salaam* was one of the Messengers

Nuh *allay salaam* [i.e. 'Noah, peace be upon him'] — he was one of the Messengers [of Allah], too.¹⁰⁷ We call them *Peygambers*. Nuh *allay salaam* was also one of the Messengers and lived before our Messenger, Mohammed *allay salaam* [i.e. 'peace be upon him']. He was also a *Peygamberin*. At that time it became clear that the world was heading for destruction, simply towards ruin, and the people living at the time were only concerned with opulence, and believed in hatred towards other human beings... At a certain moment it happened that Nuh *allay salaam*, one of the believers, had a dream.¹⁰⁸ He rejected all these [sinful] things and even tried to save [some people], but each of them mocked him, saying that he was not right in doing so. It wasn't right to do so, is what they thought, and they mocked him. After that, *Cenab-u Allah*¹⁰⁹ again sent him a message in his dream that he has to build a boat¹¹⁰ and invite into it everyone who believes him, all those people who believe that he is on the right path. He did so. He built it over many years, he built this boat. Let's call it an "ark".¹¹¹ In this dream, in this portentous vision, it was shown to him that he has to take the male and female of each animal, one couple from each, male and female.

Still, when the time [of the Flood] came, when the time approached, one of the sons of Nuh *allay salaam* was also taken by the [Flood] waters.¹¹² Yes, because when he was told [by his father] that he had to get into the boat, he disregarded it; he said that these hilarious ideas [about the Flood] are product of the imagination of an old man. Despite this, just when the boat was about to be closed and sealed, the moment arrived when he [Noah] addressed a prayer to *Cenab-u Allah* regarding his son, because no matter what, he was still his son.

Then *Cenab-u Allah* answered by saying, again in a prophetic vision, "He is not your son. He is not your child. He is not your offspring, because he did not believe in you. That is why he will be punished like everyone else."¹¹³

Нух алей селям е бил също един от Пратениците

Нух алей селям — той е бил един от Пратениците също, ние ги казваме "Пейгамбери". Нух алей селям е бил също един от Пратениците — и той е живял преди нашия Пратеник Мохамед алей селям. Той е бил също Пейгамберин. Тогава вижда, че света е бил тръгнал на разруха. Просто на провал. Нали, тези народи, през това време дето са живели, всеки е гледал охолството, вярвал е във ненавист към отделната личност... И във един момент идва пак да се присъни [пророчески сън] на Нух алей селям, който е бил един от вярващите; и той е отхвърлил всички тия [греховни] неща, дори се е опитвал да мъчи да

спаси [хората около себе си], но всеки [му се присмивал], те са го имали така за подигравка; като казвал, че това не е правилно да се върши, това не е правилно — те са мислили, че това е подигравка. И след това *Дженнаб-Аллах* му изпраща пак хабер — във съня, че трябва да построи един кораб и да покани тези хора, които му вярват. Тези хора, които му вярват, че той наистина е във правия път. И така сторува: праи го колко години там, построява този кораб, този ковчег да го речем, като във съня, във знамението, [му] се дава, че трябва да земе от всяко животно, мъжко и женско — мъжко и женско, по едно. Дори когато идва времето [на Потопа], когато идва времето, приближава времето — един от синовете му на Нух алей селям също си отива залят във водата. Да. Защото той, когато той [баща му, Нух, му] казва, че трябва да се качи във кораба, той [синът] отрича тази работа. Той казва, че това са смешки и това са превиделици на стар човек. И въпреки сичко, след като вече кораба ще бъде запечатан, затворен, идва момент [в който] той отправя молба към *Дженнаб-Аллах* за сина — защото това е син.

И *Дженнаб-Аллах* му отговаря, казва, нали, пак във знамение пак се казва: “Той не е твой син! Той не е твой евлят! Той не е твоє чедо, защото той не повярва във теб! Затва ще бъде наказан като сички останали.”

This text was recorded in 2005 in the marketplace of the city of Sandansky, Blagoevgrad region, South-Western Bulgaria; the story was told by a Muslim man selling potatoes. His name was Salih Hasan Tiber. The storyteller was born in 1958 in the village of Avramovi Kolibi, Yakoruda district, Blagoevgrad region. He graduated secondary school and vocational college of agriculture in the city of Bansko; due to financial circumstances, he had to become a lorry-driver and potato-seller. The field-research was part of the author's work on the project *Folk Religion in the Balkans*. The sound-recording of the above account is stored in the Hans Rausing Endangered Languages Project (HRELP) archives, at SOAS, University of London.

Text No. 11

Nuh *allay salaam* was the one who was building a boat for 120 years

Azreti Ibrahim¹¹⁴ was a *Peygamberin* [Prophet]. He had four sons... Nyuh, Nyuh *allay salaam*, Noy [Noah] was one of the sons he had,¹¹⁵ Noah, you call him Noah. We call him Nyuh. Nyuh *allay salaam*. Do you know what “nyuh” means in Arabic?¹¹⁶ “Nyuh” is the air, this is the air. What you are hearing, what is said, is [also] “nyuh”, and when you sense the smell of something, this is also “nyuh”. It is the smell of parsley, of a flower, of a human, of everything, of a [dog and] cat, this is “nyuh”. Nyuh *allay salaam* was one of the sons of Ibrahim. He was the one who was building a boat for 120 years. It happened that during his time, when Allah said to Dzhebrail [Gabriel], to the great *meilyake*, to the great angel, Allah said to the great angel, “You will appear before Nyuh, before Nyuh to tell him to build, to build a ship because I will cause a flood lasting 40 days and 40 nights!”

It happened during the Flood, and people were unbelievers, just like now.¹¹⁷ Look how people have changed. They don't believe [in God], and it was the same then.

He [Allah] told Dzhebrail, “He should collect, I will tell you what he should collect, what kind of people and what kind of animal he should put into the ship”.

He [Noah] began building it. He kept building it for 120 years. He was the only man who lived for 950 years, no other one lived [so long]... But he was a righteous man, Nyuh, Nyoi, and while building the ship people started mocking him, just like the youth nowadays. I beg your pardon for what I'm now saying, but the ship was somewhere in the fields, that's where he was building it, and people went to defecate in it. They were making a mess inside it, they were breaking things, and so forth...

He was hammering away all the time, he would go [to fields where the ship was] during daylight, he would appear there, he would hammer with his adze, and people would see him every now and then. Yet sometimes they were not able to see him; they could only hear his hammering, how the construction was going. It was not a short time, it was 120 years...

And when going there, mocking him, people started defecating there in a hidden place, next to the sea, but Allah, God, inflicted an infection like scabies on those who went there. It was like scabies, like eczema. They started scratching themselves. The more they scratched, the worse it became, making them go mad. Wow! They were jumping into the sea to cool themselves, but it didn't help. Some of them, however, continued to go there [to desecrate the boat], I don't know for how long it continued like this.

The Hodja used to describe it, the man told us [this story].

After a while, one [man] again went to defecate there [in the ark], to relieve himself, and as soon as he tried to get up, he slipped on human shit, because it was full of shit inside. When he slipped, he fell and got soiled all over. Wow! He went into the sea, washed himself and washed himself,¹¹⁸ and within five days his sores were healed. Wherever he was soiled, everything was healed. He wondered about that, since the upper part of his body was still infected [with sores since he only washed the lower parts]. He went there, took off his clothes, and with his hands he took shit, human shit and covered his body. He put the dirt all over, and then he went to the sea, he washed himself and got healed. After one week everything was healed.

The rest of them, though, continued [to defecate there in the boat and their disease was getting worse day by day]... They went mad from scratching themselves... But they were laughing at him [who was healed]. "Hey, you don't go there anymore, and you don't scratch yourself like us!"

"Yes, I got healed."

"Ha, what healed you?"

"I won't tell you."

"Why not? You should tell us, aren't we all friends? We are all human beings."

Finally he told them, "This and that, I slipped, I got soiled, and I got healed." These [people], one after the other, went there, soiled themselves, soiled themselves, and went to the sea, washed themselves and got healed. Finally, those who were left went to the sea, took buckets, and brought sea water and with this water they washed everything and put it back into the buckets and washed themselves and got healed.¹¹⁹ E-e-e-e-eh! It means that all of them became believers.¹²⁰ Those who did it, they started treating Noah, Nyuh *allay salaam*, with respect. "Well, you were right to say, 'Come to our faith! Believe in the power of Allah, because there is no other god than Him'." [Noah answered], "Invisible creatures [i.e. the angels] told me, that's what they told me to do, and with their help I am building a ship here. Come with me."

They joined forces and started helping him.

One night, after having built the ship, when he was asleep, Dzhebrail came, the *meilyake*, and told him, "Tomorrow, by ten o'clock, you should take two from every living creature, male and female". Two of the sons of Ibrahim also came to the ship, while the other two didn't because they were not believers — he had four sons altogether. He took two of the sons of Ibrahim, and off they went. A strong wind started blowing with a force that made the earth shake, there was a massive earthquake, just like the one that happened over there in Indonesia right now. Everything was covered with water, the seas overflowed and every living creature drowned. For forty days and forty nights it was like this. Ah! You

see, the other son [of Ibrahim], Ismail, he was the brother of the one who built the ship, of Nyuh, so Ismail was Nyuh's brother and he was also taken there and he was also there. After forty days, the sea started to withdraw and the dry land appeared. He let out all the animals and the brothers, which were left there, got out with them.¹²¹

Нюх алей селям е строил гемията сто и двајсе години

Азрети Ибрахим — той е бил Пейгамберин. Той е имал четири сина... Нюх, Нюх алей селям, Ной — единият е син Ной, вие го казвате Ной. Ние го казваме Нюх. Нюх алей селям. Нюх знајш какво означаваш по арабски? Нюх — въздух. Ето сега, слуха, дето се приказува, тоа е “нюх”. И како усещаш миризма от нешто — тоа е “нюх”, усеща миризмата на мирудията, на цветето, на чувјак, [на] сичку, на котката... — тоа е “нюх”. Нюх алей селям — единия син на Ибрахим. Той е строил гемията, парахода, сто и двајсе години. През негово време — оти [на] Джебраил, голямото мейляке, голямия ангел, казал, Аллах му е казал на голямия ангел: “Ше са јавиш при Нюх, при Нюх, да му кажеш да построи, да построи кораб, защото четиресе дена и четиресе ноци ще напрај Потоп!”

През Потопа е. И народа са били невярвачи — ја како ја. Како ја измени народа? Не вярват. И тогаш така.

“Той ше събере, ја ше ти наредя,” — на Джебраил казал [Аллах], — “ше ти наредя какви ора и какви животни да тури [Нух] в кораба.”

И тој почнал да го строи. Сто и двајсе години го е строил. Само тој е живял деветстотин и педесе години. Друг чувјак не е живял... Ама тој незавидив чувјак, Нюх, Ньой. И како го е строил кораба, како днешниот младеж, почнале да му се присмиват. Да извиняват, тој бил на гръмотето кораба, там гу е строил, одили да се испражняват вътре. Да си играат вътре, да крџат, да таква...

Той само [в]се чукал [в]се там, иде днеска, јави са, чука с теслџа, на места се видува, на места го видуваат, на места не може да го видят, само чукањето слушаат, строежа. Не е малко, сто и двајсет години е...

И како одили там, от присмеф, почнале да се нуждат във него, на скришну мясту, накрај морето; [на] тия, коит се одили там [по нужда], Аллах, Госпуџ е дал една зараза във тџа, како краста. Како краста, екзема. Почнале да се дџрпат. Колку са дџрпат повече, на лудост ги кара. Бреј! Фџф морето се мџтат, да се разладяват, да такват — не ше! Други си продџлжават да си одят пак; колку време е карало тува няшу, не знам.

Там гу описуваше [х]оджата, чувјак гу казуваше.

Ама след тоа пак отишџл един, пак да се кенџа там, да се нужда. Како рекџл да стане, подхлизна се на лайната, на човешките лайна. Те гу напџлнили лайна вътре! Кат се подлџзнал, паднал — и се оклџопал џялия. Ех! Отишџл на иџлера [иџнера, иџера?] вџнка, на морето — измил се, измил; след пет дена оздравяли му раните. Кџдет се оклепал — сичку оздравяло. Той се чуџи какво няшу е. Нагоре [по тџлото му] си гу има още тва [крастата]. Отишџл, съблџкџл се, зима с рџките — оклепал се џялия. От лайната, от чувјашките лайна. Оклепал се и отишџл па[к] вџф морето, измил се е и оздравял. За една седмица [в]сичко оздравяло.

Онија си продџлжават [да мџрсят кораба, а крастата им се влошавала с всеки изминат ден]... Пошурџват от дџрпане... И [взели] да му се смеџт: “Еј, ти не доодиш веке там, бе? Ти не се дџрпаш кату нас, бе!”

“Ми аз уздравџа, бе!”

“Ха! От шо оздравџа бе?”

“Нџма да ви каџа!”

“Оти тџџ си, бе? Ше [ни] каџеш! Па нали [в]сички сме приџатели! Сички сме [х]ора!”

Напоследџк зел да им ги каџва. “Така и така, така и така: подлизнах се, оклепах се. И оздравџа.” И тџа, един по един са отишли, оклепували се, оклепували, идат вџнка на морето, измџят се — и оздравяли. Напоследџк, които останали, отишли, от морето, земали кофи и от

морето, от таа вода, оплакнали сичко и я събрали във кофите и със тая вода оздравяли всичките. Е-е-е-е-е-ей! Значи — [в]сичките станали вярващи. Тия, които направили това, зели да му праят уважение на Ной, Нюх алей селям: “Ей, ти убаво казваше: “Елате на нашта вяра! Вярвайте във силата Аллахова, защото друг Господ няма!”, [а ние не ти повярвахме].” [Тогава Нух алей селям казал:] “Мен ми казаа невидимите [х]ора [т.е. ангелите]! Така и така да напрая и аз със тяхна помощ праим кораба тука! Айде!”

Сплотили се и тея, почнали да му помагат.

Една вечер, кат си спал, а той нап्राил [вече] кораба, кат си спал, дошъл Джебраил, мелякето. Казал му: “Утре, докъм десет часа ше прибереш от сичку живо по две. Мъжко и женско.” И двамата сина на Ибрахим — другите двамата не вярвали, а четири сина имал! — двамата сина на Ибрахим [се] прибраха в кораба; прибрал ги — айде! Почнало да дуе силен вятър. Със силата зела да се люля земята. Силно земљотресение — както сега става във Индонезия нататък. Сичко заляло вода. Моретата преляли, сичко живо се издавило. Четиресе деня и четиресе нощи държало това. А! И единия син, Исмаил, Исмаил, брат му на тоя, дето строил гемията, на Нюх, брат му на Нюх е Исмаил, дет са го земали, и той е бил там. И след четири[де]сетто деня почнали да се оттеглят моретата, сушата са подала. Той разпуснал тия животни; и тия братя, които останали, излязли и тея.

This text was recorded in 2005 in the village of Kornitsa (county of Gotse Delchev, Blagoevgrad region), South-Western Bulgaria. The story was narrated by an eighty nine-year old Muslim man by the name of Ibrahim Husein Sürmali. The storyteller was born in October 1916 in the same village; he was a shepherd and a peasant farmer. The field-research was part of the author's work on the project *Folk Religion in the Balkans*. The sound-recording of the above account is stored in the Hans Rausing Endangered Languages Project (HRELP), at SOAS, University of London.

Text No. 12

About Nyuh *allay salaam*

They were traveling with a boat; [this is a story] about Nyuh *allay salaam* [i.e. ‘Noah, peace be upon him’]... When they traveled with with the boat, they had nothing to eat, and they scraped [wood] from the boat [to eat], in order to survive... So that they could cross the sea, or ocean...

He was a Peygamberin...

За Нух алей селям

С кораб са пътували. За Нух алей селям [е тази легенда]... Кат са пътували с кораба, нема що да едат. И са стръгли от кораба това [дървесина], за да може да удържа... За да може да премине през море или океан...

И той е бил Пенгамберин...

This text was recorded in 2005 in the village of Avramovi Kolibi (county of Yakoruda, Blagoevgrad region, South-Western Bulgaria). The story was narrated by an eighty six-year old Muslim man, known among his fellow villagers as Alyo Chalūmski, or Ali Chalūmov (Ali Mustafā Ali), born in 1919 in the same village; secondary school education. After World War II, when the Communist Party came into power, Ali was persecuted and sent to one of the regional interment (labour) camps (the Bulgarian version of the Soviet *GULAG*). The sound-recording of the above account is stored in the Hans Rausing Endangered Languages Project (HRELP) archives, at SOAS, University of London.

IBRAHIM IN THE FIERY FURNACE

Text No. 13

Put into the fire, he was unscathed

I can't tell you who he [this Prophet] was... But there was such a case when they put him into the fire to burn him [alive], but he was unscathed by the flames.¹²²

For this fire, only the mules agreed to bring wood for this fire, [only] the mules, that's how we call them, mules.¹²³ They [his enemies] lit the fire but in the middle of the fire there was nothing. The fire was burning in a circle and in the middle, it remained [without flames] and it ceased...

That's why the mule is punished; it doesn't have offspring.¹²⁴

Го слагат да гори във огъня — огъня не го фаща

Не мога да кажа кой е бил [този Пророк]... Имало е такъв случай, когато го слагат да гори във огъня — огъня не го фаща.

Тоя огън, тоя огън е, съгласили са се да карат дърва за огъня [само] мулетата, както го казваме ние, мулета. Запалили огъня, обаче във средата на огъня [нямало пламък]; огънят гори в кръг, във средата то остава така [непокътнато от пламъка] — гаси се ...

И затова мулето е наказано — без род е [понеже е носило дърва за кладата, на която са искали да изгорят Пророка].

This text was recorded in 2005 in the village of Gorno Kraishite (county of Belitsa, Blagoevgrad region), South-Western Bulgaria. The story was narrated by a forty nine-year old Muslim man. His name was Hyusein Mukhtarski. He was born in the same village in 1956; the storyteller works as a forest-ranger and a woodcutter. The field-research was part of the author's work on the project *Folk Religion in the Balkans*. The sound-recording of the above account is stored in the Hans Rausing Endangered Languages Project (HRELP) archives, at SOAS, University of London.

Text No. 14

They put him into the fire and Allah ordered the fire to withdraw

[This is a story] about [the prophet] Ibrahim...¹²⁵

This Tsar¹²⁶ *Nemrut* [i.e. Nimrud]¹²⁷ was [ruling] in *Vavilyon* [Babylon]. In *Vavilyon*. Even until today there is [such a city] in Iraq. *Vavilyon* was the capital [...]. It was the capital of Iraq, the capital. And this *Nemrut*, when Ibrahim started disseminating "Muslimhood" [i.e. Islam], this Tsar *Nemrut*, what would he do? He would throw him [Ibrahim] into the fire.¹²⁸ They built a fire, they built a big fire. When they built the fire they threw him into the fire already there. They threw him into the fire and Allah ordered the fire to withdraw. The fire indeed fanned out and a green meadow appeared around him [Ibrahim]. They reckoned that he had been burned alive, perished. The end of him... But when the fire ceased, when the fire ceased — then they saw Ibrahim there,¹²⁹ making his noon prayer, and we also make this noon prayer now. He was making his prayer there...¹³⁰

Фърлили го в огиня и Аллах заповедал на огиня да се разтегли

За Ибрахим [е тази история]...

Тоя Цар Немруд [е царувал] във Вавилъон. Вавилъон — [и] сега в Ирак има си [такъв град]; Вавилъон [е] била столицаата. [...] И там е било столицаата на Ирак, столицата. И тоя

Немруд, като почнал оня Ибраим да разпространява мюсюлманлъка, и тоя Немруд — како ше праи цара Немруд? — ке земе ке гу фърлаа [Ибрахим в огъня], накладеа един огън. Наклали един огън голям. Като наклали огъна — и го фърлили ф огиня вече там. Фърлили го в огиня — и Аллах заповедал на огиня да се разтегли. И се разтеглил — и една зелена полянка станало там код него. Те смятат — той е изгорял вече. Край... А кат се разкарал огиня, разкарал се огъна — и видели Ибрахим там, дека си прави обедната молитва. И ние [мюсюлманите] я праиме сега тая обедната молитва. Праи си молитва там [в огъня]...

This text was recorded in 2005 in the village of Gorno Kraishte (county of Belitsa, Blagoevgrad region, South-Western Bulgaria). The story was narrated by a seventy nine-year old Muslim man by the name of Ismail Mechkarski (or Ismail Redzhep Mechkar), a woodcutter. He was born in 1926 in the nearby village of Babyak; four years of schooling. The field-research was part of the author's work on the project *Folk Religion in the Balkans*. The sound-recording of the above account is stored in the Hans Rausing Endangered Languages Project (HRELP) archives, at SOAS, University of London.

ISHMAEL CAST OFF: THE MIRACLE OF THE ZEM-ZEM SPRING

Text No. 15

“Take some, take some! Water is coming from the earth!”

[*Question by FB:*] I heard also a story that Ibrahim abandoned the mother [Hagar] and the child [Ishmael] in a certain meadow and they didn't have water to drink... And then the child hit the earth with his foot, Ismail did this and water sprung up...

[*Storyteller 1:*] Yes, it happened there, it is where our people go on Hajj,¹³¹ or to the Holy Sepulchre. There the mother was searching for water to give the child to drink.¹³²

I didn't go there...

She saw the stone was shining and she thought that the stone was wet. She went there to see whether there was water...

[*Storyteller 2:*] She went there to dig and search for water...

[*Storyteller 1:*] And the child started digging there [by kicking]... He was digging, and the water shot up.¹³³ The child was drinking water saying to his mother, “Mother”, he said, “Take some, take some!”¹³⁴ Take some! Water is coming from the earth.”

Now from this water, when they go to the Holy Sepulchre, they bring it from there, so they give it [the water] to people so that they drink from this water.

[*Storyteller 2:*] And whoever suffers from an illness will recover and get well.

[*Storyteller 1:*] Those [people] who went there brought some of this water here. They give you a little bit to drink from a little glass, so that you can drink from this water of *Zem-zem* [i.e. *Zem Zem Suyundan*].¹³⁵ This is from there where they went [on Hajj].

[*Storyteller 2:*] This water comes from there, from the Hajj... They take it from there, from the water which is called *Zem-zem*...

[*Storyteller 1:*] Which was dug by the child...

[*Storyteller 2:*] The water which was from the earth...

[*Storyteller 1:*] He [the child] was saying, “Mother, mother”, he was saying, “Take, take”, he was saying, “take, take”.

[*Question by FB:*] Who was the child who dug the earth, then?

[*Storyteller 1:*] It was the one who dug the earth... That was the one. This is where the Hajj is [now]. But then there was no water [there]... There was no water. When she was looking at the stone and it was shining, yet the stone wasn't wet at all, since there was no

water... And they were searching for water, and then the child remained there alone and started clawing there with his hands, and the water ...

[*Storyteller 2:*] It was God who gave this water there...

[*Storyteller 1:*] God gave this water.¹³⁶ Allah did it, through the earth... And he, the child, was saying, “Mother”; that’s what he said, “Take, take”, he said, “Take, take”. [Hence the name of the spring “Zem-zem”]. The water comes from the earth, and he drank and quenched his thirst...

[*Storyteller 2:*] I don’t know how many people took this water but no one sees it being diminished. A lot was taken away from there but it stays at the same [level]. It remains the same...

[*Storyteller 1:*] It remains the same, it doesn’t get less.

“Зем земи! От земята иде вода!”

[*FB:*] А чух още една такава приказка, че той ги бил оставил Ибрахим майката и детето на една поляна, пък те нямали вода да пият... Пък детето ударило с крачето, Исмаил, пък излязло вода...

[*Али:*] То е там, дето ходеа наште на хаджилък, или на Божи гроб. Там я, майката търси да даде вода на детето.

Я не съм одил там...

И гледа, като се лъска камъка тамока, тя мислела, че е мокър камъка. Отишла тамока да видия дали има вода...

[*Емине:*] Тя иде там да копа да търси вода...

[*Али:*] А детето почнало да копае там... Да копае там — рунало вода е там. И детето пие вода там и казва на майката: “Майко!” — вика, — “Зем земи! Зем земи! От земята иде вода!”

И ся от тая вода, като одея там на Божия гроб, доношая оттам, та давая на хората, да пийнея от тая вода.

[*Емине:*] И който е болен от нещо — да оздравее.

[*Али:*] Тия, които одия там, донесея тая вода тука. По малко дадат само, с една чашчица да пийнеш от тая вода там, “Зем-Зем”. Това е там, дето одеа [на хаджилък]...

[*Емине:*] От там, дето е на аджилъко, тая вода... Оттам зимая, от тая вода, дето я викая “Зем-Зем”...

[*Али:*] Дето детето я изкопало...

[*Емине:*] Дето е от земята е водата...

[*Али:*] То е казувало: “Майко ле, мамо ле!” — как казало веке, — “Зем земи!” — вика, — “Зем земи!”...

[*FB:*] Значи кое е било това детенце, дето е изкопало земята?

[*Али:*] Ами дето е копало земята, нали... Сигур са били тея, там на аджилъко. Обаче няма[ло било] вода... Вода няма. И тя като гледа камъко — той се лъска малко. А той не е бил мокър тоа камък, нали нема вода... И те търсеа вода. То останало там детето и почнало да рови там с ръката... И водата...

[*Емине:*] Това я е Господ дал там, водата...

[*Али:*] Господ я е дал тая вода, Аллах. Чрез земята... И то вика детето: “Майко ле!” — как казал, — “Зем-земи,” — вика, — “зем-земи!” Из земята иде водата. И то пие тамка е, напило се е...

[*Емине:*] Не се е видело [да намалява водата на този извор], не знам колко наливая от тая вода, много вода нящо се изнася — и па си е толко. Па си е толко...

[*Али:*] Па си е толко! Нето намаля, нето нищо.

This text was recorded in 2005 in the village of Avramovi Kolibi (county of Yakoruda, Blagoevgrad region, South-Western Bulgaria). The story was narrated by an eighty six-year old Muslim man, known among his fellow villagers as Alyo Chalŭmski, or Ali Chalŭmov (Ali Mustafa Ali) and his wife Emine Ali. They both

were born in 1919 in the same village. Ali was a man well-educated for his time, as he graduated secondary school; very few among his fellow villagers were able to do so. After World War II, when the Communist Party came into power, Ali was persecuted and sent to one of the regional internment (labour) camps (the Bulgarian version of the Soviet *GULAG*), whereas his wife was sent as an internee to the village of Rila. The field-research was part of the author's work on the project *Folk Religion in the Balkans*. The sound-recording of the above account is stored in the Hans Rausing Endangered Languages Project (HRELP) archives, at SOAS, University of London.

THE FILIAL SACRIFICE

Text No. 16

That's why the Kurban should be sacrificed

He was from the old times, he was from the first people. He didn't have a child. He didn't have a child. His name was Ibrahim. In fact his name is Ibrahim, Ibrahim. He didn't have a child. He was already old, however his wife allowed him to get married to the servant, with only one purpose, to have a child.¹³⁷ He was compelled to marry her, but he also made a promise that if God gives him a child, he will sacrifice him as a Kurban.¹³⁸ That is why the Kurban is sacrificed, that is why. He made it happen... It's a long tale... When he took the second wife, the servant, she got pregnant with a male child, and his given name was Ismail.¹³⁹ However, at the same time his own [wife], at the age of 90, got pregnant as well,¹⁴⁰ so she gave birth too, and he was forced to chase away the servant.¹⁴¹ He took the servant [away] with food and drink, he took water,¹⁴² he took her somewhere there in Saudi Arabia.¹⁴³ It is where Mecca is now, where the Hajj is, the Hajj takes place there... I was there last year, I went on Hajj. He took her to a forest,¹⁴⁴ he took bread and water... And made a hut there. A simple hut. Within time she ran out of everything, and she was on a lower foothill. On one side there was a hill [that is, Al-Safa], and on the other side there was a hill [that is, Al-Marwah], and she was between them in the plain. She left the baby and went to that hill, crying and running [searching for water], and the child [was left alone]. She again passes by, seeing what he [the child] was doing, and went to the other hill; crying she came back [to see the child]. The third time, lo and behold, water sprung up¹⁴⁵ from where the child was kicking, and now when she saw the water — that's how old people explained it to us when we went on Hajj — the water started flowing stronger and stronger.¹⁴⁶ Then she got frightened and said, “Zem-zem!” Well, our people call it “Zem-zem”, meaning “dry water”,¹⁴⁷ this water is called “Zem-zem” [i.e. *Zem Zem Suyundan*]. In Arabic however, it means “stop, stop!” She got frightened and told the water to stop, and it stopped, and it remained at this level until now. Now this water is containerised and when people go there, they bring it back so that everyone can try this water.

However, with the passing of time this man [Ibrahim] started seeing in a dream¹⁴⁸ that [the execution of] his vow was being demanded — [the sacrifice of his own] child for a Kurban.¹⁴⁹ He was compelled [to slay his son], since he saw it two and three times in his dream, as a reminder that he made a vow. He had promised to give his child as a Kurban. He went and told his wife this and that, he didn't tell her exactly, however, that he is going to take him [the boy] to sacrifice him, and said, “We'll go somewhere there...” However when they set off on the way, he explained to the child, “So-and-so, I'm taking you to sacrifice you as a Kurban.”¹⁵⁰ As they got closer to the destination, the Devil said to him [the boy], “Hey, Ismail, your father is taking you to sacrifice you as a Kurban!”¹⁵¹

20-30 meters later (I was exactly at this particular place [on Hajj]), again, the Devil said, “Hey, Ismail, [your father is taking you as a Kurban!]”... The third time, the same thing happened. He [Ismail] took a stone and hit the Devil in the eye and blinded him, and the Devil afterwards went away...¹⁵² He [Ibrahim] set off with him and took him to slay him as a Kurban. The child told him to unbutton his shirt, so that his mother won't see [the blood], so that she doesn't get scared and doesn't find out that he was sacrificed. The child undid his shirt and asked his father to tie up his hands and legs so that he doesn't move.¹⁵³ He left only one arm free and tied up the other three limbs, two legs and an arm. But when he [Ibrahim] started slaying him with the knife, the knife didn't cut. For a second time the knife didn't cut [again]. He [the father] got angry and [struck] a stone, the knife cut through a stone.¹⁵⁴ At that time, [a voice] began to be heard from above, in Arabic, “*Allah ikibber, Allah ikibber, Allah ikibber*”,¹⁵⁵ and he turned and saw a ram there,¹⁵⁶ and he ran off after it. He ran after the ram and caught it. If the ram did not [try to] run away, the Kurban should have only been sacrificed there [in Mecca]. But since the ram ran away, that's why the Kurban can be sacrificed everywhere, whoever and wherever, it can be sacrificed. That is [the tale] about the Kurban. He slew the ram and from then on our [people] have made the *Bayram* and that's why the *Bayram* exists from then onwards. That's why the Kurban is sacrificed.¹⁵⁷

Курбана затва се коли

Той е бил някуга, от първите хора. Не си е имал рожба. Не е имал рожба. Ибрахим се е казал. Ибрахам. Той е аслъ Ибрахам. Не е имал рожба. Бил е възрастен вече. Обаче жена му разрешила да се ожени за прислужничката. Само и само да имат рожба. И той съ принудил и съ оженува за нея, ама обещава, че ако му даде Господ рожба, ще го заколя курбан. И затва, затва се коля курбана. Той гу е извършил това няшу... Тя е дълга пословица... Той кату зел втората жена, тая прислужничката, тя забременяла с мъжко дете. И името му сложили Исмахил. Обаче в същото време негвата на деведесе години забременява и тя. И тя ражда. И гу принудиха да изгони прислужничката. И я закарва прислужничката, зел ядене и пиене, вода и я откарва там некаде, в Саудитска Арабия. Мека е това, там — хадж, хаджилъка е... Бил съм аз, миналата година ходих на хадж. Завел я в гората. Зима хляб, вода... И прави една колиба там. Проста колиба. И в продължение на време тя свършва сичко [т.е. както храната, така и водата]. Била на един хълм. По-ниску. Оттука има височина, хълм. И оттука — хълм. Тя била на нискуту. И остаила бебчету и отишла на тоя хълм — плаче, търчи [да търси вода]. И детето [го оставила само], минава пак [търчешком при него да види] кво праи и отива на другия хълм; плаче — и съ връща [пак при него]. Пък третия път, гледа — то детето кату ритало, то потекло водата. И ся там тя, кату гледа водата — на нас ни обясняваха там хора, като бяхме на хадж — потекла водата и почнала да усилва. И тя съ изплашила и казала : “Зем-зем!” Ся наште хора я казват “зем-зем”, сух вода, “зем-зем” тая вода, обаче по арабски [това значи] “Спри! Спри!”; тя се изплашила вече и казала да спре водата и тя спряла. И остава на тва положение. Ся тая вода е фаната и като ходят там донисат сяк да накуси от тая вода.

Обаче с течение на време почнало да се [присънва], на сън на тоя човяк [почнало] да се вижда каквото е обещал — курбан, детето [за] курбан. Той съ принудил вече, два-три пъти вижда насън, че какво е обещал. Той е обещал да даде рожба да е за курбан. И отива и обажда на жената му така и така. Той не обажда, не казва точно, че ше го кара да го коли, [а казва:] “Ще идем донякъде, там...” Обаче в движение по пътя обяснил на детету: “Така и така, ше те карам, ше те заколям за курбан!” И [като] наближили вече там, където ше е мястуту, Дявола му казал [на детето]: “Я, Исмаил, баща ти те кара да те коли за курбан!”

След дваис-трийс метра — аз бях на съшуту мясту! — пак Дявула му казва: “Я, Исмаил, [баща ти те кара да те коли за курбан]...” На третия път па съ случва съшуту. Обаче

той зима един камен и удара Гявола в окото и му изкарува окото. Гявола се тръгва вече... А той го закарва и го кара там да го коли курбан вече. И на него детето му казало да [му] разкопче ризата, [та] като види майка му [ризата, тя да не бъде окървавена, та] да не се плаши, [т.е. да не се досети] че гу е заклал. Детето разкопчва ризата. И гу накарва да му върдзе, бащата да му върдзе ръцете и краката да не мърда. Той също само едната ръка му е остаил, вързал му е трите крака... Двата крака и ръката. Обаче като почнал с ножа, ножа не сече. Втор път — ножа не сече. Той се ядосал — и [ударил] от един камък. Ножа разсича камъка. В това време почва по арабски отгоре: “Аллах икибер! Аллах икибер! Аллах икибер!” И той се обърнал и коч видял там. И — айде по него. И той затичал по коча и гу фанал; и аку не е забягал коча — само там ше се коли курбаня. А коча, шом е забягнал, курбаня ся затва се коли навсякъде вече. Кой къде може — там коли. Тва е за курбана. И заколюва коча вече и оттам после сетне наште Байрам са напраили и затва е Байрам насетне; курбана затва се коли.

This text was recorded in 2005 in the village of Breznitsa (the county of Gotse Delchev, Blagoevgrad region, South-Western Bulgaria). The account was given by a local Muslim man by the name of Yusuf Omer; he was born 1928 in the same village; secondary school education, a retired forest-ranger (in charge of the local timber-yard). The field-research was part of the author's work on the project *Folk Religion in the Balkans*. The sound-recording of the above account is stored in the Hans Rausing Endangered Languages Project (HRELP) archives, at SOAS, University of London.

Text No. 17

“You should give as an offering the dearest thing you have!”

Ibrahim, just like Isus [Jesus] and the other Messengers are mentioned [not only in the Bible but] also in our Book, in the Qur'ān; in the Qur'ān, it is mentioned — well, that's how they taught us — about Ibrahim [as follows] ...

Ibrahim lived before our Prophet who also renounced idol worship¹⁵⁸ during the time of the Arabs; and as early as in his [Ibrahim's] lifetime there was built — in what is today Mecca, a holy place for Muslims — he built in his lifetime [the Ka'ba].¹⁵⁹ It is not like a building but something like a complex It happened during his lifetime and God — or as we call him Allah, it doesn't matter [how one calls Him] — decides to try him [Ibrahim] one day, to see how faithful he is and how much he believes in his religion. And He tells him [the following]...

But [before that] he [Ibrahim, who was for many years childless] must have made an oath... He didn't have a male offspring, he didn't have a son, and he gives a vow before God that if he has a male offspring, he will offer [a sacrifice], the dearest thing he has... So the years pass and the time comes when a son is born to him, and an order from God comes to obey the promise he gave.

And [Allah] says, “You have to give as a sacrifice¹⁶⁰ the dearest thing you have!”

He [Allah] didn't say to him [Ibrahim], “your son”, but “the dearest thing you have”...¹⁶¹

He thinks and thinks about what is [the dearest thing he has]. He realises that his son is the dearest thing he has. He [Ibrahim] has decided already [to sacrifice his son]...

He thought and thought [. . .] and told his son [that he intends to sacrifice him]. His son was called Izmail [Ishmael].

And he [Ibrahim] takes the knife and begins to sacrifice him [Izmail] as an offering,¹⁶² to slay him. Perhaps, as may also be known in Christianity, he tries to slay him with his knife, and he cuts [his throat] but cannot slay him.¹⁶³ Now, this might be a legend, and I don't know how much truth is in this, but there was a stone nearby and he [Ibrahim] hit the stone [with the knife] and the stone divided into two. Perhaps this shows — I don't

how to explain it to you — that the knife was very sharp or maybe something different [i.e. divine intervention]... After this, God sends him a sign and says, “Ibrahim, you are my faithful servant!”¹⁶⁴ Because you promised and having promised you fulfilled your promise! Indeed, you have shown, not only to Me, but also before society and before the people you lead that when a man gives a promise he has to fulfil it!”

It also shows, this particular thing exactly shows the strong faith of Ibrahim in Allah.

[*Question by FB:*] Did he slay something instead of the child?

[*Hasan:*] Yes, after that, whether following God’s order or his own will, since he promised to sacrifice an offering, and after that he takes a ram and slays it as a sacrificial offering. That’s how we now understand, until today Muslim people know that there is a special day called *Kurban-Bayram*. On each [feast of] *Kurban-Bayram*, a man of means, one who has money, one who is well-to-do, ought to slay in the name of Allah, ought to slay a Kurban. This ritual, however, is not among [the five Pillars of Islam]... Because we have a number of levels of obligations as Muslims. For instance, there are things which are an obligation and have to be strictly fulfilled, which you cannot disobey. But slaying the Kurban is not among these things. It belongs to a lower level [of obligations]. It is also an obligation, but there is another condition applied here, if the person is well-to-do.

The same goes for going on pilgrimage, on Hajj to Mecca...¹⁶⁵ Because every Muslim, if he can afford it, at least once in his lifetime ought to do that. This is how to explain it to you, just like Christians have God’s Ten Commandments, for us this is one among the five Pillars of Islam.

This going on Hajj to Mecca is one of these obligations, but only under the condition that one can afford it... If one doesn’t have the means, that is a completely different matter altogether. [. . .]

As for me, I, as my other [fellow villagers] are well-aware [of the tradition of Islam]... I graduated Muslim school but in the Muslim school we study things which are deeper in the religion, but this [the story of Ibrahim] is a bit like a saga, a bit like a legend... There was such a thing, however, but some [details] are added by people and embellished, so that it becomes more interesting...

[*Question by FB:*] And this [story], about Ibrahim and his son, where do you know it from?

[*Hasan:*] We know this from the Qur’ān.¹⁶⁶

“Трябва да дадеш във жертва най-скъпото си нещо!”

Ибрахим, както и Исус и другите Пратеници, са споменати [не само в Библията, но] също в нашата Книга, във Корана; и във Корана се споменава, нали, както съ нъ учили, за Ибрахим...

Ибрахим, той е живял, нали, преди нашия Пророк [Мохамед], който също е отхвърлил по времето на арабите идолопоклонничеството. И още по негово време се изгражда, което е в днешно време във Мекка, нали, което е свещено място за мюсюлманите, той още по негово време той изгражда [the Ka’ba] — то не е като сграда, а може би като комплекс... Нали по негово време това нещо става. И Бог, или както ние го казваме Аллах, няма значение [как ще го наречеш], един ден решава да го изпита, нали — колко е верен на Бог, нали, колко вярва във религията си и му казва [следното]...

А той [Ибрахим, който бил много години без мъжко чедо,] дава клетва... Той нямал мъжка рожба. Син не е имал. И дава клетва пред Бог, [че] ако му се роди мъжка рожба, ще

даде най-скъпото си нещо [в жертва]... И нали минават години и идва време, когато му се ражда син. И идва заповед от Бог нали, да се спаси това, което е обещал.

И казва [Аллах]:

— Трябва да дадеш във жертва най-скъпото си нещо!

Не му казал, нали, “[Трябва да дадеш] сина ти!”, а “[Трябва да дадеш] най-скъпото си нещо!”...

И той мисли, мисли — кое е [най-скъпото му нещо]? И вижда, че синът му е най-скъпото нещо, което има той. И решава вече [да го принесе в жертва]...

Мислил, мислил — [...] и казал той на сина му [какво е намислил]. Сина му Измаил съ [е] казвал.

И взема [Ибрахим] ножа и почва да го принася във жертвоприношение, да го коли. И нали, както може би и във християнството се знае, опитва със ножа, нали, да го заколи, нали, реже, обаче не може да го заколи. И ся, то тва е може би предание, не знам колко е истина, имало някакъв камък наблизно, ударил [Ибрахим] камъка — камъка се разделил на две. Това може би показва, де да знам как да Ви го обясня, колко е остър ножа? Или може би [нещо пак] във такъв смисъл [показва]... И след това вече, нали, пак Бог му изпраща знамение и му казва: “Ибрахим, ти си Мой верен раб! Понеже ти обеща, нали, обеща — и изпълни своето обещание! И наистина ти показва не само пред Мен, но и пред обществеността, хората, които водиш, че един човек, кат даде едно такова обещание, той трябва да го изпълни!”.

А също така показва, нали, ей тва нещо точно показва силната вяра на Ибрахим към Аллах...

[FB:] А заклал ли е нещо вместо детето?

[Hasan:] Да. След това вече, нали, дали по Божия заповед, или по негово желание, понеже нали той е обещал да даде някакво жертвоприношение, нали — и след това той взема един коч и го коли като жертвоприношение. Затова разбираме нали, още и до днешен ден [помним ние], мюсюлманите — има определен ден и го казваме “Курбан-Байрам”. И във всеки “Курбан-Байрам”, нали, на човек, който има възможност, има финанси, които моа да разполага, [се полага] да заколи във името на Аллах, да заколи курбан. И т[о]ва, тоя обряд, понеже не е, как да Ви го обясня, не е [сред абсолютните пет задължения на изповядващите Исляма]... Понеже ние имаме няколко степени на задължение като мюсюлмани; например, има неща, които са задължение и стриктно трябва да се изпълняват, не може да откажеш от това нещо. Но коленето на курбан не е от тия неща. То пада във малко по-долна степен. То е пак задължение, но вече тук има и друго изискване — ако има [финансова] възможност човек.

Както е същото и за отиването на поклонение — на хадж в Мекка... Нали мюсюлманинът, ако има възможност, поне веднъж във живота си, той е длъжен [да отиде на хадж в Мекка] — това е, както да речем, има десет Божи заповеди при християните, при нас тва са едни от петте условия на Исляма.

И т[о]ва — ходенето на хаджилъка в Мекка е едно от тези задължения, но при условие ако има възможност човек... Ако няма — това вече е отделен въпрос. [...]

Иначе аз, нали, както и другите [мои съселани] сме доста запознати [с традициите на Исляма]... Аз съм завършил мюсюлманско училище. Но по принцип в мюсюлманското училище учим неща, които са по-дълбоки във вярата. А тва [за жертвоприношението на Ибрахим] може би е малко и като предание, и като легенда... Но е имало такова нещо. Но вече то някои неща се слагат и се украсяват от хората, нали, за да може да става по-интересно...

[FB:] Това [предание] за Ибрахим и за сина му откъде го знаете?

[Hasan:] Ами това го знаем от Корана.

This text was recorded in 2005 in the marketplace of the city of Sandansky, Blagoevgrad region, South-Western Bulgaria; the story was told by a young Muslim man selling potatoes. His name was Hasan Mehmed Hasan. The storyteller was born in 1976 in the village of Avramovi Kolibi, Yakoruda district, Blagoevgrad region. The field-research was part of the author's work on the project *Folk Religion in the Balkans*. The sound-recording of the above account is stored in the Hans Rausing Endangered Languages Project (HRELP) archives, at SOAS, University of London.

This custom comes from Ibrahim

[*Question by FB:*] What is the story you know about Ibrahim?

[*Salih:*] When Ibrahim prays before God, in front of Allah, because for several years he had no child, and he prays to Allah to reward him [with a son] if he deserves it, of course.¹⁶⁷ At that time, he didn't know that he was a Messenger of Allah. He prays with his whole heart and soul like this, so that he may be rewarded and have a child. Indeed, after a certain time [God] gave him this child. But he sees in his dream that his prayer-request¹⁶⁸ will be fulfilled only under the condition that after he will have to do something in Allah's name which will cost him dear. The dearest.

Indeed, there is nothing more dear than the children... He [Ibrahim] thinks and thinks...

And after that the time comes when he has to give "this", this loan, let's call it "this loan" to God, to Allah. He then sees in a dream,¹⁶⁹ that he has to return his loan via the request which he addressed. It was a test by Allah...

Then he goes and tells his son and his wife, sharing [the dream] with them. After Ibrahim's having shared with his son and his wife [the dream], he [the son] says, "Well, one day I will die [anyway]."

His name was Ismail.

He said, "Whatever Allah allotted to me, that will be done." He says to his father that there is nothing to be concerned about, nothing..., since it was [the will of Allah].... They asked the mother to dress him up in the best outfit which [the child had].¹⁷⁰ The best... and to bathe him. She was to dress him up, to bathe him, to purify him, and that was so... The son also knew that he would be offered as a sacrifice, or a Kurban, to Allah. In the name of Allah. And when they go, he [the father] takes him there [where he intended to sacrifice him]...

He [Ibrahim] tries [to slay him] with a knife and he couldn't!¹⁷¹ And the knife was even [sharpened].... That's how it was, because the child only had one request, that it [the knife] would be very sharp so that he doesn't feel [anything, any pain]... So that, in one go [his father] could slay him without him [suffering]... That's why he requested the knife to be sharp.

Well, but when he [Ibrahim] went [to sacrifice Ismail], he tried and it didn't happen! That's why he [Ibrahim] hit the stone with the knife, and the stone split! Yet the child [remained alive]... This is a test, this is a test of faith. This is a test [on behalf of Allah] for His Messenger [Ibrahim], because each of us has a weakness. That's why it's not easy to keep your word! There are no more times like this anymore, perhaps... But that's what it was.

After that [Allah] already sent him... [the ram because] he [Ibrahim] was supposed to do something [i.e. make a sacrifice] in the name of Allah. Since He refused to accept his son [as a sacrifice], He told him [Ibrahim] that he fulfilled his obligation towards Allah, towards Him. In other words, he paid back his loan. But nevertheless Ibrahim decides to offer a ram as a sacrifice, an animal as Kurban, and from then on, on this date [a Kurban is offered]...

But it should be taken into consideration that for us Muslims, this feast moves every year, within ten days. Just like for you, Easter was on 20-21 April last year and now is on the 1st of May. Although it was on the 20-21st of April last year, and now Easter is on the

1st of May. The same is with us, [our festivals go] with the moon. Just like the moon, or the “luna”, rises and moves with every [month], changing in time, so do our festivals, the *Bayrams*...

One of the *Bayrams* is *Ramadan-Bayram*,¹⁷² and the other *Bayram* is *Kurban-Bayram*. The difference between the two festivals consists of this, during the *Ramadan-Bayram* — that’s why it is called *Ramadan* — *Ramadan* is held, and one fasts.¹⁷³ This is again in the name of Allah. In the name of Allah... This is to say that people should purify themselves from the burden of eating during the whole year... That’s why people should give a break to their own bodies and in the name of Allah, you should keep a month of *Ramadan*. The fast starts before sunrise, even before dawn you start to fast, and in the evening, when the moon rises, we call it “the entering of *aksham*” [i.e. *akşam* (Turkish), meaning ‘evening’]. That’s when you break the fast and the entire evening you can eat and drink and have fun, and so on... During the day you cannot drink water, you cannot smoke cigarettes, you cannot have any food. You simply skip lunch, to put it this way...

[*Question by FB:*] So Ibrahim’s sacrifice is related to this feast, is that so?

[*Salih:*] No, no... This is the first feast, the first feast which is called the first *bayram*... This is our first *bayram* and it is called *Ramadan-Bayram*. It lasts for 30 days and on the last day, on the last day sweets are distributed. It is called “Arife”¹⁷⁴; that’s the last day. And to this day every family takes sweets and candies and baklava and so forth, all kinds of sweet stuff and hands it out around the settlement. Be it a neighbourhood or a village, or a bigger [place]... And it is handed out to families and to your neighbours. After that the *Bayram* takes place, and after more than two months, almost three months, as a matter of fact, 10 days after this *bayram* you count three months and the *Kurban-Bayram* begins. *Kurban-Bayram* comes, which is related to Ibrahim.

[*Question by FB:*] Why?

[*Salih:*] What do you mean why?

[*Question by FB:*] Didn’t you say that he offered him as a sacrifice? But did it happen on this day [*Kurban-Bayram*] or on another day?

[*Interjection by Salih’s nephew, Hasan Mehmed Hasan:*] Because after that, after what happened to Ibrahim, Muslim people began [to celebrate this event]. After the preceding *Bayram*, which is the *Ramadan-Bayram*, it is to be decided on which day [to celebrate *Kurban-Bayram*]; they will fix the day on which this [*Kurban-Bayram*] will continue [to be celebrated], up until now. This comes from [the Qur’anic story about] Ibrahim...¹⁷⁵ After that, our Messenger Mohammed has come, but although during the time of Ibrahim there was no Islam, and there were no Muslims, but, as I told you at the beginning, he is such a prophet who, in his time, rejected idol worshipping. Although he was not a Muslim, he was a Messenger of Allah and he was one of the Faithful, a Prophet who did not trespass [the rules] of his religion.

[*Question by FB:*] How did he reject idol-worship?

[*Salih:*] During his time, there were people who were bowing before some kind of [“holy” objects]..., they begin to worship and deify a stone, a figurine, things they make and after that hang them somewhere and begin to bow down before them. They simply elevate them like a god, as if it is God: “this is God.” That’s what people were like then. They would make a kind of figurine, being of clay, being of wood, it doesn’t matter what of, and say, “this is God”. Then Ibrahim says, “There is only one God. I cannot invent something to bow down to, being of stone or another figurine, which I can invent myself and define [to be God].” And he [Ibrahim] says further, “Our God is invisible. Right? He

won't appear to everybody. It has to be decided by Allah Himself to whom He appears... To whom He comes in a vision..."

And he [Ibrahim] said that, "It is not possible [for people] to believe in whatever one wants to believe."

And that's why he upheld this faith [i.e. Islam], and that's it.

То идва от Ибрахим това нещо

[FB:] А Вие как я знаете историята за Ибрахим?

[Salih:] Когато Ибрахим се помолва пред Господ, пред Аллах, нали, няколко години той няма рожба и той се помолва на Аллах да го възнагради [с чедо], ако заслужава, разбира се. Като той не е знаел, че е Пратеник на Аллага. И се помолва със цялото си сърце и душа така — да бъде възнаграден, да си има рожба. И наистина след време [Бог] му дава рази рожба. Но във съня си той вижда, че молбата му ще бъде изпълнена при условие, че след това ще трябва да направи във името на Аллах нещо, което му е най-скъпо, най!

По-скъпо, наистина, от децата няма... Той мисли, мисли...

След това идва време, когато той трябва да даде "това", "този заем" — да го наречем "този заем", — към Господ, към Аллах; и идва [пророческо видение] във съня [му], че той трябва да си върне заема чрез молбата, която е отправил. А това е било изпит на Аллах....

Отива, казва дори, споделя със сина му и със жена му, Ибрахим споделя със сина му и със жена му [съдържанието на съня си] и той [синът му] казва: "Ми някога ще се умира".

Исмаил се е казвал [синът му].

И казва [синът]: "Каквото е отредил Аллах — това ще е!"; и казва на баща му, че няма какво да се свенли, какво да такова [се колебае]... Щом е такова [желанието на Аллах]... Помолили майката да го премени във най-хубавите дрехи, които [Исмаил имал], най-таковата..., да се изкъпе. Да го премени, да го изкъпе, да го очисти — и така... Синът също е знаел, че ще бъде принесен в жертва на — или курбан на — Аллах. В името на Аллах. И когато отива, закарва го [баща му на мястото, където трябвало да го принесе курбан]...

Опитва [Ибрахим] със ножа [да заколи сина си] — не може! А ножа даже е бил [наточен много остър]... Така е било, че само е била била молбата на детето да бъде много остър [ножът], за да не може да усети [болка]... От един път да моа да го заколи, нали, а не да [страда]... Затва той е искал ножа да бъде остър.

Добре, но когато отишъл, опитал — не ще! И затва той [Ибрахим] ударил във камъка със ножа и камъка се разцепил! А детето [е останало живо]... Това е изпитание. Това е изпитание на вярата. Това е изпитание [от страна на Аллах] към Неговия Пратеник [Ибрахим]! Защото секи, секи от нас има някаква слабост. Затова не е лесно да си държиш на думата си! Такива времена вече сигурно да няма... Но така е.

И след това [Аллах] му праща вече... [овена, понеже] той трябва да направи нещо [жертвоприношение] в името на Аллах. Той [Аллах] след като е отказал да приеме сина му, Той казал му [на Ибрахим], че е изпълнил задължението си към Аллах, към Него. Или си е върнал заема. Но въпреки всичко Ибрахим си решава да си принесе в жертва един овен, животно, нали, като курбан. И оттук насетне на тия дати [се принася курбан]...

Защото този празник при нас, мюсюлманите, той се мести сека година със десет дни. Както при вас Великден миналата [i.e. 2004] година беше на двасти-двайсе и първи [април], а сега е на първи май. А беше на двасти-двайс първи април [миналата година], а сега — е[то], на първи май беше Великден. Така е и при нас, [нашите празници са] със месечината. Как месечината, или луната, изгрява и се мести със [в]секи [празник], таковата..., във времето — така и нашите празници, Байрямите...

Единият Байрам е Рамазан-Байрам, другия Байрам е Курбан-Байрам. Разликата между двата празника е това, че през Рамазан-Байрам — то затова се казва и Рамазан — кара се Рамазан, говее се. Това е пак в името на Аллах. В името на Аллах... Се едно човек да се попочисти малко от натоварването през цялата година на храна и на таковата... Затова

трябва човек малко да отлаби към собствения си организъм и във името на Аллах трябва да изкараш един месец в Рамазан, като почва говеенето преди изгрев слънце, още преди да се развидели, почваш да говееш и вечер, като излезне луната, ние го казваме “флиза акшам”, тогава се разговеева и цяла вечер мож да ядеш, да пиеш, да се веселиш и така нататъка... През деня не може да пиеш нито вода, нито цигари [да пушиш], нито храна [да консумираш], просто пропускаш един обед, да речем...

[FB:] Значи Ибрахимовата жертва е свързана с този празник, така ли?

[Salih:] Не, не! [Ибрахимовата жертва не е свързана с този празник]... Тва е първият празник, първият празник, който се казва “Първият Байрам”, който ни е... Тва ни е първия Байрам и се казва “Рамазан-Байрам”. Кара се трийсет дни, последния ден, последния ден се раздават сладки работи, казва се “арифе”. Последния ден. И фъф този ден секо семейство зима бонбони, сладки, баклави и така нататък, сладки работи и раздава по населеното место. Дали квартал, дали село — ако е по-голямо... И се раздава по семействата, по комшиите. И след това минава Байрама, след два месеца и нещо, три месеца, нали броиш след десет дена от тоя Байрам, броиш три месеца и флиза Курбан-Байрам. Идва Курбан-Байрам, който е свързан със Ибрахим.

[FB:] Защо?

[Salih:] Как защо?

[FB:] Защото нали ти казваш, че той [Ибрахим] си го е принесъл в жертва [сина си Исмаил] — ама дали на този ден [т.е. на Курбан-Байрама] е станало [това], или на друг ден?

[Interjection by Salih's nephew, Hasan Mehmed Hasan:] Защото след това, след тоя случай, който става със Ибрахим, впоследствие мюсюлманите започват [да отбелязват това събитие със специален празник], те определят кой ден [ще бъде честван]; след предишния Байрам, който ни е Рамазан Байрам, те определят ден, във който тва нещо се продължава [да се отбелязва] и до ден днешен. То идва от Ибрахим това нещо... То впоследствие идва нашият Пратеник Мохамед. Но въпреки че по времето на Ибрахим още не е имало Ислям, не е имало мюсюлмани, но аз нали Ви казах в началото — той е един такъв пророк, който още по неговото време той отхвърля идолопоклонничеството. И [макар че] той не е бил мюсюлманин, но той също, като пратеник на Аллах, той е бил един от правоверните пророци, който не излиза от религията си.

[FB:] Ами той как е отхвърлил идолопоклонничеството?

[Salih:] През негово време имало е хора, които, примерно, решават да се покланят на някакво ["свещено" според тях самите нещо]..., почва да го боготвори — камък ли нещо, фигура ли, които те са си правила и след това ги закачат там и почват да праат поклон. Просто ги възвисява във Бог — че това е Бог. Това е Бог — тогава така е бил народа. И праи си фигурки некакви, дали било от глина, дали било от дърво — няма значение. Казват — това е Бог. Тогава Ибрахим казва, че: “Има един Бог. Не може аз да си измислям да се покланям на нещо там, камък или нещо друга фигурка, която аз мога да си измисля и да си я определя.” Казва [Ибрахим следното]: “Нашият Бог е невидим, нали. Не може да се яви на секи човек. Трябва да бъде определен от самия Аллах [човека], за да може да има..., да му се яви на [него] тва [i.e. Бог]”...

И той [Ибрахим] казва, че: “Не може да се верва във кой каквото си иска.” И затва той си поддържа тази вяра [Исляма] — и тва е...

This text was recorded in 2005 in the marketplace of the city of Sandansky, Blagoevgrad region, South-Western Bulgaria; the story was told by a Muslim man selling potatoes. His name was Salih Hasan Tiber. The storyteller was born in 1958 in the village of Avramovi Kolibi, Yakoruda district, Blagoevgrad region. He graduated secondary school and vocational college for agriculture in the city of Bansko; due to financial circumstances, he had to become a lorry-driver and potato-seller. The field-research was part of the author's work on the project *Folk Religion in the Balkans*. The sound-recording of the above account is stored in the Hans Rausing Endangered Languages Project (HRELP) archives, at SOAS, University of London.

The stone was severed but the head was not cut off

When he [i.e. Ibrahim] wanted to offer a Kurban to Allah, what was prescribed was such that the dearest was to be slain, and he was preparing his son [to be sacrificed]. He did so. He honed his knife. Then he [the father] pushed him [his son] down to slaughter him. He — his son — agreed with this because it was to be done in the name of Allah. He agreed to be offered as a Kurban, and he told his father to blindfold him so that he couldn't see and to hone the knife, so that he might behead him quickly.¹⁷⁶ He [the father] honed the knife and when he tried to slay him, the knife did not cut. He swerved with the knife and cut the stone. The stone was severed but the head was not cut off,¹⁷⁷ and at exactly this moment Allah delivered a Kurban — a ram... That's it! The ram came on behalf of Allah — Allah who paid him back since he [the father] agreed to slay his own son. Since he was ready to do everything, Allah said, "It won't be, the child won't be [sacrificed as a Kurban]".

[. . .]

I think that the son was called "Ismail" while the father was "Ibrahim".

Камъка се цепи, глава се не реже

Той, [Ибрахим] когато искал да прави курбан на Аллах, така е било предписание, че най-милото требвало да го коле. И той готви сина си. Прави го, остри ножа. Че го събаря да го коле. Той се съгласило, сина му, понеже е във името на Аллага. Съгласен е да се принесе във курбан. И му казал на баща си да му вързе очите, да не гледа; и да наостри ножа, бързо да го заколе. Наострил той ножа, когато опитал да го коле — ножа не реже. Извива със ножа — цепи камъка. Камъка се цепи, глава се не реже. И точно във тоя момент — Аллах му принася курбан, овен... Това е! Идва овена. Това е от името на Аллага, Аллах му плаща. Щом той е съгласен да коле сина си, навит е на сичко, Аллах казва: "Нема, нема да е детето [курбан]..."

[...]

Мисля, че [синът] се е казвал Исмаил, а бащата — Ибрахим.

This text was recorded in 2005 in the village of Gorno Kraishte (county of Belitsa, Blagoevgrad region), South-Western Bulgaria. The story was narrated by a forty nine-year old Muslim man. His name was Hyusein Mukhtarski. He was born in the same village in 1956; the storyteller works as a forest-ranger and a woodcutter. The field-research was part of the author's work on the project *Folk Religion in the Balkans*. The sound-recording of the above account is stored in the Hans Rausing Endangered Languages Project (HRELP) archives, at SOAS, University of London. The digitalized sound-recording of this narrative has also been submitted to the ECHO website of the MPIWG.

"If God gives me a child, I'll sacrifice him as a Kurban!"

[Question by FB:] You say that Ibrahim was a Peygamber [i.e. Prophet]?

[Ismail:] Yes, Ibrahim was a Peygamber. That's how he was born, sent [by God] as a Peygamber. Look now, these Peygambers are like us, like us [humans], but the most righteous people. The purest people. The most pious. The most observant. These people are without sin and transgression. They are without sin and transgression. [. . .]

Kurban-Bayram — that's what was ordered to us [to Muslim people]. We have two [most important] festivals during the year, *Kurban* and *Ramadan*. *Kurban-Bayram* was ordered to us because, look now, he, this Ibrahim, the same Ibrahim [I mentioned earlier], the same one [I told you about], was childless. He didn't have a child. That being so, he

said, “If God gives me a child, I will sacrifice him as a Kurban. I will sacrifice him as a Kurban!” And a child was born to him. The child grew up, grew up, grew up, grew up, and became a couple of years old, a couple of years old became the child. And then he [the father] decided [to sacrifice him], and he said to his [the child’s] mother to dye him [the child, with henna] — because we dye the Kurban [with henna].¹⁷⁸ He said to his [the child’s] mother to dye him, and he took him to the Meketo site [i.e. Mecca], which is where he was [planning to sacrifice the boy]. He took him there — haven’t you seen [this place] where people who go on the Hajj throw stones? They throw stones [there]. Then, when he set off there to slay him, the Dzhavolo¹⁷⁹ [i.e. Devil], the Sheytan,¹⁸⁰ went there [as well]. And he [Sheytan] said to the child, “your father will sacrifice you”, but he [the child] took a stone and threw it and blinded him [Sheytan]. So he blinded him. After his having blinded him... [throwing stones there became a custom]; that’s why it remained [a tradition] to throw stones there; three times seven¹⁸¹ stones are to be thrown, so that the Gyavolo¹⁸² [the Devil] is chased away from there. Since then it remained [as a tradition to throw stones there]...

It was also then when He sent [a ram from above]. So then, when the knife didn’t want to kill the child, when the knife didn’t want to cut him, he [the father] hit the stone there, he hit the stone there and the stone was divided into two.¹⁸³ But to cut [the child], it [the knife] didn’t want to. Then Allah sent from above, God sent a Kurban. He sent a Kurban and [Ibrahim] sacrificed it instead of his son. And from then on [it remained as a tradition to celebrate] *Kurban-Bayram, Kurban-Bayram, Kurban-Bayram...*

One ram! He sent one ram like this from Heaven. It descended from Heaven, this ram descended, destined from Heaven. And Ibrahim *allay salaam* slew the ram and the child survived...

As for this water, which is there as well, the water which is called “Zem-zem Suitan” [i.e. *Zem Zem Suyundan* (Turkish)]¹⁸⁴, it is at the place where people go on Hajj, where people go on Hajj; there is water there [and I know the following story about how and when it sprang]. He, the father [i.e. Ibrahim], chased them [i.e. Ismail and his mother] away... His mother was Aidzher [Hagar],¹⁸⁵ that’s what the name of his mother was. Her name was Aidzher, while the child was Ismail. That was the boy who blinded Sheytan. He [Ibrahim] left them in a certain desert and the child started crying for water. And she climbed on one mountain, as there was a mountain there, and another one too; there were two mountains there. One of them is called “Derbet”¹⁸⁶ and the other one “Sava”¹⁸⁷. It was written there [in the Qur’ān?] about this “Sava” [mountain] and about the other mountains; they are there, these two mountains... She [the mother] was running off to this mountain, off to that mountain! She was running so that she could see whether there was water shining [in the sun], so that she could take the child and he could quench his thirst. But as the child was kicking, as the child was kicking with his foot — and then the Angel Dzhebrail [i.e. Archangel Gabriel] came. Through him and the power of the child, water shot up from the ground, the child dug it up with his foot [in the desert]! This water shot up there and this water is brought from there and people used to drink from this water...

[*Question by FB:*] What is Ibrahim’s wife’s name? You said it was Aidzher?

[*Ismail:*] Yes, Aidzher, Aidzher. Aidzher was her name. Ibrahim’s wife was [called] Aidzher.

[*Question by FB:*] And they did not have children, right?

[*Ismail:*] They didn’t have children, that’s right... And when they were given a child, [he decided to give the child as an offering]... As he promised beforehand, “if I have

a boy, if a child is born to me — no matter whether a boy or a girl — I will give him/her¹⁸⁸ as a Kurban, I will give him/her as a Kurban!”

So far so good, and then the child was born. The child was born and he decided to sacrifice him as a Kurban. Because he promised. They dyed him [the child] with henna, they dressed him up, they coloured him with red, they clothed him and took him to a certain place there to slay him...

[Question by FB:] Where?

[Ismail:] There, in Mecca. There is [a special place] there where [sacrifices] are offered... This [place] was called “Minare” [i.e. “Minaret”]... This was written about, where everything is described in writing about Ibrahim...

And the child jumped against the Dzhyavolo [Devil] there, against Sheytan, because Sheytan went to tell him [that his father was to sacrifice him]. When Sheytan told him so, the child threw a stone and blinded him.

[Question by FB:] Did the father blindfold him or not?

[Ismail:] He should have, he should have done so... He should have covered him, he should have covered his eyes. He should have covered him with a piece of cloth... That is the same we do now when we sacrifice a Kurban, the same we do now when we offer a Kurban.

[Question by FB:] What exactly do you do?

[Ismail:] When you are about to sacrifice it, you will bind the three legs of the Kurban. You bind the three legs, because he [Ibrahim] also bound him [i.e. his son] the same way. He [Ibrahim] covered his eyes, he covered his eyes with a piece of cloth. Its eyes are covered with a piece of cloth. Then we slay it, so that it doesn't see the knife... It should be blindfolded like this, so it doesn't see the knife!

[Question by FB:] So that it shouldn't see the knife... So, when he [Ibrahim] went to sacrifice him [his son], he also bound him like this, right? I didn't know that he bound him like this...

[Ismail:] Oh yes, oh yes.

[Question by FB:] He bound his legs or his arms or what?

[Ismail:] He bound his legs and his arms... The two legs and one hand or perhaps two hands [and one leg]...

[Question by FB:] And you bind three legs of the Kurban?

[Ismail:] Yes, we bind three legs.

[Question by FB:] Why?

[Ismail:] Because that is what is commanded. One of the legs should be free and that should be the right rear leg...

[Question by FB:] Why?

[Ismail:] Well, just because that's the way it's supposed to be. That is what is commanded.

[...]

Then I ask people, since it was written, when people go on Hajj, I ask them, “Tell me now, what is the first thing you do?” [...]

Well, when they go there, they bathe themselves, they bathe, they bathe their bodies [thus purifying themselves]... They are dressed in *aaram* [i.e. *ehram* (Turkish), “white cloth”], completely naked underneath, they are completely naked underneath, but on the top they only have this *ehram*. That's what they do when they go on Hajj.

[Question by FB:] And was it the water that the child [Ismail dug with his foot]?

[*Ismail:*] That's exactly so! [Under] Ismail. So, this is the water, it is called *Zem-Zem Sui*, that's where it is... People went there from our neighbourhood and brought some water from there for me too, so I also drank from this water.

[*Question by FB:*] So you are saying that this is the water which is the water of Ismail, of the little child who, with his feet ...

[*Ismail:*] Yes, yes... The little child, that's exactly so! That's it! With his feet he made this water spring up, and this water is there now where people go on Hajj, where people go on Hajj.

[.....]

[*Question by FB:*] And when you make *Kurban-Bayram*, into how many pieces do you cut up the meat?

[*Ismail:*] It depends upon what kind of Kurban you make...

[*Question by FB:*] How did you yourself make it?

[*Ismail:*] I make a male offering. Male offering is the best, male is the best. It can be a [male] sheep, [male] goat, ox, as well as camel, [provided it's a male]. However, the ox-[offering] should be provided by seven people. One ox is counted as seven [smaller] Kurban. It is for seven people. For example, we organise ourselves, seven of us, and we buy an ox and we sacrifice it as a Kurban. After our having sacrificed it, we must put it on a scale, it should not be [shared out by estimation]; so that it's equally divided and nobody owes anyone anything...

So, let's say I sacrifice a ram Kurban. I myself sacrifice it. I sacrifice this ram. I divide it into three, into three I divide it. And a lot of people asked me, some of them had Christian neighbours, can they give to them from the Kurban? Yes, certainly you may. You may give them. So you divide this Kurban into three pieces. The first piece you give to poor people. You give it to poor people. But we aren't doing that any more... We cut it into pieces, cut it into pieces, cut it into pieces, and then we put it into one place for everyone... Then we start giving to everyone in our neighbourhood [gesturing up the hill], and you give and give and give until you have nothing left [of the first piece]...¹⁸⁹

The other part [i.e. the second share], that one we will give to the rich people and to Christians, if you have Christian neighbours. You will distribute it to them from this Kurban to them as well...

And the other part [i.e. the third share] you leave in your home for when your children come — our children used to come home for *Bayram*, because we kiss each other's hands for *Bayram*, we kiss each other's hand, and we cook for this — and we have to feed them.

However, if you have a big family with a lot of children, you can even leave half of the Kurban at home. You can even leave two-thirds at home, so that you can feed them.

However, if you have a terribly big family and if your Kurban is small, if you have a smaller Kurban, you can leave the entire Kurban at home, so that you please your children. And that's how you eat the Kurban.

[*Question by FB:*] When you are about to sacrifice the Kurban, which direction is the animal facing?

[*Ismail:*] Which direction is [the animal] facing? We have the following custom. We say, "towards Saudi Arabia, towards Mecca". Towards there where people go on Hajj. We call it "*kablia*".¹⁹⁰ That's where we face. That's where we turn to. We face that way. We turn that way and we will sacrifice it like this, so that we turn it towards there. There is even a prayer when you sacrifice a Kurban.

[*Question by FB:*] And what is the prayer?

[*Ismail*:] The prayer is as follows:

[*FB*: *Here follows the text of the first prayer.*]

And then you sacrifice it. But before you take it there, while you tie it up, you have to do the *Dekpire*.¹⁹¹

[*FB*: *Here Ismail recites the text of another prayer.*]

Yes, you want it again from the beginning, don't you? You are very keen to learn. I'm going to tell it from the beginning... When they reached the destined place, they made the *Dekpire* and that's what it is called:

[*FB*: *Ismail repeats the text of the prayer.*]

So you take it there to the place. This is where the abattoir is. You take it there and you dig a hole, you dig a hole. Then you turn it on its left side, you turn it to face the *kablia*, you tie its three legs together, you cover its eyes, and then you say this prayer, you say this prayer:

[*FB*: *Ismail repeats the text of the prayer.*]

Then you cut its head off. Then you cut its head off. But you shouldn't touch the animal's brains. It is not allowed. You just cut its head off. After that, when it is isn't warm anymore, we cut the meat into pieces, as I told you. We divide it into shares, into shares, into pieces, into bits, and we distribute it. And we distribute it.

[*Question by FB*:] Is it said that the ram which Allah dropped for Azreti Ibrahim was created first of all, before anything else?¹⁹²

[*Ismail*:] Yes, it was the first.

[*Question by FB*:] Would you please tell me about this ram?

[*Ismail*:] It was sent by Allah. God sent it down from Heaven, from above. He sent it so that he [Ibrahim] doesn't sacrifice the child. [That's why] He sent him the ram. He sent it to him. And he sacrificed the ram and let the boy go.

[*Question by FB*:] As for this ram, is there a tale about it?

[*Ismail*:] There is no tale, no tale at all. This is the reason [for the sacrifice], this is the legend. When Ibrahim wanted to sacrifice the child, then Allah sent to him from above, God sent him a ram from above. The ram dropped down from Him and he slew the ram by the command of Allah. He [Allah] commanded him to sacrifice the ram and to leave the child and that was it.

[*Question by FB*:] And do people say that some this day this ram will take you... [to the beyond]?

[*Ismail*:] Yes, yes.

[*Question by FB*:] Tell me about that...

[*Ismail*:] Well, look now at what we are experiencing here. People are dying out... When the time comes for the Flood to come, when the Flood comes, do you know what's going to happen here? There are already events portending this... There are a lot of omens here... There are great omens here... There are 52 omens which are going to take place before the Flood comes and we have already experienced these omens. There they are, these omens.

First of all, our Prophet Mohammad, *salaam alley salaam*, came and passed away and he died. That's the first omen.

The second omen: people would build very big buildings, quite unnecessarily. We built a big house and we sit in one room and in the other one birds are flying. That's it. Here it is.

A time would come when women would wear men's clothes. This also came to happen.

A time would come when one man would take charge of 50 women. It happened, and it was not only 50 women under the command of one man, but 1050, and that was the time of the TKZS [i.e. *Трудово Кооперативно Земеделско Стопанство*, meaning Socialist co-operative farms]. Didn't it happen? It did indeed, 1050 women, if not more, were under the command of one man. It also passed.

A lot of omens like this we have witnessed... A lot of omens... [...]

[When the end of the world comes] and when they raise us from our graves, then this angel, Israfil [Asrāfil], who is sitting with the trumpet, he will announce with the trumpet when this is going to happen... At the beginning, there will be such an earthquake, there will be an earthquake. What kind of earthquake is going to happen? Every living thing will become unconscious, unconscious. A mother with her baby on her breast will remove it and throw it away, and won't even think about it. That is what is going to happen. And then when this earthquake takes place — the one before the Flood — small children, these little children will grow grey hair, just like I'm grey, from torments and from suffering. Yes! A pregnant woman will suffer miscarriage. Yes! After that... After that all living creatures will die. There will be no life any more. But... after that Allah will create a wind and mountains will start beating each other. They will beat each other, beat each other, beat each other, the mountains. Everything will be flat like a baking pan. Like this, everything will be flat. After that, Allah will do the following: he will revive, first of all, the angel Israfil, the one with the trumpet, and he, Israfil will start blowing, saying, "Come on, time to get up, rotten bones, so that your reckoning will be examined."

What we did here on Earth is going to be examined.

"So that your reckoning will be examined, get up, you rotten bones!"

Then Allah will give rain and it will rain for 40 days. Then we will start sprouting up from our graves as mushrooms, just like they sprout in springtime. That's how we would sprout... That's how.

Then when we rise, whoever sacrificed a Kurban, his Kurban will be waiting for him next to his grave. The Kurban would wait next to the grave. It will wait next to the grave there.

What an animal it would be! So beautiful! Its horns will be of gold, its fleece of gold, and its eyes of something of *Dzhenditski* [i.e. from *Cennet*, 'heavenly']¹⁹³ *dzhabair* [shining?]. Shining from 'Adn [i.e. from *Jannatu 'Adn*, Garden of Eden].¹⁹⁴ How do you call the *Dzhendet* [i.e. *Cennet*]? Hell is called *Dzhendem*.¹⁹⁵

[Question by FB:] Ah, you mean Heaven?

[Ismail:] That's it, Heaven! From Heaven! A heavenly substance, this 'shining', these lights. Its eyes will shine like light from heaven. And he [the dead person] would ask him, "Who are you, animal, here?"

And he would answer, "I'm your ram, I'm your Kurban, the one whom you sacrificed on earth! Get on me now!" Then he would jump on him and he would take him through all the stages [in the Beyond]. He would take him through all these stages. We would have, we would have ten stages there, we will have ten stages. On each of these stages we will have to give an answer [for our deeds], but the Kurban-ram will be able to take us through without stops... That's it. The Kurban which we sacrificed.¹⁹⁶

[Question by FB:] What kinds of 'stages' are these?

[Ismail:] Those are the stages where we are going to be examined about what we did here on earth...

[Question by FB:] So the journey starts and what happens?

[*Ismail:*] We are told the following. The first stop: whoever didn't pray [in their lifetime], he will be stopped there. Whoever didn't recite prayers, that will be the first stop. The second stop will be related to whether you observed Ramadan or not, because we fast, we fast for Ramadan. The second stop is for whether we observed the fast for Ramadan. The third stop is for whether we used to give a share of our wealth to others. This is about whether we gave something for thanksgiving for our wealth... Thanksgiving for our wealth. You are supposed to give a fortieth away.

[*Question by FB:*] To whom do you give this?

[*Ismail:*] To poor people. To poor people. If you have 800 levs, for example, you have to give away 20 levs. If you have 40 sheep, you have to give one away. That's how you are supposed to do it. You are supposed to give it to someone as a present.

[*Question by FB:*] So it was which stop?

[*Ismail:*] It was either the second or third stop, and so on and so forth, I can't tell you... I can't remember about all the stops... And then, only then, if you give the right answer throughout all these stops, will you be allowed to go ... to Paradise. You will go to Paradise. To Paradise you will go. Yet those who are not sinful [won't have these stops and ordeals]... But we are all sinful. We are all sinful...

They are going to exam us for one thousand years on each stage, but if a man is not sinful, he will be able to answer in one hour and let go... But all those who are sinful, they will sit there for a thousand years. Do you know what kind of years are those? Do you know what kind of years are those? One day of these years [of judgement and torments], one day only equals one year here on earth. Ah! So one day there equals one year here on earth. You can calculate what it means.

[*Question by FB:*] So the ram [i.e. your Kurban] is there [and he will take you through there on his back]?

[*Ismail:*] The ram. The ram will take you ... The ram will take you through there. Yes.

There was a poor man. A poor man. He was not obliged to sacrifice a ram, he was not obliged to sacrifice a Kurban [because only the rich are obliged to do so]. But his heart was willing to do so and he was sacrificing Kurban. Every year he used to sacrifice a Kurban. After that, this man died. When he died, one of his friends ardently wished to see his dead friend in his dream. He wanted his dead friend to come to his dream so that he could see how he was doing and what was happening with his friend. What was happening with his friend? Well, he saw his friend in his dreams, he saw him there [in heaven]... He saw him in such a nice place, such a nice place was this there... It was in Paradise, in a nice place. The [living] friend asked, "Tell me, because of what did God have mercy on you and gave you such a nice place to stay?"

He answered, "with one only of my offerings, *Sūdūka*" [i.e. *Tzedakah*].

Sūdūka we say, a "present", and we also call it "*ediye*", which means a "gift", "charity".¹⁹⁷

And he asked him again, "and what about these?" he asked, "sheep which are around you [in the dream]?"

"These are", he said, "my Kurban. These are my Kurban, my Kurban are here because I have sacrificed them on earth, in that world..."

"And what about the one you are riding on?", because he [the dead friend] was riding on one.

"This is", he answered, "is my very first Kurban".

That was the one he was riding on... Having said that, off he went to Paradise, he mounted the Kurban and off he went to Paradise. Off he went to Paradise.

Well, that's it. It is nice to do good deeds whenever you can. Whenever you can, let us do good deeds, because we don't know because of what Allah will have mercy on us. We don't know because of what Allah will have mercy on us...

[*Question by FB:*] And how exactly did he see his friend? How did he appear to him?

[*Ismail:*] He appeared to him, but in his dreams. He appeared in his dreams, in his dreams he came to him. Because didn't he pray to God, "I want to see my friend". That's how he prayed to Allah. "I want to see my friend in my dreams, I want to see in what situation he is in". And Allah let him know how his friend was doing.

Because it was also written there the following... That in Saudi Arabia, there is a mountain which is called Huhud, Huhud is the name of this mountain.¹⁹⁸ Because [on Judgment Day] one piece [of Kurban] will weigh the same as this mountain Huhud. When they start weighing our good deeds and our bad deeds, because there are scales there; they are called "scales". You know what scales are, don't you? A balance. On this side, the good things will be put and on that side bad things will be put, and then the outcome will depend upon which side will outweigh the other... The pieces [of the Kurban], the ones which we give away, these pieces will be as heavy as the mountain Huhud.

I asked some of the people going on Hajj from here (we have two people going on Hajj), and I asked one, "Did you go to this Mount Huhud?"

"We did."

"Why did you go there? What is happening there on this mountain? What did they tell you about this mountain there?"

They didn't tell me anything as they couldn't give any explanation.

"Ако ми даде Господ рожба, ке го заколя за курбан!"

[*FB:*] Казваш, че е Пейгамбер бил Ибрахим?

[*Ismail:*] Да, Пейгамбер е бил Ибрахим. Така се е родил, Пейгамбер изпратен. Тия са, глей сега, тия са — Пейгамберите — те са от нас. От хората — обаче най-правите хора. Най-чистите хора, най-правите, най-изпълнителните хора, тия са без грешки. Без грешки са... [...]

Курбан-Байрам — на нас [мюсюлманите ни] е така наредено, е два празника във годината. Курбан и Рамазан. Курбан-Байрам ни е наредено, понеже, глей ся, той Ибрахим, същия, той тоя Ибрахим, същия, немаше рожба. Немаше рожба. И като така, като така рече: "Ако ми даде Господ рожба, ке го заколя за курбан. Ке го заколя за курбан!" И роди му се дете. Детето расте, расте, расте, расте — настана на няколко годинки детето, на няколко годинки стана детето. И той реши, каза на майка му да го боядиса. Оти ние го боядисваме курбането. Каза на майка му да го боядиса и го откара там, там го откара във Мекето, там беше той. Там го откара, където — ти нали си гледала? — където тиа аджиите там фърлаа каменчета. Фърлаа каменето. Тогава, като го оправи там да го коле — и Джаволо отиде, Шейтана. И кажува на детето: "Ке те заколя баща ти!" Но то зе един камен, та фърли, та го окъорави. Та го окъорави. След като го окъорави... И затова ся остана там [традиция], за да фърлаа каменчета, по три пъти фърлаа по седем каменчета, гонаа Гяволо оттам. И [от тогава] тогава остана [тази традиция]...

Тогава изпрати — като не ще да го коле ножа, не ще да го реже ноже, и той удари в камък там удари там и камъко се раздели, а да реже не ще — тогава Аллах изпрати отгоре, Господ изпрати курбан. Изпрати един курбан и [Ибрахим] го закла [вместо сина си]. И оттам после век — Курбан-Байрам, Курбан-Байрам, Курбан-Байрам се празнува...

Един коч! Един коч изпрати [Господ] — я така от небесата! Слезе от небесата, отреден слезе от небесата тоа коч — и Ибраим алай селям закла коча, а детето си остана...

А таа вода, където е там па, дека викат “Земзем суитан”, таа вода във аджилъка, където прават наште [хора] аджилък, там една вода [има и за нея знаем следното]. Той баща му [i.e. Ибрахим] изпъди [Исмаил и майка му]... Майка му беше Айджер, се викаше на майка му [Айджер], ѝ беше името Айджер. А детето — Исмаил, това е също момчето, що окъорави Шейтанина. Той [Ибрахим] ги остави ги там на една пустиня и детето заплака за водица. И тя се качва на, имаше една планинка там, на тия две планинки, една се казваше Дербет, една — Сава. Там [в Корана?] си пише, таа Сава и таа [другата] и те са там тия планини... И тя [майката на Исмаил] търчи ту на тая планина, ту на тая планина! Търчи — да види дали ке види някъде вода, дека се ласка. Да отведе детето, да го напое водица. Добре, ама то като риташе детето, като риташе детето с крачето, и тогава дойде тоа ангел Джебраил: чрез него там сила на детето извря таа вода, изкопа [Исмаил] с ногата [земята в пустинята]! Извря таа вода и тая вода а донисаа там, пиеня от таа вода...

[FB:] Как се казва, значи, жена му на Ибрахим? Ти викаш, че е Айджер?

[Ismail:] Айджер, Айджер. Айджер се казва. На Ибраим на жена му [името е] Айджер.

[FB:] И те не са имали деца?

[Ismail:] Не са имали деца... И след като си отимала деца [Ибрахим е решил да даде сина си курбан]... Той обеща, той обеща, че: “Ако ми се роди момченце, квото ми се роди, ке го коля за курбан. Ке го заколя за курбан!”

Добре, ама се роди детето. Роди се детето и той реши да го коле за курбан. Оти е обещал. Наканосаа го, оправия го, нацървия го, оправия го — отнесоа го там да го колеа...

[FB:] Къде?

[Ismail:] Там, във Мекето, къдята там има, дято принасят [оброци] там... Минаре се казваше там... То пише, то сичко там дека пише, [за] Ибраим където [е отвел сина си да го принесе в жертва]...

И той е рипил детето къде Джяволо тоя, то е Шейтанина, оти отиде да го каже [че баща му иска да го заколи]; и му каза, па то фърли един камък, та го окъорави.

[FB:] А баща му вързал ли му е очите или не?

[Ismail:] Ами трябва да е... Покрил го е, покрил го е, със кръпче го е покрил... Така и ние си правиме сега курбаните. Така и ние си правиме сега курбаните.

[FB:] Как ги правите?

[Ismail:] Кат ке го заколеш там, ти му вързеш трите крачета на курбана. Връзеа му три крачета — оти и той [Ибрахим] го върза така [сина си Исмаил]. И му покри очите, със кръпче му покри очите, покриени са му очите със кръпа. И тогава го коляме — да не гледа ножа... Да е покрито така — да не гледа ножа!

[FB:] Значи да не гледа ножа... Значи той [Ибрахим], когато е отишъл да го коли [сина си], той така го е вързал? Аз не знаех, че той така го е вързал...

[Ismail:] Да, да...

[FB:] Крачетата ли, ръчичките ли или как?

[Ismail:] Крачетата и ръчичките му е вързал... Двете крачета и една ръчичка, иль и двете ръчички...

[FB:] А на курбана три крака му връзвате.

[Ismail:] Три крака му връзваме

[FB:] Защо?

[Ismail:] Ами оти така е наредбата. Единия крак да си е свободен, десния дзадния...

[FB:] Защо?

[Ismail:] Ами така, така е наредено.

[...]

И викам я на тия — сега пише тука — като отидоа аджиите там, на аджилък, викам язе бе: “Кажи ми сега, викам, най-първо и първо като отивате там, първия фарц — какво е?”

[...]

Ми там, като идоя там, там се изкъпат, изкъпат се. Изкъпат се там, изкъпат си телата [и се очистват от греха]... С аарам са се облекли. Чисто голи са, чисто голи са, пък са се облекли с аарами — и така праваа там [х]аджилъка.

[FB:] А в тая вода ли беше, дето детето ... [Исмаил било изкопало с крачето си]?
 [Ismail:] А така! Исмаил. Таа, “Зем-зем суи” се казва тая вода... Там е! Те сега от нашта маала одиа аджи, та донесоа и на мен, та и я пи сега от тая вода.
 [FB:] Значи това е тая вода, дето на Исмаил, малкото дете, дето с крачето...
 [Ismail:] Да, да... Малко [е било] детето! А така! Точно така! С крачето изкара тая вода и са я накарали във аджилъка там! Тоа аджилък там... [...]
 [FB:] А ти, като се заколи Курбан-Байрама, на колко парчета го делиш месото?
 [Ismail:] Ами зависи какъв ти е курбана...
 [FB:] Ти какво го правиш?
 [Ismail:] Аз съм го праил мъжко, мъжко е най-убаво. Мъжко си е най-убаво. То може и овца, може и коза, може и говедо, може и камила [— стига да е мъжко]. Само че тия иска говедото — на седем души. Отчита седем курбана отчита то говедото, седем души. Примерно, ние се организираме един друг, седем души — и зехме едно говедо и си го заколяме за курбан. След като го заколяме, трябва да се разтегли със кантар, а не така [да се дели на око], да не останем един към друг длъжни...

И тогава един курбан — примерно, един коч — заклал съм го аз. Съм го заклал тоа коч. Деля го на три. На три го деля. От са ма питали много. Имаа комшии [х]ристияни, може ли на него да даде? Да, мое да дадеш. Мож да дадеш. Дели се на три тоя курбан. Едната част от курбана ке го раздадеш на бедни. На беднички [хора]. Ма ние не правиме това нещо [вече]... Ние го разкъсаме, разкъсаме, разкъсаме — та на общо... Айде, почвай тука нагоре [из махалата], раздавай додека стигне [месото]...

А единия [i.e. втория дял], едната част — ке го раздадеш па на богати и [х]ристияни, ако имаш комшии, ке раздадеш и на них от тоа курбан...

А едната част [i.e. третия дял] ке си остааш па във къщи; като ти дойде това, поколението, дяца; децата се свъртая, ние се свъртаеме на Байрам — и си целуваме рака, целуваме си рака; на госте [си ходим] и си стотвиш там — да ги нагостиш.

Ако ти е големо, ако ти е голямо това там поколението, аку ти са многу [децата и родата], може и половината да го оставиш. Може и двата дяла да остааш, и двата парчета да остааш да ги нараниш.

Ако ти е пъ ептем голямо [поколението и родата], а да а по-малечок курбана, да а по-малък курбана — може и цялия курбан да си консумираш, да си пофалиш децата. Ако ли — така ше го консумираш.

[FB:] А като го колиш курбана, накъде го слагаш да гледа?

[Ismail:] Накъде го слагам да гледа ли? Тука имаме [такъв адет]: обръщаме се, казваме, към Саудитска Арабия, към Меккетото. Там, където одиаа на аджилък. Каблия го казваме ния. Обръщаме се натам. Обръщаме се натам. Натам се обърнеме, така ше го обърнеме и ше го заколеме така, обрачаеме го натам. Има си и молитвички така да си се заколя курбана.

[FB:] Коя е молитвата?

[Ismail:] Молитвичката е:

[FB: *Here follows the text of a prayer.*]

И го коляш. А преди, преди да го откараш там, като го вързеш, трябва да се направи “декпире”.

[FB: *Here Ismail recites the text of another prayer.*]

Да. Искаш от началото ли [да ти я кажа молитвата], щом си мераклия? Началото да ти го почна... Като го забере до там, прави “декпире” се казва това:

[FB: *Ismail repeats the text of the prayer.*]

И го откараш до местото там [дето ще го принасяш в жертва]; тука, дето до кланицата там. Откараш го там, ископал си си дупка, ископал си дупка; слагаш го на лявата страничка, го обрачаш към Каблия, връзваш трите крачета, покриваш му [очите] — и изучиш таа молитвичка, таа молитвичка [да я] изучиш:

[FB: *Ismail repeats the text of the prayer.*]

И му режеш главичката. Му ряжеш главата. Само че главния мозък няма да ряжеш. Не е разрешено. Така — режеш му главичката. След това вече го, като се състине, разкъсаме

го и го делиме на, делиме ги на делове така. На делове — на парчета на парчета, на късчета. И го раздаваме. И го раздаваме.

[FB:] А казват ли, че тоя овен, дето Аллах го е пуснал на Азрети Ибрахим, е бил направен най-първо?

[Ismail:] Е най-първо.

[FB:] Я ми го разкажи това за тоя овен?

[Ismail:] Ами той изпратил го Аллах, Господ го изпратил от небесата, от горе. Изпрати го да не заколе детето — прати му овено му допрати. И той закла овена и освободи момченцето.

[FB:] А за тоя овен, приказка за него има ли?

[Ismail:] Нема приказка, никаква приказка. Това му е причината. Това е легендата. Като иска да заколе Ибраим детето, и Той му, Аллах, му прати отгоре, Господ прати му, коча му прати, падна пак от Него — и той закла коча със нареждане на Аллах, нареди му [Аллах] да заколя коча, да остаа детето. И така.

[FB:] А казват ли, че тоя коч щял да те носи един ден ... [на онзи свят]?

[Ismail:] Да, да!

[FB:] Кажу за това...

[Ismail:] Сега, ето нали стана тука как се изживяваме [т.е. как обезлюдяват селата]... Като дойде веке да стане Потопа, като стане Потопа — тука знаеш какво ще стане [когато настъпи времето на] Потопа? Има признаци тука... Има голями признаци тука... Педесе и два признака има, за да стане тоя Потоп. И [м]ного признаци дойдоа вчече. Признаци има.

Най-първо — Пейгамбера ни Мохамед салема алей селям, той ке дойде и ке замине, ке умре. Първия признак.

Втория признак — ше се градат такива сгради, ненужни; градиме къщи голями — в едната седиме, в другата така пилята фъркаа там. Това а. А така.

Ше дойде, време ше дойде жените да носат мъжки дреи. Дойде и тава.

Ке дойде време един човек да команда педесе жени; не е педесе, а иляда и педесе командваа. Мина ТЕ-КЕ-ЗЕ-СЕ-то, не мина ли и това? Хиляда и педесе жени командва, ако не и повече, един човек. И това мина.

Много признаци минаа... Много признаци... [...]

Като ни дигнаа от гробовете, тогава тоа ангел, Исафил, който седи на тръбата — той ше оповести със тръбата кога ке стане... Най-напред ке стане едно такова землътърсение. Едно землътърсение ке стане. Какво землътърсение ке стане? Сичко живо ше стане в безсъзнание. В безсъзнание. Една майка — то е, нали, цица малечкото на ненката, тя ке го изскубне [от гърдата си] и ке го фърли е там. И неке се сеца за него. Така ше стане. При тоя землътърс най-напреде, кат ке стане до Потопо, тия малките дечица, които са малките дечица, ке побелея главите им като на мене. От съклет, от лошо. Да. Една бременна жена — тя ше го изфърли преждевременно. Да. След това... След това сичко живо ше си измреме. Няма да има вече такова, живот, но... След това Аллах ке си създаде един ветер и ке почнаа планините да се бия. Да се бия, бия, бия планините. И ке се заравни сичко и ке стане като тепция. Е такова ке стане сичко. Равно. И след това, най-напраде Аллах ше съживи това, тоя ангел, Исафил, който е на тръбата. И той ше засвири тоя Исафил. “Айде, ставайте сега, гнили кокали, сметката да ви се гледа!”

Квот сме правили на дунята.

“Сметката да ви се гледа! Айде ставайте, гнили кокали!”

Тогава ше даде Аллах един дажд, ке капе четиресе дена. И ке почнеме да изникнувааме от гробовете като гъбите — пролетно време как никнуваа? Така ке никнеме... Теквия.

След като станеме вече тогава, тога — който си е клал курбан, неговия курбан ше го чака на гроба. Ше го чака на гроба курбана. Ше го чака на гроба там.

Какво ше бъде животно — такова красиво! Рогата ше му бъдеа от злато, вълната — от злато, а очите — некакъв си Дженнички джабаир. От Адн [i.e. *Jannatu 'Adn*] джабаир... Това, от това... Вие как викаете на Джендета? Ада се казва на Дженхема...

[FB:] А, Рая...

[Ismail:] Рая, а! От Рая теквია Дженницки няшу — светлини, очите ше му святат! И той [ще] гу [по]пита: “Какво си бе, животно, тука?”

Той [ще му] казва: “Аз съм твоя коч! Твоя курбан, който ме кла на дунята! Качвай се сега на мене!” И той се качва и го прекарва през сички спирки. През сички спирки го кара. Ние ше имаме, ние ше имаме десет спирки ше имаме! Десет спирки. На сякоя една спирка ше одговаряме. А коча ше ни пренеше без такова [i.e. спирки] ... А! Курбана, който сме си клали [той ше ни пренесе].

[FB:] Кои са тия спирки, чичо?

[Ismail:] Ами тия са спирки, дет ше ни следвая кой каквот сме праили...

[FB:] Значи като тръгне — и какво?

[Ismail:] На нас ни казват така. Най-първата спирка ни е, който е правил, което сме правили поклон [приживе]. Ако не сме се молили там, първата спирка ни е таа. Втората спирка ни е дали си държал Рамазан, оти ние държиме руч, Рамазан държиме. Втората спирка ни е дали държим си Рамазан. Третата спирка ни е дали сме си давали на богатството нящо, дали сме си давали нящо отплата... Отплата на богатството. На четиресе — едно.

[FB:] На кого го даваш това?

[Ismail:] На беднички. На беднички. Осемстотин лева да имаш пари, трябва да дадеш дваесе лева. Четиресе брави овци да имаш, трябва да дадеш една овца. Така. Да подариш на някой.

[FB:] Тва е коя спирка?

[Ismail:] Таа е втората спирка, третата спирка — и така нататък... Не мога да си спомна какви точно спирки беше... И тогава, ако дадеш тея спирки, ако дадеш това няшу, да дадеш точен отговор, ке заминеш... За Рая. За Рая, ке заминеш там за Рая. Ке заминеш. А който е негрешничък, тоа [няма да минава през тези изпитания]... Ама све сме гряшнички, све сме гряшнички...

По [х]иляда години ке ни изпитваа на една спирка. А като не е гряшен човяк, той си го дава [отговора], той си го отговаря за един час... И заминава. Ама който е грешничък — по илядо години седи там. А ония са години, найш какви са години ония? Един ден е от ония там [дни на съдното време], от тия един день е една година е на дунята тука ни е. А! Един ден е оня там — една година [на земята]! Направи сметка какво ше бъде там!

[FB:] И коча [т.е. курбана, който си клал,] е там [този, който ще те пренесе през митарствата]...

[Ismail:] И коча. Коча ке те преноша вече... Коча ке те преноша там... Да.

Имаше един бедничок. Един бедничок човек. И той не му се полагаше да коля коч — курбан да коля. Добре, ама той си му даваше сърцето и си коляше, сяка година си коляше курбани. И след това — почина оня човек. Като почина, един негов приятел, иска му се така — да му се предстаави. Да му се представи, да го види — какво [прави], какво става с неговия приятел. К[акв]о става с неговия приятел? Добре, ама неговия приятел го виде [насън, присъни му се]. Там го виде... И го виде на едно хубаво место... Хубаво место там... В Рая е, на хубаво местенце. И вика [живият приятел на покойника]: “Абе,” — вика, — “с какво те,” — вика, — “помилува,” — вика, — “Господ,” — вика, — “та ти даде,” — вика, — “такова убавко,” — вика, — “тука?”

Вика [мъртвият приятел]: “Със едно даване, съдъка!”

“Съдъка” ние казваме, подарък, [а също го наричаме и] “едие” — подарък, даване.

Ами той го попита: “Епа тия,” — вика, — “брави какви са тука къде тебе?”

[На което той, покойникът, отвърнал:] “Това са,” — казва, — “моите курбане. Моите курбане,” — вика, — “тука са, що аз съм ги клал на дунята... На свето...”

[Приятелят му отново попитал:] “Еми тоя, дека той го яздиш тука?”

Качил се, на един [коч] се качил [мъртвият].

“Тоа ми е,” — вика, — “най-първия курбан!”

Дека той [i.e. покойникът] го язди... И това продумали — и заминал за Рая. На курбана се качва — и заминава за Рая. Заминава за Рая.

Та така. Та си е убаво — каквото може човек, да напраа добринка. Каквото моа — да напраиме добринка, оти не знааме със какво Аллах ше ни помилва. С какво Аллах ке ни помилва...

[FB:] А как го е видял така приятелят му? Как му се е представил [покойникът]?

[Ismail:] Ами представил му се е [покойникът], ама на сън. На сън му се представи. На сън му се представи той. Той [i.e. живият приятел] се помоли на Господ: “Искам да вида приятела ми!” — на Аллах се помоли. “Искам да вида приятела във съна, да вида на какво положение е!” И Аллах му го кажа. Кажа му на какво положение е.

Понеже пише там така... Има във Саудитска Арабия една планина Хухут, Хухут се казва тая планина. Едното парче [от курбана в Съдния ден] ше тежи като тая планина Хухут там, където ни се мяреа и грешките, и добрините. Има се казва там “Везни”. Везни — нали знааш везни що е? Кантар. Отгук се тура убавите работи, отам се тура лошите работи. Зависи къде ке натегне... Та тия парчета [от курбана], що ги раздаваме ние, тия парчета ке тежат там като на таа планина Хухут.

Викам я на тия наште аджии тука, дека одия ся двамина: “Абе отидехте на тая планина Хухут?”

“Одийме”.

“Е защо одихте там бе? Какво става там на таа планина? Какво ви разправиа там за таа планина?”

Не моя да обяснат.

This text was recorded in 2005 in the village of Gorno Kraishte (county of Belitsa, Blagoevgrad region, South-Western Bulgaria). The story was narrated by a seventy nine-year old Muslim man, known among his fellow villagers as Ismail Mechkarski (or Ismail Redzhep Mechkar). The storyteller was born in 1926 in the nearby village of Babyak. He attended school for four years and became a woodcutter in the local forest; then he married a Muslim girl from the neighbourhood and settled in the village of Gorno Kraishte. The field-research was part of the author's work on the project *Folk Religion in the Balkans*. The sound-recording of the above account is stored in the Hans Rausing Endangered Languages Project (HRELP) archives, at SOAS, University of London.

Text No. 21

The *Kurban-Bayram* comes from Ibrahim Pengamberin

[Question by FB:] What does *Kurban-Bayram* come from?

[Ali:] The [feast of] *Kurban-Bayram* comes from Ibrahim Pengamberin.¹⁹⁹ He had a son, Ismail. What does the *Kurban* comes from? He made a request before — you say God, we say Allah, Vlaxhs [Romanians] say Domnule — [to give him children because he was childless].

[Emine, Ali's wife:] He didn't have children...

[Ali:] He said, “If a boy is born to me, I will slay him as a *Kurban*.” When a boy was born to him [after a while],²⁰⁰ he didn't feel like slaying him...

[Emine:] But he gave his word...

[Ali:] Well, but no. It didn't seem like a good idea any more.

Then Allah — or God — said to him, “Hold on, you are not our man! You are not a Pengamberin [i.e. Prophet]! You do not keep your word. What did you promise?”

He [Ibrahim] prepared to slay him [his son]. The Devil was walking behind him [Ismail], the Devil was walking behind him. You call him “Devil”, we call him “Sheytanin”. He [the Devil] said to the child, “He is getting you ready to be slain as a *Kurban*.”

Then he [the child] threw a stone and blinded the Sheitanin in one eye; you call him the Devil.

So far, so good... And so, he prepared to slay him.

He, the boy, said, “Cover my eyes so that I don’t see when you put the knife to my throat to slay me!”

[*Emine:*] So that the child doesn’t see!

[*Ali:*] So that he wouldn’t do anything [wrong] against God, or Allah! He [Ibrahim] put a cloth [on his eyes] and got him ready to put him to the knife. But the knife didn’t cut.²⁰¹ It did not want to cut him [the boy].

[*Emine:*] The knife didn’t slice him...

[*Ali:*] The knife didn’t slice him... He tried once, he tried twice, no! It didn’t want to. He [Ibrahim] hit a stone with the knife and he split the stone. But it didn’t want to split him [Ismail] open...

[*Emine:*] It didn’t want to split the child open...

[*Ali:*] It was God — or Allah! — it was Him who didn’t let it happen. Lo and behold, from above comes something, but what was coming? What was coming? There was a great noise from above, and lo and behold, something fell down there...

[*Emine:*] The Kurban!

[*Ali:*] The Kurban, the ram! Then he [Ibrahim] slew the ram and the child remained alive!

[*Question by FB:*] What sort of ram was it?

[*Ali:*] He gave it. Allah gave it. He dropped it down from above, or as you would say, God...

[*Emine:*] To save the child.

[*Ali:*] When he slew [the ram], the child remains alive. The name of the child was Ismail.

[*Question by FB:*] You say that the Kurban remains since then?

[*Ali:*] Because of this, the Kurban takes place now, so that we slay the Kurban. From this, from this particular story, it remains [as a tradition] up until now; indeed so — from then, from Ibrahim and from his son, whom he wanted to slay as a Kurban! Since then, it has remained for us [as a tradition] so that we must slay the Kurban. Whoever has the opportunity to buy of course ... to slay a Kurban.

Each year after *Ramadan* — because we have *Ramadan* — it is for one month that we eat early in the morning

[*Emine:*] Just as you [Christians] keep a fast, [so do we]...

[*Ali:*] We keep a fast the same way. We call it *Ramadan*. Then when two months and nine days pass, then comes the *Kurban-Bayram*.

[....]

[*Emine:*] Then I will tear the Kurban into pieces, I will tear it into pieces and I will distribute it among [neighbouring] households.

[*Ali:*] While doing Kurban, we count how many [are the households] within the village, as here within our *mahala* [i.e. neighbourhood]. We [i.e. the inhabitants of our *mahala*] are now [included] in the village of Avramovo [which was not the case in the past, as the *mahala* used to be a separate settlement], but we still do not go over there [to other neighbourhoods]. We go to this neighbourhood and to the one opposite ours and we count how many people are here [so that we can give them pieces of Kurban]...

When we chop it into pieces, into small ones, we count how many there are [and divide it into three]. One third of the Kurban remains for the household, the rest [is given] to the other clans, so that the family can be fed with one-third of the Kurban. The second third is given to kinfolk and close relatives, and the third is for common use, for everybody. That’s how we chop up the Kurban and that’s how we distribute it.

[Question by FB:] Is it said that this Kurban one day, when one dies ? [FB: *without waiting to hear the question, Ali interrupted and explained*].

[Ali:] Yes, yes, yes, yes. It [the Kurban-animal] turns into some kind of ..., it turns into some kind of a horse, some kind of ..., so that it takes you through the rough stuff you are supposed to get through [en route to the Beyond after death]... So that you don't end up in Dzhenhem [Hell].²⁰² Because there is a bridge which is supposed to be crossed there, over the bridge [it takes you]. It [the Kurban-animal] will appear in front of you, you will mount it, and it will take you through. It will fly like the wind over the bridge and you will cross it without ... [problems], and you won't end up in Dzhenhem [Hell]. We call it Dzhenhem, but I don't know how you [i.e. Christians] call it.

[Question by FB:] And when is this going to happen?

[Ali:] When we die and when the [last] Flood takes place [on earth]... The Flood will come and there will be no living creatures on the white [world].²⁰³ Seas and mountains, everything will be evened out.

[...]

[Question by FB:] And who is Ibrahim?

[Ali:] Ibrahim, he was a Pengamberin.²⁰⁴ However, he was not indeed [a prophet], for us one only is recognised — Mohammed *allay salaam*. Mohammed Pengamberin is the true [prophet] of Allah. The true one...

[Question by FB:] Was it said, that once Ibrahim was thrown into a certain fire?

[Ali:] He was surrounded by fire... He was surrounded by flames as they [wanted to] set him on fire, so that he burns alive. But Allah didn't allow [that to happen]. They surrounded him [with fire], so that he burns in flames, but around him there was green grass. The One who is Most High didn't let it happen.

[....]

[Question by FB:] And how was Ismail born? How old was Ibrahim then?

[Ali:] I have already told you, haven't I, that [before] he was born, his father [Ibrahim] promised that "if a child is born to me, I will slay him as a Kurban."

[Question by FB:] So he did not have children, is that so?

[Ali:] He [Ibrahim] did not have a child... "If a child is born to me", he said, "I'll slay him as a Kurban." Well, but when later the child was born, it was "uh-uh", and it didn't work the way it should have. That being so, Allah told him, "You", He told him, "are not a true Pengamberin. What did you promise and what are you doing now?"

After that he decided to slay the child. So, the Devil, or the Sheytanin, was following him [the son] who took a stone and threw it [at the Devil] and knocked out one of his eyes. And now, the Devil, Sheytanin, has only one eye. Now, when they go on Hajj, they throw stones there [where Ismail threw the stone at Sheytanin, blinding him]. People used to go to the Holy Sepulchre.

[...]

[Question by FB:] As for the child, for Ismail, when he [Ibrahim] was about to slay him....?

[Ali:] Oh yes, he covered his eyes with a cloth. He said, "So that I don't see how you put me to the knife."

Now, when we are about to slay the Kurban, we put a piece of cloth on [the eyes of] the ram so that it doesn't see [the knife]... You should do it with one go, the knife should be sharp so that it cuts straight through its throat [and it doesn't suffer]!

[Question by FB:] Do they bind its legs?

[Ali:] Yes, we bind three of its legs and leave one free.

[Question by FB:] Why?

[Ali:] Because it's very strong [and the slaughterer should be able to sacrifice it]... Because it struggles a lot...
[...]

[Question by FB:] Was the child dyed with henna?

[Ali:] Yes, of course. He was dyed with henna. Everything was done properly. The mother did it, but the father didn't say to the mother that he intended to slay him... That's why now, nine days before the day — these are called the “counted days”²⁰⁵ — we put some henna or dye on the ram's forehead, on the Kurban.

[Emine:] So that it's evident that it's a Kurban.

[Ali:] That he is already [predestined] for a Kurban...

[Question by FB:] And what [were you saying] about the child which was ... [supposed to be given] as a Kurban? You mentioned that the mother ... [prepared him]?²⁰⁶

[Ali:] Yes, she prepared him...

[Question by FB:] How did she prepare him?

[Ali:] He, the father, did not tell [his wife] that he was preparing him [Ismail] for a Kurban. The Devil or Sheytanin told the mother, “He [Ibrahim] set off to slay him as a Kurban.” She said, “Get out of here!”

[Emine:] The mother dressed him up, combed him; she, the mother, didn't know anything. He [the father] said to her, “You will dress up the child [with a nice outfit], you will prepare him nicely for the *Bayram*.” She combed him, she prepared him, but she didn't know since the father didn't tell her that [he wanted to sacrifice him]....

[Ali:] That he will slay him as a Kurban...

[Emine:] That he will slay him... After that, when they set off and left, she didn't know where he [Ibrahim] took him and where [they went]...

[Ali:] After that, when this [Kurban] drops from above, when the ram drops from above, it was Allah who sends it so that he [Ibrahim] did not slay this [child]... He tried once with a knife, but the knife didn't want to [harm him].

[Emine:] When the Kurban [ram] was dropped from above [by Allah], then the Kurban took place [and since then this custom remained]... Yet the child was there [prepared to be sacrificed as Kurban]. The child was there to be slain [by his father]. After that, when he [Ibrahim] took the knife to slay him, they put a piece of cloth on his eyes, so that the child didn't see the knife. He [the father] tries once, it didn't work. He tries twice, it didn't work. It was the knife, it was the knife itself that wouldn't slay him [the child]. And he [Ibrahim] became angry and hit the stone. The stone burst but the child was not slain. And then from above — we call him Allah, you call him God — dropped a ram Kurban from above. They sacrificed the Kurban and the child remained alive.

[Ali:] The child remained alive... And they sacrificed the Kurban.

[Emine:] They sacrificed the Kurban, they skinned it and then chopped it into pieces, into shares, and they distributed it in the village there, among the neighbours... And that is how it was...

[Ali:] And now, if one doesn't have means to buy, you give some [meat from your own Kurban] to him, too; if one has [means to afford the sacrificial animal], one should share [the meat with those who are poor] so that they may serve it to their children for *Bayram*, since there are people who don't have means to buy [one].

[Emine:] Some people have money to spend and some people don't.

[Ali:] But whoever has, he has to distribute it to everybody; that's the way it should be, it should be given to poor people and to orphans...

Курбан-Байряма идва от Ибрахим Пенгамберин

[Question by FB:] Откъде идва Курбан-Байряма?

[Али:] Курбан-Байряма идва от Ибрахим Пенгамберин. Той е имал син —Исмаил. И какво [т.е. от какво] става курбана? Той искал пред, да кажеме, вие викате Бог, ние викаме Аллах, власите викаа Домнуле [да му даде деца, понеже е бил бездетен]...

[Емине:] Не е имал деца...

[Али:] Той казал: “Ако ми се роди момче, ще го закола за курбан!” И като му се родило момче [след време], той вече, нали, не му се коле...

[Емине:] Но дал е дума веќе...

[Али:] Така — ъ-ъх! Нещо не иде! И Аллах му, или Господ му е рекъл: “Чекай бе, ти не си наш човек! Ти не си Пенгамберин! Ти не си седиш на думата! Какво каза?”

И той [Ибрахим] го подготвил да го коле [сина си]. И връви по него [Исмаил, а] това, Гяволо, връви [след него]. Вие викате “Гявол”, ние викаме “Шейтанин”. И казва на детето: “Той те,” — вика, — “готви да те коле за курбан, бе!”

И той е фърлил камък и му е изкъоравил едното око на Шейтанино. На Гявола, дето викате вия.

Добре... И така. И [Ибрахим] го е турил да го коле [сина си Исмаил].

Той е казал момчето [на баща си]: “Да ми покриеш,” — вика, — “очите, да не вида,” — вика, — “кога ќе ми туриш ножа на гушата да ме заколяш!”

[Емине:] Да не види детето!

[Али:] Да не стане против Бог или Аллах! И той му турил далака — и да му тегли ножа. Ножа не посича. Не ще да го посече.

[Емине:] Ножа го не го кълца...

[Али:] Не кълца го ножа... Опенал еднаж, опенал дваж — не! Не ќе! Удара със ножа във камъка — разцепил камъка! Не ще да посече товака [Исмаил]...

[Емине:] Детето не ще да [го] посече...

[Али:] А той Бог, или Аллах — той не дава! Оп! Отгоре идва нещо — ама какво идва? Какво идва? Отгоре нали — шум голем! И оп! Пада тамока...

[Емине:] Курбан!

[Али:] Курбано, овен! И той вече зима, коља овено — а детето остава живо!

[FB:] А какъв е бил тоя овен?

[Али:] Той го дава — нали, Аллага го е дал! Отгоре го пуска. Или па Бог по ваше...

[Емине:] Да спаси детето.

[Али:] Като го коле [овена] — и детето остава живо. А на детето му е било Исмаил името.

[FB:] Викаш, че оттогава останал курбана ли?

[Али:] От това става ся курбан, та ния коляме курбан. От това, от тая работа остава сега нали, от тогава, от Ибрахим, от сина му, дето е искал да го коља за курбан! И оттогава вече остава вече на нас, треба да коляме курбан. Който има възможност да си купи, нали... Да си коља курбан.

Сяка година, нали, след — ния нали имаме Рамазан? Дето един месец, сутрин ядем по-рано — и... [държим пост]?

[Емине:] Като вия ваште как постея...

[Али:] Па ние постиме па така, Рамазан му викаме. И като мине два месеца и девет дена — тогава дойде па Курбан-Байряма.

[...]

[Емине:] И курбано веќе я [т.е. аз] го скъся, скъся на парчета — и го раздада по кашци.

[Али:] Курбана го броиме колко [са къщите и домакинствата] селото, къде обхваща. Тука нашта махала къде обхваща тука. Ние сме сега едно общо Аврамово, ама ние натам не ходиме. Е тука тая маала и оная отсреща, броиме колко са хора [и им раздаваме от курбана]...

Като го посечеме на късчета, на малки, изброиме колко такава [са късчетата и ги делим на три] — и [дадем една трета от курбана] на родовете и една трета от курбана остава

си за семейството. Да мож да се нахрани семейството, от една трета. Втората трета се сече и се дава на роднините и на близките. Третата [част на курбана] — вече общо, на сички [се разпределя]. И така се сече курбана и така се раздава.

[FB:] А казват ли, че тоя курбан, един ден, човек когато си отиде... [Без да ме изчака да довърша въпроса, прекъсвайки ме, Али поясни:]

[Али:] Да, да, да, да. Става, един вид, става [този курбан] там на тебе нещо като кон, като какво... Да те пренесе през лошото там, дето ке минеш... Да не попаднеш в Дженхема. Защото има един мост, който ке се мине там. През моста. А той [курбанът] ке ти се яви, ти ке се качиш на него и ке те пренесе — и той ке прелети като веявица през моста и ке си заминеш без... [никой да те спре, без усложнения и проблеми], да не попаднеш там в Дженхема. Дженхема, или пък вие [християните] как го викате — не знам...

[FB:] А това кога ще стане?

[Али:] Когато измреме, когато стане вече Потоп на това [т.е. на земята]... Потоп става вече, нема вече живо същество [да остане] на белото такова [свят]; морета, балкани — сичко ше се сравни.

[...]

[FB:] А кой е тоя Ибрахим?

[Али:] Ибрахим, той е бил, нали, като Пенгамберин. Обаче той не е хасълли [Пророк], за нас е признат един — Мохамед алей селям. Мохамед Пенгамберин — той е истинския [Пророк] на Аллаха. Истинския...

[FB:] А казват ли, че Ибрахим са го били хвърлили в някакъв огън?

[Али:] Обграден е бил във огън... Обграден е в огън — [искаха] да го запалая, да изгори. Обаче Аллах не дава. Тия са го обградили — демек да гори фъф огъня, а при него там — трева, зелена трева. Най-Висшия, който е — той не дава [Неговият Пророк да бъде изгорен].

[...]

[FB:] А как се е родил Исмаил? И на колко години е бил Ибрахим [тогава]?

[Али:] Нали ти викам, то [преди] кат се е родил, баща му обещал, че: “Ако ми се роди дете, ше го закола за курбан!”

[FB:] А той не е имал дете, така ли?

[Али:] Не е имал дете... “Ако ми се роди дете,” — рекъл, — “ке го закола за курбан!” Добре, ама той вече, като се е родил детето, нещо тъ-х — не излиза работата! Така-така — и Аллах му казал: “Ти,” — вика, — “не си на место Пенгамберин! Какво обеща, пък сега какво правиш!”

И той тогава вече решава да заколи детето. И така — тоа Дяволо, или Шейтанино, той върви по него и той зима един камък и го фърля и му изважда едното око. И сега-сега Гяволо, или Шейтанино, той е с едно око; [затова] там, дето одея на аджилъка, там фърляя камъни. Одея на Божи гроб.

[...]

[FB:] А за детето, за Исмаил, че като го е турил да го коли...

[Али:] А да! Със кърпа го е покрил през очите. Вика: “Да не гледам га ше ми туриш ножа!”

И сега курбаните, кога ги коляме, туряме на овено кърпа отпреде, да не вижда, че такова [ще го колят]... И требе със един замах, толко да е остър ножа, че да стигне чак до гърлото!

[FB:] Връзват ли му краката?

[Али:] Да. Три крака му връзваме, един му оставяме.

[FB:] Защо?

[Али:] Да може да такова [бъде надвит от този, който ще го коли]... Оти много се бори...

[...]

[FB:] А детето червисали ли са го?

[Али:] Да бе, къносано е, сичко е оправено. Майката го оправя, обаче бащата не казва на майката, че ще го коле... Затова сега курбането, като влезе девет дена, се казва на али, “зачетени дни”, туряме на овено отпреде тука малко къна или боя.

[Емине:] Да се познава, че е курбан.

[Али:] Че той е вече [предназначен и отреден] за курбан...

[FB:] А за това дете, за курбан дето [е щяло да бъде пожертвано, какво се разказва?]... Нали казваш, че майката [го е приготвила?]...

[Али:] Тя, дето го е готвила...

[FB:] Как го е готвила?

[Али:] Той бащата не е казал [на жена си], че той го готви за курбан [сина им]. И Дявола, или Шейтанина, той е казал на майката: “Той го откара,” — вика, — “да го коля за курбан, бе!”

“Я мани се оттука!” — вика [тя на Шейтанина]...

[Емине:] Тя го е майката наредила, зарешила го е. Тя не знае майката. Той [i.e. бащата] рекъл: “Ке премяниш детето! Ке го напращаш убаво — като за Байрям!” И го изрешила, го вече наредила... И тя не знае, че бащата не кажува на нея, че [иска да принесе сина им в жертва]...

[Али:] Ке го коле за курбан...

[Емине:] Че ке го коле... И след това веке, като излезли веке — тя не знае къде го е отвел, къде [са отишли]...

[Али:] И след това като пада, като пада овено отгоре, Аллах го изпраща, да не се заколя това [дете]... Той опъва един път с ножа, ножа не ще [да реже]...

[Емине:] И като спусна [Аллах] курбано — станало е курбано веке [да се тачи]... А детето е [било предназначено за курбан] там. Детето е [било] там да го коле [баща му]. И след това веке, като [Ибрахим] зел ножа веке да го коле [сина си], туриле му една кърпа на очите, да не види детето ножа. Той [бащата] опина е[д]наж — не ке! Опина дваж — не ке! Ножа, ножа го не коле. И той се разядил — и го ударил в камено. Камено разкъса, детето не коле. И тогава отгоре — ние викаме Аллах, вие викате Господь ли е — спуща един овен курбан отгоре! Заколуваа курбано — детето си е добре.

[Али:] Си остава живо детето ... Заклаа курбана...

[Емине:] Заклали курбано, одрали и го скълцали на такива парчета веке, на дялове. И го раздели по селото там, по комшиите... И е така...

[Али:] Има-няма, който няма да си купи, то се даде и на него. Кат има — да даде и на него, та и той да си готви на децата си за Байрям. Някой няма сила да си купи.

[Емине:] Някой има пари да купи, па някой пъ няма.

[Али:] И който има — да раздаде на сичките; а така, да дава на бедни, на сираци...

This text was recorded in 2005 in the village of Avramovi Kolibi (county of Yakoruda, Blagoevgrad region, South-Western Bulgaria). The story was narrated by an eighty six-year old Muslim man, known among his fellow villagers as Alyo Chalūmski, or Ali Chalūmov (Ali Mustafa Ali) and his wife Emine Ali. They both were born in 1919 in the same village. Ali was a man well educated for his time, as he graduated secondary school; very few among his fellow villagers were able to do so. After World War II, when the Communist Party came into power, Ali was persecuted and sent to one of the regional internment (labour) camps (the Bulgarian version of the Soviet *GULAG*), whereas his wife was sent as an internee to the village of Rila. The field-research was part of the author's work on the project *Folk Religion in the Balkans*. The sound-recording of the above account is stored in the Hans Rausing Endangered Languages Project (HRELP) archives, at SOAS, University of London.

Text No. 22

He wanted to sacrifice his child and since then we have the Kurban to slay

He [Ibrahim] wanted to sacrifice his child²⁰⁷ and since then we have [the tradition] of slaying the Kurban. He set off and stretched out the knife to slay his boy but it didn't want to, and then he [Ibrahim] struck a stone with it.²⁰⁸ [...]

Why are some sheep [and rams] with black splotches around the eyes?²⁰⁹ Because he chased after it [the sheep] to catch it and he couldn't, and finally he caught up with it and

he kissed it on its eyes, that's why there are sheep [and rams] with black splotches around the eyes.

[*Question by FB:*] How so? Would you please tell it to me again, since I didn't get it...

[*Yusain:*] He ran after the Kurban to catch it and he couldn't catch it [at first], but when he caught it, he kissed it on its eyes... And that's why there are sheep [and rams] with black splotches around their eyes... There are [animals] like this, there are sheep [and rams] with black splotches around their eyes.

[*Question by FB:*] But why did Ibrahim the Peygamber promise this Kurban [to be sacrificed]?

[*Yusain:*] I can't tell you why he promised it, whether he had a dream²¹⁰ or something else... What was and how it was, [I don't know]... Whether he had a dream, I can't tell you...

[...]

He didn't have children, yes. He did not have any, and I guess that he must have said that if a child is born to me I will sacrifice him as a Kurban. Because he did not have [children] And a child was born to him, and he vowed to sacrifice him as a Kurban. He set off and started sacrificing him [the son] and stretched him out, but the knife didn't want to [kill the boy]. It did not want to! Then he [Ibrahim] tossed away the knife and the knife broke into two! Because it did not want to slay the child!

[*Question by FB:*] Is that when the Kurban descended ...[from the sky]?

[*Yusain:*] Yes, that was when it descended. Yes...

[*Question by FB:*] And you said that he was running after it...

[*Yusain:*] He was running after it and [when he got it] he kissed it on the eyes... And that's why there are sheep [and rams] with black splotches around the eyes.

[*Question by FB:*] And who dropped this Kurban, this ram [from above]?

[*Yusain:*] This is something I cannot tell you; [I cannot tell you] who dropped this ram.

[*Question by FB:*] Is it only this kind of ram [with black splotches] which is acceptable as a Kurban?

[*Yusain:*] Well, yes. It has to be white though and it has to be unblemished. It's ears have to be all right and not cut, it shouldn't be lame in its foot and not limp. Also, its tail shouldn't be shortened. It shouldn't be blind. It has to have everything as it ought to be.

[*Question by FB:*] Is it true that one day this Kurban will take me up [to the Beyond]?

[*Yusain:*] Yes, it's true. This is true. True. This is true.

[*Question by FB:*] And what do they say about the Kurban?

[*Yusain:*] You asked what they are saying about it? There was a certain man who saw in his dream his [deceased] brother, who used to sacrifice Kurban [when he was alive]. He saw him in his dream like this: he was riding a horse and after him [were many other horses], since every year he was slaying Kurban. He saw him riding a horse; we call it "stallion" [Bulg. "ar" (*at*)], a stallion, a strong beautiful horse, and he [the living brother] asked, "what are these horses?"

He [the dead brother] replied, "this is my first Kurban". The one he was riding. The one he was riding. He [the deceased] said, "This is my first Kurban. Those behind me are those slain after it."

And it was said like this: "The Kurban there [in the Beyond]" ..., — our Hodja used to talk a lot about it — "will take one across a certain bridge. The Kurban will take one across"

[*Question by FB:*] What kind of bridge is this, sir?

[Yusain:] It was called, “*Sirak Chupresi*” [i.e. *Sirat Köprüsü*],²¹¹ [its name was] “*Sirak Chupresi*”...

[Question by FB:] Where does this bridge go to?

[Yusain:] Through to Hell. We call it “Dzhenhem”, “Dzhenhem” [i.e. Arabic *Jahannam*, meaning Hell]. We call it “Dhenhem” and I don’t know how you [Christians] call it.

[Question by FB:] What was the name of the person running after the Kurban?

[Yusain:] I won’t be able to tell you now..., because I forgot it. It was one of the Peygambers. It was, I think, Ibrahim or someone else... But he was a Peygamber.

[Question by FB:] Did the Kurban have horns?

[Yusain:] Yes, it did, it was with horns, it was with horns.

[Question by FB:] So he caught it and kissed it on the eyes... Why was that, sir?

[Yusain:] Because he was running after it and thus he disturbed it, and he was not allowed to get angry at it and to get irritated with it [because the Kurban should be sacrificed without upsetting the ram]. That’s why he kissed it in the eyes.

[Question by FB:] After that, he sacrificed it as a Kurban, is that so?

[Yusain:] Yes, it was written the same way in your [Bible]. Whatever is written there always happens. Everything which is written in the Bible is fulfilled. There was a man of your faith here, we have [Christians living] here, and he told me — which year was that? — when partisans were around and took power, he said that, “They were going to be ruling like Tzars for a while. But then, the regime would change!”

I didn’t believe him.

He used to say, “It was written in the Bible!”; he used to say, “They will rule for a while and the regime will change!”

And indeed the regime changed.

Искал да заколе детето, та оттогаз имаме ний курбан да колаа

[Пейгамбер Ибрахим] искал да [си] заколе детето, та оттогази имаме ний [традицията] курбан да колаа. А той фанал, па опнал ножа да заколе момчето си, а то не ше — и фанал, та го ударил от некој камък. [...]

Защо са вакли така, едни овци има вакли? Той я е гонил да я фане, та не е можел, та я кде я е стигнал, та я е цалувал на код очите, та затова са така вакли овците. Да.

[FB:] А-а-а-а... Как така? Я ми го разкажи пак, че аз не го доразбрах...

[Юсаин:] Ами курбана е гонил да го фане и не е можал да го фане, та кога го е фанал, го е цалувал на очите... И затова са така вакли, едни овци има вакли... Едни овци има вакли...

[FB:] А зашто го е обещал Ибрахим Пейгамбера този курбан?

[Юсаин:] Я това не моа да ти кажа де, зашто го е обещал. Дали е сџн гледал нешто... Какво е и што е... Сџн ли е гледал нешто — не моа да ти кажа...

[...]

Не е имал деца, да. Не е имал. И я ми се така струва, че е той така казал, ако ми се дете роди, ке го закола за курбан. Оти не е имал... И му се родили дете. И той обещал го за курбан да го заколе. И фанал, фанал да го коле — и го опнал! — и ножа не че! Не че! Па фанал па фърлил ножа и се счупил ножа на две! Оти не ше да коля детето!

[FB:] И тогава ли паднал курбана...

[Юсаин:] И тогава паднал курбана, да...

[FB:] И той го е гонил, казваш...

[Юсаин:] И той го е гонил, го е целувал на очите... И затова така са вакли овците.

[FB:] А тоя курбан кой го е пушал, тоя овен?

[Юсаин:] Са това не мога да ти кажа тоя овен кой го е пушал.

[FB:] А само такъв ли става за курбан? Само вакъл?

[Юсаин:] Ами — бел да е. Да нема нещо кусури. Да не са му ушите нещо нарежувани. Да не е сакат — с некой крак така да куца. Да не му е опашката пререзана. И да не е кьорав, така да си е, да си е редовен, да си има сичкото.

[FB:] А верно ли е, че тоя курбан ше ме носи един ден нагоре?

[Юсаин:] Верно е. Верно е това. Верно. Това е верно.

[FB:] И какво казват за курбана?

[Юсаин:] Какво ли казваа? Един човек гледал брат му [който бил наскоро починал] на сън. Той си клал курбане [приживе]. И го гледал на съна: я[х]нал на един кон, а по него [много други коне] — а той сека година си клал курбане! — ама видел го, как си е яхнал на един конь; ат го казваа, ат; як конь, убав. И рекъл: “Какви са пъ[к] тия коне?”

Рекъл [брат му]: “Тоя първия курбанин ми е!” — тоа, шо го е яхнал. Шо го е яхнал. Той вика: “Това ми е първия курбань. Па ония последните вече са па ония отсам насетне, които е клано след него!”

А викаа така: “Курбаните там [на оня свят]...” — нашия ходжа много разправяя, че... — “през тоя мост ше го прекара, ке го пренесе курбана...”

[FB:] През кой мост, чичо?

[Юсаин:] Тия викаа — “Сирак Чупреси”. “Сирак Чупреси”...

[FB:] Закъде е тоя мост?

[Юсаин:] През Джен[х]ема, във Джен[х]ема. Ние го казваме “Джен[х]ема”, вие не знам как го казвате...

[FB:] А как се е казал тоя, дето го е гонил курбана?

[Юсаин:] Нема да ти го кажа бе... Я в акъла ми е, ама нема да ти го кажа [понеже не мога да си го спомня името му]... От Пейгамберите е бил некой. Такой Ибраим ли е бил, та друг ли е бил... Пейгамберин е бил.

[FB:] А курбана с рога ли е бил?

[Юсаин:] Аха, с рога. С рога е, с рога.

[FB:] И го е хванал и го е целувал по очите... А защо, чичо?

[Юсаин:] Еми оти, оти го е гонил, оти го е мъчил, ама той пъ[к] не е смеял да се разлюти по него така, да се изнервира. Па го е цалувал на очите.

[FB:] И после го е дал курбан, така ли?

[Юсаин:] Да. Такова пише и във вашата [Библия]. Ама шо е писано, се се явювало налице. Се се е явило налице, каквото е пишено във Библията. Казал ми е един човек ваш, тука имааме [християни], коя година беше, партизаните бея влезли, бея зели властта, каза ми един човек, вика: “Тия ке поцарувая, ама тя ке се смени тая власт!”

Я не веруях.

Вика: “Във Библията пише,” — вика, — “че царувая, колко ке царувая и тя ке се смени!”

И се смени властта!

The above text was recorded in 2005 in the city of Yakoruda (Blagoevgrad region, South-Western Bulgaria). The story was narrated by a seventy seven-year old Muslim man. His name was Yusain (Husein) Ismailov Erutski. He was born in 1928 in (the then village of) Yakoruda; he attended the local school for four years only, and later became a shepherd. The field-research was part of the author's work on the project *Folk Religion in the Balkans*. The sound-recording of the above account is stored in the Hans Rausing Endangered Languages Project (HRELP) archives, at SOAS, University of London.

Text No. 23

When the world got started

[Question by FB:] Tell me what you heard about the Kurban? According to your tradition and customs, why is this [ritual] happening?²¹²

[*Storyteller 1:*] I'll tell you [what to do]. Go there where the bench is [pointing towards the mosque] and now, in a short while, towards five o'clock at *ikindiya* time [dusk], there are people [who go to pray and can tell you]... Look over there, the old people on the bench... [...]

[*Storyteller 2:*] It was in days of yore, but how do I know? [...] He [Allah] dropped down the ram and the child was let go ...

[*Storyteller 1:*] There was a mother once who didn't have a child ...

[*Storyteller 2:*] Elderly people are telling this [story]....

[*Storyteller 1:*] There was a certain mother who did not have children and she said, "Should God²¹³ give me [a child], I'll give him as a Kurban!"²¹⁴ She got pregnant and gave birth. The time arrived when He [Allah], disguised as a beggar, like a Gypsy, came and wanted the child as a Kurban. Since she promised it, she ought to [give it] as a Kurban...²¹⁵ She clothed him [the boy], she dressed him up and she let him go with his father to the forest. Exactly at the moment when they were set to slay him — I have seen pictures how they put him to slay him and how he [the father] with one such a big knife — as a Kurban, then Allah dropped a ram down to earth and the ram lays down and the child was set free. That's how it was...

[*Question by FB:*] Where is there a picture of this?

[*Storyteller 1:*] There are many pictures like this in Turkey...

[*Question by FB:*] Is there a picture of this anywhere here in the village?

[*Storyteller 2:*] At some point I saw such a thing...

[*Storyteller 1:*] Is that so?

[*Storyteller 2:*] There was a young chap who had distributed [pictures like this]. Oh, I saw a lot of such things, there were such things...

[*Storyteller 1:*] I haven't seen anything like this...

[*Storyteller 2:*] It was on paper...

[*Question by FB:*] So they did not have children and she said, she promised what?...

[*Storyteller 1:*] Should God give her a child, she would give him as a Kurban! For a single purpose to give birth! Because you see, we are very mean... Our people sometimes can be really nasty [when talking about a childless woman]...

[*Storyteller 2:*] When the world got started, when the world got started, that's when it happened...

[*Storyteller 1:*] Sometimes they can be really nasty. This is, as one can say, a bad habit... [That's what they would say about a barren woman:] "Look! she's a barren bottom!" This being so, she wanted to give birth ..., because that's what they would say [about her]... When she got very upset one time, she [made this promise, having] one sole purpose, to give birth.

[*Storyteller 2:*] So that the people see that she gave birth...

[*Question by FB:*] And when did you say this happened?

[*Storyteller 2:*] This must have taken place when the world was founded.. Then it must have happened... From then on people started sacrificing Kurban.

[*Storyteller 1:*] It may have been the case, if you say so...

[*Storyteller 2:*] That's how it started, indeed... From then on they started sacrificing Kurban, from the time when the world got started... When the Earth got started, that's when it should have happened, and from then on, afterwards, from then onwards they started sacrificing Kurban... [...]

[*Storyteller 3:*] From then onwards they started sacrificing Kurban. [...]

[*Storyteller 1:*] My sister used to have [a male acquaintance]... And when he started spinning yarns... As your grandmother will say, you should not only listen to what people say to you, you should also read and you should also pay attention to what you hear. But when he was telling his stories, [it was] as if you go to the Beyond...

[*Storyteller 2:*] I recollect it...

[*Storyteller 1:*] As if your mind is taken away to a different world... Having pondered for a while, you say to yourself, “No, this is not the [right] world here.”

[*Storyteller 2:*] No it is not. But look now at those who now read the Qur’ān — they got very much attached to it...

[*Storyteller 1:*] Well, when they read, at least something goes into their mind... Little by little...

[*Question by FB:*] Have you heard anything about Adem?

[*Storyteller 1 to Storyteller 2:*] Look now, she is now talking about Peygambers... I don’t know, really... The old people really know, Ma’am ... In a while, at five o’clock they will go to the Mosque to pray, they will come just before five o’clock and they are quite quick at praying. When they go out [you can ask them]. But it would be better if someone could advise you [to whom to talk]...

[...]

[*Question by FB:*] But didn’t you say that when the mother didn’t have a child, she promised him [as a Kurban]? And was it the father who decided to do that? Wasn’t she, [and not he], who said that he [the child] would be given as a Kurban? I didn’t understand that...

[*Storyteller 3:*] As for the father...

[*Storyteller 1:*] Look now, when she didn’t have children, she was praying to Allah, God, to Him she was praying: may she give birth.²¹⁶ She would then give the child as a Kurban, but only for people to see that she has given birth...

[*Storyteller 2:*] The sole purpose was to have [a child].

[*Storyteller 1:*] So that the people see that she gave birth... Look now, when she prayed like this, it happened, God gave her a baby. She gave birth... Then the time came when it [the child] was requested back [as a Kurban], as she made an oath to God and now this Kurban was requested back. The time came and she must have seen it in her dreams.²¹⁷ Surely she should have seen in her dreams — “Come on! this child should be given back now!”

[*At this point, the Storyteller 1 is turning to Storyteller 2:*] Look what you are saying now [that this must have happened when the world got started]... I have heard it as well, but..

[*Storyteller 2:*] Oh, I have even seen pictures... I saw the Kurban [depicted]...

[*Question by FB:*] What happened after she saw this dream? What happened after that?

[*Storyteller 1:*] Well, she gave it [as a Kurban]. She clothed him, dressed him up... And she gave the child to be slain as a Kurban in the forest.

[*Storyteller 2:*] When they set off to the forest — there was a forest shown there... [in the picture] — and when they set off to the forest [it was also shown] how he raises like this the knife while he [the child] was lying down, and his head was like this... He, the Peygamber, already holds the knife, he was shown as a terrifying man, that’s how you see him in the picture...

[*Storyteller 1:*] Of course, how else!

[*Storyteller 2:*] As you said, suddenly the ram [was dropped], as if it had wings, and lands down...

[*Question by FB:*] Is it said that one day this ram will take you to the Beyond?

[*Storyteller 1:*] Rightly so, rightly so.
 [*Storyteller 3:*] That's what is said!
 [*Storyteller 2:*] It is said that whoever sacrifices Kurbans [here in this world], in that world he will be like a horseman, you will fly on them [Kurbans], you will shuttle back and forth... And so that's why the Kurbans are sacrificed.
 [*Storyteller 3, question to FB:*] Do you sacrifice Kurbans up there [in your home]?
 [*FB's answer:*] Yes, we do that on Saint George's Day.
 [*Storyteller 3:*] Ah, on Saint George's Day... Here our Bulgarians [i.e. Christians] also do the same... They also buy lambs [for sacrifice]. They don't sacrifice young goats for the Kurban... Also young goats are not sacrificed for the feast for dead persons, because goats are devils...

We also have here Bulgarians [i.e. Christians] and we live together very well...

Когато света се е курдисал

[*Question by FB:*] А я ми кажи за това, което си чула за курбана — защо става това според вашия си адет, според вашата традиция?
 [*Storyteller 1:*] Я ж'ти кажа [какво да направиш]! Я там жъ ийте на пейката [сочи към джамията] — и ся след малко, къде пет часа, на икиндията, има таквие ора [там, които идват на молитва]... Виж, ей тукана има стари хора, на пейката. ... [...]
 [*Storyteller 2:*] То е било на времето! Аз знам ли брее! [...] Той [Аллах] пуснал коча и детето го пуснаа...
 [*Storyteller 1:*] Една майка си е немала деца...
 [*Storyteller 2:*] Ама тия гу разпраят я такви [приказки] по-старите ора...
 [*Storyteller 1:*] Някоя майка си немала деца и рекла: “Да ми даде Господь [чедо], за курбань ше гу дам!” И забременяла и рудила. И дошло време, [Бог се предрешил и я посетил, като] съ напраил [на] някуй циганин, кат на просяк. И душъл и искал детету за курбань. Тя си гу е обещала, трябва [да гу даде] на курбань... Тя гу напременила, наредила гу и гу пуснала със бащата в гората. И таман го турили — аз съм виждала снимка как са гу турили, как гу са турили да гу колат и той [бащата] с един ай толък нож [замахва]! — да гу заколят за курбань и Аллах пуца коч на земята и коча ляга и детето го пушат. И така...
 [*FB:*] А къде има такава снимка?
 [*Storyteller 1:*] Има, я в Турция много снимки [има]...
 [*Question by FB:*] А тука някъде в селото да има такава снимка?
 [*Storyteller 2:*] По едно време гледах...
 [*Storyteller 1:*] Така ли?
 [*Storyteller 2:*] Имаше едно момче, дете бяхе пуснало [такива снимки да ги гледат хората от селото]. О-о-о, я съм видела такви неща, имаше...
 [*Storyteller 1:*] Я не съм видела...
 [*Storyteller 2:*] На [х]артия...
 [*FB:*] Значи те не са имали деца и тя казала, тя обещала...
 [*Storyteller 1:*] Че да й даде Господь [чедо], ше го даде за курбань! Само и само да роди! Оти виж, ние сме много лоши... Наште малко да покарат някой...
 [*Storyteller 2:*] Като света се е основал, когато света се е основал, тогай е било това...
 [*Storyteller 1:*] Малко да покарат някой, тва ни е на нас, што думаш, като [един лош адет]... “Виж, мари, е-е-ей — я, ялова гъзица!” [Така казват за бездетните жени.]
 Тя като такво [е дала обет], тя ше си да роди... Тъй думат... Тя като й станало нящо мъчно — и [дала такъв обет] само и само да си роди.
 [*Storyteller 2:*] Да видят хората, че е родила...
 [*FB:*] А викаш, че това е било кога?
 [*Storyteller 2:*] Това трябва да е било когато света се е основавал... Тога[ва] трябвало да е било... И тогава, оттам вече са се заколили [т.е. се е започнало да се колят] курбането.

[*Storyteller 1:*] Може, щом думаш...

[*Storyteller 2:*] Еми започна се... Оттам сетне се започнало да се колат курбането натам, когато света се е курдисувал... Кога дунята съ е курдисувала, тогаз трябва да е било. Еми та оттам сетне, оттам сетне са започна да се колят курбането... [...]

[*Storyteller 3:*] Оттам сетне са започнали да се колят курбането... [...]

[*Storyteller 1:*] На моята сестра имаше [един познат]... Та той като ти заразраа е[дни] такви [истории]... Та к[ак]во е ти дума вашта баба, че не само да го слушаш кой какво ти казва, а ти пък отнейде гу чети, а отнейде да се чуе; а той като ти заразрава — се едно на оная дуня идеш...

[*Storyteller 2:*] Сещам са...

[*Storyteller 1:*] И направо акъла ти съ однесе... И като помислиш, речеш: “Не! Тва не е свят тук.”

[*Storyteller 2:*] Не е. Ами виж ся, я които ся четат Корана, как са се привързали така...

[*Storyteller 1:*] Ами като четат — па[к] малко влиза в главата... Малко по малко...

[*FB:*] А за Адем да си чула?

[*Storyteller 1 to Storyteller 2:*] Ету виж ся, това тя ся за Пейгамберите ся казва... Ами не знам, бе... Те тия старите ора знаят, бе! Ей сега на [д]жамията, ей сега фъф пет часа флизат да съ молят. Преди пет часа тия доадат. Апъ и бързо са молят. Като изляят [можете да отидете и да ги питате да ви разкажат] — ама да има някуй да ви посочи [към кого да се обърнете]...

[...]

[*FB:*] А ти нали каза, че като не е имала майката дете и го е обещала [на Бога, макар че все още не е било родено]... А защо бащата е решил [да изпълни нейния обет]? Нали тя е казала, [а не той,] че ще го даде курбан? Аз това не го разбрах...

[*Storyteller 3:*] А-а-а, бащата...

[*Storyteller 1:*] Виж сега, тя кату не е имала деца, си съ е молила, на — я кату в Аллах, Госпудь! — съ е молела... Нека да си руди, та ше гу даде курбанин, ама само да видят хората, че е рудила...

[*Storyteller 2:*] Само и само да има [чедо]...

[*Storyteller 1:*] Само да видят хората, че е рудила... Ету, тя се кату помолила — и така! Господь ли, какво ли, дал й бебе, рудила е... И тогава, дошло време, когат си гу искат [детето курбан]. Ся тя пъ[к], тя е дала във Бога клетва. Ету тоя курбан си гу искат. Дошло време, като във съне, сигур ше й съ е сънило — айде, това дете да се дава сега!

[*At this point, the Storyteller 1 is turning to Storyteller 2:*] Виж сега как ти думаш... Абе яз съм слушала, ама...

[*Storyteller 2:*] О, я съм снимки даже видела... Как е така [нарисуван] — курбаня...

[*FB:*] И после? Тя като е видяла тоя сън — и после?

[*Storyteller 1:*] Ами дала си гу. Пременила гу, облякла гу... И ша гу даде детето да гу заколят за курбанин в гората...

[*Storyteller 2:*] И кату излизат в гората — дават една гора... [на картината, за която споменах] — и като излизат в гората и [то е нарисувано] как дига той [ножа]; той така легнало [детето] — и главата [му е положена така]... И веке и ножа държи тоа Бейгамберина ли, някакъв той кату грозен чувяк нящу съ гледа там на снимката...

[*Storyteller 1:*] Еми как!

[*Storyteller 2:*] И шо думаш! И веднага коча [пада]! Като се едно [е спуснат отгоре] с крила— и стипа отдолце...

[*FB:*] А викат ли, че тоя коч ше те земе един ден да те носи на оная свят?

[*Storyteller 1:*] А така де, а така!

[*Storyteller 3:*] Така казват!

[*Storyteller 2:*] Казват, че който си коли курбане [на този свят], на оная свят ше е като конник, ше фъркаш със них [курбаните], ше одиш нагор-надолу... И така, затва се колат курбаниту.

[*Storyteller 3:*] Ами вие нагоре колите ли курбани?

[FB:] Да, на Гергьовден.
[Storyteller 3:] На Гергьовден... Ами тука наште българи — и тия така... Ами и тие ся купуват агнета, ярета не колат за курбань... Ярета не колат и за умряло, от са гяволе... Ние тука имаме и българи, ама много хубаво си живеем...

The above text was recorded in 2005 in the village of Breznitsa (the county of Gotse Delchev, Blagoevgrad region, South-Western Bulgaria). The account was given by three local Muslim women. The name of the first one was Nevse Ibrahim Pent-Aydareva, born 1956 in the same village; she is referred to as 'Storyteller 1'. The other two women (referred to as 'Storyteller 2' and 'Storyteller 3') wished to remain anonymous. The field-research was part of the author's work on the project *Folk Religion in the Balkans*. The sound-recording of the above account is stored in the Hans Rausing Endangered Languages Project (HRELP) archives, at SOAS, University of London.

Text No. 24

He hit the neck with a knife but the knife would not cut

[Storyteller 1:] That's what was said... There was a fellow once who didn't have children. He didn't have children and he said, "Allah, if You give me it [a child], I'll give it [back] to you as a Kurban."

[Storyteller 2:] That's right.

[Storyteller 1:] He gave him, He gave him a child, it was said... He gave him a male child. The child lived and lived and lived and grew up and became seven years old²¹⁸...

[Storyteller 2:] Ah, that's how old he grew up!

[Storyteller 1:] That's how old he grew up! So far so good, but then Allah said to him [the father], "you promised it [the child]! Are you going to give it or what?"

[Storyteller 2:] It was [promised] to Allah...

[Storyteller 1:] He [the father] said, "Well, I'll give it to You. There is no way it could be otherwise!"

Then he took the child and told the mother, "I want you, mother, to bathe him, to dress him up and make him look nice. I'll take him, mother, with me in the forest."

[Storyteller 2:] Oh my...

[Storyteller 1:] Then she dressed him up, she got him ready, she made him look nice, and then he [the father] took him and set off to the forest. So, that's all that I know. That's all I know, I don't know anything else. He [Ibrahim] went to the forest [with his son Ishmael] and said, "Ayde, Bismil Araman Iram!"²¹⁹ Then wherever he took him, he made there a little hole in the earth and put the child there, to slay him. He made a little hole in the earth and put the child there to slay him. He said, "Bismil Araman Iram, ayde! I have promised him and now I'm giving him back!" He hit the neck with a knife but the knife wouldn't cut! He again hit the neck and the knife again wouldn't cut! Then he hit a stone, and the stone split.²²⁰

Then a voice from above came. *Cenab-u Allah*²²¹ called to him from above, "Durbiral,²²² let the child go!", and He [Allah] dropped a ram down from above. He dropped a ram down from above and he [the father] sacrificed the ram and made a Kurban [offering] and took the child [home] and set him [free]. That is all I know. I don't know anything else.

[Question by FB:] Since then they started [to have Kurban]?

[Storyteller 1:] From then on they started sacrificing Kurban. But when he put the ram [down to be slain], then the ram broke into a run ...

[Storyteller 2:] It jumped ...

[*Storyteller 1:*] It jumped, the ram jumped... That's why now everybody sacrifices wherever they want.²²³ That's why they do not take [rams intended for Kurban] to one place [only]...

[*Storyteller 2:*] Whoever wants to [will sacrifice] in their own place...

[*Storyteller 1:*] Whoever wants to [will sacrifice] in their own place... Everybody will do it wherever they want to... From whatever village they happen to be [they will do it there], wherever they live...

[*Storyteller 2:*] Wherever they wish to do it...

[*Storyteller 1:*] Wherever they live, that's where they will sacrifice [the Kurban].

[*Question by FB:*] You said that the ram jumped?

[*Storyteller 2:*] It jumped, it jumped.

[*Storyteller 1:*] The ram jumped, the ram jumped when he [the father, was about to] sacrifice it. The ram jumped and that's why people now sacrifice everywhere...

[*Storyteller 2:*] Wherever one wants...

[*Storyteller 1:*] Wherever one wants...

[*Question by FB:*] When he [Ibrahim] set off to sacrifice the child, you mentioned that he dug a cavity in the earth.

[*Storyteller 1:*] He dug a cavity...

[*Storyteller 2:*] He dug a cavity, he dug a little opening in the earth, he dug a hole...

[*Storyteller 1:*] Look now, [this is] the way we do it now. Each year we go over there, under those rocks and locate [a particular spot for the sacrificial ceremony] ... We fix a hole for a child there, and each year we sacrifice there for our child's sake.²²⁴ We do it at the same place [and keep doing it there]...

[*Storyteller 2:*] So that the blood runs there...

[*Storyteller 1:*] So the blood runs there and we put the entrails and everything there...

[*Storyteller 2:*] [Everything] which we take out from inside [the ram, we put there]...

[*Storyteller 1:*] Everything we take out from it, we put there.

[*Storyteller 2:*] [Including] the horns, the guts...

[*Storyteller 1:*] The horns, the hooves, whatever we don't eat we put there, and bones.²²⁵

[*Question by FB:*] Did he [the father] cover the eyes [of the boy]?

[*Storyteller 1:*] He covered them with a cloth. He covered the child's eyes, the child's eyes, and so he tried [to sacrifice him]. He hit him once with the knife to slay him but he couldn't. He hit him a hundred times and couldn't again. Well, then *Cenab-u Allah* [Almighty God] called from above and said, "*Durbiral-sval!*"²²⁶

He [the father] hit the stone, and he split the stone. The knife was good! But it was *Cenab-u Allah* who did not allow it to happen [i.e. the child to be sacrificed]...

[*Storyteller 2:*] He didn't allow the child to be slain!

[*Storyteller 1:*] He didn't allow [the child] to be slain, and then He dropped a ram down and he [the father] set the ram down and covered the eyes of the ram and he was ready to slay it, and the ram broke into a run. Because the ram broke into a run, they can go anywhere to [make a sacrifice]... Anyway, he [Ibrahim] slew it [the ram]. He set it there and slew it...

[...]

[*Question by FB:*] Did he [the father] bind the child or not?

[*Storyteller 1:*] No, he did not bind him.

[*Storyteller 2:*] He didn't bind him.

[*Interjection by Anife's husband:*] He DID bind him! How else?

[*Storyteller 1:*] Is that so?²²⁷
 [*Storyteller 2:*] Was this what happened?
 [*Storyteller 1:*] You go to the mosque, you must know better.²²⁸

Ударил ножа на шията — а ножа не рачи да сече

[*Storyteller 1:*] Тия така казувая... Един чувяк си немал дечица. Немал дечица — [и] той рекъл: “Аллаше, аку ми гу дадеш, шъ ти гу дам курбанин!”

[*Storyteller 2:*] А така!

[*Storyteller 1:*] И той, баре[м], дал му, дал му, демек, детя... Дал му мъжко детя. И той, си живяло детето, седяло, седяло, станало на седем години...

[*Storyteller 2:*] А-а-а! Толку нарасло!

[*Storyteller 1:*] Толку нарасло! Хубуу, ама тук Алла[х] шъ му рече: “Ти гу обеща! Шъ гу дадеш ли или не щеш?”

[*Storyteller 2:*] То е [обречено] в Аллаа[х]...

[*Storyteller 1:*] И той рекъл: “Ми шъ гу дам, нема какво да е!”

Та гу завел детето, рекъл на майката: “Искам, мале, да гу примениш, да гу умийш, да гу напраиш — шъ гу вода, мале, с мене в гората.”

[*Storyteller 2:*] Яхе-е-е...

[*Storyteller 1:*] И тя [майката] гу пременила, омерила, напраила; той [бащата] гу завел и отишъл [с детето] в гората. Та ся тва знам. Тва знам, а друго не знам. Отишъл в гората [Ибрахим, съпроводен от Исмаил]. Като рекъл: “Айде, *бисмилъ-араман-ираим!*” — веке където го откарал — турил, напраил една лочица, турил детето да гу коле. Напраил една лочка — турил детето да гу коле. Рекъл: “*Бисмилъ-араман-ираим!* — [х]айде! Обещал гу съм — давам гу!” Ударил ножа на шията — а ножа не рачи да сече! Той па ударил на шията — ножа па[к] не рачи да сече! И той ударил на каменя — каменя гу пресякъл!

И отгоре тогаз съ порукало, *Дженнаб-Аллах* порукал отгоре, рекъл: “*Дурбирал*, пусти детето!” И спуснал един овен. Спуснал един овен — и той заклал овена и напраил курбаня и детето си гу завел [у дома] и си гу оставил [живо]. Тва знам, друго не знам.

[*FB:*] И оттогава почнаха [да колят курбаните]?

[*Storyteller 1:*] И оттогава почнаа да колят курбаните. Па той като турил овена, па овена подбъгнал...

[*Storyteller 2:*] Подрипнал...

[*Storyteller 1:*] Подрипнал, подрипнал овена... Ся от тва колят кой къде иска. Не е да гу носят [овена за курбан] на една мяшка...

[*Storyteller 2:*] Кой у тях...

[*Storyteller 1:*] Кой у тях... Кой къде иска... Кой от кое село, кой където жувяй...

[*Storyteller 2:*] Кой където знае...

[*Storyteller 1:*] Кой където жувяй, там си коля.

[*FB:*] Подрипнало?

[*Storyteller 2:*] Подрипнало, подрипнало.

[*Storyteller 1:*] Овена подрипнал, овена подрипнал, като гу заклал. Та подрипнал овена, а па та оттва колят сега навсякъде...

[*Storyteller 2:*] Кой къде иска...

[*Storyteller 1:*] Кой къде иска...

[*FB:*] Той [Ибрахим] като е отишъл да го коля детето, ти каза [че изкопал] лочица?

[*Storyteller 1:*] Лочица напраил ...

[*Storyteller 2:*] Изкопал лочица, изкопал едно отворче, изкопал една дупка...

[*Storyteller 1:*] Я гляй ся, я сега като ния, ката година, я там смя омерили — я под ония камъни... Смя омерили дупка — на детето ката година му колим там. Се на едно място...

[*Storyteller 2:*] Ми да тече кръвтъ там...

[*Storyteller 1:*] Кръвтъ, и тва черева, и що веч сичку [от вътрешностите на курбана]...
 [*Storyteller 2:*] Що изпаряме...
 [*Storyteller 1:*] Що изпаряме — там го туряме.
 [*Storyteller 2:*] Рогата, черевата...
 [*Storyteller 1:*] Рогата, ногите [т.е. копитата], което не ядем, пак туряме сичко там. Кокалето.
 [*FB:*] А покрил ли му е той очите?
 [*Storyteller 1:*] Покрил му е с кърпичка. На детето покрил очите, на детето. Та като мъчил, баре ударил едноч ножа да го заколе, не можло. Ударил сто пъти — па не можло. Хубаву, ама тога порукал *Дженнаб-Аллах* и рекъл: “*Дурбираль-сваль!*”
 Той [бащата] ударил каменя — каменя гу пресякъл. Ножа е убав! Ама *Дженнаб-Аллах* не е дал [да бъде принесено в жертва детето]...
 [*Storyteller 2:*] Не е дал да заколи детето!
 [*Storyteller 1:*] Не е дал да се заколи! И тогаз пузнал овена и той [бащата] турил овена, пукрил му очите на овена и тогава рекъл да гу заколе и овена подбягнал. Като подбягнал овена — и оттва ся одят навсякъде [да колят курбани]... Та па гу заклал, [Ибрахим овена] де! Па си гу турил там, го заклал...
 [...]
 [*FB:*] А той детето вързал ли го е или не го е вързал?
 [*Storyteller 1:*] Не, не го е вързал.
 [*Storyteller 2:*] Той негу не го е вързал
 [*Тук се намеси съпругът на Анифе:*] Вързал гу е, как!
 [*Storyteller 1:*] А [т.е. нима]?
 [*Storyteller 2:*] Така ли е?
 [*Storyteller 1:*] Вие одите на [д]жамия, вие по-знете.

The above text was recorded in 2005 in the village of Breznitsa (the county of Gotse Delchev, Blagoevgrad region, South-Western Bulgaria). The account was given by two local Muslim women. The name of the first one was Anife; she was born 1924 in the same village; she is referred to as ‘Storyteller 1’. The second one was Nevse Ibraim Pent-Aydareva, born 1956 in the same village; she is referred to as ‘Storyteller 2’. The field-research was part of the author’s work on the project *Folk Religion in the Balkans*. The sound-recording of the above account is stored in the Hans Rausing Endangered Languages Project (HRELP) archives, at SOAS, University of London.

Text No. 25 About the Kurban

[*Storyteller 1:*]²²⁹ About the Kurban... I don’t know anything about it. I know nothing. Well, my father used to know a lot, but I’m already [old and I don’t remember anything anymore]... He used to tell me [about it], but I’m 83 years of age and I have forgotten everything, just like this... [...]

The Peygambers are from days of old, from days of old. They have been here from days of old. Among them the first is Ibraim [i.e. Ibrahim]. Ibraim, when he thought about cutting off his son’s head..., that’s what it’s about, that’s what Kurban is about...

He [Ibraim] prayed [to Allah] since he didn’t have children. He didn’t have children, and after his having prayed and prayed, and then *Cenab-u Allah* allowed it.²³⁰ A child was born to him. A long time passed, two to three years, and then He [Allah] spoke to him [to Ibraim], “At least one thing [you should have given as Kurban].”

He [Ibraim] said then, “Since this is so, I will [give a sacrificial offering as a Kurban].” That’s what he said. He said what was to be taken [for the Kurban], so that it was for the sake of the child, it was for the sake of the child, since he was born as a result of this [prayer]. That’s what he did. He took out 30 [animals] and made this, *daderasi* [?]. At some point, Allah said to him again, “it’s too little [not enough].” That’s what He said to him [i.e. to Ibrahim].

Then they did [the following]. He [Ibrahim] then bought large oxen and sacrificed them... He slaughtered them. In the third year it became difficult again.

Then he said to his wife, “If that wasn’t [enough], then I will [do something else]... He sacrificed camels, and again it didn’t work.

Then he took his son, for whom he had prayed to Allah [for a child]...

[*Storyteller 2:*] He had made an oath to Allah. Allah doesn’t want camels or sheep, He wants nothing [but the promised child].

[*Storyteller 1:*] Nothing!

[*Storyteller 2:*] He wants the child.

[*Storyteller 1:*] The child! And he [Ibrahim] took him [to sacrifice him]... He didn’t tell his wife, however. He said [to his son], “Child, come on”, he said, “Let’s go”, he said, “Let’s go there”]...

The child’s name was Ismail and his, Ibrahim.

He took him to the place where the Hajj takes place now. That’s where everybody goes now, everybody who goes on Hajj goes there...

[*Storyteller 2:*] To Mecca.

[*Storyteller 1:*] Everybody goes there to see where he [Ismail] was taken [to be sacrificed]. He [Ibrahim] carried on and carried on and carried on [with his son] and went to the mountain, there [they went].... There he pushed him down and said to him, “Well, my son”, he said, “that’s it”, he said. “I [slaughtered] so many camels,” he said. “I slaughtered so many oxen, so many things I did and it didn’t work... I can’t do anything but slay you”.

The child said, “If you have to slay me then slay me.”

The child lay down and he [the father] prepared the knife, getting ready [to sacrifice him], like this. Just when he was about to do what he had to do, to slay him, at the moment when he grasped him, something then came from Allah — a ram. The ram was pushed down [from above], Allah gave the ram and it came straight to him [Ibrahim]. Then it occurred to him [Ibrahim] that it should be given to Allah. Then he said again, “Come on my son”, he said, “you appear to be lucky. You are lucky.” That’s what he said. After that he took the child up and they went back home... It happened ages ago to this Ibrahim.

[*Storyteller 2:*] Well, when his wife didn’t have children [he prayed to Allah for a child]... He bought sheep — how many, was it thirty?

[*Storyteller 1:*] Yes.

[*Storyteller 2:*] That’s right, but she again had a dream [that Allah wanted a Kurban]... Then he bought camels.

[*Storyteller 1:*] The camels also [were unacceptable]...

[*Storyteller 2:*] Allah also didn’t want camels. He wants the vow [to be fulfilled]. The vow which the woman made to Allah, she gave her word... The husband took him [the child], but you see that my father tells the story otherwise... Then the ram came down. The ram descended when he [Ibrahim] took him [his son] to a certain place to slay it, over there on the hill.

За курбаня

[*Storyteller 1:*] За курбаните... Яз нищу не зная за тва. Нищу не знам. Я, баща ми гу знаяше многу... Хубуу, ама я съм сега [вече стар и не помня]... Той ми е разправял, ама съм осемдесе и три години. И съм [в]се забурил, е така... [...]

Пейгамбериту те са отдавна, отдавна. Отдавна са тука; тий са, най-напреж е Ибраим. Ибраим, когато той смятал да отсеке на сина си главата... За това е тая [история]..., за курбаня...

Молил съ е [Ибрахим на Аллах, понеже] немал си деца; немал си деца; и *Дженнаб-Аллах* — той [Ибрахим му] се молил, молил — и даде [Аллах] да му се [роди дете], едно дете му се родило. И заминало така коджа време, две-три години, Той [Аллах] заказал му: “Ти,” — каза[л му Аллах], — “баре пу една такво... [курбан да дадеш]!”

И той [Ибрахим] е зел тога[ва], рекъл: “Щом така, аз ше зема [да дам курбан]!” — казва. Казал колку такво да земи, там да е заради детету, тва е за детету, щом съ гу родили оттва, тва напраил. Той изкарал трийсе такво, направил така, *дадериаси* [?]. Та пу ено време Аллах па му рекъл: “Многу малку е!” — казва.

Айде, те фатили, той [Ибрахим] фатил, купил тогай голями говеда. И тях ги онодил... И тях заклал. На третята година той — па[к] зор.

Рекъл на жената му: “Щом не [беше достатъчно това, което досега съм дал], тогава [камили ше принесе в жертва]...”

Камили насякъл — не ще.

Сина си карал, оти той съ молил на Аллаа [за чедо]...

[*Storyteller 2:*] Има клетва в Аллах! А Аллах не ще ниту камилите, ниту овци — нищу [друго] не ще [освен детето].

[*Storyteller 1:*] Нищу!

[*Storyteller 2:*] Иска си детету.

[*Storyteller 1:*] Детету! И той гу завел [да го принася в жертва]... Не казал на жената му. Рекъл: “Дете, айде,” — казва, — “ше идем,” — казва... “[еди къде си]”.

Исмаил го са зовали детето, а пък той — Ибраим.

Той гу закарал оттам на аджилъка, където сега отам нанагоре къде одят, ся сичку одят там, коиту на аджилъка...

[*Storyteller 2:*] Мека.

[*Storyteller 1:*] Сичку одят на натам, да видят там къде гу са откарали [Исмаил да го колят]. Той кара, кара, кара на планината веке, там във това... Бута гу там — и рекъл му: “Е, сине,” — казва, — “така е!” — казва. — “Толку камили съм [заклал],” — казва, — “толку говеда съм запрял, колку това-онова и ... — не може... [да се направи нищо друго,] освен да те заколя!”

Детету реклу: “Ми ку мъ заколиш, шъ ма заколиш!”

И той полегнал така детету и той [баща му] нанодил ножа така да гу [коли]; кът си гу така, онодил — да гу фатил веке така, гу наготвил да гу коле, таман гу фатил на тва — и од Аллаа[x] тога тръгнало това оттам, един коч. Коча гу бута, Ала[x]а гу дал коча — та при негу. И той тогава се сетил веке — зарад Ала[x]а ше му даде. Тогай той па си гу [пуснал]: “Айде, сине, казва, имало си късмет, вика, късмет,” — казува. И сетне след тва той па станал така, със тва детету и съ върнал... Той бил рано тоа Ибраим.

[*Storyteller 2:*] Тая жена, кату е немала деца... Купил е овци — колку? Трийсе ли?

[*Storyteller 1:*] Да.

[*Storyteller 2:*] А така. Ней па[к] й съ всънява, [че Аллах си иска курбана]... Той купил камили.

[*Storyteller 1:*] И камили па[к] ...

[*Storyteller 2:*] И камили не ще Аллах. Иска си клетвата. Клетвата, което си е дала жената думата в Аллах... И мъжа гу извел. А ету сега баща ми казува, че [е иначе]... И тогай коча слиза. Слиза коча, [когато] той гу откарал там на мяшката да гу коля, на баиря.

The above text was recorded in 2005 in the village of Breznitsa (the county of Gotse Delchev, Blagoevgrad region, South-Western Bulgaria). The account was given by two local Muslim people, a father and a daughter. The name of the father was Ibrahim Ismail Arnautin; he was born 1922 in the same village; he is referred to as ‘Storyteller 1’. The daughter’s name was Nevse Ibraim Pent-Aydareva, born 1956 in the same village; she is referred to as ‘Storyteller 2’. The field-research was part of the author’s work on the project *Folk Religion in the Balkans*. The sound-recording of the above account is stored in the Hans Rausing Endangered Languages Project (HRELP) archives, at SOAS, University of London.

**“You were given by Allah
and now I had a dream to sacrifice you as a Kurban!”**

Ibrahim was a Syrian by origin. It should have happened somewhere there, between Jews and Assyrians,²³¹ and he was making idols. He was a craftsman, he was making idols from gypsum and wood and other things, which he was sending his sons to sell in the market, so that people pray to these figurines.²³² So Ismail went to the market and [said] to his other brothers, “Why do you sell this stuff? You are deceiving people.” [The brothers answered], “We care about the money, [nothing else]... Didn’t our father make them [the idols]? Isn’t he a master craftsman? He is our father, isn’t he? This is business.” The other [people], while passing by, were looking at a figurine, at the way it was made, [and asking], “How much does it cost?” “It costs so-and-so much”. He [Ismail] went to one of his brothers and [told] him, “Pray now, pray to the figurine and see if it helps you with something.” He had strong faith. [His brother said], “The only thing that I’m concerned about is taking money, the rest [doesn’t matter to me]. What sense does it make to pray to it — it’s a figurine!” He [Ismail] uttered a prayer so that it [the figurine] would burst. He [the brother] said to him, “When I get home tonight, when I get home tonight, I’ll tell our father about this. He won’t allow you into the house if you do such things.” [Ismail said], “I believe in Allah, and Dad, our father, will also come to the Faith! He will also turn to Allah and his power! All the rest is lies, don’t deceive people with these idols! You put it there in the room and go pray to it.”²³³

[The brother replied], “But these are holy, man!”

“I can also make you such a “holy” thing. The power which is an invisible power, this is holy. Who gives rain, Who gives lightning, thunder, the earthquake, the wind? Who created the seas? It is the Great Power. The dry land on which we are living, everything which is born, the animals from which we draw milk, and so forth, and which we sacrifice as Kurbans for meat — everything is from Allah.”

“Mind your own business! We only care about the money, not the rest...”

So far so good...

Ismail got married. He got married, and one year, two, three [passed] and he had no children... Every night, every evening when he was going to bed, before going to bed he was praying to Allah, “Allah, if I have only one child, I will slay the dearest thing to You as a Kurban.”²³⁴

Some time passed and after a while, his wife got pregnant. He continued to pray, and a child was born to him, a male child... After that, one night he had a dream. “You promised to sacrifice as a Kurban the dearest thing. Come on, I am waiting!”²³⁵

He sacrificed 90 rams, 90 rams he sacrificed as Kurbans, he distributed them around and fed the people.

Three months passed and he again had a dream that this Kurban won’t do: “You promised that you are going to slay the dearest thing for a Kurban.”

He slew 70 camels, he slew them as Kurbans, as camels are suitable to be slain for Kurbans.

Three months passed and he again had a dream: “The camels aren’t good enough. What is the thing dearest to you?”

“The child is.”

“He is indeed. You will sacrifice him as a Kurban!”

Wow! Come on! He [Ismail] was praying to Allah every day as he was a believer... He didn't tell his wife that he is going to sacrifice him but said to her, "You will dress him up beautifully²³⁶ and you will dye his nails." That's why now the feet of the Kurban are dyed with henna. "You will paint his eyebrows beautifully. Dress him beautifully in new clothes and I'll take him to another village, to a friend of mine, so that they can enjoy seeing that I have a child."

He didn't tell his wife anything! He took his knife and off they went, as if on their way to another village. Reaching one hill [he said], "Hey, son, do you know where I'm taking you now?"

"Where, my father?"

"I had a dream. You were given by Allah and now I had a dream to sacrifice you as a Kurban. You won't struggle! Whatever I say [will be done], since Allah ordered me to sacrifice you. You are my only offspring, you are my only heir! I don't have any other children!"

"Whatever you say, Father, whatever you say will be, since the order comes from Allah and from the *melyake* Dzhebrail [Gabriel].²³⁷ He is here, we cannot see him, but he is here. You will bind", he said, "my hands and one leg together, so that if I jump when you slay me, if I jump I won't spatter you with blood."²³⁸ Because when I splatter blood over you and when you go home tonight, my mother will see you splattered with blood, wouldn't she? I won't be there and she won't survive this. She will die [of sorrow]. So you will do this."

Then he [Ismail] tied [the boy's] two hands next to one leg....

"But my one leg you'll leave free," he said, "so that I can kick with it."

"It will be here", he [Ismail] said, "on the green meadow". There was greenery and a rock there. He bound his arms and a leg, just the way we now tie up the Kurban. We tie the Kurban up just like this. The moment when he took out the knife ...

[Yet before that the child had said], "you will sharpen the knife, so that it is sharp! When you do it, my soul may depart in one go, so that I don't suffer, and you will say a big *salaam, çok salaam*²³⁹ to my mother! So that she shouldn't cry a lot and she doesn't mourn after me. It's what Allah ordered."

Just when he took out the knife and was about to strike with the knife to slay him, the knife didn't cut.²⁴⁰ The knife didn't chop! He tried for a second time, while he [the son] was still bound and tied on the ground. He tried for a second time, the knife didn't cut! He tried it again like this for a third time, and it again didn't cut! He did like this with the knife on the stone, on the rock, and the rock split into two. At that moment something started rumbling in the air. Hop! Dzhebrail [Gabriel], the great *melyake*, the angel, dropped a ram, he dropped a ram and a voice uttered to him, "Ismail, this ram was created by Allah 400 years ago in Paradise, in *Cennet*."²⁴¹ We [Muslims] call it "*Cennet*," in Paradise. "It was known that a child would be born to you and that you will sacrifice it as a Kurban with your whole heart. Now Allah dropped this ram so that you could sacrifice it as a Kurban, so that the child may live."

He slew the ram as a Kurban...

It is also on a picture... It was there in a book which was studied, it was a Bible... It was in Persian, it was translated from Persian into Arabic... The man who studied it was called Aygulyu Skatadzhiev. Do you know him? He was a relative of Smyalyu Kesidzhiev... A relative of Smyalyu Kesidzhiev was he. A relative, his grandfather. He used to come here. Our grandfather, the father of my mother, was the mayor of the three villages [around this one], so the old people from the three villages used to come here to

seek advice from the mayor. The mayor in Turkish is called, “Myukhtar” [i.e. Mûhtar]. They used to come to the Myukhtar, and when I was a young child I was always around them. I remember this, I remember how they were studying and how this man was explaining and how he was translating — the one who was studying the book. He was in the Ottoman army, captured by the English for three years

This tale has remained from the time of Peygambers. I’m telling you.

After that, when he sacrificed the ram, the child remained alive and he also became a Peygamberin. Azreti Ismail was also a Peygamberin. Then the world spread out. Allah gave different languages and different religions. My father used to tell a lot of stories like this, many stories, but I don’t remember all of them...

This is my son.

[FB: *The storyteller points to a man entering*].

He lives in Asia Minor, he came to visit me. He came to see me.

“Тебе Аллах те даде и ся ми се всънува да си те заколя за курбан!”

Ибрахим е бил, а-а-а, сирийско поколение. Между евреите и между асирийците, там някъде е било тва нящу; и той е правил идоли. Той е бил майстор, правил е идоли — от гипс, от дървета, от такова; и е пушал тия синове да ги продават на пазаря — хората да съмолят на тях, на тия фигури. А Исмаил отишъл на пазаря и [казал] на другите му братя: “Защо ги продавате тва бе? Да лъжете ората!”; [а братята му отговорили:] “Ние да земем парите, та [да върви търговията]... Нали нашия баща ги е направил! Нали той е майстор! Той ни е баща! Като търговия е!”; те си тия [купувачите] минават, гледат фигурата направена: “Колку пари?”, “Толку пари.” Той [Исмаил] зел така, отишъл при брат му, при единия [и казал]: “Айде, моли съ, моли съ на фигурата — да видим шъ ти помогне ли нящу!” Той [Исмаил] е бил силно вярващ. “Ся да им зема парите, та... Какво шъ съ моля, тва е фигура!”; [Исмаил] изрекъл една молитва — да съ спуска [идолът]. Той [брат му казал]: “Кат си ида довечера,” — оня му казва, — “като си ида довечера, ше кажа на баба, на татко! Не ше тъ прибере у дома, ако напраиш такова нещущу!”; “Аз вярвам във Аллах! И баба, татку — и той шъ до де във вярата! И той ше увярва във Аллага! Във силата! Това е сичку лъжи! Немой лъжете хората със такива идоли! Туриш гу там е във стаята и ше идеш на нея да съ молиш!”

“Ама това са светии бе!”

“Ама и аз ше ти напраа такава светия! Силата, която е, невидимата Сила, тя е Светията! Кой дава дъжда, кой дава светкавиците, гръмиша, земетресенията, ветерата, моретата кой ги е създал? Великата Сила. Сушата, дето живейме, тва, дето съ ражда, животните, дето доиме мляко, и туй-онуй, ги колиме за курбани, за месо, сичко е от Аллах.”

“Я си глей работата па ти бе! Ние да зейем парите, па...”

Добре...

Исмаил съ оженил. Оженил съ — и година, две, три, нямал деца... Сяка нош, сяка вечер, като лягал, лягал — се си се е молел на Аллах. “Аллаше, дори барем едно дете да имам, ше ти заколя най-милото за курбан.”

Де-де, няколко време — и жената му забременяла. Той си съ продължавал да си съ моли. И му съ родило дете. Мъжко дете... И след това всънило му се една вечер: “Ти обеща да заколиш курбан най-милото! Айде! Чакам!”

Деведесе коча, деведесе коча заклал ги за курбан, раздал ги, наранил ората.

Минало три месеца — пак му съ всънило, не се фатат тия курбане: “Ти обеща най-милото, че ше заколиш за курбанин!”

Заклал седемдесе камили. Заклал ги за курбани, оти и камилите се колят за курбани.

Минали три месеца, пак му съ всънило: “Не ти съ кабуль камилите! Най-милото кое ти е?”

“Детето е!”

“То йе! Ше гу заколиш за курбан!”

Брей! Айде! Моли си се на Алах всяки ден [Исмаил], той си е вярващ... И казал на жената му; но не ѝ е казал, че ше гу коле. “Ше гу премениш хубаво, ше му вапцаш нектето!” Ся затва се кьносват ногите на курбаните! “И ше му туриш убави вежди! Облечи го убаво, със нови дрехи — и аз ше го откара в другото село при един приятел, да му съ радуват, че имам дете!”

Не казал на жената! Зел си е ножа у него — и айде, примерно, да префърлят към другото село, на една тумба: “Е-е-е! Синко! Найш къде те карам сега аз?”

“Къде, баба?”

“Мен ми съ всънува, тебе Аллах те даде и ся ми се всънува да си те заколя за курбан! Няма да ми съ опинаш! Каквото ти кажа — Аллах е наредил да си те заколя! Ти ми си явлет! Поколение! Други деца нямам!”

“Каквото кажеш, баба, както ми кажеш — така! Щом от Аллах е заповедта и мелякето Джебраил — той е тука, ние не можем да гу видиме, амъ той е тука! Шъ ми върдзеш,” — казува, — “ръките и едната нога заедно, като рипам, като ме заколиш, ако рипам, да не тъ опръскам с кръв! Защото, като те опръскам с кръв, довечера като си идеш [у дома], нал мойта майка ше тъ виде опръскан си със кръв и мен няма да мъ има и тя няма да живее веке! И тя ше умре [от мъка]! И така ше направиш!”

И той фатил и върдзал му двете ръки за едната нога...

“Едната нога ше ми я остаиш! Да си ритам със нея!”

“И я тука!” — казва; на една зеленуга, зеленушка така, имало е една скала там, вързал му ръките и ногъта, едната нога — както връзваме курбаня! Ния така го връзваме курбаня. И таман изкарал ножа...

“Шъ наостриш ножа, да е остър! Като речеш — на един път да ми излязе душгът! Да не ме е зор! И ше кажеш, много селям, чок селям на мойта майка! Немой много да плаче и немой да ме жали! Аллах е наредил така.”

Таман изкарал ножа — рекъл да тръгне ножа, да го заколя, ножа не ряже. Ножа не сече! Повторил втор път — той [синът му] си е наведен и вързан, на земьта! Втор път повторил — ножа не ряже! На третия път — пак рекъл така! Пак не ряже! Така рекъл със ножа във камъна, във скалъта — скалъта съ разрязала на две. И в тоа момент нящо забоботило във въздуха. Хо-о-о-о-п! Джебраил, великото меляйке, ангела, спуснал коча. Спуснал коча и един глас му съ продумало: “Исмаил! Тоя коч е преди четристотин години във рая, във Дженнете, ние го казваме Дженнете, в Рая, създаден е от Аллах! Знае, че на тебе ше се роди дете и ти със сичко сърце ше гу заколиш за курбанъ! Сега Аллах гу пусна тоя коч, да заколиш за курбан — детето да ти живее!”

И той заклал за курбанъ коча...

Има гу и на рисунка... Там гу имаше във книгата, къдету гу учаа, във таа Библия... Тя е на персийски. От персийски преведена на арабски... Тоя чувяк, който учеше, Айгулю Скатаджиев знаиш ли гу? На Смялю Кесиджиев дюку му... На Смялю Кесидчиев, неговия дюкю. Дядо му. Той доодяше тука; нашия дяду, на мойта майка баща ѝ беше кмет на трите села, та доодаа от трите села стари ора да се допитуват до кмета тука, по турски се казва кмета “мюхтаръ”; при мюхтаря, апа яз кату малък се бях ду тях. И тва си гу повня, и повня какво учаа, какво нареждааше чувяка, превеждаше тоя чувяк, който учеше книгата, той е бил три години английски пленник от османската армия...

От Пейгамберите, как е останало преданието, нали ти казувам.

След това, като заклал тоя коч, детето си останало живо и то останало веке и то е Пейгамберин. Азрети Исмаил. И той е Пейгамберин. И света съ е разпространил. Аллах е дал различни езици, различни религии. Татку ми ги разпраяше многу работи. Многу работи, ама сичките не ги помня ся...

Тоя ми е син.

[FB: *The storyteller points to a man entering*].

Той живее в Мала Азия. На гости ми е. Сега е дошъл да ма виде...

The above text was recorded in 2005 in the village of Kornitsa (county of Gotse Delchev, Blagoevgrad region), South-Western Bulgaria. The story was narrated by an eighty nine-year old Muslim man. The storyteller Ibrahim Husein Sürmali was born in October 1916 in the same village; he was a shepherd and a peasant farmer. The field-research was part of the author's work on the project *Folk Religion in the Balkans*. The sound-recording of the above account is stored in the author's private archives and in the Hans Rausing Endangered Languages Project (HRELP) archives, at SOAS, University of London.

Text No. 27
Koch-Bayram

[There exists a feast day called] *Koch-Bayram*.²⁴² Look now, [I will tell you] where this feast of *Koch-Bayram* came from. It came from the offspring of the Peygamberi [prophets]. There was a certain Peygamber called Ibrahim, who was childless. His second wife, for he had married twice,²⁴³ called upon God: "Give me a boy, a child! When he reaches six years of age, he will be [offered] to You as a Kurban [sacrifice]!"²⁴⁴

[So the unborn boy] was promised by her to be slaughtered [as a sacrifice]. They were given [a male child]. The boy was called Ismail. He turned six, but his father Ibrahim forgot [the pledge his wife had made].

In the night-time he had a vision, while he was sleeping he was seeing, he was dreaming [a dream in which] he was told: "Hey, Ibrahim, don't you have to offer Ismail as a Kurban sacrifice?"²⁴⁵ [Didn't you promise to slaughter] Ismail?" It was not said quite like that, but "You have a Kurban to give!" [i.e. that Ismail was supposed to be offered up as a sacrifice!]

He [the father] sacrifices a hundred oxen, and a thousand sheep, and other [animals]. Yet every day he was having the same dream. Seventy times he had the same dream: "No!" it was said in the dream, "You did not keep your word!"

After that he understood that he really must slaughter Ismail. The mother was told nothing [about her husband's intentions].²⁴⁶

The name of the mother was Hazhder [i.e. Hagar]. [The father said to Hazhder,] "Hazhder, put henna on Ismail's hands and feet. He is to come with me to get wood!"²⁴⁷ Ibrahim said that.

The mother took the boy into the house and did what she was told. Ibra[h]im took his child by the hand and said: "Come on, let's go!"

Then the Devil, Sheitan,²⁴⁸ went to the mother and told her: "Ismail is gone! His father Ibra[h]im is going to slaughter him!" That's what he said.

[She answered:] "Why would he slay him? How so, who [has ever heard of a child being sacrificed], how can it be?"²⁴⁹

When the Devil saw that there was no point trying to convince Hazhder,²⁵⁰ he went to Ismail, who was on the way to the forest with his father, and told the boy: "Your mother", he said, "heard that your father is going to slaughter you and she wants you to come back."

And he [Ismail] took a stone and hurled it [at the Devil, Sheitan]. That is why now the Devil only has one eye. He was struck and now he does not have one [of his eyes]!

They reached [the place], and Ibra[h]im took a knife and said: "My boy, I shall kill you! God told me to do it!"

He, Ismail, replied: "If God said so, then I want to die just as I am! I want this death! Don't tie me up! Slaughter me without tying me up!"²⁵¹

[That is why today when we sacrifice an animal] and bind it, we leave one leg untied!

Having said that, he [Ibrahim] tried to kill his son seventy times²⁵² by cutting here [i.e. his throat], but still he didn't succeed, for the knife would not cut.²⁵³ Finally, a ram appeared from above with a messenger whose name was Dzhebrail [Gabriel], he was the postman, he was sent by the Peygambers! Then the ram was slain and God said: "Ibra[h]im, you did what you had to!"

After that they returned [home]. Since then that day has been named the Feast of *Koch-Bayram*. *Koch-Bayram* is *Kurban-Bayram* [i.e. the day we offer a sacrifice].²⁵⁴ We give, that is, I give [pieces from the sacrificial animal to our neighbors]. I give some and say: "Here, neighbour! This is for you!"

Then he gives me back [some of his own Kurban in return]. One has to give meat to seven houses.²⁵⁵ The meat which was given away has to be from the right side of the animal. The left side we eat at home.

Коч Байрам

Коч байрам. Този Коч байрам виж откъде е. Те са пак от Пейгамберите. Имаше един Пейгамбер и се казва Ибрахим. Той нямаше деца. Втората жена, земал втора жена, казва на Бога: "Дай на мене едно момче, дете, кат стане на шест години, на тебе курбан ще е."

За коление го казала. Дадоа [им], ба. Исмаил са казва то момче. Той стана на шест години, [а]ма баща му, Ибраим, забрай сега тоз работа, дето казва.

Вижда [Ибрахим], сънува, вечер кат спи — сънува, [като чува насън някой да му] казва: "Абе, Ибраим, ти нали щял да колиш курбан Исмаиля, Исмаиля!" — не го казва тъй. "Ти" — кай, — "имаш един курбан да даваш."

Той — сто волови, иляда овце, това, онова. Все вижда [същото в съня си], [в]се, [в]секи ден. Седемдесе пъти вижда, сънува: "Няма," — кай, — "не си [из]пълнил думата!"

И после до[й]де до ума [му] вече — трябва да га коли Исмаил. И не казват на майката [какво е намислил да прави].

Майката името се казва Хаждер; [бащата заръчал:] "Хаждер, на Исмаиля къна сложи на краката и ръцете, да доде," — казва — "със мене за дърва!" — [така наредил на жена си] Ибраим.

Зема го майката, напраи го и има в къщата туй-онуй, зема Ибраима на ръка той деца: "Айде, да отиваме!"

Тогава, сега Дявол, Шейтан, идва на майката и казва: "Исмаил отиде! Ибраим, баща му, ше [го] заколи!" — казва.

"Абе, защо ше заколи, кой заколи детето, може ли така?"

Той кат нямал файда от Хаждера, стигнал Исмаил сега, той при баща си, нали отива [в] гората, казва на Исмаиля: "Твоя[та] майка, — каз[в]а, — чул[а], че баща ти ше [те] заколи и иска тебе да се върнеш!"

И той фърлил един камък на него, че няма едната очи сега Шейтана. Кършил и бирда-а-а! Няма, едната няма.

И отидоа там, Ибраим зема ножа, каза: "Чоджум, момче! Ше заколя тебе! Бога ми каза тъй!"

Той казва Исмаил: "Ако казва Бога, аз съм [съгласен да умра]! Желая тоз смърт! Недей вързва мене, без вързване заколи ма!"

Ний вързваме сега курбана, ама едната крак остаиме пак!

Таман той, седемдесе пъти тегли ножа тука [на врата], ама не режи ножа! И най-после една коч донеси я там отгоре и каза на него, Джибраил се казва — поща, пощаджията, Пейгамберето го пускат — и после заколяя тоа коча и на Бога казаа: "Ибраим! Стана твоя работа вече!"

И върнаа оттам и Курбан Байрям останал оттам. Сега него ден праим Коч Байрям. Коч Байрам, Курбан Байрам то е — и даваме, аз давам: "На ти, комшо, на тебе!"

Той дава на мене, [аз давам на него], на седем къщи трябвало да дадем; от дясната страна което е, се раздава, а другото в къщи ще ядем.

The text was recorded in March 1987 in the village of Chernoglavtsi (the county of Venets, Shumen district, North-Eastern Bulgaria) by the late Bulgarian folklorist Evgeniya Mitseva. The story was told by Mehmed Ibryamov Yusek, born 1920 in the same village; four years of schooling, a builder and a peasant farmer. The original sound-recording of this narrative (in Bulgarian) is stored in the Archives of the Institute of Folklore (Bulgarian Academy of Sciences) under the following record number: ФНАИФ 1 Е. М. 1987 No 2.1. 23. The Bulgarian transcription of the text was first published in an essay (written with Anisava Miltenova) on the image of Abraham in Balkan folklore and apocryphal literature [Badalanova and Miltenova 1996: 247-248].

Text No. 28

The voice from above

This has survived from Muslim times;²⁵⁶ it has come down to us from our grandfathers, from the saints.²⁵⁷

Once there was [a man called] Ismail²⁵⁸ who was going to sacrifice his boy. Before that he had no boy, he did not have a son. [Before his son was born] he had a dream in which he was told: “You will have a boy!”²⁵⁹

So the boy was born; he grew and reached an age between five and six. From God he [the father] was sent another dream in which he was told: “You have to slaughter this boy! You have to slaughter the boy!”²⁶⁰

This voice was sent from above by Allah.

What could he do after that, but take the boy. He dressed him in his best outfit.

Three times Allah called upon him [i.e. upon the father]: “You have to slaughter the boy!” He had appeared to him.²⁶¹

He got the boy dressed and took the boy after that; he said to his wife: “Woman! Get the boy dressed; we are going to get some flowers, some crocuses!”²⁶²

So they set off with the boy. He [the father] took a big knife and a rope with him.²⁶³ He went to the forest and tied up the boy. He tied his hands, and he tied his feet so that the boy could not move.

His son [asked]: “Father! What are you going to do?”

[The father answered] “I am going to slaughter you!”²⁶⁴

Thereupon he began to do what he had to. He was going to slaughter the boy.

He tried to cut with his knife, but the knife could not cut!²⁶⁵ It would not cut the boy! He hit a rock with it — and the rock split in two!

Finally, on Allah’s behalf, on God’s²⁶⁶ behalf, a ram descended to him from above! At that very moment, it was said, a male ram appeared to replace the boy! He slew the ram. That is why we now observe this custom — it is called *Koch-Bayram*. That is why we commemorate it every year at this time by sacrificing a ram [Bulg. *коч* (*koch*)!]

[The feast of] *Koch-Bayram* changes its date every year; it can take place in the summer or the winter! It always changes, by ten days! Every year it comes ten days earlier than the previous year!

These deeds survived from Muslim times! What I say is true. He was going to slaughter his son, but instead he slaughtered a ram, a male lamb.

Отгоре гласа

Това е от мюсюлманско време, от дедите останало е. От Светиите.

Някога Исмаил щял да убие момчето си. Понеже той нямал момче, син, ношно време, когато сънувал — и казали: “Ти ще имаш момче!”

Родило са момче, израснал, момчето, вече станал на пет-шест години. От страна на Господа казали на него [i.e. на бащата] на сын: “Трябва да заколиш туй момче, трябва да заколиш момчето!”

Отгоре гласа Аллах го изпраща.

После той — кво да прай? — земал момчето си, облекъл му хубавите дрехи.

Три пъти Аллах му викал [на бащата]: “Трябва да заколиш момчето!” Явявал му са.

Той земал момчето облечен, казал на жена си: “Жена, облечи момчето! Ний ше отиваме за цветя,” — казва — “за минзухар!”

И тръгнали с момчето. Той земал голям нож и една връв земал. Отишел на гората, връзва момчето, казва му, връзва ръцете, и краката връзва, да не мърда.

Казва [синът]: “Какво ше праиш, казва, тате?”

[Бащата му отговорил:] “Ше та заколя.”

Значи, той почнал вече така, ше заколи момчето!

По едно време теглил ножа — ножа не го режи! Не го режи! Ударил на камъка — камъка се пръснал на две!

Най-после, от страна на Аллаха, от страна на Господа, отгоре му слезил един коч. Във момента, казват мъжко агне, слези, зема неговото място, заколи коча. Затова е нашия адет сега Коч Байрам. Затуй го именуваме сяка година — по туй време колиме коч.

Коч Байрам — то са мени, лятно време идва и зимно време. По десет дена, по десет дена сяка година то се мени, с десет дена по-напред.

Тия дела са останали от мюсюлманското време. Както казвам, това е правилно, понеже сега, дето щял да коли момчето си, коли коча, мъжко агне.

The text was recorded in March 1987 in the village of Venets (Shumen district, North-Eastern Bulgaria) by the late Bulgarian folklorist Evgenia Mitseva. The story was told by Marin Yosifov Angelov, born 1925 in the same village, five years of schooling, retired police officer and peasant farmer. The original sound-recording of this narrative (in Bulgarian) is stored in the Archives of the Institute of Folklore (Bulgarian Academy of Sciences) under the following record number: ФнАИФ I Е. М. 1987 No 1.1. 37. The Bulgarian transcription of the text was first published in an essay (written with Anisava Miltenova) on the image of Abraham in Balkan folklore and apocryphal literature [Badalanova and Miltenova 1996: 248-249].

JOSEPH THE SON OF JACOB

Text No. 29

About Yusuf [Joseph] *allay salaam*, who was thrown by his brother into a well

Look now, this Yusuf *allay salaam* [i.e. peace be upon him] was the one who was thrown by his brothers into a well; then they, the brothers, went somewhere. How many [sons] did this man have? His name was Dawud [David], his [Joseph's] father's name was Dawud.²⁶⁷ He had many, but he had a soft spot towards Yusuf. He had a soft spot towards him... So far so good. But when the [other brothers] saw that the father favours him a lot, and when they went to collect wood, they threw him [Yusuf] into a well, they threw him into a pit. It was written, it was written about this [in the Qur'ān] as well, when they threw him into a pit, they went back, they returned home.²⁶⁸ Having returned home they said, “A wolf snatched him away.”²⁶⁹ They didn't reveal that they threw him [into the pit] there...

“The wolf snatched him.”

And Yakoub [Jacob] *allay salaam* [was saddened], Yakoub, Yakoub was his [father's] name.

Once they returned from there, they came home. Yakoub *allay salaam* was suspicious..., and he went and met the wolf.²⁷⁰ So far so good. They met each other, he was met by the wolf, he met with the wolf. Having met the wolf, Yakoub *allay salaam* told it the following, "Why", he asked, "did you snatch my son?"

Yet it [the wolf] answered, "I didn't snatch him", it said, "[I didn't snatch] the one who is a Peygamber," it said, "the Peygamber cannot be burnt by fire, cannot be [swallowed] by the earth, since the earth wouldn't have him... Nor would a wild beast eat him, nothing may eat a Peygamber, because he [Yusuf] was in fact a Peygamber," it said. "The Peygamber, the prophet may not be eaten by anything," it said. "Nothing may eat him," it said. "Fire cannot burn him, wild animals can't eat him, and neither can he rot in the earth. These [sons of yours] must have lied to you."

"Where are you going now?"

"I am going towards the *Djensan* islands²⁷¹." It was somewhere [far away], it is written where. "I am going from here and there and from here and there... I have a brother with whom I shared the same breast,²⁷² and I'm going to see him now for the last time..."

So he [the wolf] went off.

[*Question by FB:*] What happened to Yusuf?

[*The storyteller:*] With Yusuf? This is what happened with Yusuf... There were certain caravan people who were taking merchandise to sell somewhere, they were a kind of merchants. They found him [Yusuf] there and took him out and he began travelling with them. He would go with them and they would suddenly sell merchandise. It was going very well [because of him],²⁷³ that's how their business fared... But he [Yusuf] then got together with a certain woman, and this woman fancied him and she was also a merchant. She was a merchant and he married her.

Later, he revealed himself before his father and brothers²⁷⁴ when they came to buy something, and he sent back there [to his father's home] something, thus revealing himself...

[*Question by FB:*] By how did it happen that they went to him? How did they get to him?

[*The storyteller:*] They were also selling stuff, weren't they? They were merchants... So they went to him to buy [grain]: wheat, rye, and other stuff, so that they could take it back... Then he revealed himself and sent something to his father. He revealed himself in this way.

[*Question by FB:*] After that, was he cross with his brothers?

[*The storyteller:*] Come on! How on earth would he be cross? They [Peygambers] don't get cross very often. They don't get angry a great deal. Look now, when we [mere mortals] start maligning each other behind each other's backs, we accumulate each other's sins, and I get your sin on me and you get my sin on you.²⁷⁵

There was a certain Hassan Ibn Sirim [or Ibrasirim] from the city of Basra, the city of Basra in Iraq. You must have heard of it, the English army was there in the city of Basra... He heard that [someone was slandering] him, as he was informed, "Well, so-and-so is slandering you, he said such-and-such about you..."

He took a container in which he put dates, he put dates and took them to him and offered them to him, saying, "This is to you from me," he said, "in exchange for these bad words I'm going to treat you to this."

But look at us, the way we are, we are so irascible... We burn with anger and enrage each other ... [. . .] As for that man, [Hassan said], “take it on my behalf, because you acquired my sins, a great many of my sins”.

Юсуф алей селям, дето го фърлия фъф бунара братята му

Виж сега, на тоя Юсуф алей селям, дека го фърлия фъф бунара братята [му]; тия отидоа, братята отидоа — имаше колко души [синове] тоя? — името му беше Давуд, на баща му. И тия, той имаше много [синове, но] имаше симпатии към тоя, Юсуф. Много имаше симпатии към него... Добре, ама тия [братята му] видяха, че бащата много мечтае към него и отидоа на дърва и метнаа го в един бунар, в една яма го метнаа там. То пишува — и за него пишува [в Корана]. Като го метнаа [братята му] в ямата, отидоа, върнаа се дома, върнаа се вкъщи те и викат: “Той го [i.e. Юсуф],” — викат, — “грабна вълко!”; не кажуват, че са го фърлили там...

“Той го грабна вълко!”

И Якуб алей селям — той Якуб, Якуб му беше името [на бащата]...

И кат се върнаа вече оттам, и се върнаа — и Якуб алей селям, той се учуди, учуди... И добре, ама срещна се така, го срещнаа, със вълко се срещна. Срещна се със вълко...; и той му вика Якуб алей селям му вика така [на вълка]:

“Защо,” — вика, — “ти грабна моя син?”

А той [вълкът му] каа: “Не съм грабнал,” — вика, — “Пейгамбера!” — вика. — “Пейгамбера,” — вика, — “ни огин го гори, ни земня го не ще, ни земня..., ни диво животно го яде, нищо го не яде Пейгамбер, понеже той [Юсуф] си е бил,” — вика, — “Пейгабер, Пророк... Нищо го”, — рекъл, — “не яде”, — рекъл, — “него. Той го нищо не яде,” — рекъл. — “Ни огин го гори, ни диво животно го яде, ни във земята гние... И те са те”, — вика, — “излъгали... [твоите синове].”

“Ми ти сега къде си тръгнал?”

“Тръгнал съм към Женсанските острови,” — натам някъде, то [това го] пишеше, — “от еди къде си на еди къде си съм тръгнал... Имам един млечен брат, да ида да го видя на последното му вече там виждане...”

И заминал... [...]

[FB:] А какво е станало с Юсуф?

[Storyteller:] С Юсуф ли? С Юсуф така е станало... Имало едни теквие керванджии, които карали, кираджии нящо, карали стока нящо да продавая; и тия го нашла там и тия го извадили и почнал да оди със них. Отиде там с них — и веднага продаде стоката, така връвяло, вече му връвяло търговията... Ама се фанал там пък с една жена, една жена го аресала — тя била търговка, търговка била, па се оженил за нея.

Ама сетне веке се оказал, оказал се на баща му и братята му, те като отишли да купуват нещо, и той изпратил вече там нещо и се оказал...

[FB:] А как са се оказали те при него? Как са отишли те при него?

[Storyteller:] Ами нали те са продавали, били са търговци... Те са отишли при него там да купаа — ченица, ръж, теквие работи да купаа, да откарая... И той тогава се оказал, пратил нещо там на бащата, това-онова — и се оказал тогава.

[FB:] И после? А той сърдил ли се е на братята си?

[Storyteller:] Ех, къде ке се сърде той? Тия [Пейгамберите] се не сърдаат много тия, много не се ядосуваа. Оти виж ние сега, като почнем да думаме, я думам за тебе лоши думи и ти думаш за мене лоши думи — ти ми сбираш грехо и я ти сбирам грехо.

Имаше един, Хасан Ибрасирим от град Басра — град Басра във Ирак, нали си чула за това, английските войски бяха там, град Басра... И той чул за него, те му казали: “Абе она думаше за тебе, е тоа за тебе думаше така-така...”

А той турил там, във един съд имал фурми, фурми турил и му отнесъл и му дава: “Ети това е за мене,” — вика, — “за тия,” — вика, — “лоши думи аз па да те почерпа!”

А виж ние какви сме, какви сме ние избухливи... Ке дигнеш огин та опал към мене [...] А той [му казал]: “На ти това за мене, оти ти ми сбра грявете, доста гряве ми сбра...”

The above text was recorded in 2005 in the village of Gorno Kraishte (county of Belitsa, Blagoevgrad region, South-Western Bulgaria). The story was narrated by a seventy nine-year old Muslim man by the name of Ismail Mechkarski (or Ismail Redzhep Mechkar), a woodcutter. He was born in 1926 in the nearby village of Babyak; four years of schooling. The field-research was part of the author's work on the project *Folk Religion in the Balkans*. The sound-recording of the above account is stored in the Hans Rausing Endangered Languages Project (HRELP) archives, at SOAS, University of London.

Text No. 30

Lines on the palm of the hand

Since the world came into existence and until it ends, there has never been under the vault of heaven a more beautiful and greater love than the love between Yusuf Peygamber and Azreti Mejrima²⁷⁶. They were always together. They could not be parted from each other because of their affection. All these blessed days they would sit together and talk. One day Yusuf Peygamber received an order from God to go on a long journey, and Azreti Mejrima was so sad that it was beyond words. After the departure of the Peygamber, she did not go anywhere, either to her neighbours (blessed like her), or to any other Peygamber. Azreti Mejrima was counting every hour until Yusuf Peygamber's return. Every dusk she would sit on the divan in the orchard and was looking endlessly in the direction in which she expected him to appear. Thus one evening she was sitting on this very divan and thinking, as always, about Yusuf Peygamber, and she was holding an apple in her left hand, while cutting it with a knife. All at once Yusuf Peygamber emerged near the orchard, and she was so struck dumb by his appearance that she slashed her palm while cutting the apple, without feeling anything. To commemorate this, Yusuf Peygamber ordered it (and righteous God allowed it) that from that day onwards everyone would have creases on their palms [like those] which Azreti Mejrima incised. It is said that a lot of people know how to read the creases [on the palm], to know how long one will live and when one will die.

Brazdice po dlanima

Od kako je svijet postao, pa dok ga ne stane, nije bilo pod božijim kubetom lepše i bole lubavi, nego što je u Jusuf-pejgambera (sveca) i azreti Mejrima. Ervak (vazda) bili su zajedno. Jedno se od drugog od dragosti nije moglo odmaknuti. Po vas dugi božji dan sjedili bi zajedno i razgovarali se. Jedan dan dobije Jusuf-pejgamber hućum (zapovijed) od Boga, da ide na daleki put. Azreti Mejrima bila je tako tužna, da ti se ne može kazati. Čim je pejgamber bile, otišao, nikud se nije maknula, ni u svojih komšinica, koje su isto tako kao i ona azretlije kod drugih pejgambera. Svaku dekiku (čas) brojila e azreti Mejrima, kad će se Jusuf pejgamber povratiti. Ovako pred večer sjela bi na sofū u bašču i uvijek bi gledala na onu stranu, otkle se je nadala, da će trgnuti. Tako jednu večer sjedila je na istoj sofi i jedino, kao i uvijek, mislila na Jusuf-pejgambera. U lijevoj ruci držala je jabuku, pa je čakijom (nožićem) križala. Al na jedan put pokaže se na kapigiku od bašče Jusuf-pejgamber i tako se je bila u n zaniijela, tobe ja rabi (prosti, Bože), da je svu svoju ruku križajući jabuku, izrezala, a da nije ni oćutila. Jusuf pejgamber na tu biva uspomenu naredi, kako je Akt-Ala' (pravedni Bog) dopustio, da od tada u svakoga bude po dlanima one brazde, kuda se je god azreti Mejrima porezala. Mnogi, kažu, da znadu pogoditi po onijemu brazdama, koliko će ko živjeti i kada će umrijeti; ali ništa nema grješnije, nego se u božije emre (znaće) miješati.

The text was recorded in the vicinities of the towns of Ljubiški and Mostar (Bosnia and Herzegovina) by Ivan Zovko. It was published in Zagreb in 1899 as a special section (entitled “Vjeroña iz Herceg-Bosne. Od Hrvatskog naroda ćuo i

CROSSING THE RED SEA

Text No. 31

The Prophet and the Pharaoh

[This is about] Hud²⁷⁷ *allay salaam*. In Arabic it is Hud, and in Turkish Yahud.²⁷⁸ He was a Jew, and he was from somewhere in Iraq. He was from Iraq, he was a shepherd. He had a lot of sheep. He was trading in lambs, wool, milk, and everything... The Pharaohs from Egypt used to go there to trade in Assyria somewhere, in the Levant. Towards all these countries, towards Iraq... They started telling him, “You have nice merchandise, but if you were in Egypt” — in “Masr”,²⁷⁹ in Turkish Egypt is called “Masr”, because our roots are from there, from Masr — “and if you were there with this merchandise, you would have much success”.

It started bothering him and he put his stuff onto a camel, he took some food and drink and he took his flock of sheep and off he went. In those days there was no Suez Canal. You heard about it, didn't you? He crossed all the seas and went to Egypt, to Africa, to the river Nile. Have you studied about it? . . . The Nile valley was very rich and even now it is still rich but in those days it was [even richer]...

So, his sheep settled there...

And he was a believer [in Allah]. Merchants went there to buy lambs from him... But when they went to buy stuff, they did not believe in Allah. They believed in Pharaoh. Pharaohs — the ones who made the pyramids there... The Egyptian pyramids; and there they believed in [and worshipped] many different icons and other things...

[The Prophet told them:] “Hey, you believe in such things, but all these things are man-made, these pyramids are made by men, they were not created by Allah.”

“Eh, what do you know?”

One day like this, the next day like this, and these big-shot merchants told the Pharaoh and Pharaoh gave an order, “Bring him here”.

“Who are you, where are you from” [Pharaoh asked].

“From over there”.

“What did you preach to our people? What did you tell our people? You told them not to believe in the power which originated here, the one which is a visible power.”

“Neither of these is true. Who makes these [visible] powers? Your craftsmen. Here is the power of a pyramid, here you have towers, this and that, and underground hiding places and many other different [things]. Come with me to believe in Allah. Allah created everything. These seas, the air, nature, everything is from Allah, from God.”

“You? are you the one who is going to make us believe in Allah? Where is Allah? Bring him here so that we can see him!”

“You will see him.”

One day passed and another day passed ... When these merchants were coming, he kept saying to them, “Believe in Allah so that you may have [through Him] great help! So that you will benefit and your country will become much stronger. Don't have faith in these objects.”

Returning they told Pharaoh [what the Prophet told them].

[Pharaoh again summoned him]. “Bring him here!”

They brought him there.

“Don’t lie to people. You came from far away. You are the liar here and you deceive people so that they believe in a certain invisible power, which doesn’t exist.”

One day passed, a second day passed, he doesn’t change his mind.

Well, he [Pharaoh?] ordered a lot of logs to be brought to a big square and to make a big rotating catapult.²⁸⁰ A big rotating catapult. They will place him on this catapult and they will spin him and they will ignite the logs and then from far away they will put the catapult into motion and cast him into the fire, so that he burns alive, so that he doesn’t persuade anyone anymore, so that he doesn’t convert anybody to believe in another power. So they made this thing. They ignited the wood and then they announced around the country so that people could come and see how a certain someone will be burnt alive. So they made the fire and put the rotating catapult into motion and he [the Prophet] was put into the fire.²⁸¹ The wood burned down, the fire ceased, and what did they see? In the middle of what had been the fire, there was a green meadow and he was sitting in the meadow and praying. And he was still alive.

Pharaoh was startled and he sent his troops. They surround him [the Prophet] in order to capture him and cut him into pieces.²⁸²

But [this incident was preceded by another important event:] once when he [the Prophet] was wandering around with his sheep²⁸³ they dozed off at noon time, you know how sheep doze off, don’t you? So they rested and he fell asleep too, and when he woke up his sheep were not there. There was a massive gorge, somewhere in the area of the River Nile, and there was a big “Zmey” [dragon]²⁸⁴ — in Turkish and Arabic it is called “Lamya.”²⁸⁵ “Lamya” — a dragon. Whatever living creature would go there, the dragon would eat it live. So, when he [the Prophet] fell asleep and woke up, the sheep were not there. In this meadow there was a lot of good grazing grass. Well! He sat and started wondering and he saw a fancy crook next to him.²⁸⁶ But [while asleep], he had heard in his dream something dropping next to him. His own shepherd’s crook was there, as well as another one, which was very fancy. Colourful and stained with blood. He picked it up and looked at it. He took it instead of his own shepherd’s crook, because just before he set off to look for his sheep, this crook was sent to him by Dzhebrail²⁸⁷ [i.e. Gabriel] — there it was! It came from Heaven or from wherever, the “Melyaketo” [i.e. *melek* (Turkish)]²⁸⁸, the angel sent it to him so that he could take it and walk.

As for the dragon, it didn’t want to eat the sheep but wanted to eat him [the Prophet] first, because the sheep were there anyway, and he wanted to eat the shepherd... So far so good, but the crook — the one sent from above — this crook jumped up and killed the dragon.²⁸⁹ This is again the invisible power. It was ordered by Allah. It killed the dragon and he [the Prophet] saw that the dragon was dead. He descended and his sheep were there in the gorge. He took them back... Whomever he met [he said], “Believe in Allah because otherwise Allah will punish you!”

Everything was reported to Pharaoh... Pharaoh gathered his army so that it could expel him [the Prophet], so that he goes to the Levant, towards Iraq... So, the army surrounded him to capture him and chop him into pieces, and he grabbed his crook and here-and-there and here-and-there he butchered the whole army.

Some [of the soldiers] escaped and told Pharaoh, to Tzar²⁹⁰ Pharaoh, so-and-so, so-and-so. “With his crook he butchered everybody”.

Then he [Pharaoh] sent another division after the first one and he butchered them as well. [Pharaoh] sent a third division and they surrounded him [the Prophet] from far away; there were many of them. He took his flock and off he went. Do you know about the Red

Sea there? Well! He took them towards the Red Sea so that he could go towards Israel, towards Palestine.

On the edge of the sea he gestured like this with [his crook] ... And the army was coming! He gestured like this with the crook and the sea was cut [into two]. He let his sheep go through on dry land. The army followed after him and as soon as they gathered and were about to finally catch him [the Prophet] at the end of the sea, whoops! The sea joined together and the whole army drowned.²⁹¹ He [the Prophet] went towards Palestine and continued his life there ...

It was in the time of Pharaoh, the Second Pharaoh, it was in the reign of the Second Pharaoh, it was the Second Pharaoh, not the First, and “the people of the Bible”²⁹² were saying that, but I can’t remember everything since I’m an old man already. I’m 89 years old.

[Question by FB:] And what happened to this Peygamber [Prophet]?

[The storyteller:] What happened to him? Well, he continued living his life... But I can’t remember any longer. There was someone who was telling me this story but I can’t remember anything more.

Пророкът и Фараонът

[Това е за] Хуть алей селям. По арабски е Хуть, а по турски е Яхуть. Той е [бил] евреин. И той сега от Ирак някъде е бил, от Ирак, той е бил овчарь. Имал е овци много. И е пра[в]ел търговия — със агнета, със вълна, със мляко, със сичко... От Египет Фараоните одели на търговия във Асирия там, към Ливан. Към натъка по тия държави, Ирак... И почнали да му казват: “Хубава стока имаш, ама аку си във Египет — “Масър”, по турски [Кайро] се казва “Масър”, нашто поколение е от там оти, от “Масър”... — и ако си там със таа стока, многу шъ напреднеш.”

Той, заяла гу съвестта, натварил на камилата багаж, ядини, пиине, закарал овците — айде. Тогава Суецкия канал не е бил напраен, ти си гу чула за негу? Минава там през тия морета, [отива] във Египет, Африка. Реката Нил [е там]. Учила ли си за нея? ... Долината на Нил е много била богата. И сега си е богата, ама тогава било на времето [още по-богата]...

Разположил съ там, ония овци [с него]...

И той бил вярващ. Ходили при негу търговци, купуват ягнета... [...] И кату одили на купуват, не вярвали във Аллаха. Вярвали във Фараоня. Фараоните — те са правили пирамидите там... Египетските пирамиди. И там са вярвали във най-различни икони и други работи... [А Пророкът им казал:]

“Ей! Вие вярвате в такова работи, ама тия работи сичките чувяка ги праи! Тия пирамиди чувяка ги е напраил! Не са създадени от Аллах!”

“А[йде]! Ти много знаеш!”

Днеска така, утре така, тия големци търговци казали на Фараона. Фараона ги изрукал:

“Докарайте го!”

“Какъв си ти? Откъде си?”

“Оттам и там”.

“Какво си приказувал на наште [х]ора ти? Какво си приказувал на наште [х]ора ти бе? Да не вярват във тая сила, дете е израсла тука, дете е видима сила.”

“Тва не е нищо вярно. Кой ги прави тия сили? Ваште майсторе. Айде силата пирамида, тука, кули, тва онова, подземни скривалища, други най-различни [неща]. Ялте с мене да вярвате във Аллаха. Аллах е създал всичко. Тия морета, тия въздухи, тая природа — сичко е от Аллах, от Бога.”

“Ти ли? Ти ли ше нъ накараш да вярваме в Аллаха? Къде е Аллах? Докарай Го да Го видиме!”

“Шъ Го видите!”

Днеска така, утре така... Като до[х]ождат тея търговци, той [в]се им казваа:

“Вярвайте във Аллах, за да имате голяма помощ! Да напреднете много и държавата да стане много по-силна. Немой вярвайте в тия работи.”

Тия кат се връщат, казват на Фараона.

[Фараонът пак го извикал:] “Докарайте го тука!”

Откарали го.

“Немой лъжи [х]ората! Ти си дошъл отдалече, ти си лъжача, да лъжеш [х]ората да вярват в някаква си никаква невидима сила.”

И днеска така, утре така, той си държи на неговата [дума].

Айде! Накарал [Фараонът?] на един площад голям да навъртат много кубици дърва. И да направят една голяма въртка. Голяма въртка. Ше го ялнат на въртката, ше гу въртат и ше запалят дървата — и ше врътнат отдалече въртката, да иди във огъня, да гу изгурят. Да не кандардисува, да не превърта ората да вярват във друга сила. Направили тва няшу. Запалили дървата. Съобщили в цялата държава, да дойдат да гледат еди- кой си как ше го изгорят. Запалили [дървата], въртнали въртката, отишъл във огъня. Дървата изгоряли, огъня загаснал, какво да видят! Във средата на огъня една зелена ливада — той седнал на ливадата и си съ моле. Жив си е.

Фараоня се зачудил. Пуснал войска. Заградили го, да го фатят жив, да го раздробят.

Ама той, като [х]одел [на времето] със овцето, някъде му се спладнили овцето. На как са се спладнале? Заспят. Те налягат и кат си и той заспал, разбудил се, овцето ги няма. Имало е една долина голяма. Там някъде, във реката Нил, имало един змей голям. По турски и по арабски се казва ламя. Ламя. Змей. И каквото живо иде там, змея го изявал. И кат си заспал, разбудил се — овците ги няма. Във тая долина имало много паша, трева. Брей! Седнал и се чуди! Гледа, до него — една модерна тояга. Ама [той, докато е спал] чувал в съне — нящо лопнало. И неговата си тояга овчарската там, ама и друга тояга, много модерна. Шарена и омацана със кръв. Повдигнал я е, погледал я е. Преместил я оная овчарската. Таман тръгнал къде да търси овцето — [х]оп! Тая тояга Джебраил му я спуснал — от небето ли е, от къде е? Мелякето [му я спуснал], ангела, със нея да върви.

И змея не хтеял да изеде овцето, вървял първо да изеде него. От овците му съ колайни... А да изеде овчаря. Убаво, ама тоягата, [дето е била] а спусната, тоягата станала, убила змея. Тя си е пак невидима сила. От Аллах си е наредена. Убила змея и той видел, [че] змея умрял. Слязъл надолу — хоп! — овцето там, в тая долина; закарали ги е [обратно]... И кой как срещне [казвал]: “Вярвайте в Аллах! Инак шъ въ накаже Аллах!”

Сичко казували на Фараона... Фараона събрал войска, да може да го изгонят войската, да си иде във Ливан, натам, къде Ирак... Войската го заграждат да го фатят, да гу разсекат. Той кату зел тоягата — натук, натам, изклал сичките войска.

Едни [от оцелелите войници] избягали, казали на Фараона. Цар Ферон. Така и така, така и така. “Със тоягата изкла сичку”.

Пуснал [Фараонът] друга дивизия след първата. И тях изклал. Пуснал трета дивизия — заградили гу отдалече, многу. Той закарал овцету — и [х]айде. Червено море има ли някъде там? А! Към Червено море, да си мине за Израел натам, за Палестина.

И накрай морето — така рекъл със [тоягата]... Войската иде! Така рекъл със тоягата, морето съ разрязало [на две]. Прекарал овцето през суша. И войскътъ съ след него — таман съ натрупали да гу стигнат накрая на тва — [х]оп! Морету съ съединило и сичката войскъ съ издавили. И той си минал за Палестина натака и си продължил живота нататък...

И тогава тия Фироне, Фирон Втори, Фараон Втори, през неговите векове е било тва няшу, през Фараон Втори; не първия, а втория, и там още казуваа [х]ората на Библията [“the People of the Book”?], ама сичку не мога да помня. Стар съм веке. Осемдесе и девет годишен.

[FB:] А какво е станало със тоя Пейгамбер?

[Storyteller:] Със негу ли? Ами той си е продължил живота... И не помня веке нататък. Той [ходжата?] казуваше, ама не помня.

The above text was recorded in 2005 in the village of Kornitsa (county of Gotse Delchev, Blagoevgrad region), South-Western Bulgaria. The story was narrated by an eighty nine-year old Muslim man. The storyteller Ibrahim Husein Sürmali was born in October 1916 in the same village; he was a shepherd and a peasant farmer. The field-research was part of the author's work on the project *Folk Religion in the Balkans*. The sound-recording of the above account is stored in the Hans Rausing Endangered Languages Project (HRELP) archives, at SOAS, University of London.

APPENDIX

Text No. 32

About the giant Adzh, also known as Alangsar-Alif

According to [our] tradition, our forefather Adam had a daughter whose name was Anuk, who gave birth to Adzh. He was incredibly tall in stature. During the Flood, when people of the [time of the] Prophet Noah perished, the water rose forty cubits above the tallest mountains. However, the water did not even reach the knees of the aforementioned Adzh. He was pulling Noah's Ark with one hand. The aforementioned Adzh was catching carps in large rivers and frying them in the sun and eating them.

[...]

When Prophet Noah was building the Ark, he lacked four pieces of wood. Then came the news from the Blessed and Highest God: "There is a sycamore tree on an island of the River Nile; he should get hold of it and finish the Ark. He should send there the aforementioned Adzh, having promised to feed him and satisfy his hunger, and he [Adzh] would deliver it." Prophet Noah then prayed before the Highest: "O God, in order to satisfy the appetite of this Adzh, the world's food supply will not be enough. How can I satisfy his hunger?" God the Highest then said, "I will feed him by means of My power!"; afterward He ordered the above-mentioned Adzh to be fed until satisfied, and He let Noah leave. Adzh set off, uprooted the aforementioned sycamore tree, together with its roots, and it was as heavy as a hundred thousand *batman*.²⁹³ He brought it to Noah and give it to him. After that, the Ark was completed. When the aforementioned Adzh was walking, the clouds in the sky were around his waist.

[. . .]

The aforementioned prophet Noah once committed himself to feeding [the giant] Adzh until no longer being hungry. The distance between the Nile and Noah's location was a journey of three-month's duration, yet the distance covered by the footfall of the aforementioned Adzh was a one-day journey. To take the aforementioned sycamore tree [for Noah's Ark] took him one day. That very morning he [Adzh] brought it to Noah and told him, "Give me food and satisfy my appetite!" At that time the Blessed and Highest God, through the Hazreti Dzhebrail [Blessed Gabriel], sent him two small loaves, giving the order: "Let him eat them while reciting, "In the name God, the Merciful and Compassionate" [i.e. the *Bismillah* formula]. Dzhebrail put the two loaves in front of Adzh saying, "Eat these, reciting, 'In the name of God, the Merciful and Compassionate'". Adzh uttered, "In the name of God", and began eating, and his appetite was satisfied through God's power, with only one loaf. It was the only case when his appetite was satisfied.

О великане Аджъ, по прозвищу Алангсарь-Алифъ

По преданию у праотца нашего Адама была дочь, по имени Анукъ, отъ которой родился Аджъ. Онъ былъ невѣроятно высокъ ростомъ. Во время всемірнаго потопа, когда народъ пророка Ноя подвергся гибели, вода поднялась на 40 яршинъ выше высочайшихъ горъ. Однако тогда вода не превышала колѣнъ помянутаго Аджа, и онъ водилъ ладью пророка Ноя, ухватившись за одинъ конецъ ея. Упомянутый Аджъ ловилъ въ большихъ рѣкахъ (дарья) сомовъ, жарилъ ихъ на солнце и питался ими.

[. . .]

Когда пророкъ Ной строилъ ладью, у него не хватило четырехъ деревянныхъ досокъ. Тогда отъ Бога Благословеннаго и Всевышняго послѣдовала вѣсть: “ На островѣ рѣки Нила есть одно чинаровое дерево, пусть достанетъ его и достроить. Пусть пошлетъ туда и упомянутаго Аджа, обѣщавъ накормить его раз до-сыта, и онъ доставить”. Тогда пророкъ Ной взмолился передъ Всевышнимъ: “О, Боже! чтобы накормить этого Аджа, не хватить провизии всей вселенной, как же я его накормлю?” Тогда Богъ Всевышний сказал: “Я накормлю его при помощи Своего могущества” — далъ обязательство накормить упомянутаго Аджа и отпустил (Ноя). Аджъ отправился, вытянулъ упомянутое чинаровое дерево съ корнемъ въ сто тысяча батмановъ, принесъ и отдалъ (Ную). После (того) ладья была окончена.

Когда упомянутый Аджъ ходилъ, то облака, находящіяся на небесахъ, окаймляли его поясницу.

[. . .]

Вышесказанный пророкъ Ной уже обязался единожды накормить Аджа. Между Ниломъ и (мѣстомъ нахождения) Ноя, разстояніе пути опредѣлялось въ три мѣсяца, а разстояніе одного шага помянутаго Аджа занимало одинъ день пути. За упомянутымъ чинаровымъ деревомъ онъ сходилъ въ одинъ день (букв. к утру-же), принесъ его и сказала Ную: “Дай мнѣ пищи и накорми меня”.

Въ это время Богъ Благословенный и Всевышний черезъ хезрета *Джебраиля* послалъ ему двѣ лепешки, повѣлевъ: “Пусть онъ, произнеся: “Во имя Бога Милостиваго и Милосердаго”, съѣсть”. Две лепешки онъ (Джебраиль) положилъ передъ нимъ (Аджемъ), сказавъ: “Съѣшь это, произнеся: “Во имя Бога Милостиваго и Милосердаго!”” Аджъ, произнеся: “Во имя Бога”, началъ ѣсть и насытился, по могуществу Бога, отъ одной лепешки. Это былъ единственный случай утоленія голода (Аджемъ).

The text of this folklore legend was provided by Abubekr Akhmedzhanovich Divaev, a member of the Society of Archaeology, History and Ethnography at the Imperial University in Kazan (the former Russian Empire); it was published by A. A. Divaev and V. Anderson, with an introduction by N. Katanov, in 1908, in the *Proceedings of the Society of Archaeology, History and Ethnography at the Imperial University in Kazan*, Vol. 24 (5), pp. 432-442. The legend was recorded by a certain Tauke Nurabaev, who was a Kirghiz Mullah residing in the *aul* (i.e. village, settlement) No 3 [“3-ro аула”] in the Tas-Tiubin county [“Тась-тюбинской волости”] of the Aulieatinskii region [“Аулиеатинского уѣзда”] of Sur-Darya district [“Сыр-дарьинской области”] of the Russian part of Turkistan. The Russian translation of the original text of the present legend follows the publication of Divaev and Anderson [1908: 438-439].

Text No. 33

No one from among the living survived the waters, except for ‘Udzh

Along with Noy [Noah] there were 80 persons in the Ark. No one from among the living [outside the Ark] survived the waters [of the Flood], except for ‘Udzh, son of Anuk, since everyone else perished. According to Ibn Abbas’ account, ‘Udzh was reported to be the son of Adam’s daughter. Anuk was the daughter of Adam, whereas ‘Udzh’s father’s

name was Seikhan. When the waters of the Flood intensified, 'Udzh came to Noah and began asking to be let into the Ark. Noy started inviting him to accept the Faith, but 'Udzh did not accept it. Noy replied, "There is no room in the Ark for non-believers." 'Udzh survived because he was very tall in stature. In the book of Arais, it is said that 'Udzh's height was 23,333 1/3 cubits. The waters which rose four cubits above the mountains reached up to his knees. 'Udzh's mother was also tall in stature, and was actually the one with whom female fornication [i.e. promiscuity] began. God the Highest sent dragons as big as elephants and wolves as big as camels against her, and they devoured her. The reason why 'Udzh was saved from the Flood was that Noy could not cut down and bring a huge Indian black tree called "Sāj", but 'Udzh brought it to him. Thanks to this particular favour, he survived. Being very tall in stature, he used to catch fish in large deep rivers and eat them, after grilling them in the sun. According to God's word (i.e. the Qu'ran), he was pulling the Ark from its stern. 'Udzh's lifespan was 3,600 years. He died in the time of Mousa (i.e. Moses).

Въ водѣ изъ живыхъ кромѣ 'Уджа никого не осталось

Съ Ноемъ въ ковчегѣ было 80 человекъ. Въ водѣ изъ живыхъ кромѣ 'Уджа, сына Анукъ, никого не осталось, ибо все погибли. Со словъ Ибн Абасса передають: 'Уджъ есть сынъ дочери Адама, 'Анукъ есть дочь Адама, а имя отца 'Уджа было Сейханъ. Когда вода потопа усилилась, 'Уджъ пришелъ къ Ною и сталъ проситься къ нему в ковчегъ. Ной сталъ приглашать его къ вѣрѣ, но 'Уджъ не принялъ ея. Тогда Ной сказалъ въ отвѣтъ: "Невѣрующему нѣтъ мѣста въ ковчегѣ!" 'Уджъ спасся потому, что былъ очень великъ ростомъ. Въ книге "Араисъ" говорится, что 'Уджъ росту имѣлъ 23.333 1/3 аршина. Вода, поднявшаяся выше горъ на 40 аршинъ, была ему лишь до колѣнъ. Великаго роста была и мать 'Уджа; отъ нея-то и пошла развратность женщинъ. Господь Всевышній напустилъ на нее драконовъ величиною со слоновъ и волковъ величиною съ верблюдовъ, и они съѣли ее. Причина спасенія 'Уджа отъ потопа заключалась и въ томъ еже, что Ной не могъ нарубить и принести индѣйскаго чернаго дерева большого размѣра, называемаго "саджъ" (т.е. тековаго дерева), а 'Уджъ принесъ ему. Благодаря этой то услугѣ онъ и уцѣлѣлъ. Будучи очень великаго роста, онъ ловилъ въ глубокихъ и большихъ рѣкахъ рыбу и ѣлъ ихъ, поджаривъ на солнцѣ. Судя по Слову Божию (т.е. Корану) онъ двигалъ ковчегъ, держа его за корму. Жизни 'Уджа было 3600 лѣтъ. Умеръ онъ во времена Мусы (т.е. Моисея).

This Muslim folklore legend was first published by the Karimov brothers in 1908 in the city of Kazan (in the Former Russian Empire), in their (rather large) *Collection of Tales About the Prophets* [*Сборникъ разсказовъ о пророкахъ*], which contained 479 pages; the above text is to be found on p. 57 of that edition. The collection was compiled by the Imam (Mullah) of the settlement ["казаклара"] of Olo; his name was "Sallah, the son of the Mullah Sharafu'-d-din" ["Салляхъ, сынъ муллы Шарафу' д-дина"]. Reportedly, the account presented by the Mullah Sharafu'-d-din was further proofread and corrected by two other local men: Yakub Sadru-d-dinov Mamyshev [Якубъ Садру'-д-диновъ Мамышевъ] and Kuamil Fattax-d-dinov Bashirov [Кямилъ Фаттах-д-диновъ Башировъ]. The Russian translation of the legend (which was most probably narrated in Tatar originally) was subsequently published by A. A. Divaev and V. Anderson, with an introduction by N. Katanov, in 1908, in the *Proceedings of the Society of Archaeology, History and Ethnography at the Imperial University in Kazan*, Vol. 24 (5). The Russian translation of the original text of the present legend follows the publication of Divaev and Anderson [1908: 447-448].

About 'Udzh son of Anuk

According to the account of Ibn 'Umar, Udzh's height at that time was 23,333 cubits. He reached up to the clouds with his head and drank water from them. He used to catch large fish from the bottom of the sea, frying them in the sun and eating them. It was also reported that during the time of Flood, he appeared before Noy [Noah] and said to him, "Take me with you too into the Ark." Noy answered, "O adversary of God, I received no order to take you with me." When the Flood embraced the earth, the waters of the Flood did not reach higher than 'Udzh's knees. He lived an additional 3,000 years after that. Finally, God the Highest dispatched him through the hand of Moses, for the following reason. Having seen the army of Mousa (that is, Moses), 'Udzh set off towards a mountain, severed a stone from there as large as the Children of Israel. When he was about to lift and throw it upon them, God the Highest sent birds, including the hoopoe-bird, and with their beaks they perforated the stone, which fell like a yoke on 'Udzh's neck and suffocated him. Moses then approached, leaped up and hit 'Udzh with his staff, but the crook only hit him on the ankle; Moses' height was ten cubits, and the length of his staff was ten cubits, and he leapt ten cubits from the earth as well. [Having hurt the giant], the people ran towards him and with the help of daggers, removed ['Udzh's] head from his body. This was a man whose body was so massive that his fingers were as large as three cubits.

Объ 'Уджъ, сынъ 'Анукъ

По словамъ Ибнъ 'Умара ростъ 'Уджа аршинами того времени былъ въ 23.333 аршина. Головой доставая до облаковъ, онъ пилъ воду изъ нихъ. Крупную рыбу онъ добывалъ со дна моря, затѣмъ поджаривалъ ее на солнцѣ и ѣлъ. Передаютъ также, что во время потопа онъ явился къ Ною и сказалъ ему: "Возьми въ ковчегъ и меня!" Ной отвѣчалъ ему: "О врагъ Божій, я не получилъ приказанія брать тебя съ собою!" Когда потопъ охватилъ землю, вода потопа не поднялась выше колѣнъ 'Уджа. Онъ прожилъ на свѣтѣ еще 3. 000 лѣтъ. Наконецъ, Господь Всевышній погубилъ его чрезъ руки Моисея, а причина того была слѣдующая: 'Уджъ, увидавши войско Мусы (т. е. Моисея), отправился на одну гору, высаякъ оттуда камень величиною съ сыновъ Израилевыхъ и, когда хотѣлъ—было поднять его и бросить на нихъ, Господь Всевышній послалъ птицъ вмѣстѣ съ удономъ, которыя своими клювами продолбили камень, — и камень точно хомутъ надѣлся на шею 'Уджа и задушилъ его. Моисей пришелъ, подскочилъ и жезломъ своимъ ударилъ по 'Уджу, но палка достала ему только по лодыжки. Росту Моисей имѣлъ 10 аршинъ, длина жезла была тоже въ 10 аршинъ, подскочилъ онъ отъ земли тоже на 10 аршинъ. Люди подбѣжали и при помощи кинжала съ трудомъ отдѣлили голову отъ туловища. Это былъ человѣкъ съ такимъ туловищемъ, что пальцы были длиною по 3 аршина.

This Muslim folklore legend was first published by M. M. Kadyrov in 1907 in the city of Kazan (in the Former Russian Empire), in a collection of stories about the Prophets (containing 542 pages); it was printed in the publishing house of B. M. Dombrovskii. The (rather scattered) text of the above Muslim folklore legend is to be found on pp. 68, 263 and 264 of that edition. The collection was compiled by one of the disciples of Burkhanu d-din al-Mardzhani [Бурхану'-динъ аль-Марджани], a certain "Hadzhi Muhamed Al-Amin, the son of Hadzhi Abdulla Yakobov [Хаджи Мухаммедъ Аль Аминъ, сынъ хаджия Абдуллы Якубовъ]. The Russian translation of the legend (which was most probably narrated in Tatar originally) was subsequently published by A. A. Divaev and V. Anderson, with an introduction by N. Katanov, in 1908, in the *Proceedings of the Society of Archaeology, History and Ethnography at the Imperial University in Kazan*, Vol. 24 (5). The Russian translation of the original text of the present legend follows the publication of Divaev and Anderson [1908: 446-447].

“The cause of death of the aforementioned Adzh will be your staff — hit him with it!”

In those times, Prophet Mousa (that is Moses) used to reside in the city of Mysyr (in Egypt).²⁹⁴ He (Adzh) arrived there. Upon his arrival, Prophet Mousa received the following order (call) from the Blessed and Highest: “The cause of death of the aforementioned Adzh will be your staff – hit him with it!” The aforementioned Prophet Mousa was 40 cubits in height, and when he leapt up he could raise himself another 40 cubits, and then when, having leapt 80 cubits, the staff only struck Adzh’s ankle. Thanks to God’s might, Adzh’s foot was in great pain and not being able to cope with his suffering, he put his foot into the River Nile. At that time, an order came from God to Hazreti Azrail, and he received Adzh’s soul. The body remained at that place and his hip bone served as a bridge over the River Nile. It was reported that people could travel with heavily-laden camel caravans and with their animals through the hollow aperture of the aforementioned hip bone. Once a year this bone was smeared with fat. It appears that he (i.e. Adzh) lived an unaccountable number of years.

"Причиной смерти названнаго Аджа долженъ быть Вашъ жезль, ударьте имъ его!"

Въ тѣ времена въ городѣ Мысырь (в Египтѣ) жилъ пророкъ Муса (т.е. Моисей). Вот онъ (Аджъ) туда и прибыль. Съ прибытіемъ его пророкъ Муса получилъ слѣдующее повелѣніе (возгласъ) отъ Благословеннаго и Всевышняго: "Причиной смерти названнаго Аджа долженъ быть Вашъ жезль (аса), ударьте имъ его!"

Упомянутый пророкъ Муса имѣль росту въ сорокъ аршинъ. Когда онъ подскочилъ вверхъ, то поднялся еще на сорокъ аршинъ. и вотъ, когда онъ, вскакнувъ на восемьдесятъ аршинъ, ударилъ, — жезль угодилъ (только) в щиколку Аджа. Благодаря могуществу Бога, нога (Аджа) стала сильно болѣть и, не вынося страданій, онъ опустилъ ногу въ рѣку Ниль. Въ это время послѣдовало (отъ Бога) повѣленіе къ хезрету Азраилу, и этотъ принялъ душу его (Аджа). Тѣло осталось на томъ самомъ мѣстѣ, а бедровая кость стала служить мостомъ черезъ Ниль. Говорятъ, что черезъ отверстіе названной бедровой кости люди проводятъ караваны верблюдовъ съ тяжестью и свой скоть. (Кость эта) въ году одинъ разъ смазывается жиромъ. Онъ (Аджъ), оказывается, прожилъ (на свѣтѣ) безчисленное множество лѣтъ.

The text of this folklore account was first published by A. A. Divaev and V. Anderson, with an introduction by N. Katanov, in 1908, in the *Proceedings of the Society of Archaeology, History and Ethnography at the Imperial University in Kazan*, Vol. 24 (5). The Russian translation of the original text of the present legend follows the publication of Divaev and Anderson [1908: 441].

NOTES

References to the Qur'ānic text are from *The Koran*, translated by J. M. Rodwell [London: Phoenix, 1994; first publ. London: Orion, 1909]

References to the Biblical text will follow of *The Holy Bible (Kings James Version)* [NY: Meridian, 1974].

References to *The History of Prophets and Kings (Tarīkh al-rusul wa'l-mulūk)* by Al-Tabarī will follow the English translation of the text by F. Rosenthal (Vol. 1: *From the Creation to the Flood*) [Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1989] and W. Brinner (Vol. 2: *Prophets and Patriarchs* and Vol. 3: *The Children of Israel*) [Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1987, 1991]

References to *Lives of the Prophets ('Arā'is Al-Majālis Fī Quisas Al-Anbiyā')* by Al-Tha'labī will follow the English translation of the text by W. Brinner [Leiden: Brill, 2002].

Unless otherwise stated, references to Al-Rabghūzī's *The Stories of the Prophets* will follow the English translation of the text by H. E. Boeschoten, J. O'Kane and M. Vandamme [Leiden: Brill, 1995].

References to *The Babylonian Talmud* are from the Soncino Edition of *The Babylonian Talmud*, ed. I. Epstein [London: Soncino Press, 1935-1948].

¹Midrashic sources maintain that the ram which Abraham sacrificed instead of his son was

created in the twilight of Sabbath eve in the week of creation, and prepared since then as a burnt offering instead of Isaac. [. . .] As the creation of this ram had been extraordinary, so also was the use to which all parts of his carcass were put. Not one thing went to waste. The ashes of the parts burnt upon the altar formed the foundation of the inner altar, whereon the expiatory sacrifice was brought once a year, on the Day of Atonement, the day on which the offering of Isaac took place. Of the sinews of the ram, David made ten strings for his harp upon which he played. The skin served Elijah for his girdle, and of his two horns, the one was blown at the end of the revelation of Mount Sinai, and the other will be used to proclaim the end of the Exile, when 'the great horn shall be blown, and they shall come which were ready to perish in the land of Assyria, and they that were outcast in the land of Egypt, and they shall worship the Lord in the holy mountain in Jerusalem' [Ginzberg 1968 (1): 282-3].

Some sources (such as *Toledot Yizhak*) "state that the ram came to life again after it was sacrificed and burned to ashes"; for further information see Ginzberg [1968 (5): 252, n. 246].

A similar idea was attested in Muslim popular tradition clustering around orthodox exegesis of the Qur'ān. As Jan Knappert points out, "the beginning and the end of every legend is completely traditional, containing references to the Qur'ān and to the Hadith" [Knappert 1985: 5]. Islamic religious narrative literature is familiar with the motif of the wondrous ram previously created by Allah to replace Ishmail, the son-victim, which Ibrahim was about to sacrifice following God's command. According to one of the vernacular counterparts to the Qur'ān account of the filial sacrifice (as presented by Knappert in his compendium of *Islamic Legends*), the knife refused to cut the throat of Ismail and spoke to both father and son with a human voice:

Suddenly they heard the rustling of wings in the air, and a sweet voice saying: "Peace be upon you all!" It was the angel Jibrīl whom God sent to end all misery. He continued: "Four hundred years ago God decided to test you, Nabii Ibrahīm, and for that purpose he created a ram. Look, there it is!" And indeed, a big ram came walking along. The angel said: "Take your knife and slaughter this ram in the name of God. He is the greatest." Thus it was done, and in commemoration of this readiness of their ancestor Isma'īl, the Arabs still today sacrifice a sheep every year, of behalf of the poor [Knappert 1985: 79-80].

² The Qur'ānic account of Ibrahim's life is scattered through the text of Sūrah 2: 118, 130-134, 260-262; Sūrah 3: 60, 89, 91, 189; Sūrah 4, Sūrah 6: 74, 162; Sūrah 11: 72; Sūrah 14: 38; Sūrah 15:51; Sūrah 16: 121; Sūrah 21:68, Sūrah 22: 27; Sūrah 29: 15; Sūrah 37: 107; Sūrah 43: 25; Sūrah 51, Sūrah 87:19. The detail that Allah sent Ibrahim a ram which was to be slain instead of his son is not actually attested in the Qur'ān; see Sūrah 37: 100-109. The origin of the ram motif is extra-Qur'ānic. See also the discussion below.

³ The storyteller uses the Bulgarian (Slavonic) word “Господ” [i.e. ‘God’, ‘Lord’] and the name of Allah interchangeably.

⁴ Cf. A 52 (Creation of angels) in Stith Thompson’s *Motif-Index*.

⁵ The local dialect form “*melyaike/malyaike*” (meaning ‘angel’) originates from Turkish *melek*, which is itself derivative from Arabic *malāk* (pl. *malā’ika*) and is cognate to the Hebrew *malāch* (pl. *melāchim*). The word is of Semitic origin.

⁶ Cf. Sūrah 7: 11 and Sūrah 38: 77. A similar idea, that the angels are created of fire, is developed in some extra-Qur’ānic writings, such as Al-Tabarī’s *History of Prophets and Kings* [trans. Rosenthal 1989: 252-253], Al-Rabghūzī’s *The Stories of the Prophets* [trans. Boeschoten, O’Kane, Vandamme 1995: 11-13, fol.4r], and popular Islamic oral tradition.

On the other hand, the concept that the angels are created of fire is distinctly attested in midrashic tradition [Ginzberg 1968 (1): 16], as well as in some extra-canonical Christian (oral and written) accounts which parallel both the canonical Qur’ānic text and Islamic exegetical writings. A great variety of Old Church Slavonic apocrypha and folklore narratives (and in particular dualistic cosmogonic legends related to the Christian heresy of Bogomilism) touch upon the matter of angels being created from fire.

According to the *Sea of Tiberias* Slavonic apocryphal text (which is representative of the indigenous Slavonic apocryphal repertoire and has no Greek protograph), when God decided to create the world, he ordered Sotana-il (Satan) to dive to the bottom of the primordial waters and bring him soil and flint:

Sotana-il obeyed the Lord and dove into the Sea and brought up earth and flint. And the Lord then took earth and sand and scattered it along the Sea of Tiberias and said, “May the earth be rich [lit. “fat”, “thick”] and broad on the Sea!” And God took the flint from Sotana-il and broke it into two and He kept what was in His right hand for Himself and what was in His left hand He gave to Sotana-il. God then took His sceptre and began beating the flint, saying, ‘Fly out from this flint — angels and archangels — in My fleshless form and image!’ Fiery forces started to fly out from this flint, and God created angels and archangels and all nine ranks [of angels].

Sotana-il saw what God created and began to beat the flint which God gave him from His left hand. Sotana-il’s angels began to fly out and he created for himself great forces. God made him [Sotana-il] the head of all angel ranks, and he himself came to the ninth rank [of angels].

Below follows the original Slavonic text:

Сотонаиль же послѣша Гдѣ и поныри са въ море и вынеси земли и кремень. И възѣ Гдѣ землю и песокъ, разсѣа по морю Тивириадскомѣ и рече: бѣди на море земля тольста и пространна! И възѣ Гдѣ оу Сотонаила кремень и преломи его на полы, и въ правой рѣкѣ остави Гдѣ оу себѣ, а въ лѣвой ѿдалъ Гдѣ Сотонаилу. И възѣ Гдѣ посохъ и нача бити кремень и рече: вылѣти из него кремени агглы и архангели по образѣ моемѣ и по подобію и безплотніи! И почали ѿ того кремени вылетати силы огненныа, и сотвори Гдѣ агглы и архагглы и всѣ девять чиновъ. И виде Сотонаиль что сотвориль Гдѣ изъ лѣвыа рѣки. И почали оу Сотонаилѣ вылѣтати агглы его Сотонаиловы, себе сотвори силѣ великѣю. И сотвори Гдѣ [Сотонаила] начальникомъ надо всѣми чиньми аггельскими... пріде Гдѣ въ девѣты чинъ [Quoted after Ivanov 1925: 290-291].

The above fragment is an extract from a sixteenth century Russian Ms. published by E. V. Barsov in 1886. Although the now extant recensions of *The Sea of Tiberias* are predominantly Russian (with the Bulgarian version from the Slepche Monastery, published by V. Grigorovich as a rare exception), these surviving written accounts show similarities with South Slavonic oral tradition, and in particular with certain dualistic cosmogonic legends (often related to the Christian heresy of Bogomilism). Some of these texts can still be recounted among storytellers in the Balkans. Most probably the protograph of *The Sea of Tiberias* belongs to the apocryphal Bogomilistic tradition of original South Slavonic literature (Old Bulgarian in particular)

dating from the eleventh to thirteenth century; for further information, see Ivanov [ibid. 310-311]. Recently it has been argued that the Sea of Tiberias has East Slavonic (Russian), and not South Slavonic (Bulgarian) origin, see V. Kuznetsova [1998: 59-78]. However, there is abundant evidence that the protograph “belongs to the tradition of original South Slavonic literature (Old Bulgarian in particular) and most probably dates from the eleventh to thirteenth centuries when other original Old Bulgarian apocrypha, borrowing and reinterpreting earlier apocryphal and apocalyptic traditions, were written” [Stoyanov 2001: 20-21]; for further information see M. Dragomanov [1894: 10-35, 45-52], I. Ivanov [1925: 287-326], D. Petkanova [1978: 155-161], D. Dimitrova-Marinova [1998: 38-57], R. Tomicki [1976: 86-95; 1979: 174-175; 1980: 51-62, 70-117], Yu. Stoyanov [2001: 19-33; 2004: 192; 194], and Badalanova [2003: 6-7, 13-14; 2008: 168, 189, 219-30]; for general survey of dualistic themes and motifs in Slavonic and Balkan folklore, within the context of Eurasian archaic cosmogonies, see Dragomanov [1892]. On the relationship between *The Sea of Tiberias* and Islamic heterodox (*Bektaş and Kizilbaş/Alevi*) cosmogonies from the Balkan-Anatolian area (with special emphasis on creation stories narrated among the Bulgarian Muslims), see Stoyanov [2001a: 167-217; 2004: 191-201].

One more related example: according to the Slavonic *Book of the Secrets of Enoch the Just* (known also as *Enoch 2*), on the second day of Creation God struck up a great fire from the primordial hard stones and from this fire He created an incorporeal host, the angels, and their armour was fiery and the garments were of burning flame:

From the stones I struck up a great fire, and from the fire I created the ranks of the incorporeal host of the 10 angels and their flaming armour, and their garments were like a burning blaze. And I ordered each of them to remain in the rank assigned to them. But one among the hosts of angels severed himself along with all those below him, being upset by the sick thought of putting his throne above the clouds and above the Earth, to become equal to My power. I tossed him from the height, together with his angels, and he started flying in the air above the Abyss.

И ѿ камене^х оусѣко^х ѿгнь великы и ѿ ѿгнѣ сътвори^х чини бесплѣтны^х вои і □ тѣ^м агг^ль, и ѿрѣжѣа и^х ѿгньна и ѿдежде и^х плами палець; и повелѣ^х да стоѣ кѣждо въ свое^м чиноу. Ёдни же ѿ чина архагг^лкаго ѿвращ са съ чино^м сѣщи^м под ни^м, въспрѣж^т мисль немощнѣа, да постави^т прѣстоль свои выше ѿбла^к на^д землеа, да бѣде^т тѣче^т мое^и силѣ. И ѿврѣго^х е^гго съ высоты съ агг^ли е^гго. И бѣ лѣгаа по въздохуо винѣ врѣхоу бездни. [Quoted after Ivanov 1925: 176]

The above fragment is an extract from a sixteenth century Bulgarian redaction of *The Book of the Secrets of Enoch*, the actual title of which reads, *The Book of the holy secrets of Enoch, a sage and a great man of letters, whom the Lord loved and received so that he might witness life above and the most wise, greatest, unimaginable and immutable Kingdom of Almighty God, and the most wondrous, glorious, luminous, and many-eyed abode of the servants of God, and immoveable throne of the Lord, and the ranks and appearance of heavenly hosts, and indescribable station of many multitudes of elements, and other visions and an unexpressible singing of the cherubims, and immeasurable light, so that he may become a witness to all this* (*Книги ст^ли^х таинь Енохо^г, Мѣжа мѣдра и велика хѣдожника, е^ггоже прѣ^л Гь^л и възлюбить е^гго, да види вышина^ж житиѣ и прѣ^лмѣдраго и великаго и недомыслимаго и непрѣ^лмѣннаго црѣтва ба^л въседрѣжителѣ, и прѣ^лдивнаго и славнаго и свѣтлаго и многоѿ^лчитаго стоанѣа слоугѣ гн^лѣ, и неподви^жимаго прѣ^лта гн^лѣ, и степени, и ѿбѣяленѣ) воинѣ бесплѣтны, и неказажемаго сложенѣа много мѣжества стухи, и различнаа видѣнѣа и неисповѣдимаа пѣнѣа хероувимскы^х вои, и свѣта безъ мѣрна самовидецѣ быти). The actual Ms. is preserved in the National Library in Belgrade (record No. 321); it was discovered by the Russian scholar M. Sokolov in 1886 and published by him 13 years later. Here I refer to Iordan Ivanov’s publication of the original text following Sokolov’s publication of the apocryphon [Ivanov 1925: 177-178].*

The earliest version of *Enoch 2* probably appeared in medieval Bulgaria in the tenth century [Petkanova 1982: 351]; Iordan Ivanov suggests as *terminus ante quem* eleventh-twelfth centuries [1925: 167]. The Slavonic protograph must have originated from a Greek Vorlage which may have been based on an Hebrew or Aramaic original. It has been argued that it was composed in Egypt (most probably in Alexandria) by a Hellenistic Jew [Schmidt 1921: 308]. Further on *The Book of the Secrets of Enoch*, see M. Stone [1980: 31-47, 59-70, 109], as well as J. C. Greenfield and M. Stone [1979: 89-103], P. Alexander [1998: 87-122]; on the *Slavonic Enoch*, see R. H. Charles and W. R. Morfill [1896], A. Pennington in H. F. D. Sparks’ (Ed.) *The Apocryphal Old Testament* [1984: 321-362], F. Andersen in the first volume of J. Charlesworth’s *Old*

Testament Pseudepigrapha (Ed.) [1983-1985: 91-221], Orlov [2004: 3-29]. On the angelic intercession on behalf of men in *Slavonic Enoch*, see Higgins [1953: 321-323].

The fact that some explicit ideas related to the origin of the angels of fire are attested not only in canonical Qur'ānic text, but also in Muslim and Christian folklore, as well as in Judaeo-Christian apocryphal writings indicates that there must have existed a certain oral Ur hyper-text which functioned as a Vorlage-compendium of themes and motifs for both the Bible and the Qur'ān. Further traces of this oral Ur-hypertext have survived in the oral tradition in the Balkans (and the present folklore text provides evidence supporting this assertion).

⁷ Cf. Sūrah 3: 52; Sūrah 15: 26, 33; Sūrah 16: 4; Sūrah 17: 63; Sūrah 22:5; Sūrah 55:13. This particular motif — that the first man was made of “the dust of the ground” (i.e. earth / soil / clay) — parallels the Biblical account of Gn 2: 7, as well as some Christian extra-canonical (Old Church Slavonic apocryphal) texts, such as *The Sea of Tiberias* (see above). It should be noted, however, that the motif of the creation of Adam out of dust/earth is not always included in Jewish and Christian extra-canonical (apocryphal) Creation narratives. The *Book of Jubilees*, for instance [Sparks 1984: 15], follows Gn 1:26-27 and does not contain the detail of the dust of the ground being the *materia prima* from which the first man was created. Slavonic and Balkan folklore narratives of the creation of Adam/Adem out of dust/earth share the vernacular exegesis of both Christian and Muslim anthropogenesis. Furthermore, the motif of “the earthen/earthborn man” is the most widespread component of the indigenous myths of origin, be it Christian or Muslim. A cluster of new themes and motifs is often attached to it by the local storytellers. Thus, among the heterodox (Kizilbaş) Muslims in the village of Bisertsi (North-Eastern Bulgaria), it is believed that the horse is a sacred being, as it “participated in the act of the creation of the first man” [Mikov 2005: 278]; it is further maintained that this animal was created in order to squash with its hooves “the dust of the ground”, and then mash and knead the clay from which the body of the first man was subsequently moulded by God. This belief is also mirrored in traditional customs, social norms and values shared by the local village people among whom the horse enjoys enormous respect. The special attitude towards this animal is also related to the belief that the Prophet Muhammad accomplished his “night journey” from Mecca to the temple (of Jerusalem) [Sūrah 17], and then through the seven heavens to the throne of God, on the back of his miraculous horse Borak (for vernacular interpretations of this motif among the orthodox and heterodox Muslims in Bulgaria, see Lozanova [2002: 46-48] and Mikov [2005: 278-281]).

Thus the two key-events in the sacred history of the Muslim people, the Creation of Adam and the Ascent of Muhammad, are bound in some circles by the same zoomorphic icon — that of the horse. In this way the traditional belief system reveals a mystical relationship between the two key-figures in the sacred Muslim genealogy, the first and last Prophets Adam and Muhammad.

⁸ Cf. Sūrah 13: 3; Sūrah 41:9; see also *The History of Prophets and Kings* by Al-Tabarī (839-923 AD). According to his account, after Allah's having created the primordial fish (*hūt/nūn*),

the earth was spread out on its back. The fish moved, with the result that the earth was shaken up. It was steadied by means of the mountains, for the mountains indeed proudly tower over the earth [trans. F. Rosenthal 1989: 218, fol. 48].

Al-Tabarī offers further versions of this cosmogonic narrative [ibid., pp. 219-222, fol. 49-52]. According to one of them,

He created the earth upon a [big] fish (*hūt*), that being the fish (*nūn*) mentioned by God in the Qur'ān: “*Nūn*. By the Pen.” The fish was in the water. The water was upon the back of a (small) rock. The rock was upon the back of an angel. The angel was upon a (big) rock. The (big) rock — the one mentioned by Luqmān — was in the wind, neither in heaven nor on earth. The fish moved and became agitated. As a result, the earth quaked, whereupon He firmly anchored the mountains on it, and it was stable. The mountains proudly (tower) over the earth. This is stated in God's word that he made for the earth “firmly anchored (mountains), lest it shake you up” (Sūrah 16: 15) [ibid., p. 220, fol. 50].

As for the two different words denoting “the primordial fish” (see above), Rosenthal points out that “there is no discernible distinction between *hūt* and *nūn*, the latter being ancient Semitic word”; incidentally, “*Hūt* appears in the Qur’ān also in connection with Jonah” [ibid., p.220, footnote 361].

⁹ Compare this fragment to the following excerpt from the “Account of the Creation of the Heavens and the Earth,” as presented in Al-Rabghūzī’s *The Stories of the Prophets* (13-14th cent.):

Once the earth had been created on the water, it didn’t stay in its place but began to move. To keep it in place God created the mountains; they became the earth’s fasteners (f.3r) [Boeschoten, O’Kane, Vandamme 1995: 9].

See also the medieval Bulgarian Christian apocryphal tradition, and in particular the text of Question No. 44 of the Разумникъ:

Question, “Why did God create mountains?” Answer, “The Earth was stabilized by means of the mountains, so that it does not rock (back and forth) on the waters.”

В.: чесо ради сътвори Бъ□ гωры? – Ѡ.: гωрами землѣ Ѡтврѣди сж, да не колѣбае са на вωдахъ. [Quoted after Ivanov 1925: 262].

¹⁰ Cognate to Arabic *sadaqa*, and *tasaddeqa* ‘alā, “to give alms” [courtesy Harry Norris]; also in Hebrew “alms” (*tsedāqāh*).

¹¹ The above folklore text is virtually identical with an 11th century account from *Lives of the Prophets* of the Islamic exegete Al-Tha’labī (died 1036 AD), whose native land was Nīsāpūr (which indicates that he was of Persian origin). Here follows his text:

When God created the Earth it began to shake, so God created the mountains and placed it upon them, and it became steady. The angels were amazed at the strength of the mountains and said: “O Lord, is there anything in Your created world stronger than the mountains?” And He said: “Yes, iron.” And they said: “Lord, is there anything stronger than iron in Your created world?” He said: “Yes, fire.” Then they said: “Lord, is there anything in what You created stronger than fire?” He said: “Yes, water.” So they said: “Lord, is anything stronger than water in Your created world?” He said: “Yes, wind.” Then they said: “Is anything of Your created world stronger than wind?” He said: “Yes, man. He gives alms with his right hand and conceals it from his left.” [translation Brinner, 2002:9-10].

It is remarkable that an account composed probably in early 11th century Baghdad found its way to a small Bulgarian village ten centuries later. Originally written in Arabic, Al-Tha’labī’s manuscript of *The Lives of the Prophets* must have spread far beyond the native land of its author, thus becoming part of much broader cultural milieu and gravitating “between classical, medieval and popular Islam” [Brinner 2002: xi]. “Undoubtedly meant for the enjoyment of the many, while simultaneously giving religious instruction with scholarly commentary on the Qur’ān as a background” [ibid.], Al-Tha’labī’s account obviously encompasses the affluent heritage of indigenous oral tradition. As pointed out by some scholars, “in some portions it uses folk literature and language that is almost playful and certainly amusing”, thus indicating “aspects of shared folk-religious beliefs of Muslim, Christians and Jews” [ibid.].

Evidently, Al-Tha’labī’s *The Lives of the Prophets* enjoyed great popularity in the Ottoman Empire.

On the cumulative structure of the above passage of Al-Tha’labī’s text, see Schwarzbaum [1982: 37-38,140, footnote 86] who compares it to the Hadith version of the same text “transmitted by Anas Ibn Malik on behalf of the Prophet Muhammad” [ibid., p. 38]; he also points out that “this cumulative legend is very popular in both Jewish (i.e. Talmudic-Midrashic) and world folklore” and refers to Aa-Th Type 2031 (“Stronger and Strongest”) and Aa-Th Type 2031 A (“The Esdras Chain”). While analyzing the pattern of “Strong, Stronger and Strongest” in the Babylonian Talmud, Schwarzbaum emphasizes that “the cumulative chain in this Talmudic version ends with charity or almsgiving”, just as it is the case in the Hadith version (and indeed in the case of the Muslim folklore account from Bulgaria).

In the Babylonian Talmud (*Baba Batra 10a*), the cumulative pattern of the text runs as follows:
Ten hard things have been created in the world. The Mountain is hard, but iron cuts it; iron is hard, but fire fuses and softens it; fire is strong, yet water extinguishes it; water is mighty, yet the clouds bear it; clouds are mighty, yet the winds scatter them; the wind is strong, but the body (of man) endures it; the human body is strong, yet fear shatters it; fear is strong, but wine dispels it; wine is strong, yet sleep dissipates it. Death, however, is the strongest of all these things, nevertheless Charity delivers from Death [ibid.].

¹² The term “Peygamber” / “Paygambar” (which in the present account is rendered as “Peygamberin”) does not refer to prophets in general but only to the Prophets who appear in the Bible and Qur’ān, i.e. within Islamic religion, which includes ‘Prophets’ such as Hūd and Sālih, and of course, Mohammad himself, the ‘Seal of the Prophets’. In fact, in the oral tradition of Bulgarian Muslims, the appellation “Peygamber” (Messenger) traditionally appears together with the name of Muhammad. The term “Peygamber”/ “Paygambar” is registered also in Turkish, Albanian, Uzbek, etc. [courtesy Harry Norris].

¹³ For Qur’ānic anthropogony, see Sūrah 2:27-35; Sūrah 3: 52; Sūrah 15: 26-39; Sūrah 16: 3-18; Sūrah 17: 63; Sūrah 22:5; Sūrah 55:13; Sūrah 96:2, etc.; consult also *Al-Tabarī* [trans. F. Rosenthal 1989: 257-290, fol. 86-119]. For the folklore renderings of Qur’ānic and extra-Qur’ānic narratives concerned with the creation of the first people, as presented by the Bulgarian Muslims, see Elchinova [2000: 47-52], Mikov [2005: 278], Lubańska [2007: 121-135].

For the iconography of the creation of Adam, see Fig. 1.

¹⁴ See also Al-Tabarī’s *History of Prophets and Kings* [trans. F. Rosenthal 1989: 261-262, ff. 90-92].

¹⁵ From the Arabic *Jibrīl* or *Jibrail*, literally “Master, of God”, i.e., a Master, who is “of God”). In Islamic tradition, he is considered to be the ultimate mediator between terrestrial and celestial realms, between Allah and His Messengers. Thus it is held that it was through him that Allah reveals the Qur’ān to His prophet Mohammad. For Qur’ānic angelology, with special emphasis on the image and functions of Jibril [Gabriel] as the Messenger and the Bearer of Revelation, see Sūrah 2: 91-92 and Sūrah 53: 5-6; see also Sūrah 16: 104; Sūrah 66:4; Sūrah 81: 19. However, he is mentioned only twice by name in the Qur’ān: in Sūrah 2: 91-92 and Sūrah 66:4.

¹⁶ The name of Mikail/Mikal [Michael] appears only once in the Qur’ānic text, in Sūrah 2:92.

¹⁷ The angel Isrāfīl (also known as “the Lord of the Trumpet”, or “the Master of the Horn”) is the one who is expected to blow the horn on the Day of Resurrection. Although this angel is not mentioned by name in the Qur’ān, he is rather popular in Islamic oral tradition in the Balkans. According to some eschatological folklore legends narrated among Bulgarian Muslims (which parallel some rabbinical sources), it is believed that the musical instrument to be blown on the Last Day by Isrāfīl is actually made of the horn of the ram sent by God to Abraham/Ibrahim so that he could sacrifice it instead of his son; see also the discussion above, footnote 1.

¹⁸ ‘Azrā’īl is the principal Islamic angel of death; in the Qur’ān he is mentioned under the title of *Malaku ‘l-Maut* (The Angel of Death) once, in Sūrah 32:11; see also in this connection Sūrah 6: 61, as well as Sūrah 7: 35, Sūrah 16: 30 and Sūrah 47:29.

¹⁹ Or ‘soil’; in Bulgarian the word for ‘earth’ can also denote ‘soil’. For the canonical Islamic interpretation of the concept that Adam was made out of dust, see Sūrah 3: 53 (“He created him of dust: He then said to him ‘Be’ – and he was.”), as well as Sūrah 15:26 (“We created man of dried clay, of dark loam moulded”); and Sūrah 55:13 (“He created man of clay like that of the potter”).

On the other hand, this same idea, that earth/soil/dust was the substance from which the first human being was formed by Allah, features prominently the Qur’ānic accounts about the refusal of Iblīs/Eblis to prostrate himself before Adam and worship him; see in this connection the following fragment from Sūrah 15: 26-39:

We created man of dried clay, of dark loam moulded; // And the djinn had We before created of subtle fire. // *Remember* when thy Lord said to the Angels, ‘I create man of dried clay, of dark loam moulded: // And when I shall have fashioned him and breathed of my spirit into him, then fall ye down and worship him.’ // And the Angels bowed down in worship, all of them, all together, // Save Eblis: he refused to be with those who bowed in worship. // ‘O Eblis,’ said God, ‘wherefore art thou not with those who bow down in worship?’ // He said, ‘It beseemeth not me to bow in worship to man whom thou hast created of clay, of moulded loam.’ // He said, ‘Begone then hence; thou art a stoned one, // And the curse shall be on thee till the day of reckoning.’ // He said, ‘O my Lord! respite me till the day when man shall be raised from the dead.’ // He said, ‘One then of the respited shalt thou be // Till the day of the predestined time.’ // He said, ‘O my Lord! because thou hast beguiled me, I will surely make all fair seeming to them on the earth; I will surely beguile them all; // Except such of them as shall be they sincere servants.’

A similar idea is expressed in Sūrah 17:

And when we said to Angels, ‘Prostrate yourselves before Adam’; and they all prostrated them, save Eblis. ‘What!’ said he, ‘shall I bow before him whom thou hast created of clay? [Sūrah 17: 63]

According to some Muslim hermeneutical writings, Iblīs/Eblis was unwilling to bow before the earthborn Adam, since he, “who was of the Djinn” [Sūrah 18:48], and thus considered himself to be created out of substance much more superior than earth, i.e. fire. Further on the Qur’ānic account of how Eblis/Iblīs refused to obey God’s command to worship Adam, see S. Zwemer [1939: 135-148], who also draws attention to parallels between canonical Muslim and extra-canonical Christian (apocryphal) traditions, with special emphasis on some Syriac and Latin texts (such as *Vita Adam et Evae*, etc.); Zwemer’s observations were further corroborated by Anderson and Stone who point out that the motif of Eblis’/Iblīs’ refusal to bow down before Adam is well attested not only in Syriac and Latin, but also in Armenian and Georgian apocryphal writings [Anderson and Stone 1994: 10-13]. For the iconography of this motif in Jewish, Christian and Islamic art, see Gutmann [1998: 137]; for the interpretation of this motif in Islamic painting, see N. Brosh and R. Milstein [1991: 25-28] and Milstein [2005: 51-56]. For the folklore interpretations of the story of Satan’s refusal to worship Adam/Adem, as attested among the Bulgarian Muslims, see Troeva-Grigorova [2006: 52]. See also Al-Tabarī’s *History of Prophets and Kings* [trans. F. Rosenthal 1989: 259-266, ff. 86-94].

²⁰ The name of the angel Dzhebrail is here in the vocative case (which is formed by adding the ending -e after the name, i.e. Dzhebraile).

²¹ In Bulgarian the noun denoting ‘soil’ is feminine.

²² The storyteller uses here the local dialectal (Turkish) word “*marlyukat*”, which means ‘impure’/‘reckless’.

²³ The name of the angel Mekail in the original Bulgarian text is in the vocative case (which is formed by adding the ending -e after the name, i.e. Mekaile).

²⁴ The name of the angel Isrāfil in the original Bulgarian text is in the vocative case (which is formed by adding the ending -e after the name, i. e. Israfile).

²⁵ See footnote 17.

²⁶ On the Qur’ānic interpretation of the concept of the Last Trumpet, see Sūrah 23: 103, Sūrah 36:51, Sūrah 37: 19.

²⁷ This folklore text reveals anthropogony which is closely related to some Muslim exegetical writings dealing with the theme of the creation of Adam. The earliest relevant example comes from *The History of Prophets and Kings* by Al-Tabarī (839-923 AD):

When God wanted to create Adam, He commanded that the soil from which Adam was to be made be taken from the earth, as we are told by Abū Kurayb—’Uthmān b. Sa’īd—Bishr b. ‘Umārah—Abū Rawq—al-Dahhāk—Ibn Ablās: He — meaning the Lord—then commanded to lift up Adam’s soil. God created Adam “from sticky (*lāzib*) clay — *lāzib* (sticky) meaning viscous and sweet smelling — “from *masnūn* slime” — *masnūn* being “stinking”. He continued. It became stinking slime after (having been compact soil). He continued. God created Adam with His own hand.

According to Mūsā b. Hārūn — ‘Amr b. Hammād — Asbāt —al Suddī —Abū Mālik and Abū Sālih — Ibn Abbās. Also (al-Suddī) Murrah al-Hamdānī—Ibn Mas’ūd and some (other) companions of the Prophet, commenting on the angels, saying: “Will You place on it one who will cause corruption on it and shed blood, whereas we praise and sanctify You? and (God) replied: I know what you do not know” — that is, of the affair of Iblis. God then sent Gabriel to the earth to bring Him some of its clay. The earth said: I take refuge in God against your taking something away from me and mutilating me. So Gabriel returned without having taken (any clay) and said: My Lord, the earth took refuge in You, and I granted it its wish. God then sent Michael and exactly the same thing happened. Then He sent the angel of death. When the earth took refuge in God against him, he said: I take refuge in God against returning without having executed His command. So he took (some soil) from the face of the earth and made a mixture. He did not take the soil from a single place but took red, white, and black soil. Therefore the children of Adam came out different [trans. F. Rosenthal 1989: 258-259, ff. 87-88].

The second (parallel) case in point comes from the Iranian-born Islamic exegete Al-Tha’labī (died 1036 AD); in his *Lives of the Prophets* (in the second chapter, *On the Creation of Adam, of What He is made, and His Distinguishing Features*), he records the following story:

When God desired to create Adam, He manifested to the Earth: “From you I shall create humans, some of them will obey Me and others will disobey Me. Those who obey Me I shall allow to enter the Garden, and those who disobey I shall make to enter the Fire.” Then he sent Gabriel to the Earth in order that he bring Him a handful of its soil. When Gabriel approached to take the soil, the Earth said to him: “I take refuge in the power of God Who sent you, that you not take any thing from me which will have a share in the Fire tomorrow.” So Gabriel returned to his Lord without taking anything from the Earth, and said: “Lord, the Earth took refuge in You and I did not want to approach it.”

Then God ordered Michael, and he came to the Earth and it likewise sought refuge in God refusing to let him take anything from it, so he returned to his Lord without taking anything. Then God sent the Angel of Death and he came to the Earth, but it again refused that he take anything from it. However, he said: “God forbid that I disobey any of His command.” So he took a handful from its four corners, from its upper surface, and from its swamps, from its clay and its red, black, and white (soils), from its smooth and its rough ground. Likewise there are among the offspring of Adam the good and the evil, the pious and the vicious, the beautiful and the ugly. Therefore their forms and colors differ. God said: “*And of His signs is the creation of the Heavens and the Earth and the varieties of your tongues and hues.*” (30:22)

The Angel of Death ascended with the soil to God, Who commanded him to form all of the soil into clay, and let it ferment. So he kneaded it in bitter water and in sweet and salty (water) until he formed it into clay, and leavened it. Therefore human natures vary. Then he commanded Gabriel to bring him a handful of the white (soil) which is the heart of the Earth, its splendor and its light, to create Mohammad from it. So Gabriel descended with the favorite angels of Paradise, the Cherubim, and the angels of the highest plane, and took a handful (of soil) from the place of the Prophet’s tomb, which, at that time, was white and pure. It was kneaded in the Blessed Water of Paradise, and was so fresh that it became like a white pearl. Then it was immersed in all the rivers of the Garden. When it came forth from the rivers, God looked at this pure pearl and it trembled for fear of God, whereupon one hundred and twenty-four thousand drops fell from it, and from each drop God created a prophet, and all the prophets—may the blessings of God be upon our Prophet and upon them — were created from his light. Then the pearl was shown round the Heavens and the Earth, so the angels came to know Muhammad at that time, before they knew Adam. Then he kneaded it with the clay of Adam and left it for forty years until it became sticky, pliable clay. Then He left it for another forty years until it became ‘sounding clay’ like pottery. It is the dry clay that rings when you strike it with you hand, that is, it makes a noise to make it known that its characteristic is craftsmanship and

omnipotence, not by its innate nature or (human) cleverness. Dry clay does not yield, nor is it easy to mold it. Then He shaped it into a body which He cast down for forty years on the path of the angels who descend to Heaven and ascend from it, for that is His word: ‘*Has there come on many any period of time [when he was a thing unremembered?]*’ “ (76:1) Ibn ‘Abbās said: “The man was Adam, and the period was forty years during which Adam was a body cast down at the gate of the Garden.”

The following report is found in the *Sahīh* of al-Tirmidhī with a chain of authorities going back to the Messenger of Allah. It is a commentary on the beginning of the Sūrah of the Cow (Sūrah 2): “God created Adam with His hand from a handful (of soil) which he took from all the earth, from the plains and the mountains, the black, white, and red soil; so his descendants became of the colors of the Earth.” ‘Abdallāh b. Salām asked the Messenger of Allah: “How did God create Adam?” He replied: “He created Adam’s head and forehead from the soil of the Ka’bah; his chest and back from Jerusalem; his thighs from the earth of the Yemen; his legs from the earth of Egypt; his feet from the earth of the Hejaz, his right hand from the earth of the East, and his left hand from the earth of the West. Then He laid him down at the gate of the Garden, and whenever a host of angels passed by him, they marveled at the beauty of his shape and his tall stature. Never before had they seen any shape similar to his. Iblīs passed by him, saw him and said: “For what purpose were you created?” Then he struck him with his hand and behold! he was hollow. He entered into his mouth and came out of his rear. So he said to his companions among the angels who were with him: “This is a hollow creature; it is not firm, nor does it hold together.” Then he said to them: “Do tell me, if He prefers this one over you, what will you do?” They said: “We will obey our Lord.” So Iblīs said to himself: “By God, if He prefers this one over me I shall rebel against Him, but if I am preferred over him I shall destroy him.” [Brinner 2002: 43f.]

The present Muslim folklore text on the creation of Adam from the village of Gorno Kraishte (South-Western Bulgaria) clearly parallels the first part of the above quoted fragment from Al-Tha’labī *Lives of the Prophets*; it also provides vernacular exegesis on the Qur’ānic account of the creation of man, along with attention-grabbing colloquial embellishments, thus responding to some questions — potentially arising from the folk audience — such as “Why people are different?”, “What was the substance from which the First Prophet (Peygamber) Adam /Adem was created?”, “Which were the sacred sites from which the soil for his body was taken?”, “Was Eve/Havva created from the same substance?”, etc. On the other hand, the Muslim folklore text from the Bulgarian village of Gorno Kraishte shares common ground not only with Al-Tabarī’s *History of Prophets and Kings* and Al-Tha’labī *Lives of the Prophets*, but also with some Turkish Islamic writings from Central Asia, such as the early fourteenth century Al-Rabghūzī’s *Stories of the Prophets* [ff. 5-6]:

When the Lord, *He is mighty and glorious*, conceived of creating Adam, the words reached Gabriel: “Go to the surface of the earth and bring back a handful of clay.” Gabriel set out; when he went to take the clay, the earth pronounced an oath before him and said: “Don’t take clay from me.” Gabriel respected the oath and didn’t take any clay. The Lord sent Isrāfīl. Before him as well the earth uttered an oath; he didn’t take any clay. Thereafter the Lord sent Michael. Before him as well the earth uttered an oath; he didn’t take any clay either. Next He sent Azrael and the earth also pronounced an oath before him. Azrael said: “The command of the Lord, *He is exalted*, is dearer to me than your oath”, and from every [part] of the earth he took one handful of clay. From East to West he laid barren forty spans of earth. Then from the majestic Presence there came the words: “Oh Azrael, it would appear you are very stern-hearted. Thus I have ordained the following: I shall have you collect the souls of all living beings”.

As for the clay, some of it was pure, some of it salty, some of it was black and white, some of it sweet and bitter, yellow and green, red and blue, hard and soft, clean and unclean, tasty and tasteless; it was composed of all these properties. For this reason, the children of Adam do not resemble one another. Some are pure and others dirty, some are ill while others are not, some are white and others black, some are yellow and others red, some are good and others bad, some are sweet in their speech, others bitter, some are stern of heart while others are gentle in this respect. Azrael set the clay down between Mecca and Tā’if at a place called Dahnā. For forty years rain fell on the clay. For thirty-nine years the rain of sadness poured down; for one year the rain of happiness. Thus Adam received more sadness than happiness. After forty years God through His omnipotence

formed a figure out of the clay, its head pointing towards Tā'if, its feet towards Mecca" [Boeschoten *et al* 1995: 16-17].

Al-Rabghūzī, the author/compiler of the above quoted text was a judge who lived and worked in Khwarezm, Western Turkistan. In 1309-1310 AD he was invited by the Mongol prince Toq Buqa to compose his *Stories of the Prophets*; the task was accomplished in Khwarezmian Turkish. It is remarkable that his version of the story of creation of Adam parallels not only the earlier (Arabic) accounts of Al-Tabarī's *History of Prophets and Kings* and Al-Tha'labī's *Lives of the Prophets*, but also some recently recorded folklore Muslim Slavonic texts in the Balkans. Anthropological field research in the region provides abundant evidence confirming the assertion that folklore counterparts of Al-Tabarī's *History of Prophets and Kings*, Al-Tha'labī's *Lives of the Prophets and Kings* and Al-Rabghūzī's *Stories of the Prophets* are still narrated among modern Bulgarian Muslims and are vital part of their oral tradition.

And last but not least, a similar account about the creation of man by Allah was recorded in Egypt by Jan Knappert and subsequently published by him in his compendium of *Islamic Legends* [1985]. According to this Egyptian (vernacular) story, after His having summoned all the angels of Heaven,

God then commanded his first angel, Jibril, to go to Earth and take seven pieces of earth from seven different places or countries. Jibril immediately descended to Earth, but when he asked the Earth whether she consented, she refused. "You shall take no part of mine to make a creature that will work evil. You know as well as I that man who will be made of earth, will cause endless suffering to me and his fellow creatures, he will wage wars and do many other godless deeds". Jibril returned to Heaven, the only time in his long life that he was not successful in carrying out God's commandments. God sent Mikail, then Asrafil, but they did not achieve His purpose either, as the Earth refused to hear their pleas, saying: "I will not collaborate in the birth of evil". Finally, God sent the fourth archangel, Azrail, to Earth with the same mission. Without asking any questions, Azrail came down and tore out the required pieces from the body of the Earth and brought them to God, saying to Earth: "It is God's command. It has to be executed regardless of any considerations and, immediately, for what in the universe is more important than God's will? It is for the best." Upon hearing these words, God spoke to Azrail: "You are My most faithful servant. When man will live on earth and have descendants, you will be sent down to the children of Adam one after another when their times come, to take their souls from their bodies, by force if necessary. You will be the most feared of all My servants; you will be the Angel of Death, whom only the good expect in peace!" [Knappert 1985: 25].

Obviously, these five different texts — the written accounts of Al-Tabarī's *History of Prophets and Kings*, Al-Tha'labī *Lives of the Prophets*, Al-Rabghūzī's *Stories of the Prophets* on the one hand, and the recently recorded oral narratives from Egypt and Bulgaria on the other — belong to a certain manifold, complex, multifaceted hyper-text, the different strata of which have functioned throughout centuries independently, yet coherently bound, still evidently retaining certain inner, clandestine links of mutual interdependence, despite of the different languages and dialects through the means of which they were transmitted.

²⁸ The account about the creation of the first woman out of Adam's rib is absent from the Qur'ān; see, however, Sūrah 7: 189:

He it is who hath created you from a single person, and from him brought forth his wife that he might dwell with her: and when he had known her, she bore a light burden, and went about with it; and when it became heavy, they both cried to God their Lord: 'If thou give us a perfect child we will surely be of the thankful'.

The above folklore legend from the village of Gorno Kraishte (South-Western Bulgaria), parallels the Biblical narrative about the creation of the woman [Gn 2: 21-22], as well as Al-Tha'labī's *Lives of the Prophets* and Al-Rabghūzī's *Stories of the Prophets*. Thus, according to Al-Tha'labī's *Lives of the Prophets*,

[w]hen God let Adam dwell in the Garden, he was walking around lonely; there was no one to keep him company or befriend him. So God cast sleep upon him, and he slept. God took one of his ribs

from his left side, which is called al-Quasīrī, and formed Eve from it, without Adam feeling it nor finding any pain therein. For if Adam had felt pain therefrom, no man would be fond of a woman. Then He clothed her in the garments of the Garden, adorned her with all kinds of decorations, and placed her at his head. When Adam awoke from his sleep he saw her sitting at his head. The angels said to Adam, testing his knowledge: “What is this, Adam?” He answered: “A woman”. They asked: “And what is her name?” He replied: “Eve (*Hawwā*)”. They said: “You are right, but why was Eve given that name?” He said: “Because she was formed from something alive (*hayy*).” They asked: “Why did God create her?” Adam answered: “So that she would find rest with me and I with her”, for that is as God said: “*It is He who created you out of one living soul, and made of him his spouse that he might rest in her.*” [Sūrah 7: 189]

The Prophet said: “Woman was formed from a crooked rib; if you straightened (corrected her), you will break her, and if you leave her as she is, you will relish her despite her crookedness” [Brunner 2002: 48].

According to Al-Rabghūzī’s *Stories of the Prophets*, when the angels (Gabriel, Michael and Isrāfil) “conducted Adam into Paradise” (after his ascend to heaven), his heart “was not at ease”, since “he did not see anyone like himself” (fol. 7):

[h]e became [anxious] like a deer as he walked in Paradise. The Lord, *He is exalted*, cast sleep upon Adam. When Adam was in a state between sleep and waking, God created Eve from his short rib, on his left side.

Question: What was His wisdom in creating Eve from Adam while Adam was in a state between waking and sleeping? Answer: If Adam had been awake, his rib would have hurt. Hence he would have taken Eve for an enemy. If he had been asleep, he wouldn’t have known that she was created from him, and he wouldn’t have loved her. In any case, [this way] she would be loved the more.

The Lord, He is mighty and glorious, created Eve from a crooked bone. And so among mankind it has become proverbial: “Women cannot be rightly guided; they are crooked bones.” When Adam saw that Eve was created from himself, he fell in love with her. Eve was very beautiful [Boeschoten *et al* 1995: 20].

The same idea, that the first woman was created out of first man’s left rib is attested in Slavonic and Balkan Christian folklore tradition [Badalanova 2008: 167, 275-6]. Consult also Stith Thompson’s *Motif-Index*: entry A 1275.1. (Creation of first woman from man’s rib).

²⁹ The first woman is never mentioned by name in the Qur’ān. The name given subsequently to her by Muslim authors is *Hawwā*’ (see also the previous footnote). The appellation “Hazreti Hawwa” is literally in Turkish, ‘the blessed Eve’.

³⁰ The storyteller uses the local Bulgarian version of the name of “the mother of all living”, Eve.

³¹ The storyteller uses here the local dialectal form of the standard Turkish word *Cennet* which is related to the Arabic *Al-Janna* (lit. the Garden), and *Jannatu ‘Adn* (i.e. Garden of Eden). The form *Al-Janna* “is the most common name by which Paradise is referred to in the Qur’ān” [Netton 1997: 134]. See also the following footnote.

³² The storyteller now uses the standard Bulgarian word for Heaven/Paradise, i.e. “Рай” [Rai].

³³ Compare this to Sūrah 2: 33:

And We said, ‘O Adam! dwell thou and thy wife in the Garden, and eat ye plentifully there from whatever ye list; but to this tree come not nigh, lest ye become of the transgressors’.

See also in this connection Sūrah 7: 18:

And, O Adam! dwell thou and thy wife in Paradise, and eat ye whence ye will, but to this tree approach not, lest ye become of the unjust doers’.

According to Al-Tha’labī’s *Lives of the Prophets*,

[w]hen God let Adam and Eve dwell in the Garden, He permitted them the delight of the entire Garden, except for one tree, for that is what He said: “And We said: ‘Adam, dwell you and your wife in the Garden, [and eat thereof easefully where you desire; but draw not nigh this tree,] lest you be evildoers.’ (2:35) (Historians) have differed about the identity of that tree which was the tree of testing. [. . .] Qatādah said that it was the tree of knowledge in which there was an indication about everything; whereas Muhammad b. Ka’b said that it was the ear of grain. It is also said that it was wheat, or that it was a grapevine [Brinner 2002: 49].

According to some Christian apocryphal sources, the tree of the fruits of which the first people eat was believed to be either an apple-tree, or fig-tree, or grapevine. For the interpretation of the motif of “Tree of knowledge forbidden” in folk literature, consult also C 621.1. in Stith Thompson’s *Motif-Index*.

³⁴ This account shares common ground with some Islamic folklore narratives registered by M. Lubańska among the Bulgarian Muslims (Pomaks) in the region of Western Rhodope Mountains [Lubańska 2007: 132-133]. These oral texts represent different renderings of one “over-arching Islamic metanarrative” [Sperl 2007]. Recounted by local Muslim storytellers, this “metanarrative of Creation” has been constantly recommenced at each new oral performance, every time updated and redacted by the “grammar” of indigenous vernacular anthropogony. One of the basic ethno-confessional categories on which this Creation metanarrative rests is the concept of “haram” (interpreted by the indigenous Muslim storytellers as “sin”/“offence”). According to the local folklore tradition, the immediate outcome of the “haram” committed by Adam and Hawwa was the physical act of defecation, which was to mark from then on the earthly existence of the human race; this detail also signifies the loss of the special status which Adam/Adam was granted by God prior to the Fall and Expulsion from Paradise (i.e. angels do not defecate, only humans). From divine perfection Man is transformed into an impure, sinful human being. Thus, the act of defecation itself is understood to define Adam’s and Eve’s status as mere mortals. Their bodies are also transformed after the Fall, with anus and genitals. Many storytellers relate that having defecated for the first time, after tasting the forbidden fruit, they smeared their armpits and genitals with their excrement. This act results in the appearance of pubic hair and hair under the armpits, since excrement is considered the most impure of substances. In Slavonic (both Christian and Muslim) vernacular contexts, excrement is employed in ritual acts to mark impurity.

³⁵ The idea that pubic hair and armpit hair are bodily representations of the Fall and loss of innocence is further related to vernacular interpretations of purification customs. This is why the removal of body hair during certain Islamic rites and ceremonies (including suicide attacks) is considered to be one of the means of re-acquiring Eden-like purity.

³⁶ Cf. A 1315.5 (Origin of pubic hairs) in Stith Thompson’s *Motif-Index*. As both oral Muslim and Christian texts indicate, the motif of the appearance of pubic hairs (as an explicit visible mark/stain placed on human bodies to signify “sinfulness” and herald the transition from grace to disgrace for both Adam and Eve) is also related to the accounts about the origin of “shame” as a moral category. The concepts of “sin” and “shame” become bound by the image of pubic hair as symbol of the Fall/transgression and loss of innocence.

Some Muslim commentators (such as Al-Tha’labī) further elaborate on the concept of sin, suggesting that after Adam’s having tested the fruit of the forbidden tree, God afflicted him for his transgression with ten traits, the second among which was “shame”:

“It is said that when God told Adam and Eve not to approach this tree, they both said: ‘Indeed, we shall not approach it nor eat of it.’ But they did not make an exception in their words, by adding ‘if this is the will of God.’ For God made them responsible for themselves and they ate of what was forbidden to them. The narrator said that Al-Hasan b. Muhammad b. al-Husayn—Ibrāhīm b. Ash’ath—Ibrāhīm b. al-Adham: “This single act of eating has bequeathed us a long-lasting sorrow.” Al-Shiblī said: “The first portion of wine-jug [leaves] sediment. Look here, our father Adam sold his

Lord for a handful of wheat and when he ate of the forbidden tree, God afflicted him with ten things. The first was that He reproved them for this transgression by saying: ‘Did I not forbid you that tree and tell you: “Iblis is an open enemy to you?”’ The second was shame, for when they committed the sin their disgraceful acts became evident [or, their pudenda became visible] and the garments which they wore in the Garden fell off of them. Adam was embarrassed and began to run about the Garden. The jujube-tree took hold of him and seized him by the forelock. His Lord called out to him: ‘Are you fleeing from Me, Adam?’ He said: ‘Yes, O Lord, but out of shame before You.’ Therefore it is said: ‘The careless will have enough shame on the Day of Resurrection’” [Brinner 2002: 52].

³⁷ For the iconographic representation of this motif in Muslim paintings, see Ottoman Turkish illuminated manuscripts from the late 16th or early 17th century. One such case is a miniature from *Hadikat üs-süada Fizûla* (British Library, Or. 7301, f. 7b). It depicts the expulsion of Adam and Havva from the Garden; Iblis (Satan) and the angel Cebrail (Gabriel) were also present, along with the serpent which is confronted by a peacock. A further example comes from another manuscript, also entitled *Hadikat üs-süada Fizûla* (British Library, Or. 12009, f. 7b). It likewise shows the expulsion of the first people from Paradise; the composition comprises an image of an angel carrying a stick, along with the images of the serpent and the peacock (which are depicted on the right), while Cebrail is observing them from a balcony.

See also Fig. 2.

³⁸ Compare this to Sûrah 7: 19-24:

Then Satan whispered them to shew them their nakedness, which had been hidden from them both. And he said: “This tree hath your Lord forbidden you, only lest ye should become angels, or lest ye should become immortals”. // And he sware to them both: “Verily I am onto you one who counselleth aright.” // So he beguiled them by deceits: and when they had tasted of the tree, their nakedness appeared to them, and they began to sew together upon themselves the leaves of the garden. And their Lord called to them: “Did I not forbid you this tree, and did I not say to you, ‘Verily, Satan is your declared enemy’.” // They said, “O our Lord! With ourselves have we dealt unjustly: if thou forgive us not and have pity on us, we shall surely be of those who perish.” // He said, “Get ye down, the one of you an enemy to the other; and on earth shall be your dwelling, and your provision for a season.” // He said, “On it shall ye live, and on it shall ye die, and from it shall ye be taken forth”.

³⁹ The storyteller uses again the local dialectal Turkish word for Paradise. This motif of the Expulsion from Paradise is depicted in a Turkish miniature resembling Christian art from the Balkans, in a 1610 illuminated manuscript, *The Book of Divination* (Topkapi Museum, Istanbul TSM H 1703). The miniature shows Adam and Eve, dressed only in leaf skirts (although still with flaming halos), leaving Paradise, with a snake holding leaves in its mouth, a peacock, and an angel dressed in red [And 1987: 79].

⁴⁰ For the concept of the Creator as a potter, consult Stith Thompson’s *Motif-Index of Folk-Literature* (entry A 15.4.1). See also Al-Tabarî’s *History of Prophets and Kings* [ff. 89-91]:

The clay from which Adam was made was moistened until it became “sticky clay”, then was left to become stinking slime, and then *salsāl* (“dry clay” or “potter’s clay”), as God says: “We created man from dry clay from stinking slime”.

According to Ibn Bashshār —Yahyā b. Sa’id and ‘Abd al-Rahmān b. Mahdī—Sufyān —al-A’mash —Muslim al-Batin — Said Jubayr — ‘Ibn Abblās: Adam was created from three (kinds of clay): dry clay (*salsāl*), slime (*hama*) and sticky clay. The “sticky” clay [*lāzib*] is the good clay. *Hama*’ is *hami’ah*, and *salsāl* is finely pounded soil. God means by “from *salsāl*”: from dry clay which has *salsalah*, that is, makes sounds.

It has been mentioned that God caused Adam’s clay to ferment. He left it lying as a body (*jasad*) for forty nights, or, according to another statement, forty years.

According to Abū Kurayb—’Uthmān b. Sa’id—Bishr b. ‘Umārah—Abū Rawq—al-Dahhāk—Ibn Ablās: God commanded to lift up the soil from which Adam was to be made. He created Adam from sticky clay from stinking slime. He continued. It became stinking slime only after (having been compact) soil. He continued. He created Adam from it with His own hand. He continued. It remained lying around as a body (*jasad*) for forty nights. Iblīs used to come to it and kick it with his foot, whereupon it made sounds. He continued. This is (meant by) God’s word:

“From *salsāl* like potter’s clay”. He means: like something separated that is not compact. He continued. Then (Iblis) entered Adam’s mouth and left from his posterior, and he entered his posterior and left from his mouth. Then he said: You are not something for making sounds (*salsalah*). What, then, were you created for? If I am given authority over you, I shall ruin you, and if you are given authority over me, I shall disobey you!”

According to Mūsā B. Hārūn — ‘Amr b. Hammād — Asbāt — al Suddī — Abū Mālik and Abū Sālih — Ibn Abbās. Also (Al-Suddī) Murrāh al-Hamdānī—Ibn Mas’ūd and some (other) companions of the Prophet: God said to angels: “I am creating a human being from clay. When I have fashioned him and blown some of my spirit into him, fall down in prostration before him!” God created him with his own hands, lest Iblīs became overbearing towards (Adam), so that (God) could say to (Iblīs): You are overbearing towards something I have made with My own hand(s), which I Myself was not too haughty to make!/? So God created Adam as a human being. He was a body of clay for forty years the extent of Friday (?). When the angels passed by him, they were frightened by what they saw. The angel most frightened was Iblīs. He would pass by him, kick him, and thus make the body produce a sound as potter’s clay does. This is (meant) where God says: “From *salsāl* like potter’s clay.” Then he would say: What were you created for? He entered his mouth and left from his posterior. Then he said to angels: Don’t be afraid of that one, for your Lord is solid, whereas this one is hollow. When I am given authority over him, I shall ruin him [trans. F. Rosenthal 1989: 260-262].

See also the discussion below.

⁴¹ Compare the above folklore text to the following anthropogonic account from Al-Rabghūzī’s *Stories of the Prophets* (fol. 6r):

The following has come down in tradition: Once Satan descended from heaven with seventy thousand angels, and went to Adam’s clay form. He tapped with his hand on Adam’s belly; he saw that it was hollow. He told the angels: “It will be easy to lead him astray”. He went on: “If the Lord, *He is mighty and glorious*, were to give him power over you, what would you do?” They all said: “We will submit.” Satan said: “*I swear by God, if He gives him power over me, I will not obey him, and if He gives me power over him, I shall destroy him.*” This means: “If the Lord, *He is mighty and glorious*, were to give him power over me, I would not obey him; if He were to give me power over him, I would kill him.” It is said Satan became an infidel that very moment. *In His words, He is exalted: “He became an unbeliever”* [Boeschoten *et al* 1995: 17-18].

For the narrative of the hollow man in Hadīth tradition, see Sperl [2007]. The concept of the “hollow man” was also interpreted by Al-Tha’labī; the anthropogonic narrative in his account of *The Lives of the Prophets* includes the motif of the Devil as anti-Creator who strikes with his own hand the earthen body of the first man (“Then he [Satan] struck him with his hand and behold! he was hollow [Brinner 2002: 45]).

On the other hand, the motif of the Devil piercing with his fingers the freshly kneaded, still soft clay body of the first man, is attested in some Slavonic apocryphal texts. One of them is the Sea of Tiberias. Below comes a fragment from this apocryphon in which the attempt of the Devil to destroy God’s Creation is described in the following way:

And then God created Eden to the East and thought of creating the first man, Adam. He created his body from seven parts. He made his flesh [lit. body] of earth, his bones of stone, his blood of the sea, his eyes from the sun, his thoughts from the cloud, his breath from the wind, his warmth from fire. God went to the sky, to his Father, for Adam’s soul. Not knowing what to do to him, Sotona pierced Adam’s body with his fingers. God came to his creation, to Adam’s body and saw that his body was all pierced, and God said, “O Devil, how did you dare do this to my creation?” The Devil answered, “God, as soon as man has an ache somewhere, he will mention Your name.” God then turned Adam inside-out, with his sores inside, and that is how illness originated. This is what Sotona did, when someone is ill, he would sigh and say, “O God, have mercy upon me!”

И потомъ сотвори Гдѣ рай на востоце, и помысли Гдѣ сотворити первозданнаго члѣвца Адама. И сатвори тѣло его ѿ седми частей: ѿ земли тѣло, ѿ камени кости, ѿ моря кровь, ѿ слѣнца

очи, ѿ облака мысли, ѿ ветра дыханіе, ѿ огна теплота. И поиде Гдѣ на нбса ко ѿцѣ своемѣ по дшѣ Адама. Сотона невѣдаа что сотвори(ти) емѣ истыка тѣло Адамово персты. И прїиде Гдѣ к своемѣ созданію, к тѣлѣ Адамовѣ, и виде тѣло истыкано все, и рече Гдѣ: о діаволе! Како еси смѣль надь моимѣ созданіемъ тако сотвори(ти)? И ѿвѣща діаволь: Гдѣ аще та кой члѣвкъ чыгнетъ что заболить и тотъ да теба поманетъ. И Гдѣ повороти Адама внѣтръ ранами, и ѿтоле зачатса болѣзнь. Сотона сотвориль, аще оу кого заболить и тотъ да воздохнетъ: охъ, охъ, Гдѣ помилѣй! [Quoted after Ivanov 1925: 291]

Further on the interpretation of the legend about Satan as the anti-Creator (believed to have struck Adam's body after God's having kneaded it from clay and laid it down to dry), with special emphasis on Slavonic apocryphal writings and folklore cosmogonies, see Badalanova [2008: 223-224, 268-269; 274-275]; see also footnote 43.

⁴² Consult Stith Thompson's *Motif-Index*, and in particular A 60 ("Mar-plot" of creation: an evil opponent attempts to undo or mar the work of the creator), and A 63 (Devil as "mar-plot" at creation).

⁴³ A similar story about the origin of the dog is presented in some Slavonic apocryphal legends and folklore tales. According to them, the dog was created from the piece of clay which was taken out from Adam's body after the Devil attempted to damage or corrupt or pollute him. The following *Legend of How God Created Adam* (*Сказаніе како сотвору Богъ Адама*) comes from the seventeenth century *Rumyantsovskii Miscellany* (Ms No 370, f. 147-177):

[God] . . . created a man in the land of Midian, having taken one handful of dust consisting of eight parts. [He made] a body from earth, bones from stones, blood from the sea, eyes from the sun, thoughts from clouds, sight from light, breadth from wind, and warmth from fire. Then Lord God went to collect eyes from the sun and he left Adam alone, lying on the earth. The cursed Satan came to Adam and smeared him with mud, slime, and dirt. Then God came to Adam and wanted to implant eyes into Adam, but his creature was marred. God got angry at the Devil and said, 'Damned Devil, do you not deserve to perish? Why did you make this blemish on man and smear him? May you be damned!' The Devil disappeared from the Earth, from God's face, like lightning. Then God, having removed Satan's blemish, created the dog from it [i.e. the slime], moulding it with Adam's tears, and He cleaned him [Adam's body] with an adze until it shone like a mirror. He placed the dog [beside the man], ordering it to guard Adam, while God himself went up to Heavenly Jerusalem, to take the breath / soul for Adam.

... Создати въ земли Мадіамстей чловѣка, вземъ земли горсть отъ осьми частей: отъ земли — тѣло, отъ камени — кости, отъ моря — кровь, отъ солнца — очи, отъ облака — мысли, отъ свѣта — свѣтъ, отъ вѣтра — дыханіе, отъ огня — оттепла. И поиде Господь Богъ очи имати отъ солнца, и остави Адама одинаго лежаща на земли; прїиде же окаянный Сотона ко Адаму и измаза его каломъ и тиною и възгрями. И прїиде Господь ко Адаму и восхотѣ очи вложити во Адама, и видѣ его мужа измазанна; и разгнѣвася Господь на діавола и нача глаголати: окаяние діаволе, проклятый, не достоинъ ли твоя погибель? Что ради чловѣку сему сотвориль еси пакость, измаза его? и проклять ты буди— и діаволь исчезе, аки молнія, сквозь землю отъ лица Господня. Господь же, снемъ съ него пакосты Сотонины, и въ томъ сотвори Господь собаку, и смѣсивъ со Адамовыми слезами и теслою очисти его аки зеркало отъ всехъ сквернь, и постави собаку и повелѣ стрещи Адама, а самъ Господь отъиде в горніи Іерусалим по дыхание Адамово [Purin 1862: 12-13].

Thus man and dog are understood to have originated from a certain common *materia prima*. In other words, man and dog share the same primordial flesh.

For the concept of the "evil input" on behalf of Satan in the creation of Adam, see also the discussion above, footnote 41.

⁴⁴ Cf. Gn 2: 21-22.

⁴⁵ As pointed out briefly above, the account about the creation of the first woman out of Adam's rib is absent from the Qur'an; see also footnotes Nos 28 and 29).

⁴⁶ Cf. Stith Thompson's *Motif-Index: A* 1275.1. (Creation of first woman from man's rib); see also Al-Tabarī's *History of Prophets and Kings* [trans. F. Rosenthal 1989: 273-274, ff. 102-103]. For the interpretation of this motif in anthropogonic legends narrated among the Bulgarian Muslims, see Elchinova [2000: 48].

⁴⁷ Compare this folklore account to the legends narrated in Arabic among the Muslims in Palestine and Egypt and recorded by J. R. Hanauer at the end of the 19th century; these tales were later published by him in his anthology *The Holy Land: Myths and Legends* [1996 (1907): 10].

⁴⁸ Cf. Stith Thompson's *Motif-Index: A* 1319.1 (Origin of Adam's apple: forbidden fruit sticks in Adam's throat).

⁴⁹ The above folklore account offers a unique indigenous idiosyncratic version of the story of the forbidden fruit.

⁵⁰ Some Muslim commentators maintain that the forbidden fruit was the ear of grain (i.e. wheat), or that it was a grapevine; for further details, see Al-Tabarī's *History of Prophets and Kings* [trans. F. Rosenthal 1989: 299, fol. 128], as well as Al-Rabghūzī's *Stories of the Prophets* [trans. H. Boeschoten, J. O'Kane and M. Vandamme [1995: 16]:

Through a trick of Satan he [i.e. Adam] went astray and then brooded all alone. He ate two grains of wheat and departed from the realm of the eight Paradises. [fol. 5 v]

⁵¹ The storyteller alternates between Arabic "Hava" [*Hawwā*] and Bulgarian "Eva".

⁵² The storyteller alternates between "Adem" (Arabic) and "Adam" (Bulgarian).

⁵³ This folklore text was analysed by the Bulgarian folklorist Vanya Mateeva in her article "The human body: visible and invisible" [1996: 110-124].

⁵⁴ The storyteller alternates between the Bulgarian version of the name of Eve (i.e. "Eva") and Arabic "Hava" [*Hawwā*].

⁵⁵ The present account shows some striking similarities with some early Muslim commentaries on scriptural passages, and especially with Al-Tabarī's *History of Prophets and Kings*; in both texts fratricide is related to the broader issue of sibling relationship as a basis for marriage rules. According to Al-Tabarī's account (ff. 140-141),

Eve reportedly used to carry only twins, one male and one female, and in twenty pregnancies she bore from Adam's loin forty children, male and female. Each man among them would marry any sister of his that he wanted, except his won twin sister that was born together with him; she was not permitted to marry him. Men could marry sisters at that time, because there were no women except their sisters and their mother, Eve.

According to Ibn Humayd—Salamah—Muhammad b. Ishaq — some scholar(s) knowledgeable in the first Book: Adam ordered his son Cain to marry his twin sister to Abel, and he ordered Abel to marry his twin sister to Cain. Abel was pleased and agreed, but Cain refused, disliking (the idea), because he considered himself too good for Abel's sister. He desired his (own) sister and did not want Abel to have her. He said: We were born in Paradise, and they were born on earth. I am more deserving of my sister — Some scholar(s) of the people of the first Book say(s): Rather, the sister of Cain was one of the most beautiful human beings, and Cain begrudged her to his brother and wanted

her for himself. God knows best what it was! His father now said to him: Son, she is not permitted to you. Cain, however, refused to accept his father's word. So his father said to him: Then, son, offer a sacrifice, and let your brother Abel offer one! The one whose offering is accepted by God deserves her the most. Cain was in charge of sowing, and Abel was in charge of shepherding. Cain therefore offered flour, while Abel offered some first-born sheep. [...]. God sent down a white fire which consumed Abel's offering, leaving that of Cain [trans. F. Rosenthal 1989: 310-311].

A similar account was recently recorded by Jan Knappert, according to which Eve had in total "twenty sets of twins, each pair a boy and a girl", just like in the Muslim text from Bulgaria:

The first two boys were Kābil (Cain) and Hābil (Abel), and the Islamic tradition tells us the reason for their quarrelling as follows: Kābil was the eldest and would therefore inherit the earth and become a king. Now God told Adam that his sons must not marry their own twin sisters, but exchange with their brothers, so that Cain must marry Abel's twin sister and Abel would become the husband of Cain's twin sister. So, Cain married Abel's twin sister and was very happy with her, but when the time came for Abel to marry, Cain would not give him his own twin sister because she was the most beautiful girl on earth. The two young men had words about this, and as soon as they began raising their voices the devil heard them and appeared casually, carrying a stone in his hand which he gave to Cain who killed Abel with it. Abel died at once. The first murder had taken place because the quarrel was there and so the weapon [Knappert 1985: 40-41].

This motif is also depicted in Turkish miniature painting, such as the 1583 illuminated manuscript (calligraphy by Sayyid Loqman), showing Adam and Eve, each holding a red flower, standing next to the forbidden tree, and below them are ten pairs of twins while on the bottom left Cain kills Abel; from Loqman's *Cream of Histories* (Türk-Islam Eserleri Müzesi, Istanbul) [And 1987: 50].

⁵⁶ A similar motif, that Eve gave birth to twins twenty times, appears in both Christian and Muslim folklore legends about the offspring of the first people. Thus the total number of their children thus comes to 40. Incidentally, in Slavonic and Balkan oral tradition, 'forty' is a number which signifies 'multiplicity'.

⁵⁷ Cf. Al-Tabarī's *History of Prophets and Kings* [trans. Rosenthal 1989: 309-310]. A similar concept of the origins of kinship, marriage rules and customary law is developed in some folklore legends narrated among the Bulgarian Christians in villages situated in the western part of the Balkan mountains. According to one of these accounts, the first people (i.e. Adam and Eve) were supposed to marry off the siblings to each other, provided they were not twins. In this scheme, children 1-5 were boys, 6-10 were girls, and each boy married a sister in this same sequence (the first boy married the first girl [= 6th child], the second boy married the second girl [= 7th child], etc.). This is why in traditional Bulgarian society a younger sibling was not supposed to marry before his/her older sibling. Here follows the account:

First, Grandad Lord made Grandad Adam and Granny Eve. He made them from earth. But first He made Grandad Adam. He made him from dust and breathed in his mouth to give him a soul, and bring him to life. And after that He took a rib from Grandad Adam and made Granny Eve. Was Granny Eve the left rib of Adam, or wasn't she? ... Well, she was made out of Adam anyway... These two were people, they were not others. And it went on like that, right? Those two. Grandad Adam and Granny Eve were already like man and wife, and were fruitful. They had five sons one after the other: from the first to the fifth, all sons. From the sixth to the tenth child, all were daughters. And they grew up and became all ready to get married. And now Grandad Lord came by, and they asked Him: "What shall we do with these children? We have to marry them off!"

And they were related to each other, weren't they? They were siblings, brothers and sisters. And thus, Grandad Lord said: "The first son is to be wedded to the first daughter!"

As a matter of fact, he was the first [offspring], while she was the sixth child in the family.

"Marry them! Then the second son will wed the seventh child, while the third son — the eighth, and you will marry them!"

And thus they made the world fruitful. That is what I have heard. [Hence, people have been left with this law: not to marry their children out of order.] It is necessary for the first to get married

first. They may not get married out of order. Nowadays, however, they start getting married out of order, but in the old days, it was not done. They waited for their turn. And they lived a life as long as three hundred multiplied by three years.

I recorded this legend in November 1989 in the village of Kotevovtsi, Berkovitsa region, North-Western Bulgaria. It was narrated by the storyteller Georgy Latinov Antonov, born 1900 in the same village, three years' schooling, a shepherd. He was one of the oldest and the most gifted storytellers in his village, where he goes under the nickname of "the great wag of Kotevovtsi".

⁵⁸ Cf. Sūrah 2: 34 and Sūrah 7: 18. See also Al-Tabarī's *History of Prophets and Kings* [trans. F. Rosenthal 1989: 274-281, ff. 103-110]. For the motif of "Tree of knowledge forbidden" in folk literature, consult entry C 621.1. in Stith Thompson's *Motif-Index*.

⁵⁹ The theme of the clandestine entering of the sneaky Satan/Iblīs into the realm of the Garden was equally attested in both Islamic and Christian folklore cosmogonies, which parallel Muslim exegetical writings and Christian apocryphal literature (*The Sea of Tiberias*, for instance). Both types of traditions clearly show certain similarities, indicating that Christian and Muslim sources must have issued forth from the fabric of a common Ur hyper-text as a major source of their thesaurus of shared themes and motifs.

Thus, according to Al-Tha'labī's *Lives of the Prophets*,

Iblīs wished to enter the Garden in order to instil evil in Adam and Eve, but the treasure-keepers (of the Garden) prevented him from doing that. So he went to the serpent, who was one of the most beautiful beasts created by God. She had four legs like the legs of a camel. Now, she was one of the treasure-keepers of the Garden and was a friend of Iblīs, so he asked her to take him into the Garden in her mouth. She put him into her mouth and passed by the keepers with him while they were unaware, and took him into the Garden [trans. Brinner 2002: 50].

Compare the above fragment from Al-Tha'labī's *Lives of the Prophets* to the following extract from *the Sea of Tiberias* apocryphon:

At that time in Eden the serpent was the most reputable among animals and the most handsome. The serpent went out of Eden for a walk. *Sotona* [i.e. Satan] from the very beginning hated the good in mankind, and *Sotona* turned himself into a worm and crawled to the serpent and said to the serpent, "Eat me!" It ate the worm and took it into Eden. The serpent then coiled around the forbidden tree and *Sotona* started calling out from the serpent's mouth "O Eve, what did your God order you to eat?" And Eve said, "The Lord commanded us to eat from all the trees but from this tree God did not wish us to eat, or we will suffer death." And *Sotona* said, "You will not suffer death but will be like gods, knowing good from evil."

И в то время была въ раю змиа паче всѣхъ свѣрей почтона, преоукрашена. Изыде змиа изъ раю гꙋлати. Искони бѣ сотона ненавида добра родѣ члꙋвчскаго, и сотона обернѣлса червемъ и приползи ко змие и рече змиа: пожри ма! Пожре черва и несе в раи. Змиа же обернѣла са около запрещенного древа, и нача сотона вопити змиевыми оустами: о Евва! Что твой Бгꙋ повелѣ ясти? И рече Евва: ѿ всѣхъ древь ясти повелѣлъ Гдѣ, а ѿ того древа не повелѣлъ намъ Бгꙋ ясти, да смертїю оумрешъ. И рече сотона: не смертїю оумрешъ, но будете аки бози, станете вѣдать добро и зло. [Quoted after Ivanov 1925: 292].

The comparison between the two narratives of how Satan enters the Paradise — that of Al-Tha'labī's *Lives of the Prophets* and that of the Old Church Slavonic apocryphon *The Sea of Tiberias* — convincingly shows that they share certain similar features: in both cases the Devil makes his way into the Garden of Eden in the mouth of the snake.

⁶⁰ Cf. Sūrah 7: 19.

⁶¹ Cf. A 1331. (Paradise lost) and A 1331. 1. (Paradise lost because of forbidden fruit) in Stith Thompson's *Motif-Index*.

⁶² Cf. A 1315.3 (Origin of beard) in Stith Thompson's *Motif-Index*.

⁶³ Cf. A 1315. (Origin of hair and beard) in Stith Thompson's *Motif-Index*.

⁶⁴ Cf. A 1315. 5. (Origin of pubic hairs) in Stith Thompson's *Motif-Index*.

⁶⁵ This detail is also attested in Al-Tabarī's *History of Prophets and Kings* [fol. 140]:

According to Ibn Humayd—Salamah—Muhammad b. Ishaq — some scholar(s) from the people of the first Book: Adam had intercourse with Eve before he committed the sin (of eating from the forbidden tree). She bore him his son Cain and Cain's twin sister. She had no craving or illness (when she was pregnant) with them nor pain in giving birth to them. She also saw no blood in connection with them because of the purity of Paradise. When, after committing disobedience by eating from the tree, Adam and Eve fell down to earth and felt secure there, Adam had intercourse with Eve, and she became pregnant with Abel and his twin sister. She had cravings and illness when she was pregnant with them, and pain in giving birth to them, and she saw blood in connection with them [trans. F. Rosenthal 1989: 310].

Most Jewish and Christian sources — both canonical and extra-canonical — maintain that the first children of Adam and Eve were born after the Expulsion from Eden. The present folklore account asserts an alternative idea, i.e. that the first twins were born in Paradise. This is also the case in some Manichaean texts.

On the other hand, some Christian apocryphal texts drop a subtle hint pointing towards the angelic parentage of the first-born son of Eve (i.e. Cain); he was believed to be conceived in Paradise as a result of Eve intercourse with the (fallen) angel. Further on the interpretation of the concept of Cain as “the first-born of the Devil” in Patristic tradition, see Braude [1968: 17-20] who also provides an extensive survey of the iconography of fratricide.

⁶⁶ In the biblical account [Gn 4: 1-16], the first two male offspring of Adam and Eve are given the names Cain and Abel. However, the two brothers are not mentioned by name in the canonical Qur'ānic text itself [Sūrah 5:30-34]. Extra-Qur'ānic Muslim tradition identifies them as Kabil/Kabeel (i.e. Cain) and Habil/Habeel (i.e. Abel). Thus, according to Al-Tabarī's *History of Prophets and Kings* (fol. 137), the name of the firstborn son of Eve was “Qābīl b. Adam”; the exegete also points out that

scholars disagree on the name of Qābīl. Some say that he was Qayn b. Adam. Other say that it was Qābīn b. Adam. Others again say that it was Qāyin, and still others that it was Qābīl” [trans. F. Rosenthal 1989: 307].

⁶⁷ According to some Islamic exegetical writings the name of the firstborn daughter of Eve, the twin-sister of Cain, was Qalīmā; F. Rosenthal points out that her name may appear in the form Iqlīmā, and was sometimes spelled as Qlīmath [Rosenthal 1989: 314, footnote 893]. Some of the sources to which Al-Tabarī's refers maintain that

Adam had sexual intercourse with Eve one hundred years after their fall to earth. She bore him Cain and his twin-sister Qalīmā in one pregnancy, and then Abel and his sister in another. When they reached early manhood, Adam wanted to marry Cain's twin sister to Abel, but Cain refused. For this reason, the two offered a sacrifice. Abel's sacrifice was accepted, while that of Cain was not. Cain thus envied Abel and killed him on the mountain slope of Hira. He then descended from the mountain holding his sister Qalīmā by the hand and fled with her to 'Adan in the Yemen [Al-Tabarī, fol. 144; trans. F. Rosenthal 1985: 314].

Afterward Al-Tabarī refers to other sources confirming once more that the first children born by Eve were called Cain and Qalīmā [Al-Tabarī, fol. 146; trans. F. Rosenthal 1985: 316, 317 (note 903)].

On the other hand, according to certain apocryphal Old Church Slavonic writings, Cain's sister is called Kalamana, and this name is obviously related to the name Qalīmā (as attested in Al-Tabarī's *History of*

Prophets and Kings); in these same apocrypha Abel's sister is called Devora. In many of these apocryphal accounts the statement concerning the names of the sisters is followed by the legend about fratricide. See for instance the following text:

Thirty years after the expulsion of Adam [and Eve] from Paradise, Eve conceived and gave birth to [a son] Kain and a daughter Kalamana. And then again, after another thirty years she gave birth to Avel and his sister Devora. After one hundred years having passed, Cain killed his brother Avel and received from God seven forms of retribution.

По .л. лѣт изгнания адамова из рая. зачньши ѥвга и роди каина и дьщерь каламану. и потом же пакъ .л. лет створи и роди авела и сестроу ѥмоу девороу. иминоувьимь сто лет оуби каинь авела брата своего. и приѣть от ба .з. мьстии.

The above fragment comes from *The Discussion Between the Three Saints* apocryphal text, from the early fourteenth century *Dragolev Miscellany* (Serbian recension); the manuscript is part of Prof. P. S. Srečković's collection, kept in Belgrade [Mochul'skii 1894: 104]. Further on the names of the twin-sisters of Cain and Abel, see the discussion below (note 76).

⁶⁸ The local dialectal form “Dzhendet” is related to the Turkish word “cennet”, which is a derivative from the Arabic *jannah* (meaning Garden).

⁶⁹ Cf. Sūrah 7: 23-24. For post-scriptural interpretations of this motif, see Al-Tabarī's *History of Prophets and Kings* [trans. F. Rosenthal 1989: 290-295, ff. 120-124]. In his *Lives of the Prophets* Al-Tha'labī further provides commentaries related to this issue. According to him,

Adam alighted in Sarandīb [i.e. Ceylon, present-day Sri Lanka], in the land of India – some say on a mountain in the land of India which is called Nūd, some say Wāsim. Eve [alighted] in Jiddah [i.e. Djudda], a town in the land of Hejaz [Brinner: 2002: 53].

See also the next footnote.

⁷⁰ According to Al-Tha'labī, the separation of Adam from Eve was “the fifth affliction” consigned to them by God:

He separated him [i.e. Adam] from Eve for one hundred years, he being in India, she in Jiddah. Each of them set out seeking the other until they drew near to one another and advanced closer, so [the place] was named al-Muzdalifah [place of coming near]. They were joined together and that place was named Jam'ah [gathering]; and they recognized each other by questioning on a day of questioning. So the place was named 'Arafāt (questions) and the day 'Irfah [Brinner 2002: 53].

See also the previous footnote.

⁷¹ For traditions regarding what happened to Adem after being expelled from Paradise, cf. Al-Tabarī [trans. F. Rosenthal 1989: 290-295, ff. 120-124; 303, fol. 133].

⁷² For Islamic exegetical traditions about Eve after the expulsion, cf. Al-Tabarī [trans. F. Rosenthal 1989: 292-295, ff. 121-124; 303, fol. 133].

⁷³ The place-name “Muzdelie” is obviously a derivative form from “al-Muzdalifah” (see above, footnote 70). For further details, see Al-Tabarī's *History of Prophets and Kings* [trans. F. Rosenthal 1989: 291, fol. 120; 303, fol. 133].

Compare this folklore account to the Arabic legends narrated among the Muslims in Palestine and Egypt and collected by J. R. Hanauer in his anthology *The Holy Land: Myths and Legends* [1996 (1907): 10].

⁷⁴ Cf. Al-Tabarī's *History of Prophets and Kings* [fol. 140 and fol. 144; transl. F. Rosenthal 1985: 310, 314].

⁷⁵ About the birth of Habil and his twin-sister, and on events related to the marital conflict between him and his elderly brother, which eventually triggered the fratricide, see Al-Tabarī's *History of Prophets and Kings* [ff. 137-146; transl. F. Rosenthal 1985: 308-317].

⁷⁶ According to Al-Tabarī's *History of Prophets and Kings*, the name of Abel's sister was Labūdhā [fol. 146; transl. F. Rosenthal 1985: 317]. In his notes accompanying the translation of Al-Tabarī's text, F. Rosenthal's offers brief comments on this detail; he points out that "[w]e have no way of knowing whether Al-Tabarī himself thought it was Labūdhā or Layūdhā. [. . .] In Ya'qūbī, Ta'rīkh, i, 4, Labūdhā is the twin sister of Cain, and Iqlīmā that of Abel. [. . .] All these names whose vocalisation is not known to us have been vocalized here simply by supplying the vowel *a*. This may have been done even where the names look suspiciously like Arabic names" [Rosenthal 1989: 317, note 903].

On the other hand, Norman Stillman states that "this motif was well developed in Syriac literature" [1974: 234]. Thus, in the *Treasures Cave* — a work which "arose some time around the 6th century" and ascribed to Ephraem Syrus— the following account about the first children of Eve is provided:

And she (Eve) bore Cain and his sister Lebuda with him... And she bore Adam and his sister Qalimath with him... Adam said to Eve: "Let us betroth Cain to Qalimath"... But Cain said: "I prefer my sister... Labuda is more beautiful" [quoted after Stillman 1974: 234].

The Christian authors of Old Church Slavonic apocryphal writings from the Balkan region were obviously familiar with the names of the two sisters, since they appear in conjunction with the names of Cain and Abel, often preceding the story about the fratricide. Nowhere in Christian apocryphal texts from the Balkans (so far found) is the detail about the conflicting interests of the two brothers in their sisters mentioned. This is one of the main differences between Christian and Muslim post-Scriptural traditions so far attested in the region.

⁷⁷ See Al-Tabarī [ff. 144-146; trans. F. Rosenthal 1989: 314-317].

⁷⁸ See Al-Tabarī [ff. 140; trans. F. Rosenthal 1989: 310]; see also the discussion above (footnote 65).

⁷⁹ See the discussion above (footnotes 65 and 78).

⁸⁰ See the above discussion (footnotes 55 and 56).

⁸¹ Cf. Al-Tabarī [ff. 138-141; trans. F. Rosenthal 1989: 308-311].

⁸² *Ibid.*

⁸³ The way in which Muslim oral tradition in the Balkans interprets this detail — that the cause of Kabil's hatred towards his brother Habil was the desire towards one of their twin sisters— corresponds to some midrashic texts [Ginzberg 1909: 108]. In Jewish tradition, however, Cain wanted to marry Abel's twin-sister, who "was of exquisite beauty" [*ibid.*]; that is why he "was constantly brooding over ways and means of riddling himself of his brother". According to the present Muslim folklore text, on the other hand, Kabil desired his own twin-sister, Eklima, who was destined to be Habil' wife; therefore he killed his brother, in order to take her as a wife. The storyteller of the present folklore narrative creates a version which is completely independent of the Qur'ānic account; the comparison to the canonical text [Sūrah 5:30-33] makes it clear:

Relate to them exactly the story of the sons of Adam when they each offered an offering; accepted from the one of them, and not accepted from the other. The one said, 'I will surely slay thee.' Said the other, 'God only accepted from those that fear Him. /'Even if thou stretch forth thine hand against me to slay me, I will not stretch forth my hand against thee to slay thee. Truly I fear God the Lord of the Worlds. / 'Yea, rather would I that thou shouldest bear my sin and thine own sin, and that thou become an inmate of the Fire: for that is the recompense of the unjust doers.' /And his passion led him to slay his brother: and he slew him; and he became one of those who perish.

Further on this subject see Norman Stillman's article "The story of Cain and Abel in the Qur'an and the Muslim commentators" [1974: 231-239].

This is how the Slavonic apocryphal *Sea of Tiberias* relates the biblical story of the fratricide and explains the reason for Cain's anger:

And Adam gave birth to two sons, Cain and Abel. Cain was a farmer and Abel was a shepherd. And when Cain was making an offering to God of his fruits, he ate of them first, and God became angry with Cain and did not accept his offering. Abel made offerings from his unblemished flocks. God acknowledged Abel's sacrifices and Cain became angry with his brother Abel.

И роди Адамъ два сына: Каина и Авела. Каинъ былъ земледѣлецъ, Авель пастѣхъ. И во время Каинъ принесе жертвѣ Бгѣ ѿ плода своего, и прежде самъ вкѣси, и Бгѣ же разгнѣва сѧ на Каина и не приѧ жертва его. И потомъ принесе Авель ѿ стадѣ своихъ праведныхъ. Бгѣ же призрѣ на жертвѣ его Авелѣвѣ. И разгнѣва сѧ Каинъ на брата своего Авела. (Quoted after Ivanov 1925: 293).

For the pedigree of this text, see note 6 above.

⁸⁴ The text is somewhat obscure. First it is stated that Kabil has taken a certain decision (the outcome of which is revealed by the storyteller much later); then Kabil takes his brother Habil and carries him. It is neither clear as to why Kabil has to carry his brother, nor where Habil is being taken; also, the purpose of the statement "he didn't know what to do with him" (which marks the end of this particular paragraph) appears to be vague and imprecise. Obviously, Habil is still alive, and it remains unclear as to why Kabil has acted in the way he has done.

⁸⁵ A similar idea, that Cain kills his brother Abel with a stone, appears in the apocryphal *Sea of Tiberias*. According to these extra-canonical Slavonic sources, however, it is the Devil who teaches Cain how to use the stone as a murder weapon, not the raven:

And Cain became angry with his brother Abel. Not knowing what to do, he [Cain] called him [Abel] to take a walk in the fields. The Devil, who was from the beginning Sotana, hating the good in mankind, showed Cain a stone in the field and he killed his brother Abel.

И разгнѣва сѧ Каинъ на брата своего Авела. И не вѣдаѧ что сотворити, и возва его гѣлати на поле. Діаволь же искони бѣ сотона, ненавида добра родѣ члѣвческомѣ, и оуказа Каинѣ на полѣ камень, и оуби брата своего Авела. [Quoted after Ivanov 1925: 293.]

This motif is also attested in some Old Church Slavonic recensions of *The Discussion Between the Three Saints* apocryphal texts, as well as in the *Palaeia*. According to these Christian sources, however, it is the Devil who teaches Cain how to use the stone as a murder weapon, not the raven.

In his study *Traces of Folk Bible in Slavonic and Old Russian Literature*, the Russian scholar V. N. Mochul'skii draws attention to the interpretation of this detail in medieval Slavonic tradition [1894: 81-2]. While analysing the literary sources containing this motif, he refers to a seventeenth century manuscript from Vienna (Mss. No 76), containing a copy of *The Discussion Between the Three Saints* apocryphal texts (Serbian recension). According to this source (fol. 6, question No 6), the Devil appears to Cain in his dream and teaches him how to kill his brother with a stone:

Who revealed to Cain how to kill his brother without knowing what death is? [Answer] The Devil appeared to him in a dream, pointed to a stone and said, "Hit your brother with this, and you will slay him!" So that's what he did.

Кто показа Каиноу оубити брата своего не вѣди что ѣсть смърть? О. Діаволь въ снѣ показѧ ѣмоу камень рекъ: оудары сѧ симъ брата своего, и оубиеши ѣго, ѣже и сѣтвори. [Quoted after Mochul'skii, op. cit.: 81]

⁸⁶ Cf. A 1336. (Origin of murder) in Stith Thompson's *Motif-Index*.

⁸⁷ Related to Turkish *Kiyamet günü*, meaning "Apocalypse Day", from Arabic *Qiyāma*, "resurrection, day of Resurrection" [courtesy Harry Norris].

⁸⁸ Compare this to Gn 4: 10-13:

And He said, What hast thou done? The voice of thy brother's blood crieth unto Me from the ground. And now art thou cursed from the earth, which hath opened her mouth to receive thy brother's blood from thy hand; When thou tillest the ground, it shall not henceforth yield unto thee her strength; a fugitive and a vagabond shalt thou be in the earth. And Cain said unto the Lord, My punishment is greater than I can bear.

For the motif of the cry of the blood of Abel in folk literature, consult Stith Thompson's *Motif-Index*, entry A 1344.1.

⁸⁹ According to the present Muslim folklore legend, blood is regarded as a substance which, after Allah's having witnessed and condemned the fratricide carried out by Kabil, is never destined to be absorbed by the earth; the image of the blood of Habil drying on the surface is thus considered to be everlasting evidence of the fratricide, and condemnation for it. Compare this folklore idea to the following fragment from the Qur'ān [Sūrah 5: 35]:

For this cause [i.e. the fratricide] have we ordained to the children of Israel that he who slayeth anyone, unless it be a person guilty of manslaughter, or of spreading disorders in the land, shall be as though he had slain all mankind; but that he who saveth a life, shall be as though he had saved all mankind alive.

Parallel tradition (concerning Genesis 4:10) can be found in the Mishnah (Sanhedrin 4:5):

"For thus we find in the case of Cain, who killed his brother, that it is written: 'the bloods of thy brother cries unto Me'; not the blood [in the singular] of thy brother, but bloods [in the plural] of thy brother, is said — that is, his [own] blood and the blood of his seed [and his potential descendants]. (Alternatively, the bloods of thy brother, teaches that his blood was splashed over trees and stones). For this reason was man created alone, to teach thee that whosoever destroys a single soul of Israel, Scripture imputes [guilt] to him as though he had destroyed a complete world; and whosoever preserves a single soul of Israel, Scripture ascribes [merit] to him as though he had preserved a complete world." [Soncino Talmud, Folio 37a].

⁹⁰ One iconographic rendering of this motif comes from the Persian illuminated manuscript of *Qisas al-anbiya* (BNF, Persan 54, f. 13 v); see also the commentaries provided by R. Milstein [2005: 57-59].
See Fig. 3.

⁹¹ Cf. A.1591. 1 (Burial learned from watching raven bury its dead) in Stith Thompson's *Motif-Index*; see also Schwarzbaum 1982: 48-49.

⁹² Cf. Sūrah 5:34-35, according to which the raven sent by Allah teaches the killer how to cover up his brother's body:

And God sent a raven which scratched upon the ground, to show him how he might hide his brother's wrong. He said, 'O woe is me! am I too weak to become like this raven, and to hide away my brother's wrong?' And he became one of the repentant.

The detail about the raven teaching Cain how to conceal the body of his brother is also attested in Al-Tabarī's *History of Prophets and Kings* [fol. 141]:

When Cain had killed Abel, he was perplexed as he did not know how to conceal him, for this supposedly was the first killing among the children of Adam [trans. F. Rosenthal 1989: 311]

An earlier Jewish source from the c. fourth century AD (*Tosefta Targum* on Genesis 4:8) reports a related version of the fratricide story:

Cain did not know where to strike him [Abel]. He looked about here and there until he saw two birds fighting; and one rose up against the other, and struck it on its mouth, and the blood spurted out, until it died; Cain took a lesson from it, and did the same to Abel [his] brother. Then seeing that he was dead, he feared that his father would demand [Abel] from him; and he did not know what to do. Looking up, he saw the bird that had killed its fellow putting its mouth to the ground; and it dug [a hole] and buried the other dead one, and covered it with earth. Cain did the same to Abel, so that [his father] might not find him. [Quoted after Gutmann 1998: 138-139]

A story similar to the one revealed in the Qur'ān [Sūrah 5:34-35] is narrated by Pirke d'Rabbi Eliezer (9th century), where the raven shows the mode of burial not to Cain/Habeel, but to Adam and Eve :

Adam and Eve, sitting by the corpse [of Abel] wept not knowing what to do, for they had as yet no knowledge of burial. A raven coming up, took the dead body of its fellow (mate), and having scratched up the earth, buried it thus before their eyes. Adam said, "Let us follow the example of the Raven," and so taking up Abel's body buried it at once." [Pirke d'Rabbi Eliezer, Chapter 21]

The above Muslim (Qur'ānic) and Jewish (aggadic-midrashic) accounts concerning the origin of mortuary customs share certain common motifs with some Christian (apocryphal and folklore) texts. According to the latter, Adam and Eve gain knowledge of how to perform the necessary funeral rites by observing the two doves which were sent by God; when one of the birds died, the second one dug the earth and buried the body of its mate. The precedent of the first funeral ceremony is described in the following way in the Slavonic apocryphal *Sea of Tiberias*:

Adam saw his son killed. Adam and Eve cried over Abel's body there. Abel's body was lying on the field, and Adam and Eve were constantly crying without cease, and they did not know what do with it [Abel's body]. And the Lord saw Adam's tears and sent two doves which were flying over Abel's body. And one of the birds fell dead on the earth, in the mountains, and the second bird, which was flying above it, took it and dug the earth with its talons so that it could bury that one with its talons, and flew away. Adam and Eve saw that, and did the same with Abel's body. They buried it in the earth, and from then on Adam and Eve stopped crying for Abel. After that, God gave Adam a son, Seth, in Abel's place.

Адамъ же видѣ сѣна совего оубита. Адамъ и Евва плака сѣ тѣ надъ тѣломъ Авелевымъ. Тѣло же Авелево лежаше на поле. Адамъ же и Евва всегда плакахѣ сѣ безпрестани, и не разсѣмѣють что надъ нимъ сотворити. И видѣ Гдѣ слезы Адамовы, и сосла Гдѣ двѣ горлицы, и леташе надъ тѣломъ Авелевымъ. И едина птица падъ на землю мертва, въ горахъ, а дрѣгаа летающи надъ нею и положи сю и ростерза землю ногѣтами своими елико можахъ и погребе сю къ землю и полете прочь. Видѣ же Адамъ и Евва, и сотвориша якоже надъ тѣломъ Авелевымъ, погребохъ въ землю. И ѿтоле преста плакати сѣ Адамъ и Евва по Авелѣ. И потомъ даеть Бгѣ Адамѣ снѣа Сифа во Авелево мѣсто. [Quoted after Ivanov 1925: 293.]

On Christian and Islamic iconography of the same motif, see Gutmann [1998: 137-139] and Milstein [2005: 57-59]. Thus the two ravens showing Cain/Kabil how to bury his brother Abel/Habil are depicted in one of the Ottoman illuminations of *Quisai al-Anblyā'* (Istanbul, Topkapı Palace Museum), Ms Hazine 1226 (fol. 18v), late 16th century [Gutmann: ibid.].

⁹³ According to Al-Tabarī's *History of Prophets and Kings*, after Cain's having killed Abel on the mountain slope of Hirā',

[h]e then descended from the mountain holding his sister Qalīmā by the hand and fled with her to 'Adan in the Yemen [fol. 144, trans. F. Rosenthal 1989: 314].

See also the account on fol. 167, stating that when Cain killed Abel he fled from his father to Yemen [ibid. 337]. F. Rosenthal further indicates that "the name of the town of Aden in South Arabia and the identical Biblical Eden suggested the Yemenite location here" [ibid. 1989: 314, note 894].

⁹⁴ Compare this folklore account to the Arabic legends narrated among the Muslims in Palestine and Egypt and collected by J. R. Hanauer; see his anthology *The Holy Land: Myths and Legends* [1996 (1907): 240-241]. Further on vernacular interpretations of the motif of "the first bloodshed" in the narrative tradition of Bulgarian Muslims see Elchinova [2000: 51].

⁹⁵ Surprisingly enough, this detail parallels Al-Tabarī's *History of Prophets and Kings*, in which it is stated that "Adam did not die before the number of his children on [Mount] Nudh had reached forty thousand" [trans. F. Rosenthal 1989: 340].

⁹⁶ Further on Islamic popular beliefs related to the length of the lifespan of Adam/Adem, see Boyadzhieva's article "*We are just guests on the Earth and this white world: images and concepts of death and the world beyond*" [2000: 52-53]. Her article is based on data collected among the Bulgarian Muslims from the village of Galata, Teteven region, Central Bulgaria. The transcriptions of the related folklore text on which the author's observations are based are stored in the Archives of the Institute of Folklore (Bulgarian Academy of Sciences) under the following record numbers: АИФ I 174: 175, АИФ I 175: 57-59, and АИФ I 176: 41.

⁹⁷ Cf. the Qur'ānic text [Sūrah 11: 27-70]:

And it was revealed unto Noah. Verily, none of thy people shall believe, save they who have believed already; therefore be not thou grieved at their doings. // But build the Ark under our eye and after our revelation: and plead not with me for the evil doers, for they are to be drowned. // So he built the Ark; and whenever the chiefs of his people passed by they laughed him to scorn: said he, "Though ye laugh at us, we truly shall laugh at you, even as ye laugh at us; and in the end ye shall know // On whom a punishment shall come that shall shame him, and on whom shall light a lasting punishment." // *Thus was it* until our sentence came to pass, and the earth's surface boiled up. We said, "Carry into it one pair of every kind, and thy family, except him on whom sentence hath before been passed, and those who have believed." But there believed not with him except a few. // And he said, "Embark ye therein. In the name of God be its course and its riding at anchor! Truly my Lord is right Gracious, Merciful." // And the Ark moved on with them amid waves like mountains: and Noah called to his son — for he was apart — "Embark with us, O my child! and be not with the unbelievers." // He said, "I will betake me to a mountain that shall secure me from the water." He said, "None shall be secure this day from the decree of God, save him on whom He shall have mercy." And a wave passed between them, and he was among the drowned. // And it was said, "O Earth! swallow up thy water;" and "cease, O Heaven!" And the water abated, and the decree was fulfilled, and the Ark rested upon Al-Djoudi; and it was said, "Avaunt! ye tribe of the wicked!" // And Noah called on his Lord and said, "O Lord! verily my son is of my family: and thy promise is true, and thou art the most just of judges." // He said, "O Noah! verily, he is not of thy family: in this thou actest not aright. Ask not of me that whereof thou knowest nought: I warn thee that thou become not of the ignorant. // He said, "To thee verily, O my Lord, do I repair lest I ask that of thee wherein I have no knowledge: unless thou forgive me and be merciful to me I shall be one of the lost. // It was said to Him, "O Noah, debark with peace from Us, and with blessings on thee and on peoples to be born from those who are with thee; but as for other and *unbelieving* peoples, we will give them their good things in this world, but hereafter shall a grievous punishment light on them from us. // This is one of the secret Histories: we reveal it unto thee: neither thou nor they people knew it ere this: be patient thou: verily, there is a prosperous issue to the God-fearing.

See also Sūrah 71 (entitled “Noah”): 1-28.

⁹⁸ Cf. Sūrah 3:30; Sūrah 4:161, Sūrah 6:84; Sūrah 7:57-60, Sūrah 11:27-51, Sūrah 21: 76-77, Sūrah 23:24-31; Sūrah 29:14, Sūrah 54:9; Sūrah 69:13-14; Sūrah 71:1-29. For the folklore interpretation of the image of Noah among the Bulgarian Muslims, see Elchinova [2000: 52-53] and Lozanova [2002: 44-45; 2003: 17-27].

⁹⁹ Cf. Stith Thompson’s *Motif-Index*: A 1021 (Deluge: escape in boat/ark).

¹⁰⁰ The next part of this Bulgarian Muslim popular narrative about Noah’s endeavours to build the ark, and in particular the fragment concerning the assistance provided to him by the giant Yuvech Yunuk [Ювеч Унук], parallels — most surprisingly! — some Turkic folklore accounts from Central Asia. Of special interest is a detail about the miraculous meal prepared by the Prophet for his wondrous helper; a meal which was supposed to satisfy his enormous, colossal appetite. According to local oral tradition, this was considered to be an impossible task. However, with God’s help, Noah manages to fulfil it, thus securing the help of the giant. See the Appendix (text No. 32).

¹⁰¹ The storyteller indicates a small container with his hands.

¹⁰² A Turkish transcription of this Qur’ānic formula reads, *Bismillāhir rahmānir rahīm*, (“In the name of Allah, the Most Beneficent, the Most Merciful”), which is what the storyteller is reciting here. The original Arabic formula *bi’sm Illāh al-rahmān al-rahīm* is also to be found in the first, opening line of the Qur’ān itself. Furthermore this formula is prefixed to each Sūrah (except the ninth). By including the *Bismillāhir rahmānir rahīm* formula in the fabric of his oral narrative, the storyteller implicitly suggests that his account follows the canonical Qur’ānic text. The recitation of the *Bismillāhir rahmānir rahīm* formula thus functions as a clandestine telltale sign confirming not only the authenticity of his sources, but also the genuineness of his account as a true recitation of one of the Sūrahs of the Holy Qur’ān. It also indicates that the local oral tradition is considered to be a legitimate counterpart to the sacred book of Mohammad’s revelation.

¹⁰³ Strikingly similar to the present Bulgarian Muslim account about Nuh and the giant Yuvech-Unuk are some Kirghiz and Tatar folk legends about Noah and the giant ‘Udzh Ben Anak (also known as ‘Udzh son of Anuk), see the Appendix, texts Nos. 32-35).

¹⁰⁴ Compare this to the following excerpt from Al-Rabghūzī:

Noah — peace be upon him — said to those who were in the ark: “Don’t approach your mates. If there were children they would not find room in the ark.” No one approached his mate. A cat saw the dog approaching his mate. Noah came and reproached the dog. When he asked, he dog denied it, saying: “I did not come near.” The cat did not find any witness, and became embarrassed. Again the cat saw the dog joining his mate. The cat said: “My God, this dog lies to your prophet. He would again deny it. Fix the dog by your power in this position (of sexual intercourse). Let me go and tell it to Noah, so that he may himself come and see it.” The Lord granted its request. The dog remained in this position. When Noah came and saw him, the dog was very ashamed. This condition has remained as a heritage to the dog till today. The dog too prayed: “It denounced me to Noah. O Lord, make it too ashamed.” The Lord — may He be honored and glorified — fulfilled the request of the dog. When cats want their mates, they cry out in such a voice that everyone knows their deed. It is known that one who reveals the shame of others, himself fails shamefully as well. [Quoted after Utley 1968: 388].

¹⁰⁵ From the storyteller’s point of view, the cat was in the wrong for denouncing someone, even if that someone is not obeying orders. The dog is not punished. The act of denouncing someone is regarded as a sin.

¹⁰⁶ Cf. *Jūdī*, the face of Mt. Ararat (Armenia) in Islamic tradition. Al-Tabarī also mentions that Noah's ark settled upon *Al- Jūdī* (i.e. Ararat), the "mountain whose foot is in the land of Mosul"; see fol. 193 [trans. F. Rosenthal 1989: 362-363] and fol. 196-198 [ibid., pp. 366-367]. In a similar way, in Al-Rabghūzī's account, the "Mountain of Djūdī" is also considered to be the chosen among the mountains on earth:

God's commandment came to the mountains: "I will let Noah's ark run over the mountains." All of the mountains raised their tops, saying: "The ark will sail around us." The Mountain of Djūdī is the lowest of all the mountains. It was modest, saying: "How may fall such a favor to my share?" The Lord selected it. It was honored by the ship's sailing around it. Be His Word exalted: "And it (the ark) came to rest upon Al-Djūdī." [Quoted after Utley 1968: 389].

See also Sūrah 11: 46.

¹⁰⁷ The name of Noah is often mentioned in the Qur'ān. It has a special significance in the lineage of the Prophets heralding the revelation of Mohammad. Thus in Sūrah 3: 30, the name of the Prophet Noah comes after that of the first man Adam (who is considered by the Muslims to be the first ever Prophet) and stands before the name of the Prophet Abraham/Ibrahim, thus signifying the mystical bond between them:

above all human beings did God choose Adam, and Noah, and the family of Abraham, and the family of Imran.

The passage of Sūrah 4:161 further refers to Noah as one of the Prophets sent before Mohammad:

Verily we have revealed to thee as we revealed to Noah and the Prophets after him, and as we revealed to Abraham, and Ismael, and Isaac, and Jacob, and the tribes, and Jesus, and Job, and Jonah, and Aaron, and Solomon: and to David gave we the Psalms.

He is mentioned in a similar context in Sūrah 6:83-84:

This is our reasoning with which we furnished Abraham against his people: We uplift to grades of *wisdom* whom we will; Verily thy Lord is Wise, Knowing. // And we gave him Isaac and Jacob, and guided both aright; and we had before guided Noah; and among the descendants of Abraham, David and Solomon, and Job and Joseph, and Moses and Aaron: Thus do we recompense the righteous.

¹⁰⁸ The prophetic dream motif is characteristic of Arab folk tradition; for further information see Hasan El-Shamy's *Folk Traditions of the Arab World: a Guide to Motif Classification* [1995], and in particular Type D 1812.3.3.5; see also Types D 1810.8, M 209.1, V 511, V 512, V 513, V 515, V 517 where supernatural knowledge is associated with prophetic dreams and/or visions. In Muslim tradition the dreams of prophets are regarded as commands from God [El-Shamy 1995: 542].

¹⁰⁹ *Cenab-u Allah* – in Turkish 'God Almighty'; this appellation is derivative from the Arabic *Janābu llāhi* ("God the Right Honourable") [courtesy Dimitri Gutas].

¹¹⁰ Cf. Stith Thompson's *Motif-Index: A 1021* (Deluge: escape in boat/ark).

The motif of Noah's Ark is also depicted in a Turkish miniature painting, such as the 1583 illuminated manuscript (calligraphy by Sayyid Loqman), showing a larger-than-life size Noah with seven males on the Ark during the Flood; from Loqman's *Cream of Histories* (Türk-Islam Eserleri Müzesi, Istanbul) [And 1987: 51].

See Fig. 4.

¹¹¹ The word used for "ark" is the same word as used in the Slavonic Bible for Noah's ark, and refers also to the biblical "Ark of the Covenant". In Christian church interiors the word can refer to an icon case. The same word is used to denote a burial coffin, perhaps alluding to the idea of the Second Coming as a new Flood, from which only the righteous would be saved. The Bulgarian word can also mean "bridal chest," and the wedding ceremony is considered to me one of the most important rites of passage, together with baptismal

ceremony and mortuary customs. The concept of marriage in Bulgarian traditional beliefs can parallel death symbolically, and hence the connection between “coffin” and “bridal chest”.

¹¹² Cf. Sūrah 11: 44-8. Compare the present folklore account to the narrative recorded in 1997 by Galina Lozanova in the village of Chepintsi, Rudozem area (Southern Bulgaria); the storyteller was a seventy-four year old Muslim woman Zekiya Letifova Afuzova from the same village [Lozanova 2003: 21-23].

¹¹³ Cf. Sūrah 11: 47-8. According to Al-Tabarī’s *History of Prophets and Kings* (fol. 199), the name of the son who drowned in the Flood was Canaan; he “was called Yām by the Arabs” and was believed to be their paternal uncle [transl F. Rosenthal 1989: 368].

¹¹⁴ “Hazreti Ibrahim” = “the blessed Ibrahim” (in Turkish). In this folklore text the storyteller mixes up the name of Noah’s father with that of Ibrahim/Abraham.

¹¹⁵ In the present folklore account the name of the Prophet Ibrahim is used to denote the character of Noah’s father.

¹¹⁶ What follows is actually what “Нюх” (Nyuh) means in Bulgarian.

¹¹⁷ A similar narrative was given by the eighty nine-year old Muslim woman Bembie Syulenkova from the village of Osikovo, Gotse Delchev area; it was recorded in 1997 by E. Troeva-Grigorova. The transcription of the text (in Bulgarian) is stored in the Archives of the Institute of Folklore (Bulgarian Academy of Sciences) under the following record number: АИФ VIII No 45, p. 10; see also Lozanova [2003: 17-27].

¹¹⁸ This story shows that there exists good evidence from the Balkans about the awareness of healing *materia scatologica*. In fact, ancient healers were aware of the curative properties of an esoteric healing plant known in antiquity as “sailor’s excrement”, believed to be effective against skin ailments (attested already in ancient Babylonian medicine). This kind of plant, an example of so-called “Dreckapotheke”, was very common in ancient and medieval medicine, and the term can refer to colourful or distasteful names for ordinary medicinal plants. This may explain the reason why excrement coming from Noah’s ark had healing properties. Moreover, this is appended to the idea of Noah’s ark being a sacred place (i.e. even the faeces become holy). Thus two cultural concepts — one from ancient medicine and the other from Scriptures — merge into one idea, spelled out as a legendary narrative.

¹¹⁹ A similar account about the Ark of Nuh (Noah) was recorded in Turkey by Jan Knappert; according to the story registered by him,

The angel Jibril appeared one day to the Prophet Noah, or Nuh as the Arabs call him, and spoke: “God has decided to wash the filth off the face of the earth. He has been patient enough with these corrupt people. Your honesty and virtue please God; from your seed He will create a new humanity. The earth-washing waters will submerge all the lands for forty days. All the people will drown except you and your family. I will help you to make a ship, that is a floating house and stable”. When the people saw the Ark they laughed, for they had never seen a ship and they could not see the angel. Fools laugh at what they cannot understand. In order to show their disagreement with Noah’s preaching, they threw dung at his newly-built ship. How to remove this dirt? God sent these sinners a skin disease to punish them for their sacrilege. Those who had defiled the holy prophet’s ark, woke up next morning with blisters all over their bodies. Of course they went up to Noah to complain, as if it was his fault, thinking that such a clever man would find them a medicine. He did. He told them to scrape a bit of their own excrement from his ship and apply it to their sore skins. Of course they did not believe anything he said. Only one man tried a bit of the dung, thinking that it would be better than nothing. Lo and behold! Where the dung had touched the skin it became fresh and clean (the skin, that is). That was what they wanted. Soon every crumb of dung had been scraped off the Ark and used as medicine for infected skins. The moral is: even dung is cleaner than dirty people.

Suddenly, Mrs. Noah’s bread-oven began to pour forth boiling water. The family fled into the Ark, for this was God’s sign that the sin-flood had begun. The waters rose quickly so that even

the highest mountains were submerged, and all the people were drowned, except Noah's family. After forty days God told the earth to swallow the water. The Ark landed on the mountain El Judi [Knappert 1985: 43-44].

According to the above legendary account from Turkey, the end of the flood marked also the emergence of the oceans, since they contain the flood-water which the earth could not swallow.

¹²⁰ The present folklore account from the village of Kornitsa shows certain similarities with some other folklore texts recorded among the Bulgarian Muslims. One such story was narrated by Tahir Syunetchiev from the village of Zhültusha, Kürdzhalı region, South-Eastern Bulgaria. The storyteller was born in 1915. The legend was recorded in 1994 by Galina Lozanova. The transcription of the text (in Bulgarian) is stored in the Archives of the Institute of Folklore (Bulgarian Academy of Sciences) under the following record number: АИФ VIII No 33, p. 17. A similar story explaining why the excrement coming from Noah's ark has healing properties was narrated by Hamid Imamski from the village of Trigrad, Smolyan region (the Rhodope Mountains). The transcription of the text (in Bulgarian) is stored in the Archives of the Institute of Folklore (Bulgarian Academy of Sciences) under the following record number: АИФ VIII No 41, p. 15.

¹²¹ The storyteller mentions four sons of Ibrahim and then refers to two brothers coming into the ship and two not coming, but forgetting that Noah himself is one of the sons. This discrepancy keeps coming into the story, unnoticed by the storyteller.

¹²² Cf. Sūrah 21: 68-69; Sūrah 29: 23-24, Sūrah 37: 95-96. See also Al-Tabarī's *History of Prophets and Kings*, fol. 253 [trans. Brinner 1987: 50], and in particular ff. 262-266 [ibid. 58-61]. According to one of the sources quoted by Al-Tabarī (fol. 273), "Abraham was sixteen when he was thrown into the fire" [ibid. 68].

The above folklore text No. 13 (together with texts Nos. 14 and 31) also shares certain common motifs with the 11th century account from the *Lives of the Prophets* of Al-Tha'labī. Here follows his text:

‘Abdallāh b. ‘Umar said that the one who recommended to them to burn Abraham in fire was a Kurdish man. Shu’ayb al-Jubbi said: "His name was Haynin, and God made the Earth swallow him up, and he will be tossed around in it until the Day of Resurrection."

He continued: "When Nimrod and his people agreed to burn Abraham, they imprisoned him in a house and built a structure for him like a cattle-pen, for that is His word: *‘They said: ‘Build a pyre for him and throw him into the raging fire.’*" (37:97) They gathered the hardest firewood and all kinds of lumber for him. When a woman became ill she would say: 'If God makes me well I shall gather firewood to burn Abraham.' A woman would vow concerning what she desired that if she attained what she wanted, she would pick up firewood and place it in the fire in which Abraham would be burned, as a pious deed performed in the hope of reward in the Hereafter."

According to Ibn Ishaq, they collected firewood for a month, and when they had gathered as much of it as they wanted, they lit a fire at all corners of the woodpile. The fire was so hot that if birds flew over it they would burn because of the great heat of the blaze. They took Abraham and carried him up to the top of the pyre and tied him up. Then, at the advice of the cursed Iblis, they made use of a catapult because the heat of the fire was so great they were not able to throw him into it. They put him in the catapult, bound and shackled. The Heavens and Earth, the mountains and all the angels therein, and all creation but for humans and *jinn* roared in unison: "Our Lord, no one on Your Earth other than Abraham worships You and he is being burned in fire. Allow us to aid him!" God said to them: "If he seeks help from any of you or calls anyone, let that person save him, I grant that to you. But if he does not call on anyone but Me, for I am the most familiar with him, being his Friend, then let Me alone help him."

When they wanted to throw him into the fire, the angel of waters came to Abraham and said: "If you desire, I shall douse the fire, for the stores of water and rain are in my hand." And the treasurer of the wind came and said: "If you wish, I shall make the fire fly off into the air." But Abraham said: "I have no need of you." Then he raised his head to Heaven and said: "O God, You are the only One in Heaven and on Earth. No one on Earth worships You except Me."

Mu'tamar—Ubayy b. Ka'b – Arqam related that when they tied Abraham up in order to cast him into the fire, he said: "There is no god but You, glory be to You, Lord of all being; to You alone belongs praise, to You belongs dominion, You have no associate in creation!" Then they cast him

with the catapult into the fire which was a great distance away, and Gabriel met him and said: "Abraham, do you need anything?" He replied: "From you, no." Gabriel said: "Then ask your Lord." Abraham said: "I need not ask Him for anything, for He knows my predicament. God is sufficient for me! Most excellent is He in Whom I trust."

The traditional narrative relates that Abraham was saved from the fire only because he spoke the words: "God is sufficient for me! Most excellent is He in Whom I trust." God said: "*Turn cold, O fire, and give safety to Abraham.*" (21:69)

Al-Suddi said: "Gabriel was the one who called out these words by God's command." 'Ali b. Abi Talib and Ibn 'Abbas said: "Had He not said: '*and give safety*', Abraham would surely have died from the cold. There remained not a single fire on earth that did not die down, thinking that it was being addressed." Ka'b al-Ahbar, Qatadah and al-Zuhri said that no one on Earth benefited from fire on that day, and fire burned nothing on that day except Abraham's bonds. On that day every beast extinguished the fire to protect him except the gecko, and therefore the Prophet commanded that it be killed and named it 'little evil-doer'. Al-Suddi said: "The angels took Abraham by his upper arms and sat him down on the ground, and there was a spring of water, red roses, and narcissus." They said that Abraham remained within the fire seven days. Al-Minhal b. 'Umar said that Abraham, the Friend of God, said: "I have never experienced more pleasant days than the days I was in the fire."

Ibn Ishaq and others have said that God sent the angel of the shadow in the form of Abraham and he sat within the fire by his side, keeping him company. Gabriel brought him a silken shirt and said to him: "Abraham, now you know that fire cannot harm those I love," and he put the shirt on him. Then Nimrod looked down from a lofty palace of his and also caught sight of Abraham, having had no doubt that he had perished. But now he saw him sitting in a meadow with the angel sitting at his side, while all around him was the fire burning the wood that they had gathered. Nimrod called out to him: "Abraham, great is your god whose power extended to being able to shield you from the fire so that it did not harm you. Abraham, now will you be able to come out of the fire?" He said: "Yes." He asked: "Did you fear that it would harm you if you remained in it?" He replied: "No." He said: "Then arise and come out." So Abraham arose, walked through the fire, and came out to him [Brinner 2002: 131-133].

The legend of Abraham/Ibrahim confrontation with Nimrud, along with the story of the divine intervention on behalf of God and the miraculous rescue of his Prophet from the fire of infidels is also rendered in Muslim art, which parallels Jewish and Christian iconographic traditions; see J. Gutman [1978: 11-13; 1989: 341-356], R. Milstein 2005: 68-72], D. Jackson [2007: 92-98]. The motif of Ibrahim cast into the fire by Nimrud is also depicted in a Turkish miniature painting, in the 1583 illuminated manuscript (calligraphy by Sayyid Loqman); the upper part of the miniature shows the interrupted sacrifice of Ishmael (with the angel bringing the ram) while the lower part shows a catapult with Iblis and Nimrud, and Ibrahim surrounded by fire; from Loqman's *Cream of Histories* (Türk-Islam Eserleri Müzesi, Istanbul) [And 1987: 52]. See Figs. 5 and 6.

On some Sufi interpretations of the legend about the confrontation between Abraham and King Nimrud, and on their iconography, see Brosh and Milstein [1991: 29-30].

Further on Jewish and Muslim legends of the miraculous salvation of Arbaraham/Ibrahim from the fire of his enemies, see Hanauer [1996 (first publ. 1907): 25], Meyouhas [1928: 40, 43-44], Schwarzbaum [1982: 158-9, footnote 180], Knappert [1985: 74-76]. A similar story is also attested among the Bulgarian Muslims; see in this respect Lozanova [2002: 45-6] and Lubańska [2005: 140-141]. See also the discussion below.

¹²³ This recently registered Muslim folk legend from Bulgaria can be compared to one of the Arab popular tales recorded by Joseph Meyouhas at the beginning of the 20th century in Palestine. In the preface to his *Bible Tales in Arab Folk-Lore* he points out that "the stories here collected have been related by itinerant teachers, singers in the bazaars, Sheikhs of the Mosques, Haji from Mecca pilgrimage, and those professional storytellers who wander from city to city and from camp to camp, giving in return for their subsistence, wisdom of the ancients, stories, divine and profane, and the latest news gathered from Western periodicals not often more than a year or two old" [Meyouhas 1928:2]. Unfortunately, Meyouhas does not indicate the exact place in which any of his stories were recorded. Still, his diligently accomplished, innovative work made a significant contribution to the study of vernacular Muslim tradition. Surprisingly enough, some of his stories from Palestine show strong resemblance to the vernacular Islamic religious narratives which are still being

related among the Muslim communities in Bulgaria (of which the above account provides a perfect example). In fact, the above folklore legend from Bulgaria parallels one of the Palestinian tales of the mule as a cursed animal. In the version provided by Meyouhas the focus of the plot was the conflict between Nimrod (the ultimate infidel-villain) and Ibrahim (the ultimate Believer), and the mule acts as a helper of the enemy of the Prophet:

The wrath of Nimrod grew against Ibrahim, and he ordered that he be driven forth from the land of his birth. But when Ibrahim had departed from the City, Nimrod repented of what he had done in driving him forth, and sent soldiers to bring him back.

But when Ibrahim looked behind him, and perceived his pursuers from afar, he knew them, and said: 'Ah, danger approaches, these are the men of Nimrod, who have been sent after me to slay me, for they ride on the mules which hauled the wood to heat the furnace to burn me in it, and in a little while they will surely seize me. What shall I do, with the weak and wretched ass beneath me?' He hastened and leapt from the back of the ass, and ran on foot amongst the mountains to hide himself in one of the caves. As he ran he met a flock of goats. He bade them shelter and conceal him from his enemies. But they would not. And he ran on, and met a flock of sheep, and also bade them be a shelter to him, and the sheep at once granted his request, saying: 'Lay thyself upon they belly on the ground.' And Ibrahim did so. And all hastened and encircled him, and hid him from the view of his pursuers who passed by without noticing him, and Allah rewarded the sheep for the good which they had done to Ibrahim, His faithful servant, and He gave them broad and fat tails, and none are like them in breadth and fatness amongst all the sheep on earth, except in the land of the East. And He said to the goats: 'Ye shall be short-tailed all the days of your lives, and your tails shall not even be of use to drive away the flies from upon you.' And to the mules he said: 'Because ye hauled the trees to heat the furnace to burn Ibrahim in it, and also pursued him to seize and deliver him into the hands of his enemies, ye shall be barren henceforth, and only burdens and travail shall be your lot all your days' [Meyouhas 1928: 43-44; translated by V. N. Levi].

(Incidentally, the description of the sheep as 'fat-tailed' was common in the Ancient Near East and was one of the common designations for a type of sheep in Sumerian texts.)

A similar story about the mule as a cursed animal was recorded by Magdalena Lubańska in the village of Zornitsa, Chepelare county, Southern Bulgaria (the Rhodope mountains); the account was given by a fifty-year old Muslim (Pomak) woman, who was one of the granddaughters of the local Hodja Razmadan; for further information see Lubańska [2005: 140-141].

¹²⁴ The image of the mule as an ominous animal is widespread in Slavonic and Balkan folklore aetiological texts, both among Muslims and Christians. Central in this type of popular legends is the common motif that once the mule had committed a sin acting against a protagonist — usually a champion of faith (be it Abraham/Ibrahim, or Jesus), thus endangering his mission — it was cursed and punished to remain childless.

Similar popular belief about the mule as an emblematic animal-wrongdoer is registered in a series of religious narratives forming the Nativity cycle. In these folklore legendary texts (narrated among Orthodox Christians) the motif of the mule being cursed (in some cases by the Virgin Mary) to remain childless is a result of its intention to harm the infant Jesus. Six months after my having registered the above Muslim text in the village of Gorno Kraishte, Blagoevgrad region, South-Western Bulgaria, I recorded — incidentally, in the same locality (in the village of Teshevo) — a similar legend about the reason behind the mule's barrenness. This time the legend was narrated by a Christian woman, who told it to me in the local church, while explaining the details depicted on the icon of the Nativity of Christ. According to her tale, when Jesus was born in the manger, and the evil King sent his henchmen to kill the wondrous infant, the ox was trying to bring to His cradle-crib more hay and straw in order to cover Him, so that He remained safe, whereas the mule was doing just the opposite, trying to uncover Him, pushing with its muzzle against His swaddling clothes. That is why, the story goes, the ox is blessed, while the mule is cursed; the ox may have as many offspring as it wishes, while the mule may not have any. (The sound-recording of this legend is preserved in the Archives of the Royal Anthropological Institute, and in the author's private archives.)

A parallel version of this legend offers the text recorded in the region of Veliko Turnovo, Northern Bulgaria, by the Bulgarian intellectual Tsani Ginchev (Цани Гинчев) in the second half of the nineteenth century; his account was published in 1890 in the second volume of the *SbNU Bulgarian Folklore Collection*, p. 162, text No 6:

Once upon a time when the Mother of God gave birth to the young God, she hid him in the crib, in the straw. There [in the manger] was a cow and a she-mule; the cow was covering the young God with her nose, while the she-mule was uncovering Him. The Mother of God cursed her [the she-mule] so that she never has offspring, whilst she blessed the cow to give birth each year and even have twins now and then.

Едно врѣме, когато Божа майка родила Млада Бога, скрила го въ яслитѣ, въ сламата. Тамъ имало една крава и една катѣрица (мѣска). Кравата заривала съ носа млада Бога, катѣрицата го откривала. Божа майка ѿ проклела, да не вижда рожба, а кравата благословила, да се тели всѣка година, а по нѣкога и да близни.

¹²⁵ Compare this folklore narrative to the Qur’ānic account about Abraham/Ibrahim as a fearsome adversary of idolatry who was condemned by the enemies of God to be burnt alive; when cast into flames, he was saved by God from Nimrod’s fire [Sūrah 21: 68-69]:

They cried: Burn him and stand by your gods, if ye will be doing. We said: “O fire, be coolness and peace for Abraham...”

See also the interpretation of this motif in midrashic tradition [Ginzberg 1968 (1): 198-203]. The legend of Abraham in the fiery furnace is not attested in Christian apocryphal writings. The visual renderings of this legend, however, are known to medieval Christian religious art, along with other Abrahamic iconographic themes (such as the “Hospitality of Abraham”, “Abraham’s Sacrifice”, and “Abraham’s Bosom”). For the iconography of these themes, see *Folk Religion in the Balkans* (ECHO, MPIWG, Berlin): http://echo.mpiwgberlin.mpg.de/content/religion/bulgaria/#bulg_abraham.

For the vernacular interpretation of the concept of Abraham as God’s bosom-friend within the context of Arab popular narratives, consult Hasan El-Shamy’s *Folk Traditions of the Arab World: a Guide to Motif Classification* [1995: 378]; El-Shamy classifies it as type V213. See also texts Nos. 13 and 31.

¹²⁶ The storyteller uses the Bulgarian royal title *цар* (meaning ‘monarch’, ‘sovereign’, ‘ruler’, ‘lord’).

The title “Tsar” was first used in 917 by the Bulgarian ruler Simeon, who, by adopting it, was implicitly claiming a status equal to that of the Emperor of Byzantium. Furthermore the Old Church Slavonic title *цѣсарь* was considered by the medieval Bulgarian rulers to be equated to the Byzantine (Greek) royal term *βασιλευς* ‘king’ (as well as *κυριος* ‘lord’). The Old Church Slavonic title *цѣсарь* is also related to the Latin title Caesar [Fasmer, Vol. 4 1987: 290-291].

By applying the title “Tsar” to the name of Nimrud, the storyteller embedded the above legend firmly within a Bulgarian cultural context.

¹²⁷ Among the Balkan Muslims Nimrud is regarded as the archetypal infidel. He was never mentioned by name in the Qur’ān, but Islamic popular legends — parallel to haggadic literature — recognise in him the tyrannical ruler who persecuted the young Abraham and tried to destroy him.

According to Al-Tabarī’s *History of Prophets and Kings*, Nimrod is the villain-king associated with the childhood/youth of the Prophet Abraham /Ibrahim [f. 205]:

We have been told that al-Dahhāk was Nimrod and that Abraham, the Friend of Merciful, was born during his era, and that al-Dahhāk was Abraham’s master who wanted to burn him [Brinner 1987: 4].

According to Al-Tabarī’s account, “Al-Dahhāk reportedly reigned for one thousand years after Jam” [fol. 204]. Some of Al-Tabarī’s sources further claim that Al-Dahhāk /Nimrod

ruled over all the earth, displaying tyranny and oppression. He killed excessively and was the first to enact (the punishment of) crucifixion and mutilation [...] and the first to sing and be sung to. It is said that there were two ganglia growing out of his shoulders, which caused pain to him. The pain became so intense for him that he would anoint them with the brains of human beings. For this purpose he killed two men each day and anointed his ganglia with their brains [ibid. 3-4, fol. 204]. [. . .] But God deprived him of his power, and his rule was ended. Afarīdhūn attacked him, tied him fast and led him

to the mountains of Danbawand. The Persians claim that he is there to this day, fettered with iron, and still being punished [ibid. 5, fol. 205].

At some point, Al-Tabarī's sources summarise the story of the sinful life of Al-Dahhāk /Nimrod in the following manner:

Al-Dahhāk had been a rebel who had seized the people of the land with witchcraft and deceit and had completely terrified them with the two serpents which had been on his shoulders. [. . .] The people were subjected to every kind of pressure by him, and he slew the young boys [ibid. 5-6, fol. 205-206].

¹²⁸ Cf. Sūrah 21: 68-69. For the interpretation of the legend of Abraham in the fiery furnace in haggadic literature, see Ginzberg [1968(1): 198-203].

¹²⁹ This recently recorded Muslim folk legend from Bulgaria can be compared to one of the Arab popular tales collected by Joseph Meyouhas at the beginning of the 20th century in Palestine, and subsequently published by him in his *Bible Tales in Arab Folk-Lore*:

Ibrahim grew and was ten years old, and began to call the sons of man to worship the God of Truth, and to relinquish idols of falsehood; and Nimrod was amongst them. Nimrod heard and was very wroth, and he sent messengers to seize Ibrahim, and he gave an order to cast him into a fiery furnace which he made ready for him, to burn him to death.

Now none could approach the furnace because of its great heat, and Iblis hastened to aid Nimrod, and he saw that they must prepare a long pitch-fork, that is a tool with which the child might be cast into the flames from afar. And Nimrod prepared the implement and he cast Ibrahim, fettered with chains, into the fire. But Allah with his manifold mercies saved Ibrahim, his little servant, from the flames, for He immediately sent His angel Mattar'iel, who changed the furnace to a garden full of flowers and lilies bedewed with the dew of Heaven, and full of the aroma of frankincense; and Ibrahim wondered amongst them and enjoyed their beauty and scent. And the thing became known to Nimrod, and his wrath against the God of Ibrahim was great, and he swore to make war against Him and to destroy Him [Meyouhas 1928: 40; translated by V. N. Levi].

See also Knappert's version of the story about Ibrahim being cast in the fiery furnace by Namrud [1985: 74-76].

¹³⁰ Compare this to the midrash that each Patriarch is associated with a particular prayer, Abraham with the morning prayer (*Shacharit*), Isaac with the afternoon prayer (*Minchah*) and Jacob with the evening prayer (*Maariv*).

¹³¹ See in this connection the account provided by Al-Tabarī in his *History of Prophets and Kings*, ff. 278-281 [trans. Brinner 1987: 72-75].

¹³² Cf. Gn 21: 16-19. According to Islamic tradition, the water was revealed by Gabriel to Hagar so that Ishmael could be saved. In some Muslim legends of Zem-Zem, however, the wondrous spring is revealed directly to Ishmael, not to his mother; see Al-Tabarī's *History of Prophets and Kings*, fol. 279 [trans. Brinner 1987: 73-74] and in particular ff. 282:283 [ibid: 76-77]. See also the following footnote.

¹³³ The present folklore narrative (and especially the episode about Ishmael scuffing at the ground with his heel) shares common features with Al-Tabarī's *History of Prophets and Kings*, ff. 282:283:

When Ishmael grew thirsty, he began to scuff at the ground with his heel. Hagar climbed the mountain of al-Safā. At that time the valley was *lākh*, that is to say, deep, so when she climbed al-Safā and looked down to see whether she could see anything, she saw nothing. So she came down and ran along the valley until she came to al-Marwah. She climbed it but could not see anything from there either. She did that seven times and then came down from al-Marwah to Ishmael, and she found

him scuffing the ground with his heel. The spring Zamzam had begun to flow, and she began scraping the ground away from the water with her hand. Wherever some water collected on the ground she scooped it up with her cup and poured it into her waterskin.

The Prophet said, “May God have mercy on her! Had she left it be, it would have remained a flowing spring until the Day of Resurrection” [trans. Brinner 1987: 76-77].

¹³⁴ In Bulgarian — “Зем земи!” (“Zem zemi!”), lit. “take, take” (an imperative form in the local Bulgarian dialect), but also a play on words on Arabic Zem-zem, the name of the fountain in Mecca [i.e. *Zem Zem Suyundan*]. Furthermore, the imperative form of “take” is a pun on Zemīa, “earth”, i.e. “take water from the earth.” The storyteller is evidently relating the story about Ibrahim in his own dialect and thus making it a Bulgarian story.

¹³⁵ Compare this to the Turkish form *Zem-zem suyundan* (lit. meaning ‘from the waters of *Zem-zem*’). The storyteller is obviously referring to the holy well situated within the precincts of the Great Mosque of Mecca (known also as the *Well of Zam-zam / Zem-zem*). The appellation *Zam-zam / Zem-zem* (which functions as a toponym designating this most sacred for all Muslims sites) is onomatopoeic, as “the name of the Well in Arabic represents the sound of the water as it rushed out when it was discovered” [Netton 1997: 263-264].

¹³⁶ See also the interpretation of the Zamzam motif in Knappert 1985: 78.

¹³⁷ Compare this Muslim folklore account from modern Bulgaria to the canonical Biblical narrative:

So after Abram had been living in Canaan ten years, Sarai his wife took her Egyptian maidservant Hagar and gave her to her husband to be his wife. He slept with Hagar, and she conceived [Gn 16:3-4].

¹³⁸ There is a widespread motif in the Balkans and elsewhere about the parent who, desperate for a child, pledges him to a deity, supernatural being or animal who can grant their wish, and who then forgets about the pledge. It is found predominantly in the thematic kernel of certain wonder tales (Type AT 310). Bulgarian folktale experts have also detected specific local interpretations of the motif of the forgotten pledge, classifying the tales in which they appear separately as Types 313A, 313C, *315A, *316* [Daskalova-Perkovska et al. 1994: 109-12, 117-19].

On the other hand, the motif of childless Abraham promising his only son as a sacrifice to Allah appears in an abridged form in Al-Tabarī’s *History of Prophets and Kings* (ff. 301-302). In this specific case, according to the group of sources to which Al-Tabarī refers, the name of the mother was given as Sarah, whereas the victim-son was Isaac:

The reason God commanded Abraham to sacrifice his son was that, when Abraham fled from Iraq and from his people and went to Syria for the sake of his religion and his Lord, he prayed that God would grant him a righteous male child by Sarah, saying, “My Lord! Grant me a righteous child” and “I am going to my Lord who will guide me. My Lord, grant me a righteous child.” And when the angels who were sent to al Mu’tafikah, the people of Lot, visited Abraham, they gave him tidings of a gentle son as God had commanded them to do. And when they did this, Abraham said, “Then he is a sacrificial victim for God.” When the boy was born and had become old enough to walk, Abraham was told, “Fulfill the promise which you made to God.”

According to Mūsā b. Hārūn—’Amr b. Hammād —Asbāt —al-Suddī —Abū Mālik and Abū Sālih—Ibn ‘Abbās and Murrah al-Hamdānī —Abdallāh and some of the companions of the Prophet, Gabriel told Sarah: “Know that [you will have] a son named Isaac, and that after him will come Jacob”. And she smote her cheek in wonder, as God said, “She smote her face”. She said, “Shall I bear a child when I am an old woman and my husband is an old man? This is indeed a strange thing”. They said, “Do you wonder at the commandment of God? May the mercy and blessing of God be upon you, O people of this house! He is the Praiseworthy one, the Glorious One”. Sarah said to Gabriel: “What is the sign of this matter?” So he took a dry piece of wood in his hand and bent it between his fingers, and it quivered and turned green. Then Abraham said, “He is therefore a sacrifice to God”.

When Isaac grew up, Abraham had a dream in which he saw him and was told, “Fulfill your promise that if God granted you a son by Sarah you would sacrifice him”. Then Abraham said to Isaac, “let us go out and offer sacrifice to God!” So he took a knife and a rope and set off with Isaac. When they reached the mountain Isaac asked him, “O my father, where is your victim?” Abraham replied, “O my son! I saw in my dream that I should sacrifice you! But consider the matter. What do you think?” Isaac told him: “O my father! Do as you have been commanded. God willing, you will find me steadfast in belief. Fasten my bonds so that I do not move about, and tie back your garments so that none of my blood splashes them, lest Sarah see it and be saddened. And move the knife quickly on my throat so that death comes easily for me. And when you come back to Sarah, greet her with great peace.” Abraham approached him to kiss him after tying him up; both of them cried until the tears gathered in a pool beneath Isaac’s side. Then he drew the knife across Isaac’s throat, but the knife did not even scratch him, for God had placed a sheet of copper on Isaac’s throat. When Abraham saw that, he turned him over and tried to cut him on the nape of his neck. . . and God proclaimed, “O Abraham! You have carried out the dream in full. Turn around!” He turned around and saw a ram. He seized the ram and kissed his son, saying, “O my son! Today you have been given to me!” [trans. Brinner 1987: 90-91].

Al-Tabarī provides a parallel account about Abraham’s sacrifice was required as a fulfillment of his earlier vow, but in this case with Ishmael as son-victim [ibid. ff. 308-309, trans. Brinner 1987: 96-97].

¹³⁹ Cf. Gn 16: 11- 16.

¹⁴⁰ The motif of the barren matriarch who conceives in her old age is a Biblical locus classicus; see Gn 17:15-19, 21; Gn 18: 9-15; Gn 21: 1-8); on its interpretation in Bulgarian folk tradition, see Petkanova-Toteva [1978: 190-91]. For the Qur’ānic interpretation of the motif of the barren matriarch who conceives in her old age, see Sūrah 15: 51-60.

¹⁴¹ Cf. Gn 21: 10-14.

¹⁴² Cf. Gn 21: 14. See also the rendering of the story of Hagar and Ismael cast off in Al-Tabarī’s *History of Prophets and Kings*, ff. 278-283 [trans. Brinner 1987: 73-77].

¹⁴³ This folk tale shares some common themes with the text of following Muslim legend:

After this Ibrahim took two wives. The name of one was Hagar, and of the second Sarah, and Hagar bare Ibrahim a son and his name was Ishmael. And Sarah bare him Isaac. One day Allah appeared unto Ibrahim and said: “Go unto Mecca, the Holy City, and build Me there Haram, that is the far-famed mosque of the Ka’ba. And Ibrahim obeyed the Command of Allah. When he had finished building the Ka’ba, Allah appeared unto him a second time and said to him: “Take thy first-born Ishmael, and offer him up unto Me for a sacrifice upon the altar which thou hast built for Me.” But Iblis, Satan the Destroyer, thought he would prevent Ibrahim from fulfilling the command of his God in order to cause him to fall from favour in His eyes. And he ran to Hagar, the mother of Ishmael, and told her what her hard-hearted husband, Ibrahim, intended to do with her beloved son, so that he might not do it. But Hagar, the Righteous, reviled him, saying: “Depart hence, Satan Belial, for thy wish is but to separate Allah and my husband, and thy intention is to cause enmity between us two,” and with these words she raised a stone from the ground and cast it at Iblis with all strength of her arm, and Iblis fled before Hagar and vanished, and the stone struck one of the pillars of the Ka’ba and broke, and the eyes of the pilgrims who visit the holy place see the breach unto this day. And from that day Satan is called in the mouth of the Arab, Al Shaitan al Raj’im, meaning Satan the Stoned, for Hagar stoned him with stones” [Meyouhas 1928: 45-46; translated by V. N. Levi].

¹⁴⁴ Even though claiming to have been on Hajj, he still uses Bulgarian landscape imagery in his story, i.e. the forest rather than desert.

¹⁴⁵ This detail from the present folklore account shares certain common features with the biblical text, and in particular with Gn 21: 14-19. The story of how an angel shows Hagar a spring in the desert is also rendered in

Christian religious art. An interesting example of its iconography is provided by a miniature from the Queen Mary Psalter (c. 1310-20, Royal MS 2B VV, f. 10 r).

¹⁴⁶ Compare this folklore narrative about the origin of the well Zamzam to the Muslim legend published by Knappert [1985: 78].

¹⁴⁷ In Bulgarian, “zemia” means “earth”, and hence “water from the earth”.

¹⁴⁸ This passage partly corresponds to the Qur’anic text: while revealing his vision to his son intended as an offering to God, the Prophet Ibrahim says: “My son, I see in a dream that I shall sacrifice thee; consider, what thinkest thou?” [Sūrah 37: 102-3]. Mohammad’s account, however, does not contain a precise description of the dream, nor is anything said about the way Allah utters this command. Abraham merely discloses His will to the son.

According to Muslim Neoplatonists of the tenth and eleventh centuries, however, the dream topic is regarded as an important component of Islamic tradition. As Ian Netton points out, “the projected sacrifice of Ismail, who replaced the Old Testament Isaac in many Islamic versions of the story, is invoked by the Ikhwan to make a point about the truth and reliability of dreams. Abraham knew that dreams must contain some truth or he would not have submitted to such a sacrifice” [Netton 1982: 85]. On the other hand, as the analysis of the morphology of the plots of some Muslim folk narratives from Bulgaria shows, the dream topic serves to link the various units of the text, integrating them into a larger whole. At the same time, the father’s vision is emphasized and amplified. Whereas in the Qur’an Ibrahim’s dream represents a condensed scenario of the actual Great Trial (the test of his faith in Allah), in folk tales the ‘dream-motif’ becomes a knot binding storytelling components in a larger chain-narrative unit. In other words, while in the Qur’anic text the motif of the prophetic dream encapsulates the entire plot of Abraham’s sacrifice, in the folk narrative it serves merely as a linking component in the plot of the Great Trial.

¹⁴⁹ For the interpretation of Islamic folk motif of the dream as a reminder of an unfulfilled vow, consult El-Shamy [1995: 274], who classifies it as Type M 209.1; see also Types M 201.0.1, M 202, M. 205.5 and M 183.

¹⁵⁰ Cf. Sūrah 37: 107. See also Al-Tabarī’s *History of Prophets and Kings* in which two types of renderings concerning this issue are offered. The first type considers Isaac to be the son-victim (ff. 302-303) [trans. Brinner 1987: 91], whereas the second maintains that it was Ishmael (fol. 305) [ibid. 93]. In both cases the son gives his consent to be sacrificed.

¹⁵¹ See also Al-Tabarī’s *History of Prophets and Kings*, in which two versions of the narrative about the encounter between the victim-son and the Devil are presented. In the first type of texts (in which it is stated that Isaac was the son-victim, ff. 293-294), after Satan’s having informed the boy that his father is going to sacrifice him, because “his Lord ordered him to do it”, he answers “By God! If the Lord told my father to do that, he should certainly obey Him!” [trans. Brinner 1987: 85]. In the second type of texts, in which it is maintained that the son-victim was Ishmael (fol. 304), the answer he gives to the Devil (Iblis) is similar: “Then let him [i.e. Abraham/Ibrahim] do what his Lord commanded; to hear is to obey [ibid. 93]. In both cases, as Al-Tabarī sums it up,

the enemy of God returned enraged, for he had not achieved anything with the family of Abraham. They had all refused to deal with him, by God’s help, and they had agreed with God’s command, saying, “To hear is to obey” [ibid.].

¹⁵² This detail about the encounter between Satan and the boy corresponds with some midrashic accounts; in Midrash Tanchuma, the Devil, after unsuccessfully approaching Abraham, attempts to talk to his son who also refuses to listen [Rappoport 1995: 292-93]. On the other hand, according to Muslim convention, Arabic *ta’awwudh* is a formula used as the name for the phrase of *A’ūdhu billāhi min ash-shaitāni r-rajīmi*, “taking refuge in God from Satan the stoned one”; it is spoken before reciting the Qur’ān, and before the *basmalah* (or consecration through the Divine Name, ‘In the Name of God’), when undertaking ritual action” [Glassé 1989: 166].

¹⁵³ Although in the Qur'anic rendering of the Ibrahim saga there is nothing about the victim being bound, this motif is considered important by storytellers; hardly any folk text from Bulgarian Muslim communities omits it. This motif is apparently also regarded to be of major theological significance in Jewish and Christian tradition, based on the Bible:

And they [Abraham and his son] came to the place which God had told him of; and Abraham built an altar there, and laid the wood in order, and bound Isaac his son, and laid him on the altar upon the wood. And Abraham stretched forth his hand and took the knife to slay his son [Gn 22: 9-10].

This biblical passage is considered to be the ultimate source of the tying-up of the sacrificial lamb. As J. Doughan emphasizes,

[t]he memory of the Akedah lies close to the heart of three religions: Judaism, Christianity and Islam. It is reflected in the liturgy of the Jew at Rosh-Ha-Shanah, of the Christians at the Mass (Catholic) or Holy Communion (Orthodox and Protestant), and of the Muslims at the great sacrificial feast ('Id-al-Kabir). The same sacred story is remembered in these three traditions as an important element of their religious identity, yet the commemoration takes place at different times and represents variant meanings. In a sense, the Akedah can be looked upon as standing at the crossroad of these three traditions as one significant sign of their common origin and also of their theological divergence [Doughan 1995: 165].

According to Al-Tabarī's *History of Prophets and Kings*, the son-victim (be it Isaac or Ishmael) asks his father to bind him. Thus, according to one of the versions of the story of the sacrifice (in which Isaac is regarded as the victim-son, ff. 302-303), the boy asks his father:

"Fasten by bonds so that I do not move about, and tie back your garments so that none of my blood splashes them, lest Sarah see it and be saddened. And move the knife quickly on my throat so that death comes easily for me." [trans. Brinner 1987: 91].

In a similar way, when revealing the episode about the last request of the son-victim (in renderings maintaining that it was Ishmael, fol. 305), Al-Tabarī reports that Abraham was told the following by the boy:

"O my father! If you want to sacrifice me, tighten my bonds so that nothing of me will strike you and lessen my rewards, for death is mighty and I am not sure that I will not move with it when I become aware of its touch!" [trans. Brinner 1987: 93]

As far as Christian typological interpretation is concerned, the motif of Abraham's bound son prefigure the Crucifixion; as Melito of Sardis (second century) declares in his Homily on the Pasch:

if therefore you wish to contemplate the Mystery of the Lord, look at Abel who is similarly murdered [Gen. 4: 8], and Isaac who is similarly bound [Gen. 22:9]... He [Christ the God-Man] is the Passover of our salvation. It is he who endured many things: it is he that was in Abel murdered, and Isaac bound" [quoted after Cignelli 1995: 124].

This pattern is also followed by Christian folklore tradition. It is significant that recently recorded Bulgarian folk interpretations of the Abraham saga still retain the Akedah detail [see Badalanova 2001: 39-46]. As for Muslim oral texts, they split at this point. Some of them maintain that 'the chosen son' was bound by his father (as attested in Al-Tabarī's *History of Prophets and Kings*); others hold the opposite belief, that 'the chosen son' was never bound, since it was his free will to become the sacrificial victim. The latter also argue that this detail affirms the supremacy of Ishmael faith (i.e. Islam) over that of the faith of Isaac (Judaism and/or Christianity).

¹⁵⁴ A similar story was recorded by Jan Knappert; see the subsection "Abraham, Ismail and the Ram" in his compendium of *Islamic Legends* [1985:78-80].

¹⁵⁵ The storyteller refers here to the Arabic expression *Allāhu akbar*, "God is great" or "God is [the] greatest", but in a corrupt form.

¹⁵⁶ This detail does not have its counterpart in the canonical Qur'anic account of the Ibrahim saga, and it is generally accepted that it originates from some complementary extra-Qur'anic sources, and from the Hadith in particular. The Hadith ('account' or 'speech') contains stories about the Prophet and early Muslim communities which were initially transmitted orally, and later, in the ninth and tenth centuries, systematically collected and written down to create an extension to Islamic tradition; e.g. cf. the following:

Ibrahim directed the knife against the throat of his son but three times it slipped and glanced aside. Then a voice called to him... Then a ram appeared which... had hitherto been in Paradise; it was offered as a sacrifice" [Houtsma 1927: 532].

Finally, it should be noted that Muslim folk narratives about the ram descending from Heaven as a sign of divine intervention, correspond, of course, to the Bible:

And Abraham lifted up his eyes, and looked, and behold behind him a ram caught in a thicket by his horns" [Gen. 22: 13].

Thus Muslim oral tradition appears to "remember" not only the story from the Hadith, but also, evidently, the canonical Biblical account of the saga of Abraham. The motif of the ram sent by God to replace the son-victim is also attested in Jewish, Christian and Muslim art. For Jewish iconography of the biblical narrative of the sacrifice of Isaac, see Gutmann [1987: 67-89]. For the iconography of the sacrifice of Isaac in early Christian art, see Alison Moore Smith [1922: 159-173].

¹⁵⁷ On the sacred dimensions of the ritual celebration of the Great Sacrifice amongst various Muslim communities, with special emphasis on the 'Ibrahim's model', see Bonte [1999: 22-61], Brisebarre [1999: 93-121], Gokalp [1999: 274-276, 290-293], Abdelsalam [1999: 362-369]; for Muslims of Slavia Islamica see Djordjević [1984: 205], Blagoev [1996:70-83; 1999: 312-340] and Badalanova [2001: 48-51; 2002: 22-73]. For the blood sacrifice ritual in the framework of the heterodox Muslim Alevi and Bektashi belief systems, see Erginer [1998: 471-478]. On Muslim legends about Abraham, with special regard to extracanonical Biblical tradition, and to "further midrashic expansion among the Arabs" in particular, see the entry on Abraham in Singer [1901: 83-96]. Consult also Combs-Schilling [1989: 233-244, 320-321], who offers an analysis of the Islamic myth of Ibrahim as a counterpoint to the Jewish and Christian myth of Abraham [1989: 262-271]. In some areas of the Muslim world, the *Kurban-Bayram* is referred to as '*Id al-Adha*, the major feast in the Islamic calendar that celebrates the sparing of Ishmael and the peak day in the Hajj Pilgrimage outside Mecca (*adha* is a word for "sacrifice"). It is also known as *al-'Id al-Kabir*, the Great Feast. In Turkic countries from China to the fringes of Belarus and from the Crimea to parts of Siberia and the Finnish Tatar community, and Turkey of course, the word used is *Kurban-Bayram*, *Kurban* being derived from the Arabic *qurban*, another word for "sacrifice" and also used to indicate the Christian Mass, and Eucharist, etc. in the Oriental Churches [courtesy Harry Norris].

¹⁵⁸ Compare this folklore narrative to the Qur'anic account about Abraham/Ibrahim as a zealous iconoclast and fervent destroyer of idols [Sūrah 21: 52-69]:

Of old we gave unto Abraham his direction, for we knew him worthy. // When he said to his father and to his people, "What are these images to which ye are devoted?" // They said, "We found our fathers worshipping them". // He said, "Truly ye and your fathers have been in a plain mistake". // They said, "Hast thou come unto us in earnest? or art thou of those who jest?" // He said, "Nay, your Lord is Lord of the Heavens and of the Earth, who hath created them both; and to this am I one of those who witness: // — And, by God, I will certainly lay a plot against your idols, after ye shall have retired and turned your backs." // So he broke them all in pieces, except the chief of them, that to it they might return, *inquiring*. // They said, "Who hath done this to our gods? Verily he is *one* of the unjust." // They said, "We heard a youth make mention of them; they call him Abraham." // They said, then bring him before the people's eyes, that they may witness against him". // They said, "Hast thou done this to our gods, O Abraham?" // He said, "Nay, that their chief hath done it: but ask ye them, if they can speak." // So they turned their thoughts upon themselves, and said, "Ye truly are the impious persons:" // Then became headstrong in their former error and exclaimed, "Thou knowest that these speak not." // He said, "What! Do ye then worship, instead of God, that which doth not

profit you at all, nor injure you? Fie on you and on that ye worship instead of God! What! Do ye not then understand?// They said: “Burn him, and come to the succour of your gods: if ye will do anything at all”.

Al-Tabarī also renders the legend of Abraham the iconoclast in his *History of Prophets and Kings* (ff. 255-266). His narrative gives elaborate details explaining in length the conflict between Abraham and his father (the idol-maker Azar), as well as the arguments of the Prophet with idol-worshippers, and with Nimrod himself [trans. Brinner 1987:51-61]. The Qur’ānic account [Sūrah 21: 52-69], along with the fragment from Al-Tabarī’s *History of Prophets and Kings* (ff. 255-266) can be compared to the narrative about Abraham the iconoclast from Midrash Rabbah (XXXVIII.13). A similar depiction of the image of Abraham the iconoclast is revealed in some Old Church Slavonic apocryphal writings; it anchors the episodes concerned with the conflict between him and his father Terah, who was believed to be an idol maker; for further information, see Nachov [1892: 406-407; 1894: 139-141] and Badalanova and Miltenova [1996: 228-229]. This motif is also rendered in Christian iconographic tradition; see for instance one of the miniatures from the Queen Mary Psalter, England (c. 1310-20, Royal MS 2 b VII, f. 8r).

¹⁵⁹ Cf. Sūrah 3: 91 and Sūrah 22: 27. See also Al-Tabarī’s *History of Prophets and Kings*, ff. 274-277 [trans. Brinner 1987: 69-72].

¹⁶⁰ The storyteller uses here — as well as throughout the entire text of the present legend — the Bulgarian (i.e. Slavonic) word “zhertva” (meaning “sacrifice”, “sacrificial victim”), instead of the commonly preferred form “kurban”, which the Muslim storytellers usually employ while rendering the Islamic folklore legends of Ibrahim.

¹⁶¹ This account shares common features with some folklore narratives registered by M. Lubańska among the Bulgarian Muslims (Pomaks) in the region of Western Rhodope Mountains [Lubańska 2005: 49-50]. See also Blagoev [1996: 70-83] and Elchinova [2000: 54].

¹⁶² The storyteller uses the Bulgarian phraseological expression “принасям жертвоприношение” (meaning “to make a sacrificial offering”, “to perform ritual sacrifice”).

¹⁶³ Compare this folklore account to the story published by Jan Knappert in his collection of *Islamic Legends* [1985:79]. In the present rendering from the Bulgarian village of Avramovi Kolibi, the detail about the knife refusing to harm the flesh of Ibrahim’s son functions as a part of a longer narrative, very much like in Knapper’s version (“Abraham, Ismail and the Ram”); see also texts Nos 16, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 24, 26, 27, 28 .

According to some Midrashic texts, a similar miracle, that of the “knife/sword unable to cut one’s flesh” is associated with either Abraham himself, or Moses. Thus the story about how the Prophet Abraham is miraculously rescued when Nimrod orders his hangman to behead him is part of a much larger account about the King’s efforts to kill him: initially Abraham is cast into prison where he is given no bread or water, but is being fed by the Archangel Gabriel, etc. [Ginzberg 1968 (1): 198-9]. Then, after his having been miraculously saved from death by starvation, he is condemned to death by decapitation, but rescued once more by divine intervention [ibid., p. 199]. Finally, when he is put into the fiery furnace, God delivers him again, thus saving him for the third time. (Significant in this respect is the fact that Abraham’s miraculous rescue from Nimrod’s persecutions is described as a three-fold event). The final episode may appear in two separate versions; for further information, see Ginzberg [1968 (1): 200-203, 216-217].

Likewise the motif of “the sword unable to cut the neck of a holy man” functions as a focal point of the Midrashic account about how Moses is miraculously saved by Archangel Michael when Pharaoh’s hangman is about to behead him [Ginzberg 1968 (2):282].

Among the Bulgarian Christians it is still believed that Patriarch Euthimius was miraculously saved by God when the Sultan’s hangman was about to behead him. Euthimius was their last Patriarch before the Bulgarian Kingdom lost its independence, becoming part of the Ottoman Empire in 1396. In this way the national mythology implicitly recognises Euthimius as the “New Abraham” and the “New Moses” of the Bulgarians.

Jewish, Christian and Muslim extra-canonical accounts about the deeds of their prophets and martyrs frequently use the motif of the “knife/sword unable to cut one’s flesh” as a common hagiographic formula. In fact, it often functions as a leitmotif of the story-line, systematically marking the climax of the narrative. In

this way each ethnic and religious community builds a certain dormant paradigm comprising the names of its ultimate heroes. Moreover this paradigm of names with symbolic resonance may function as a clandestine marker of community's identity (be it religious, or ethnic, or national). Finally, this paradigm may be reactivated at any time, channelling and labelling the energy of the community's members in moments of crisis, each time spelling out not only their values, but also their aims and objectives.

¹⁶⁴ It is significant that the storyteller prefers the word **rab** [paб] to the word **rob** [poб], although both mean approximately the same thing ('servant' or 'slave'). The former word **rab** ("servant") belongs to the upper solemn thesaurus of Sacred Scriptures, while the latter word **rob** ("slave") belongs to the standard register of Bulgarian, with a slight difference in semantics between the two forms.

¹⁶⁵ It is not clear from this text whether the storyteller considers the Kurban ritual to be of equal importance for Muslims as the Hajj. According to Muslim tradition, the Hajj is a higher obligation, since it is among the Five Pillars of Islam, but Kurban is not.

¹⁶⁶ Cf. Sūrah 37: 102-3.

¹⁶⁷ The motif of "barrenness removed by prayer" is also found in Arab folk tradition (type D 1925.3 in El-Shamy [1995]).

¹⁶⁸ In the local (Bulgarian) dialect the word *molba* ("молба"), translated above as prayer-request, can mean both 'act of devotion' ('prayer', 'invocation') and 'request'. It belongs to a certain — much broader — semantic cluster of ritual terminology solidly embedded in the indigenous vernacular thesaurus of sacrificial offerings (which are often, but not always called *Kurban*). Ethnolinguistic data (although collected mainly from Christian Slavs) indicates that this kind of ceremonies is often known as *molitva* ("молитва"), meaning 'prayer', 'devotion', 'invocation', but also 'litany' and 'communion' [Gerov 1899: 78]. Parallel with this, these sacrificial offerings can also be called *krŭst* ("кръст"), meaning 'cross', 'crucifix' [Gerov 897: 424, Marinov 1981: 651], thus referring to one of the most common symbols of Christianity. In some areas of Bulgaria these ritual sacrifices are designated as *tsurkva* ("църква"), *cherkva* ("черква"), *cherkovishte* ("черковище"), *paraklis* ("параклис"), meaning 'church', 'temple', 'chapel' respectively [Marinov 1981: 344-345, 350-351, 688-690], which indicates that the places where they are performed are regarded as holy. Moreover, these sacred sites have status equal to that of churches. Further, this kind of offering ceremonies can be labelled as *sluzhba* ("служба"), meaning 'service', 'ceremony', 'observance', 'worship', as well as 'liturgy', and even 'sacrament' [Gerov 1904: 194; Marinov 1981: 344-345, 694, 713-712], which suggests that they are perceived as a functional counterpart of the Eucharist.

It is significant that among Balkan Slavs (Bulgarian, Serbs, etc.) the *Kurban* sacrificial ceremonies can be marked with a more general term, namely *obrok* ("оброк"), meaning 'oath', 'pledge', 'promise', but also 'offering', 'oblation', 'sacrifice'; for further information see Gerov [1899: 308] and Marinov [1981: 84-85, 306, 344-345, 348-355, 694, 720-723], as well as Kulišić, Petrović and Pantelić [1998: 326-328], Popova [1995: 150-151] and Badalanova [2002: 52]. As the Bulgarian ethnographer D. Marinov points out, the term *obrok* may be used together with another, supplementary term, *zapis* ("запис") [Marinov 1981: 344, 720], the direct meaning of which could be rendered as 'something written down'. Marinov suggests that the ritual term *zapis* is also regarded as an equivalent of the term "cross", simply because the sacred site where the sacrificial ceremonies are performed is marked by a "cross with something written on it" [Marinov 1981: 720]. One could suggest, however, another interpretation of the term "zapis" which is firmly attested in folklore texts. According to them, the word "zapis" can denote 'writ', 'covenant', 'obligation', 'written contract', 'agreement' — a meaning which fits perfectly into the *Kurban* ritual pattern, as interpreted in both Christian and Muslim folklore legends of Abraham/Ibrahim. The above legend provides further evidence supporting this observation.

Still, on the basis on ethnolinguistic data from the region it can be maintained that in the Balkans the term *Kurban* — which is common for both Christian and Muslim ritual vocabularies — is the most prevalent among the terms used to label sacrificial offerings. It is definitely the most widespread one, denoting any kind of ritual offering. As for the Hebrew form *Korban*, its essential, basic meaning was 'temple sacrifice'; later this meaning was broadened to signify 'vow', 'promise'.

¹⁶⁹ The Islamic folk motif of the dream as a reminder of an unfulfilled vow is Type M 209.1 in El-Shamy's motif-classification of Islamic folk traditions [1995]; see also Types M 201.0.1, M 202, M. 205.5 and M 183. On the prophetic dream motif in Arab oral tradition see Type D 1812.3.3.5; see also Types D 1810.8, M 209.1, V 511, V 512, V 513, V 515, V 517 where numinous wisdom is associated with prophetic dreams and/or visions. As briefly mentioned above, in Muslim tradition the dreams of prophets are regarded as direct commands from Allah [El-Shamy 1995: 542].

¹⁷⁰ For a similar interpretation of the motif of the request of the father (Abraham/Ibrahim) to have his son Ismail dressed up by his mother (Hagar/ Hadjar) before offering him as a sacrifice to Allah, see the version recorded by Jan Knappert:

One sad day, the Prophet Abraham — peace be upon him — was commanded by God to sacrifice his son Ismail, his most precious possession, but he obeyed, for prophets must set a good example. So he answered God: "I surrender to Thy will." To his first wife Hagar (Hadjar) he spoke: "Wash Ismail and put his best clothes on, for today I want to take him to see my best friend." Hagar did not ask questions, but washed her only son carefully and combed his hair. When father and son left, Hagar begged Abraham: "Don't be long, do bring him back soon, I am worried to death when he is not with me. Hurry!" [Knappert 1985: 78].

The motif about Ibrahim's request to have his son Ismail adorned by his mother (Hagar/ Hadjar) for the sacrifice is featured in some Muslim paintings. One such example is to be found in an illuminated manuscript from the Oriental Collection of the British Library *Three Romances* (Or. MS 8755, Turkman/Timurid, c. 1462-3, f. 17v). Further on this miniature see D. Jackson [2007: 125]. Further on the interpretation of this motif, as attested in Sufi tradition, see Brosh and Milstein [1991: 31-32].

See also note 236 below.

¹⁷¹ This motif is interpreted in a similar way in Jan Knappert's rendering of the story of the filial sacrifice; see his collection of *Islamic Legends* [1985:79].

¹⁷² According to canonical Muslim tradition, the month of Ramadan was the time when the Qur'an was revealed by Allah (see Sūrah 2: 185).

¹⁷³ The word used by the informant, the English equivalent of which is "to fast", belongs to the local dialect, and means "refraining from consuming food or water", as well as "refraining from having sexual contact". In the local folklore tradition it can also mean "refraining from verbal communication". The latter term is used in the local Bulgarian (Slavonic) dialect to denote "the ritual silence obeyed by the bride for a certain period (40 days, or in some cases nine months) after the wedding ceremony". During this period of ritual silence she cannot speak to anybody but her husband.

In Muslim tradition, 'Id al-Fitr is the "fast-breaking" feast, celebrating the end of the month of Ramadan. It is also known as al-'Id al-Saghir, the "Little Feast" and, again, amongst the Turkic communities is referred to as *Kurban-Ramadan* [courtesy Harry Norris].

¹⁷⁴ The 'evening before', or 'eve' in Turkish.

¹⁷⁵ Cf. Sūrah 37: 102-3.

¹⁷⁶ Indicative for the iconography of the motif of the blindfolding of the victim-son Ismail in Islamic art is the miniature from the Lisbon's Anthology of Sultan, Shiraz, 1411 (Lisbon, Museu Calouste Gulbenkian). The same type of iconography is attested in a miniature from a late sixteenth century Turkish copy of Fizuli's *Hadikat al-Su'ada* [*Garden of the Blessed*] from the British Library (Or. MS 12009, c. 1590-5, f. 19v). The painting from this Turkish illuminated manuscript is representative of one of the two main types of iconography of the sacrifice in the Ottoman Period (with the son-victim blindfolded). This type of iconography is also attested in Jewish and Christian images of the sacrifice.

Another type of iconography gives the son depicted with his face uncovered. One such example comes from an illuminated Persian manuscript from the Oriental Collection of the British Library *Three*

Romances (Or. MS 8755, Turkman/Timurid, c. 1462-3, f. 20v). Further on iconographic features of this miniature, see D. Jackson [2007: 125-127]. See also the discussion above.

¹⁷⁷ Compare this folklore account to the story published by Jan Knappert in his collection of *Islamic Legends* [1985:79].

¹⁷⁸ The meaning is ambiguous but presumably means that this event was what started the custom of the Kurban being dyed with henna. Further on the vernacular Islamic tradition of colouring the sacrificial animal with henna for the Kurban-Bayram ritual, as observed among the Muslim communities in Bulgaria, see Blagoev [1996: 76, 83; 2003: 94].

¹⁷⁹ The word “Джаволо” (Dzhavolo) is a local dialect version of the standard Bulgarian form “Дявол” (Diabol); it is related to the Greek διαβολοζ (Diabolos) [Georgiev et al. 1971: 470-471; Fasmer 1986-I: 560], and belongs to the indigenous folklore demonological thesaurus. See also the next footnote.

¹⁸⁰ Note that while referring to the main antagonist, the Satan, the storyteller uses two forms of his name. Along with the Turkish word *Sheytan* [Шейтан], he employs the local dialect version “Dzhavol” [Джавол]. The two forms function in the present text as synonyms.

¹⁸¹ On the symbolism of the numbers “three” and “seven” in traditional culture of Bulgarian Muslims, see Mikov [2005: 319-329].

¹⁸² Together with the form “Джаволо” (Dzhavolo), the word “Гяволо” (Giavolo) represents one of the local dialect versions of the standard Bulgarian form “дявол” (Diavol).

¹⁸³ See Knappert [1985:79].

¹⁸⁴ Compare this folklore narrative about the origin of the well Zamzam to the Muslim legend published by Knappert [1985: 78].

¹⁸⁵ Hacer in Turkish; in Arabic Hager means ‘rock’.

¹⁸⁶ This toponym can be compared to the local dialectal word дервент/ дербент (dervent / derbent) and to the Greek “δερβεντ” (derbent); both are derivative forms from the Turkish “derbent”/ “derbent”.

¹⁸⁷ The hill “al-Safa”.

¹⁸⁸ In Bulgarian the word for “child” is neuter; hence the pronoun used to substitute it is also neuter. In the present translation, however, we prefer to use the oblique forms of the gender-inclusive “he” and “she” (“him/her”).

¹⁸⁹ The storyteller makes the point here that the first share of the Kurban which is supposed to be given to “poor people” is distributed among Muslim households in the neighbourhood, since everyone is now poor.

¹⁹⁰ The direction of Mecca (i.e. the direction of prayer), in Turkish *kīble*, from Arabic *qiblah*, the direction to which Muslims pray.

¹⁹¹ From Arabic *takbīr* / *tekbīr*, denoting “praise, glorification, the declaration or expression ‘God is most great’ (*Allahu Akbar*)” [Netton 1997: 242].

The utterance of the phrase “*Allahu Akbar*” is repeated countless times during prayers. It also appears on the Iraqi and Sa’udi flags and indeed on other Islamic flags and symbols and inscriptions, e.g. the Alhambra, in Spain, etc., and in Tatar and non-Tatar communities in Eastern Europe, on mosque and wall pictures and hangings (*muhirs*), or on the head scarves of members of Hamas in the Gaza strip, amongst those in al-Qai’da, on other flags from Morocco to Malaysia. *Takbir* is the verbal noun of the verbal

form, "Kabbara". In some communities with Turkic connections it tends to be flattened vocally, into *Tekb̄ir*, with the second syllable stressed, sometimes extremely so, and this is a tendency when *Allahu Akbar* is uttered, Akbar being pronounced as *Ekbir/Ekb̄ir/Kb̄ir*, etc. [courtesy Harry Norris].

¹⁹² See text No 1.

¹⁹³ The storyteller uses a "Bulgarised" version of the Turkish word *Cennet*, and coins an adjective meaning 'heavenly', according to the rules of the Bulgarian morphology.

¹⁹⁴ For the concept of *Jannatu 'Adn* (Arabic), see the discussion above (note 31).

¹⁹⁵ From the Turkish *Cehennem* (Hell), related to *Jahannam* (Arabic) and *Gehinnom / Gehenna* (Hebrew); see also Geiger [1998: 167-168]. The Hebrew word originally meant "the Valley of Hennom", a toponym in Jerusalem, where cemeteries were located.

¹⁹⁶ On Islamic popular beliefs related to the function of the sacrificed Kurban animal as a psychopompe in the beyond, see S. Boyadzhieva's article "*We are just guests on the Earth and this white world: images and concepts of death and the world beyond*" [2000: 55]. Her study is based on data collected among the Bulgarian Muslims from the village of Galata, Teteven region, Central Bulgaria. The transcriptions of the related folklore text on which the author's observations are based are stored in the Archives of the Institute of Folklore (Bulgarian Academy of Sciences) under the following record numbers: АИФ I 166:71, and АИФ I 167: 48; see also АИФ I 174: 98. Similar data is offered by G. Blagoev [1996; 74-75].

¹⁹⁷ For the notion of *sadaqa* in Muslim religious convention, and for its conceptualizing within the context of the Kurban/Qurbani sacrifice ritual ceremonies, see Brisebarre [1999: 104, 114-115], Gokalp [1999: 276] Werbner [1999: 294-297, 300-301], Kuczynski [1999: 307-308, 311, 319, 321-323], Diop [1999: 344], Abdelsalam [1999: 377], Hell [1999: 400].

¹⁹⁸ Arabic Uhud, the site of a battle outside Mecca where the Prophet was defeated by the Meccans in 625 AD. The Prophet was wounded yet Islam quickly recovered, helping to prove the divinely ordained triumph of the Faith [courtesy Harry Norris].

¹⁹⁹ Cf. Sūrah 37: 102-3.

²⁰⁰ For the interpretation of the motif of "barrenness removed by prayer", cf. El-Shamy [1995: 105]; El-Shamy classifies it as type D 1925.3.

²⁰¹ Compare this folklore rendering to the story published by Jan Knappert in his collection of *Islamic Legends* [1985:79].

²⁰² In Arabic *Jahannam*, related to the Hebrew *Gehinnom*, meaning Hell.

²⁰³ The "white world" ("бял свят") is traditional idiom used to denote "this world" (i.e. the "world of the living"), as opposed to "the world of dead".

²⁰⁴ Here the storyteller uses the local dialect version of the word denoting 'Prophet', i.e. "Pengamberin"; in other dialects it is "Peygamber".

²⁰⁵ Obviously, a play on words, since 'counted' can also mean 'venerated'.

²⁰⁶ The ceremonial act of the mother dyeing her son with henna can be interpreted as a rite of passage. There was an ancient ritual, already attested in Ugaritic literature, that warriors (the universal sacrifice) would rouge themselves before battle. In this way, henna, implicitly referring to the colour of blood, prepares one for

sacrifice. In the same way, Esau the hunter was described as ‘ruddy’ or red, i.e. the hunter and warrior, unlike his brother Jacob, and furthermore Esau’s homeland is Edom, the ‘red’ land; see Cyrus Gordon [1958: 125].

²⁰⁷ Cf. Sūrah 37: 102-3.

²⁰⁸ Cf. Knappert [1985: 79].

²⁰⁹ The Bulgarian adjective “вакъл” (vakŭl) is usually applied as a stock epithet to designate a special type of animals ‘with black splotches around the eyes’. At the same time, it can be used to denote “dark-eyed” young men and women who are still not married. For further information, see Marinov [1981: 117].

²¹⁰ Further on the prophetic dream motif in popular Muslim belief and oral tradition see Type D 1812.3.3.5 and Types D 1810.8, M 209.1, V 511, V 512, V 513, V 515, V 517 in El-Shamy’s *Folk Traditions of the Arab World: a Guide to Motif Classification* [1995: 103; 274; 385]; dreams and/or visions seen by prophets and/or saints are considered to be divine pronouncements.

²¹¹ Turkish for ‘the bridge leading to Paradise’ (the Turkish noun for bridge is *köprüsü*). On Islamic popular beliefs related to the ‘the bridge leading to Paradise’, see Boyadzhieva [2000: 58-59]. Her article is based on data collected among the Bulgarian Muslims from the village of Galata, Teteven region, Central Bulgaria. The transcriptions of the related folklore text on which the author’s observations are based are stored in the Archives of the Institute of Folklore (Bulgarian Academy of Sciences) under the following record numbers: АИФ I 174: 74-77. See also Blagoev [1996: 74-75].

²¹² I approached a group of women and asked them about Ibrahim’s sacrifice. The following text is the transcription of their explanations. Unlike the usual folklore renderings of the story of Ibrahim’s sacrifice, which focus on the relationship between the two male protagonists, Ibrahim and his son, and are entirely male-centred, here the trial is viewed through the eyes of women; in this the function of the father is minimized, with the mother being the main protagonist.

²¹³ Note storyteller’s inconsistent use of the Bulgarian word for God and Arabic Allah.

²¹⁴ As for the image of the mother (i.e. Hagar) in the Bulgarian Muslim versions of the Ibrahim’s saga, it appears that these accounts differ significantly from orally transmitted stories of filial sacrifice, told in some areas formerly part of the Islamic Caliphate. Thus, according to Combs-Schilling, the stories of Ibrahim, circulating in Morocco, completely ignore the image and the function of the mother. He claims that:

Hajar, the natural mother, is absent from Islamic cosmic trial, so absent that she does not even appear in the Qur’anic text. The Qur’an’s tale of ultimate sacrifice is a purely male story, involving a male-imagined God, a father, a son, and a male domestic animal. The Qur’an mentions the mother in connection with Ismail’s natural birth, but not in connection with the transcendent birth which the father, together with God, gives. The mother plays no part, has no say... So distant is the mother in awareness, understanding, and space that she cannot possibly participate in the play with death that brings about eternal life. Hajar is down on the plains — probably baking bread or washing clothes — while the fate of her son and the fate of the cosmos are being decided [Combs-Schilling 1989:240].

It must be emphasized, however, that as far as the function of the mother in the “cosmic trial” is concerned, Bulgarian folk materials indicate that the situation is much more complicated than Combs-Schilling suggests, and as such is a topic for future research. In fact, Bulgarian folk songs and narratives, recorded among both Christian and Muslim communities, reveal that the image of the mother in the vernacular Biblical and Qur’anic saga of filial sacrifice is of crucial importance.

²¹⁵ This folklore text represents a specific type of popular Islamic renderings according to which it was not the father (i.e. Ibrahim) but who prays to Allah for a child, but the mother (i.e. Hagar) instead. She promises Him that if the prayer is answered, the child would be sacrificed as a Kurban offering to Him. Similar folklore texts

were recently recorded by E. Mitseva among Muslim communities in north-eastern Bulgaria. According to them, it is Ibrahim's second wife (whose name was Hazhder, i. e. Hagar), not Ibrahim himself, who prays to Allah for a boy and promises that if He answers the prayer, the child will be sacrificed as a Kurban. This detail corresponds neither to Qur'anic nor Biblical themes, but instead to folk motifs functioning as the semantic kernels of songs and narratives about filial sacrifice in *Slavia orthodoxa* [Nachov 1894: 149-50], as, for example, in a ritual song from the village of Momina Bania, near Hisar in southern Bulgaria. The song was performed by Christian women on St. George's Day after their husbands had sacrificed a lamb. The text of the song, along with an explanation of the accompanying ritual, was described by one of the local singers of tales as follows:

When the lamb is slaughtered, we go to the spring, where the water flows down the ravine, to pour the blood in there... So that it may flow down the ravine — for a good harvest, for everything [to be born]. We [offer this sacrifice] to God and Saint George sincerely, so that he may help us all. And they [the men] make the sign of the cross on the forehead [of each child] with the blood of the lamb — for we are already offering the lamb and making the sign of the cross on ourselves. We present it all wholeheartedly. And then [we sing] the song, the song that is sung about the lambs... Let me see... [Here comes the song]:

“A mother gave birth to a single son, and named him Stoyan.
She brought him up to adulthood and betrothed him,
And the mother settled on his marriage, and married him off.
But they [Stoyan and his wife] did not have a child from their heart...
Yet his bride Petranka, his beautiful bride Petranka
Was walking along the yard, holding golden censers,
Gaining favor with them before God and praying to Him:
'Oh God! Oh Almighty God! Please, give me God, please give me,
One single male child, to bring him up for three years!
Then I shall slaughter him as a sacrificial offering!' “

As Nachov shows, songs about filial sacrifice in which the mother prays to God for a son are widespread amongst Bulgarians [Nachov 1894:149-150]. Often these songs start with a formulaic dialogue between the Morning Star [Звезда Зорница] and the praying mother. She promises the star that if God gives them a son, his name will be the “One Who Belongs to God” [Богумчо] and he will be offered as a sacrifice to Him [Nachov 1894:150].

Both Muslim and Christian versions of this motif correspond to Al-Tabari's account about the Prophet Mohammad's lineage.

²¹⁶ See El-Shamy's *Folk Traditions of the Arab World: a Guide to Motif Classification* [1995: 105]; the motif of “barrenness removed by prayer” is classified as type D 1925.3.

²¹⁷ The Islamic folk motif of the dream as a reminder of an unfulfilled vow is Type M 209.1 [El-Shamy 1995, I: 274]; see also Types M 201.0.1, M 202, M. 205.5 and M 183.

²¹⁸ As far as the age of the victim-son is concerned (a detail missing from the Qur'an), this story tells us that he was seven years old. The above tale reflects, to a degree, the conventional setting of ceremonial practices akin to rites of passage among Balkan Muslim communities. In the classical Qur'anic text we are simply told that, after being given the good tidings, the Prophet is asked to sacrifice his offspring when he reaches “the age of running with him” [Qur'an 37: 99-101]. A reflection of this detail may be found, surprisingly enough, in some folkloric versions of the Abraham saga among Christians in some parts of Bulgaria. These songs are sung by women during the Kurban ritual, on *Gergyovden* [St. George's Day], when the priest blesses the ritual loaves and fumigates the roasted Kurban lamb. Accordingly, the victim-son is to be sacrificed either when he starts talking and walking (i.e. when he reaches the border between infancy and boyhood), or when he goes to the fields of his father and brings home fruits of his first harvest (i.e. when he reaches the age of adolescence and therefore marriage). In both cases the age of the victim-son is symbolically charged by signifying “liminality” and therefore unequivocally referring to rites of passage (as in Muslim narratives).

It is essential to note that the canonical account of Abraham's sacrifice in Genesis also does not refer to the age of his most beloved son. Christian folklore songs sung during Kurban ceremonies, which are entirely typical of Bulgarian folk tradition [Petkanova-Toteva 1978: 191-92], together with the Kurban-stories

recorded among the Bulgarian Muslims, represent an alternative version of Abraham's/Ibrahim's saga that was transmitted orally. This detail about the age of the son was included neither in the Qur'an nor in the Bible, but yet has survived in the folk tradition of Balkan Muslims and Christians – an enduring memory of the oral hypostases of the Holy Scriptures. Incidentally, according to one of the sources quoted by Al-Tabarī (fol. 273), opposing the widely accepted tradition that Ishmael was the child Abraham intended to sacrifice, it is stated that the victim-son was Isaac, and that he “was seven when he was sacrificed” [trans. Brinner 1987: 68]. Al-Tabarī's account provides further evidence that the story of filial sacrifice enjoyed great popularity in the Middle ages and was transmitted as an infinite (but never ultimate) cluster of renderings which were cognate, yet not identical, with the Scriptures.

²¹⁹ Further on the ritual function of the invocation *Bismillāh al-rahmān al-rahīm* (“In the name of Allah, the Most Beneficent, the Most Merciful”) in traditional sacrificial ceremonies performed among Muslims, see P. Bonte [1999:42], Aubaile-Sallenave [1999: 139], Zirari [1999: 172-173], Virolle [1999: 182-185, 191-192], Kanafani-Zahar [1999: 202-203]; for vernacular Muslim tradition in Bulgaria, see Blagoev [2003: 95]. This formula was commonly used before eating and sacrificing [courtesy Harry Norris].

²²⁰ Cf. Knappert [1985: 79].

²²¹ One of the appellations related to Allah (meaning ‘Lord Almighty’).

²²² Presumably this expression is related to Arabic ‘*idrib* “strike”, i.e. “drop” [courtesy Harry Norris].

²²³ Because the ram jumped and ran away, there is no one place meant for sacrifice.

²²⁴ The present account indicates that a particular Kurban sacrificial ceremony is carried out by members of each family, on an annual basis, in a specially selected sacred location (i.e. “in the rocks over there”). It is believed that the observance of this ritual will guarantee the well-being of their children. The spatial characteristics of the place where the annual ritual slaughter of a ram is performed indicate that it marks the highest (i.e. holiest) spot in the local landscape, its “altar”; at the same time, it is situated on the fringes of the cultivated village territory (thus spelling out the ‘liminality’ of the Kurban ceremony and its association with the indigenous rites of passage). The description of the sacred space where the Kurban ceremony is carried out replicates the Biblical pattern of Abraham's saga (according to which the father goes with his son to the mountain). The storytellers also affirm that, apart from annually performed sacrificial offerings, the local Muslim people observe the custom of *Aqiqa*, which requires the sacrifice of Kurban for the good health of every child; it is maintained that this initiation ritual is related to the Kurban story of Ibrahim; further on the *Aqiqa* customs, as observed among the Bulgarian Muslims, see Lozanova [1996:27-28] and Blagoev [1996: 71-73].

The present folklore account from the village of Breznitsa provides an excellent example of vernacular interpretation of Holy Scriptures, showing how local ethnohermeneutics transform the native landscape into sacred territory.

²²⁵ Further information concerning popular Muslim customs related to magic / fertility / healing rituals in which bones of the sacrificial animal are used, can be found in the Archives of the Museum of the City of Kürdzhalī, Southern Bulgaria (File No 7, pp. 12, 26, 31). The data was collected from the villages of Dolna Kayaloba, Podkova, Ostrets, etc; among the storytellers from whom this information was provided, the following should be mentioned: Hamli Hadji Hyusein (from the village of Dolna Kayaloba), Aysha Mahmud (from the village of Podkova), and Yakub Omer from the village of Ostrets.

²²⁶ See note 222 above.

²²⁷ She defers to her husband.

²²⁸ Addressing again her husband.

²²⁹ The text is narrated by a father [Storyteller 1] and daughter [Storyteller 2].

²³⁰ Consult El-Shamy's *Folk Traditions of the Arab World: a Guide to Motif Classification* [1995: 105]; the motif of "barrenness removed by prayer" is classified as type D 1925.3.

²³¹ Referring here to the people of Mesopotamia.

²³² The storyteller mixes up the name of Ibrahim and that of his father; in his story, Ibrahim is believed to be the father (i.e. the idol-maker) whereas Ismail is the son-iconoclast. See also the interpretation of the story about the unbeliever-father (i.e. idol-maker) and the righteous son-iconoclast in the narrative about Ibrahim and Azar, as presented in Al-Tabarī's *History of Prophets and Kings*, ff. 256-261 [trans. Brinner 1987: 52-57].

²³³ Meaning, this is nonsense, judging from the intonation of the storyteller.

²³⁴ See El-Shamy [1995: 105]; the motif of "barrenness removed by prayer" is classified as type D 1925.3.

²³⁵ The Islamic folk motif of the dream as a reminder of an unfulfilled vow is Type M 209.1 [El-Shamy 1995: 274]; see also Types M 201.0.1, M 202, M. 205.5 and M 183 [ibid.].

²³⁶ For the visual rendering of the motif of Ibrahim's request to have his son Ismail adorned by the mother before the sacrifice in Islamic art, see the illuminated Persian manuscript from the Oriental Collection of the British Library *Three Romances* (Or. MS 8755, Turkman/Timurid, c. 1462-3, f. 17v). Further on iconographic features of this miniature, see D. Jackson [2007: 125]. See also note 170.

²³⁷ Arabic *malāk Jibrā'il* = angel Gabriel.

²³⁸ The storyteller burst into tears at this point.

²³⁹ Turkish "çok" has the same meaning as Bulgarian "много" ("much", "many", "very"), so he has repeated the same phrase in both Bulgarian and Turkish.

²⁴⁰ Cf. Knappert [1985: 79].

²⁴¹ Turkish for 'Paradise'.

²⁴² Lit. "Ram"-*Bayram*. The word "*koch*" means 'ram' in the local dialect.

²⁴³ According to the present Muslim folklore account from Bulgaria, Ibrahim had been married twice. This detail shows how Muslim oral tradition transforms the Biblical motif of the opposition between Sarah and Hagar, so giving the mother of Ismail a status equal to that given by Jewish and Christian tradition to the mother of Isaac.

²⁴⁴ Consult El-Shamy [1995: 105], motif type D 1925.3 ("barrenness removed by prayer").

²⁴⁵ The Islamic folk motif of the dream as a reminder of an unfulfilled vow is Type M 209.1 [El-Shamy 1995: 274]; see also Types M 201.0.1, M 202, M. 205.5 and M 183 [ibid.].

²⁴⁶ It should be noted that in Mehmed Yusek's text the mother's function undergoes a process of considerable transformation. While at the beginning she is the most active personage, towards the end of the text her

parental presence becomes almost invisible. It is Hazhder, not her husband, who initially encounters the celestial world through her prayers, acquiring a child whom she promises to sacrifice. In the later stages of the plot, however, she is gradually replaced by the father; eventually the stage is reached where he acts for her. In terms of the plot, this shift is expressed overtly; the mother will not be even told of the forthcoming sacrifice. This turning-point in the logic of the text may be regarded as a contradiction by readers of the Bible or the Qur'an, but certainly not for oral tellers of the Holy Scriptures, for whom the religion of the book exists in oral performance, as a sacred text in the making (with the corresponding flexibility of the plot).

²⁴⁷ This part of Mehmed Yusek's story has no counterpart in the Qur'an; instead, the detail of Ibrahim's going to collect wood for the burnt offering stems from the Biblical narrative [Gn 22: 3]:

And Abraham rose up early in the morning [...] and clave the wood for the burnt offering, and rose up, and went unto the place of which God had told him.

On the other hand, it is not only the Biblical tradition that considers the "wood topic" of particular importance for the internal logic of the saga of filial sacrifice. Early patristic tradition also acknowledges it: Christological exegesis interprets the figure of Abraham's son carrying the wood on his shoulders as he climbs the hill where he is to be sacrificed as a prototype of Jesus carrying his cross to Calvary [Cignelli 1995: 123-26; Paczkowski 1995: 101-21]. This typology was extensively developed by the Church Fathers, and by Irenaeus, Tertullian and Origen in particular [Doughan 1995: 167]. Hence, in Christian tradition the figure of Isaac carrying wood on his shoulders was connected with the Crucifixion. Of course, the way popular faith spells out this typology is quite distinctive, but it is nonetheless evident that the folkloric renderings of the Abraham saga constantly consider the "wood-bearing" motif of great significance.

The ritual songs about Abraham's sacrifice sung by Christians during the Kurban ritual draw special attention to the "wood-bearing" motif. Some of these folklore texts explicitly say that "the boy was to be sacrificed when he was old enough to go to the forest and collect wood." Numerous ritual texts confirming this observation can be quoted. Thus, according to one such ritual song performed by Bulgarian Christians on Saint George's Day, it is stated that, when the time for the boy to be offered by his father Abraham as a Kurban sacrifice approached, he was sent for the first time to go to the forest on the hill "to collect a cartload of wood":

When he was back from the hill, // His mother was baking bread, // And crying as she did so. // His father was honing sharp knives // And crying as he did so...

Afterward the song – which demonstrates how vernacular tradition creates local versions of the Biblical story of Abraham's trial – continues with an elaborate, ornate report about the filial sacrifice. The song further states that the victim-son was called Georgi, after Saint George himself, and, what is more, that his sacrifice was to take place on the feast day of his own patron saint, Saint George. And last but not least, the son was supposed to be slain after his having completed the task of bringing along wood.

Not only Christian religious songs and tales about Abraham and Isaac, but also Muslims narratives of Ibrahim and Ishmael refer persistently to the "wood-bearing" motif. Whereas in the Christian folklore tradition this can be explained straightforwardly – at least because of predictable influence of canonical Biblical text and related religious iconography upon popular tales and songs – the roots of this phenomenon in Muslim narratives are not so evident, since "wood-bearing" is absent from the Qur'anic account. How then does this motif find its way to vernacular Islamic tradition? The reference to the "wood-bearing" in Bulgarian Muslim oral tradition (of which the legend narrated by M. Yusek provides an example) points towards the steady, perpetual unfolding of a certain oral Vorlage, the earliest stages of which may have even predated the emergence of the written text of the Holy Scriptures; in my previous work I referred to this oral Vorlage of the Holy Scriptures as "Ur-hypertext" [Badalanova 2008]. Both the Bible and the Qur'an, as well as their extra-canonical written and oral counterparts, I claim, stemmed from it. In the light of the above it can be argued further that the Muslim account of Ibrahim's sacrifice from the Bulgarian village of Chernoglavtsi exemplifies yet again the encounter between Christianity and Islam at the popular level. It also illustrates how vernacular Muslim exegesis draws on sources beyond classical Islamic tradition. The tale of Mehmed Yusek shows that in the process of its narration further intriguing issues were raised. What is regarded as the most important component of the fragment is not that the father and the son go to collect wood, but the fact that

they go to the forest. The thicket becomes the emblematic setting for the filial sacrifice, recalling the folk concept of the grove as a *locus classical* for rites of passage.

²⁴⁸ The informant uses different words for Satan interchangeably, as with terms for God.

²⁴⁹ The present folklore narrative (and especially the episode about the Devil encountering the mother of the victim-son and the victim-son himself) shares common features with Al-Tabarī's *History of Prophets and Kings*, ff. 293-294. Incidentally, according to the sources to which Al-Tabarī refers in this particular case, the name of the mother was Sarah, and the son was Isaac:

When Abraham was told to sacrifice Isaac, Satan said: "By God! If I cannot deceive the people of Abraham with this, I shall never be able to do it." So when Abraham went out with Isaac to sacrifice him, Satan visited Abraham's wife, Sarah, in the shape of a man whom Abraham's people knew, and asked her: "Where is Abraham going so early with Isaac?" She said, "He went off early on some errand". Satan said, "No, by God! That is not the reason he left so early". Sarah asked, "then what is the reason?" He said, "He took him out early to sacrifice him". Sarah said, "There is no truth to that, he would not sacrifice his own son". Satan said, "By God, it is true". Sarah said, "And why would he sacrifice him?" He replied, "He claims that his Lord ordered him to do it." Sarah said, "If his Lord ordered him to do that, it is best that he obey". Then Satan left Sarah and went to Isaac, who was walking with his father, and said: "Where is your father taking you so early?" Isaac answered, "He is taking me on some errand of his". Satan said, "No, by God, he is not taking you out on an errand. He is taking you out early to sacrifice you". Isaac said, "My father would not sacrifice me!" Satan told him, "Certainly he would". Isaac asked, "Why?" Satan told him, "he claims that his Lord ordered him to do it." Isaac answered, "By God! If the Lord told my father to do that, he should certainly obey Him." [trans. Brinner 1987: 84-85]

²⁵⁰ As far as the association between Hazhder and Satan is concerned, there is some agreement between folk narratives registered among Bulgarian Muslims today and Islamic oral tradition in the Holy Land recorded almost a century ago by J. E. Hanauer. Thus, according to the account given to him by "one of the sheykhhs of the great Mosque at Hebron," Ibrahim El-Khalil, after escaping from Nimrud,

was commanded to go to Mecca and build the *Maram* or sanctuary there. On reaching his destination, he received instruction first to offer up his dear son Ismain (Ishmael) as a sacrifice upon Jebel 'Arafat, the mountain where Adam had recognized Hawa. Iblis, hoping to make trouble between the Patriarch and his friend, went to our Lady Hagar, on whom he placed peace, and implored her to dissuade her husband from the cruel deed. She snatched up a stone and hurled it at the tempter. The missile did him no harm, but the pillar against which the stone dashed is still shown to pilgrims. From this incident he has the name "Ash Sheytan er Rajim", meaning "Satan, the stoned One", or "he who is to be stoned" [Hanauer 1996: 27].

On the other hand, this tale and that of Mehmed Yusek both bear some relationship to midrashic texts. Thus, according to the story to be found in Pirque de Rabbi Eliezer, "after Satan found that he could not convince Abraham and Isaac to be unfaithful to God he went to Sarah" [Kunin 1995: 53]. In midrashic tradition, however, the fragment about the encounter between Satan and Sarah evolves differently. When told that her husband has killed their son, Sarah dies of grief. This detail, in turn, is seen as serving as "part of the logical structure in which the natural parents are progressively denied, leaving only the divine parent as the agent of the rebirth" [Kunin 1995: 53]. Yet this is, generally speaking, the logic inherent in any birth-rebirth mystery, and rites of passage in particular. The separation of the boy from the world of the mother is the first step in achieving his acceptance into the realm of men. In this, the temporal opposition acquires additional spatial dimensions. These, of course, require relocation, or in other words, the son leaves his mother's territory. So the boy undergoing the initiation ceremony experiences the act of leaving the house as the exclusion of his mother from his circle. In terms of the ritual, this step is seen as a further elimination and even denial of her function as parent. In terms of the narrative, she stays at home while her boy goes away; she is static, while her child and husband's state is dynamic. In the story of filial sacrifice, when the boy crosses the boundaries of the domestic world, the mother has to be detached from him; father and son are setting off to the forest to collect wood, while Hazhder stays at home.

However, the mother is still the first to encounter Sheytan. More than that, according to Mehmed Yusek, she is also the first to resist him, being the initial obstacle to his efforts to stop Ibrahim fulfilling her vow. It is also the last time Hazhder appears in the story.

²⁵¹ It should be noted that Mehmed Yusek's text emphasizes that the boy ought to be untied. That is why nowadays, the story goes, when Muslims give a Kurban offering, they are supposed to leave one of the ram's legs untied. Hence, the religious narrative provides justification for the ritual setting of the *Kurban-Bayram* feast. In contrast to these accounts, however, some other texts recorded from Bulgarian Muslims hold that the son-victim was bound (see texts Nos 16, 20, 26 and 28 in this connection); these have closer links with the Bible, showing that a plurality of versions existed in the Balkans.

²⁵² There is numerical symmetry between the description portraying Ibrahim's attempt to avoid fulfilling his vow (he has one and the same dream seventy times over) and the actual attempt to carry it out (the knife is passed seventy times over his son's throat). This detail functions as a prelude to the miracle which forms the climax of the story.

²⁵³ Cf. Knappert [1985: 79].

²⁵⁴ At the end of his story Mehmed Yusek (like most of the narrators rendering the Kurban-related legends) emphasises that the sacrifice of the ram sent from above to replace the son was the origin of the Islamic *Kurban-Bayram* ritual.

²⁵⁵ The number seven serves as a structuring device both in the narrative and the ritual, since those performing the *Kurban-Bayram* ritual should give some meat from the sacrificed animal to seven of their neighbors' households. At the same time, this celebration connects the history of every single family in storyteller's village with the family of Ibrahim the Prophet.

²⁵⁶ Cf. Sūrah 37: 102-3.

²⁵⁷ The proem of Marin Angelov's story declares that the memory of filial sacrifice is coming "from Muslim times"; the legend has been left to the present generation, whilst the actual celebration of *Kurban-Bayram* encapsulates the ethno-confessional identity of the community observing it.

²⁵⁸ In the Venets story, the prophet who is prepared to sacrifice his son is called Ismail, not Ibrahim. He is envisaged as the personification of a sacred genealogy and ancestor of the Islamic community. Along with the explanation of the origin of the *Koch-Bayram* feast as a sacred precedent established by him, the text contains one more significant detail. Apart from epitomizing the Muslims' ancestral roots, this character combines the image of the father (as presented in the Biblical and Qur'anic versions of the Abraham/Ibrahim saga) with the name of the son. As far as Slavic and Balkan oral tradition is concerned, this reversal of the characters' names is not unusual, and shows that folk convention has its own ways of interpreting Biblical or Qur'anic themes, often remembering types labelled by particular names rather than the actual names themselves.

²⁵⁹ The present story is held together as a narrative entity by blocks of direct speech inserted into self-contained units. As far as the verbal depiction of Allah's presence is concerned, there is only a voice from above in Marin Angelov's narrative. The first piece of direct speech comes immediately after the introduction when God declares: "You will have a boy!" It marks not only the father's first vision in this text, but also the Biblical and Qur'anic motif of the divine promise.

²⁶⁰ There then follows the second vision; in this prophetic dream Allah calls upon the father again, now speaking in the imperative mood: "You have to slaughter the boy!"

²⁶¹ For the third time God speaks, and this call from above functions as a test of faith for God's bosom friend. Then the father submits. Since Islam means "submission," the Muslim interpretation of the saga of filial

sacrifice, from the Bulgarian village of Venets, portrays him as the first among the men “who had submitted”, whilst the *Kurban-Bayram* ritual re-enacts what happened to him.

²⁶² The detail about picking crocuses again frames the forest as the proper locus for filial sacrifice. At the same time, the actual plant-name (in local Turkish dialect this flower is called “navruz”) evokes pre-Islamic concepts of the New Year (Nawruz, Navruz, Nayruz, Nau Roz) festivities observed in Zoroastrianism.

²⁶³ The narrator Marin Angelov emphasizes that the father takes a big knife and a rope with him to the forest, a detail which serves to introduce the most dramatic part of the scenario. In fact, it follows the canonical Biblical account of the saga of Abraham. This motif is further regarded as a crucial element in the justification of the ritual behaviour of the main participants in the *Kurban-Bayram* rites.

²⁶⁴ The climax of the drama is indicated by the next insertion of direct speech, the dialogue between slayer and victim; subsequently, the story is presented by the narrator as a third-person narrative, a silent drama about the divine test of the first among those “who submitted.” Allah’s appearance in Marin Angelov’s tale is heard rather than seen.

²⁶⁵ Cf. Knappert [1985: 79].

²⁶⁶ The informant uses the Arabic word Allah, and “Bog” (the Bulgarian/Slavonic word for God) interchangeably.

²⁶⁷ Later the storyteller corrected himself that Joseph’s father was in fact Jacob, not David.

²⁶⁸ Cf. Al-Tabarī’s *History of Prophets and Kings*, ff. 373-374 [trans Brinner 1987: 149-151].

²⁶⁹ See Al-Tabarī’s *History of Prophets and Kings*, fol. 375 [trans Brinner 1987: 151].

²⁷⁰ The motif of the speaking wild beast conversing with Yakub (Jacob) about the fate of Joseph (Yusuf) is also attested in some of the Muslim stories registered in other parts of the world. One such account is to be found in Al-Rabghūzī’s *Stories of the Prophets* (fol. 72), which follows a description of how Jacob’s son’s had claimed that Joseph was devoured by a wolf, leaving Jacob inconsolable:

Jacob wept; his sons said: “O father, are you going to kill yourself for Joseph’s sake? If you so wish, we will bring you the wolf that devoured Joseph. When you see it, your heart will find rest.” Jacob said: “Go and bring it.” They all set out. In the wilderness they came across a wolf and caught it. They tied its feet and neck, smeared blood on its jaws and dragged it before Jacob. “This is the wolf that ate Joseph”, they said. When Jacob saw the wolf’s jaws covered with blood, he sighed and fell unconscious. When he recovered his senses, he prayed, saying: “My God, grant this wolf speech so that we may talk together.” The words came down: “Oh Jacob, the request is from you; making the wolf speak comes from Me.” The prophet Jacob asked: “Oh wolf, for God’s sake speak the truth. How did you devour my Joseph?” Speech was granted to the wolf; it said: “*Oh messenger of God*, don’t you know that the flesh of prophets is illicit? I have never seen Joseph. I have not eaten for three days. I lost my cub, the light of my eyes. Because of sorrow over that I have not eaten for three days. While I was searching for my cub these liars caught me, smeared blood on my jaws and brought me before you. Oh Jacob, invoke God on my behalf! Perhaps God will give me back my cub due to the blessing of a prayer from you.” Jacob prayed; the wolf asked for permission to leave and departed. That very day the wolf found its cub. [Boeschoten, O’Kane and Vandamme: 1995: 180-182].

Another similar account is the Swahili *Epic of Yusuf*, the translation of which is offered by Knappert in his compendium of *Islamic Legends* [1985:85-104]. According to Knappert, the author of the *Epic of Yusuf* “may have been the well known poet and scribe Muhammad b. Abu Bakari Kijuma, of Lamu, who died probably in 1945. One MS is in possession of Professor Dammann in Pinneberg, Holstein, who kindly lent it to me for publication. The other MS is in the possession of Miss M. A. Byran” [Knappert 1985: 85-86]. Surely, the text

of the version of the Swahili *Epic of Yusuf* which was translated by Knappert stems from a much older tradition. According to this late Swahili version, however, the animal accused of killing Joseph is a jackal, not a wolf:

When they [Joseph's brothers] returned home, they began lamenting again as soon as they were within earshot of the homestead: "O, poor Yusuf!" But their father told them not to make such noise. "Bring me rather the jackal which killed him." They went and caught a jackal and brought it before Jacob.

Jacob addressed the jackal saying: "You, jackal, come near, is it true what I am told? Why did you eat my darling son Yusuf? You caused me great sorrow!" the Almighty then gave the jackal speech and the animal spoke: "O Prophet of God, far be it from me to eat the child of the apostle of the Lord! Moreover, I am a stranger here, I am an Egyptian jackal, I arrived here only today! [Knappert 1985: 90]

²⁷¹ This toponym sounds exotic and hence the place it denotes is imagined as a land far away; the storyteller is thus suggesting that the wolf had a long journey to make. The toponym could be derived from *Jinsān*, meaning two "sexes", i.e. the "island of men" and the "island of women", referring to a popular legend in Europe and the Islamic world [courtesy Harry Norris].

²⁷² In Bulgarian vernacular tradition (and in particular in customary law) there exists a special category of non-blood kinship, classified as 'spiritual siblinghood'; it is applied to some individuals if they, while infants, were breast-fed by the same woman (regardless of whether she was a mother of either of them or not). They are considered to be "milk-siblings", and extensive kinship regulations apply to them and their future descendants (e.g. prohibition of intermarriage between two lineages/clans, etc.)

²⁷³ Since he was a Peygamber.

²⁷⁴ For a visual representation of this theme in Islamic miniature art, see Fig. 7.

²⁷⁵ This occurs in Jewish folklore, e.g. if you spit maliciously on someone you acquire all his sins.

²⁷⁶ Turkish *hazreti meryem*, literally "the blessed Miriam".

²⁷⁷ In this legend, the image of (and indeed the folklore interpretation of Qur'ānic account about) the Prophet Abraham/Ibrahim intermingles with that of the Prophet Houd (see Sūrah 7:63-72, Sūrah 11:50-64, Sūrah 26:123-139, Sūrah 46:21), as well as with that of the Prophet Moses/Musa (see Sūrah 2:48-86, Sūrah 7:160, Sūrah 18: 62, Sūrah 19:52, Sūrah 20:36, Sūrah 28:2-30).

"Houd" is also the title of the eleventh Sūrah of the Kuran. This Sūrah reveals the story of the Prophet who goes to the people of Ad and is later rejected by them (very much like the Prophet in the present Bulgarian Muslim legend). Here follows the fragment from the Qur'ānic text [Sūrah 11:52-70] of which the present Bulgarian text is reminiscent:

And unto Ad *we sent* their brother Houd. He said, "O my people, worship God. You have no God beside Him. Ye only devise a lie. // O my people! I ask of you no recompense for this: my recompense is with Him only who hath made me. Will ye not then understand? // O my people! ask pardon of your Lord; then be turned unto Him: He will send down the heavens upon you with copious rains: // And with strength on strength will He increase you: only turn not back with deeds of evil." // They said, "O Houd, thou has not brought us proofs of *thy mission*: we will not abandon our gods at thy word, and we believe thee not. // We can only say that some of our gods have smitten thee with evil." Said he, "Now take I God to witness, and do ye also witness, that I am clear of your joining other gods // To God. Conspire then against me all of you, and delay me not. // For I trust in God, my Lord and yours. No single beast is there which he holdeth not by its forelock. Right, truly, is the way in which my Lord goeth. // But if ye turn back, I have already declared to you my message. And my Lord will put another people in your place, nor shall ye at all hurt Him; verily, my Lord keepeth watch over all things." // And when our doom came *to be inflicted*, we rescued Houd

and those who had like faith with Him, by our special mercy: we rescued them from the rigorous chastisement. // These men of Ad gainsaid the signs of their Lord, and rebelled against his messengers, and followed the bidding of every proud contumacious person. // Followed therefore were they in this world by a curse; and in the day of the Resurrection *it shall be said* to them, “What! Did not Ad disbelieve their Lord?” Was not Ad, the people of Houd, cast far away?

On the other hand, the story about the fate of the Prophet Houd among the people of Ad also resembles the story about the Prophet Saleh among the Themoud people:

And unto Themoud we sent their Brother Saleh: — “O my people! said he, worship; God: you have no other god than Him. He hath raised you up out of the earth, and hath give you to dwell therein. Ask pardon of him then, and be turned unto him; for thy Lord is nigh, ready to answer.” // They said, “O Saleh! our hopes were fixed on thee till now: forbiddest thou us to worship what our fathers worshipped? Truly we misdoubt the *faith* to which thou callest us, as suspicious.” // He said, “O my people! what think ye? If I have a revelation from my Lord to support me, and if He hath shewed his mercy on me, who could protect me from God if I rebel against him? Ye would only confer on me increase of ruin. // O my people! this is the she-Camel of God, and a sign unto you. Let her go at large and feed in God’s earth, and do her no harm, lest a speedy punishment overtake you.” // Yet they hamstrung her: then said he, “Yet three days more enjoy yourselves in your dwellings: this menace will not prove untrue.” // And when our sentence came to pass, we rescued Saleh and those who had a like faith with him, by our mercy, from ignominy on that day. Verily, thy Lord is the Strong, the Mighty! And a violent tempest overtook the wicked, and they were found in the morning prostrate in their dwellings, //As though they had never abode in them. What! Did not Themoud disbelieve his Lord? Was not Themoud utterly cast off?” [Sūrah 11: 65-71]

It is precisely in the text of the Sūrah which was entitled “Houd” [Sūrah 11: 73-78] where the angel professes the birth of Ibrahim’s son Isaac — a fact which further reinforces the contextual and subtextual links between the above mentioned prophets.

²⁷⁸ See also the account about the troublesome encounters between the righteous Prophet Hud and the idol-worshippers of Ad (who were subsequently severely punished by Allah) in Al-Tabarī’s *History of Prophets and Kings*, ff. 231-232 [trans. Brinner 1987: 231-232]; ff. 242-243 [ibid. 38-39].

²⁷⁹ According to Netton [1997: 61], “Masr” in colloquial Arabic refers to Cairo, but the same word also means “Egypt”, which is the case in the above text.

²⁸⁰ See also Al-Tabarī’s *History of Prophets and Kings*, fol. 253 [trans. Brinner 1987: 50], and in particular ff. 262-266 [ibid. 58-61]. For the interpretation of the motif of the catapult in haggadic literature (in relation to the interpretation of the legend of Abraham being thrown into the fiery furnace), see Ginzberg [1968(1): 200]. For the iconography of the catapult, see Figs. 5 and 6.

²⁸¹ The present folklore account from the village of Kornitsa shows certain similarities with some other folklore texts recorded among the Bulgarian Muslims. One such story was narrated by Hamid Imamski from the village of Trigrad, Smolyan region (the Rhodope mountains). The transcription of the text (in Bulgarian) is stored in the Archives of the Institute of Folklore (Bulgarian Academy of Sciences) under the following record number: АИФ VIII No 41, p. 18.

²⁸² At this point the storyteller abandons the narrative line highlighted by the character of Prophet Ibrahim and switches to a cluster of texts anchored by the character of Musa (Moses).

²⁸³ In most of Bulgarian folklore narratives concerned with the life of Musa, the Prophet is portrayed as a shepherd. Moreover he is considered to be the one who invented the craft of shepherding. This belief is attested in the text recorded by Lilyana Daskalova on 11.12. 1986 in the village of Stremtsi (Kürdzkali region), from the local Hoja (imam) Hristo Stanilov Hristov (born 1910): “Муса пейгамбер бил овчар. Отначало не бил овчар, ама създал овчарлъка, създал овчарския занаят”. (“Moses the Peygamber was a

shepherd. At the beginning he wasn't a shepherd, but he created the shepherding, he invented the craft of shepherding".) The transcription of the text (in Bulgarian) of the entire narrative is stored in the Archives of the Institute of Folklore (Bulgarian Academy of Sciences) under the following record number: АИФ VIII No 19 (IV), p. 318. See also the text recorded by Stoyanka Boyadzhieva on 2.11. 1984 in the village Sŭrnitsa, Velingrad region from the local storyteller Severin Samardziev (born 1925). The transcription of the text (in Bulgarian) of this narrative is stored in the Archives of the Institute of Folklore (Bulgarian Academy of Sciences) under the following record number: АИФ No 194 (IV), p. 359-360. See also Lozanova [2006: 19-40].

²⁸⁴ Here the storyteller uses a Bulgarian word “zmej” (“змей”) in order to denote the mythical being known elsewhere as “dragon”. The actual noun “змей” is gender-inclusive; it is masculine, and belongs to the indigenous demonological thesaurus of local folklore tradition. It is believed that the “змей” is both a zoomorphic and anthropomorphic creature, who has the body of a reptile, the limbs of a human being (or a wild animal) and the wings of a bird, thus combining in one the three strata of the Universe — the underworld, the earth and the realm of heavens. Indeed, his abode is in underground caves, but he can also reside on earth, or fly high in the clouds. Besides, this mythical winged man-lizard is believed to have a nature in which the four universal components — fire, earth, water and air — merge into one. He is the master of winds and storms, of lightning and thunder, as well as the supreme rain-keeper. This supernatural male being breathes flames and releases live coals and burning embers while flying in the sky, leading the clouds of heavenly waters towards the fields of those loved by him; at the same time, he often falls in love with the most beautiful women on earth, and is believed to be a phenomenal lover, able to make not only the land bear fruit, but also women bear children. Further on customs, beliefs and legends related to the “змей” mythical being, see Marinov [1981: 63-65, 112, 138, 210, 299-303, 739-740]. In Bulgarian epic tradition, however, the “змей” mythical being is often described as the ultimate antagonist to the main (male) hero, and as such is usually defeated by him. In the present legend, as we can see later, these two images of the “змей” character, that of the fire-bearer, and that of the defeated warrior, are brought together.

²⁸⁵ In the local dialect the word “lamya” (“ламя”) — which is considered to be a synonym of “zmej” (“змей”) — is of Greek origin. The actual noun “ламя” is gender-inclusive; it is feminine, and belongs to the demonological thesaurus of indigenous folklore tradition. The demon “ламя” is believed to be a carnivorous beast swallowing mercilessly not only domestic and wild animals, but also human beings. In Slavonic and Balkan ritual songs this image of the “lamya” (“ламя”) character is connected with the popular Christian cult of the martyred warrior Saint George, and in particular with the legend of his fight against the dragon (which in Bulgarian folklore texts is called either “ламя” or “змей”). In the above text, the character of the righteous Prophet (in the image of which the storyteller combines both Hūd and Ibrahim) is thus implicitly compared to that of Saint George. In the Christian Orthodox calendar, his feast day is celebrated on 6th May, the day when the ritual sacrifice of a lamb/ram Kurban is performed; in many parts of Bulgaria, as already stated, this ceremony is associated with the Biblical saga of Abraham.

²⁸⁶ In Muslim exegetical tradition there exists a cycle of commentaries related to the wondrous rod of the Prophet Mūsa (Moses) in which it was the divine insignia bestowed by Allah upon his Messengers as a mark of their mission as His chosen followers. It was believed that the rod was created in the Garden of Eden at the outset of the Creation itself, and was further passed down from one holy prophet to the next as the ultimate emblem of their genealogical link:

The wisemen believe that the rod was created at twilight and that it originated from the myrtle of Paradise. It was first given to Adam, who bequeathed it to Abel, his son. After Abel's death the rod was passed onto Seth; it then went from Seth to Idris [Enoch]; from Idris to Noah; from Noah to Hud; from Hud to Salah; from Salah to Abraham; from Abraham to Ishmael; from Ishmael to Isaac; and from Isaac to Jacob, who brought it down to Egypt and passed it on to Joseph. After Joseph's death, the rod was given to the Palace of the Pharaoh and Jethro, who is Shu'ayb, one of the Egyptian magicians, took the rod and planted it in his garden. Shu'ayb offered it as a gift to Moses but then regretted doing so. He asked Moses to return the precious gift to him but Moses declined. Shu'ayb pressed charges against him before the very first person to walk into his home. The judge, and angel of God in the form of a man, said: “Place the rod on the ground and whosoever is able to lift it up shall possess it.” And this they did. Shu'ayb struggled to lift the rod but was unable to do so;

when Moses, however, touched the rod with the tip of his finger, it leaped into his hand. Then Shu'ayb realized that it was the will of Allah, that Moses was his messenger, and that this shepherd's rod was intended for Moses from the first days of creation so that he could lead his flock, the nation of Israel.

Many were the attributes of the rod: As Moses wandered at night through the moonless desert, the rod illuminated the path before him like a bolt of lightning. When he was in need of water, the rod led him to a spring from which fresh water flowed. When Moses was hungry, he touched the rod to the ground and all the delicacies of the angels appeared before him. When he craved fruit, he placed the rod on the earth and immediately beautiful and succulent fruit blossomed forth. When Moses met an enemy and touched him with his rod, the man died in an instant and when the rod touched a mountain, within no time it exploded into fragments, clearing a path. When Moses wanted to cross one of the rivers, he just tapped the waters and they parted as he crossed over dry land. Honey flowed from one end of the rod and from the other end flowed milk. When Moses grew tired of his many wanderings, he mounted the rod and it brought him to his destination. Fragrances of many kinds seeped from the rod, and it guarded his flock from beasts of prey, snakes, and scorpions" [quoted after Brosh and Milstein 1991: 83].

On legends concerning the "miraculous rod of Mussa" ["вълшебната тояга на Муса"] in folklore tradition of Bulgarian Muslims, see Lozanova [2006: 29-32].

²⁸⁷ "Dzhebrail" ("Jebrail") is one of the local versions of the name of the angel *Jibrīl* or *Jibrail* (known in Jewish and Christian traditions as the archangel Gabriel). As previously mentioned (see the discussion above), he is considered to be the ultimate mediator between terrestrial and celestial worlds, between Allah and His Messengers; as such, he is believed to be the one who rescued the Prophet Abraham/Ibrahim from the fiery furnace, and later stopped his hand when he was about sacrifice his son. In Islamic tradition it is also maintained that *Jibrīl* or *Jibrail* was the one who lured Pharaoh's army into the Red Sea; by including the latter event into the plot of the above folklore legend, the narrator thus combined the accounts about various prophets — Hūd, Abraham (Ibrahim) and Musa (Moses) — into one storyline.

²⁸⁸ Since the noun "*melyake*" — which is loanword from Turkish (meaning 'angel') — ends in *e*, an ending which in Bulgarian indicates neuter, the storyteller uses also the neuter form of the definite article (-то). Thus the Turkish word "*melek*" is transformed into its Bulgarian counterpart "*melyaketo*".

²⁸⁹ This account (and in particular the narrative theme of the "wondrous crook of the Prophet"), is similar to the story narrated by Hamid Imamski from the village of Trigrad, Smolyan region (the Rhodope mountains); the transcription of the text (in Bulgarian) is stored in the Archives of the Institute of Folklore (Bulgarian Academy of Sciences) under the following record number: АИФ VIII No 41, p. 23.

For the iconography of the contest between the Prophet Mousa and the Dragon, see Fig. 8.

²⁹⁰ Here the storyteller uses the Slavonic/Bulgarian word 'Tsar' (a title denoting 'ruler'; equivalent of 'king', 'emperor').

²⁹¹ Compare the above folklore text from the village of Kornitsa to the Arab legend recorded (most probably in Palestine) by Joseph Meyouhas in 1928:

Now in the morning Pharaoh heard how the children of Israel had fled from Egypt, and he said: "Surely is the hand of Moussa, and his brother Aaron in this matter." And he was exceedingly angry, and he hastened and harnessed up his chariots and all his host, and his steeds he took with him, and they were as many as the sands of the sea-shore. And he pursued the children of Israel and reached them encamped by the Red Sea. And the children of Israel perceived them from afar, and were very afraid and cried out to Moussa and Aaron, saying, "Save us." And Moussa said to them: "Fear not. Stand firm and see Allah's salvation of us this day." And Moussa stretched forth his hand to the Sea and he cleaved it into twelve deep and broad paths according to the number of the tribes of the Beni Israel, and the waters were all walls to right and left, and they were very clear, and he ordered the tribes of the Beni Israel to pass, each tribe in its own pathway, and in going they gazed upon each other through the clear waters on each side; and Moussa and Aaron went after them. And Pharaoh

and his host saw and they said they also would do so as Moussa and the Beni Israel had done. And behold, when the horse of Pharaoh came to the sea shore it stood still suddenly in its course, for it feared to go further, and Pharaoh struck it with cruel blows, and urged it with his arms and legs, but it was useless, the horse would not move from its place.

Then Gabriel descended from heaven mounted upon a mighty mare, and galloped with her into the sea, and the horse of Pharaoh perceived and pressed after her in the manner of horses, and also all the steeds of Pharaoh and all his people followed him to a man.

And Allah said to Moussa: "Stretch forth thy hand upon the sea, and the waters will return upon Egypt, his chariots and riders." And Moussa put forth his hand and the waters returned and covered the chariots and the horsemen.

And Gabriel hastened to Pharaoh before he sank and presented before him the writing of the judgment Pharaoh had executed upon his slave to drown him, for he had rebelled against the mercies of his lord, and Pharaoh understood that his end had come, and he cried: "Indeed I have sinned. There is no God besides Allah, and Moussa is verily His messenger, and brother Aaron is His prophet and His spokesman!" [Meyouhas 1928: 115-116].

²⁹² The colloquial set phrase "the People of the Bible" plays a significant role in ethno-confessional thesaurus of Bulgarian-speaking Muslims; this is an indigenous idiom used by them to denote "the Other" (i.e. "non-Muslims", "unbelievers"). As such, it fixes popular Islamic axiology. Evidently, this local (Slavonic/Bulgarian) dialectal expression is coined as a vernacular counterpart of the Islamic theological term "the People of the Book" (Arabic *Ahl al-Kitâb*), or "the Followers of the Holy Books", which is conventionally applied to refer specifically to the non-Muslims (i.e. Jews and Christians as "those to whom the Scriptures have been given"); see in this respect Sūrah 9:29.

²⁹³ One Tashkent 'batman' equals 11 Russian 'pud'/'pood' (one Russian 'pud'/'pood' = 36 lb.).

²⁹⁴ Masr, namely Cairo, see Netton 1997: 61.











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