

Original-Forschungsarbeit

Petrus und Paulus in der muslimischen Tradition

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Zusammenfassung:

Sobald Muslime Kenntnisse über das Christentum erlangten, begannen sie, über dessen Lehren, Glaubensinhalte und religiöse Rituale zu schreiben und nachzudenken. Darüber hinaus setzten sich Muslime intensiv mit Jesus Christus, seinen Jüngern und Aposteln auseinander. Es scheint, dass muslimische Autoren ihr Wissen über das Christentum zunächst aus dem Koran und mündlichen Überlieferungen bezogen. Ab dem 9. Jahrhundert jedoch erhielten sie Zugang zu authentischen christlichen Quellen, darunter das Neue Testament. In diesen Jahrhunderten beteiligten sich sowohl Christen als auch Muslime an kontroversen und teilweise dialogischen Debatten. Solche direkten Kontakte förderten und vertieften das gegenseitige Verständnis. Die vorliegende Forschung konzentriert sich auf die muslimische Perspektive auf St. Petrus und St. Paulus – ersterer gilt als bevorzugter Jünger Jesu, letzterer als bekehrter Apostel. Wie in den folgenden Seiten gezeigt wird, kombinierten muslimische Autoren koranische und mündliche Sichtweisen mit einigen authentischen christlichen Quellen. Daher erscheint ihr Wissen über diese beiden Apostel mitunter widersprüchlich und inkonsequent. Muslime – insbesondere Schiiten – betrachteten St. Petrus als den wahren und legitimen Nachfolger Jesu. Dennoch verurteilten sie St. Paulus als jemanden, der die wahren Lehren Jesu Christi verfälscht habe.

Schlüsselwörter: St. Petrus und St. Paulus, muslimische Kommentatoren, Überlieferer, Sufis

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Abstract

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As soon as Muslims gained knowledge about Christianity, they began to write and think about its doctrines, beliefs and religious rituals. In addition, Muslims have considerably dealt with Jesus Christ, His disciples, and apostles. It seems, in the first place, Muslim writers achieved their knowledge of Christianity via Quran and oral traditions. However, from the third/ninth century onward, they could access Christian original sources, including the New Testament. And during those centuries, both Christians and Muslims took part in controversial and even dialogical debates. Such immediate contacts authenticated and improved mutual understanding. The ongoing research focuses on the Muslim perspective of St. Peter and St. Paul, the former was Jesus' favorite disciple and the latter was a converted apostle. As in the following pages, we will demonstrate that Muslim writers have combined Quranic and oral viewpoints with some Christian authentic sources. Therefore, sometimes their knowledge of the two above-mentioned apostles is paradoxical and self-contradictory. Muslims, especially Shiites, have regarded St. Peter as a true and authentic successor to Jesus. Nonetheless, they slammed St. Paul as one who distorted the true teachings of Jesus Christ.

Introduction

The way the followers of different religions view each other has always been a fascinating topic in religious studies. The subject of this article is also one of these issues. First, we will try to provide a brief historical account of the relationship between Christianity and Arabs, and then Christianity and Islam, to clarify the extent of early Muslims' knowledge of Christianity and Christian denominations. As will be pointed out, Muslims were mainly familiar with denominations of Christianity that had been condemned and rejected as heresies in the Christian world. Our goal in this research is to examine how classical Muslims viewed two central figures of Christianity; Peter and Paul. The works published today in the field of Christian-Muslim relations have not extensively addressed the status of these two apostles among Muslims, therefore, examining this topic can provide a new perspective for the reader. It should be noted that the timeframe of our research in this paper will primarily extend to the 5th/sixth century, and if necessary, we will also refer to the works of Muslim writers in the Middle Ages. Therefore, our intention here is not to discuss Peter and Paul in Christianity; rather, we will try to explain the understanding of these two main figures of Christianity by various Muslim classical writers.

Research Method

In religious studies, various methods exist, such as the sociology of religion, the psychology of religion, the philosophy of religion, and so on. These methods are usually summarized as the reductionist and phenomenological approaches. The reductionist approach seeks to reduce the religious phenomenon to a social and human one, but in the phenomenological view, the researcher tries to study religious phenomena as they are (Ryba, 2006, pp. 93-97). In the present writing, we will try to examine the view of the Quran and post-Quranic sources on the two great apostles of the Christian tradition, namely Peter the Apostle and Paul the Apostle, from a phenomenological perspective. Therefore, in the present research, we will refrain from any prejudice. For this reason, part of our work will be descriptive, but if necessary, we will analyze various opinions and reports regarding the two aforementioned apostles.

Literature Review

In recent years, many works have been written about the relationship between Christianity and Islam. These works usually examine theological issues such as the Trinity, Incarnation, and the divinity of Jesus between Christians and Muslims (e.g. Newman, 1993; Thomas, 2009; Thomas, 2008; Griffith, 2008; Abdi, 2019). However, the position of Peter and Paul in the relationship between Christianity and Islam has not received much attention. As a result, in this research, we intend to investigate the position of the two great apostles of Christianity in the ancient Islamic tradition to show what approach the Quran and post-Quranic sources have taken towards these two apostles. To achieve this goal, in addition to the Quran, we have analyzed the works and writings of Islamic commentators, hadith scholars, heresiologists, theologians, Sufis, and historians, both Shia and Sunni. Finally, we concluded that almost all classical Muslim writers had a negative view of Paul and considered him as a distorter of Christianity and the true teachings of Jesus Christ. In their view, Paul introduced the doctrine of the divinity of Jesus and antinomianism into Christianity. In contrast, Muslims have had a positive view of Peter, and especially Shia writers have considered him as the successor of Jesus. In the view of this group of Shias, Peter's position in Christian theology is similar to the position of Imam Ali in Shiism.

A Historical Glance

In the New Testament, there are some pieces of evidence that testify to Christian and Arab affinities. For example, in Mark, 3: 7-8; and Acts, 2: 11 there are references to Arabia and Arabs. And more vividly, in the letter to Galatians Paul the apostle says "Neither went I up to Jerusalem to them which were apostles before me; but I went into Arabia, and returned again unto Damascus"(1: 17): Due to missionary activities of the early Apostles, perhaps such reports can be indicative of Christian-Arab relations. In other words, maybe from the first decades, early Christians became aware of Arabs and their lifestyle. However, according to historical findings, the relations between Arabs and Christians began in the third century. Eusebius (260-339), the Church historian, cites a converted Christian, Pantaenus (Πάνταϊνος), as the first one who began to spread Christianity across the Arabian Peninsula (Eusebius, 1890, vol. 1, p.10; Trimmingham, 1979, p. 291). Sozomen, a *Roman*

lawyer and historian of the Christian Church (400-450), tells the story that in the fourth century Christians, especially the monks sought to spread Christianity among Ishmaelites (Arabs) (Sozomen, p. XXXVIII & XXXIV).

In addition, later Muslim writers have also provided more details about the presence of Christians in the Arabian Peninsula. For instance, it is reported that before the emergence of Islam over 46 Arab tribes had converted to Christianity (Shaykhū, 1989, pp. 54, 59-61, 66, 72, 111, 118; al-Azraqī, 1969, Vol. 1, p. 111). Furthermore, some influential figures such as the funders of *Hanīf* religion (Quranic monotheists), almost ten years before the emergence of Islam, had converted to Christianity (al-Iṣfahānī, 1995, Vol. 4, pp. 126, 132-133; ʿUthmān, 2005, Vol. 95, pp. 68-7; Sālim, 1971, pp. 482-487). As a result, perhaps Christianity entered the Arabian Peninsula in the third century, but the conversion of Arabs to Christianity on the large scale took place in the fifth century. In any case, prior to the emergence of Islam, Christianity was a dominant religion across the Arab world and Arabs were familiar with it. However, the main question runs as follows: what sort of Christianity was common among Arabs?

In the two centuries or so before the emergence of Islam, the Church had been split by differences over Christological formulae. As a result, those Christians who did not accept conciliar formulae had been condemned and gradually marginalized by mainstream Christianity. Finally, they left the Byzantine Empire and came to the Arabian Peninsula and the Persian Empire. These marginalized Christians generally included: the **Melkites** (Greek orthodox Christians who adhered to the Council of Chalcedon), the **Nestorians**, and the **Jacobites** (who wrote and spoke in Aramaic and Syriac and did not accept the Council of Chalcedon) (for more details see: al-Azraqī, 1969, Vol. 1, p. 111; Shahid, 2006, pp. 19-21; Hajebrahimi, und Abdi, 2017, Vol. 3, pp. 50-60; Francoise, 2008, Vol. 5, p. 377). And after the rise of Islam, these three sects had more religious, cultural and social relations with Muslims than other sects did. As a result, Muslims have generally referred to the doctrines of Melkites, Nestorians, and Jacobites. Therefore, as we will show, some Muslim authors have associated Paul the apostle with Melkites and some others with Nestorians and Jacobites. Let us explain the status of the two influential apostles among Muslim writers.

Three Apostles in the Quran

It is worth noting that both St. Peter and St. Paul are mentioned under different epithets among Muslim writers. For example, *Sham'ūn* (Simon/Peter), *Sham'ūn al-Ṣafā* (Ibn Idrīs, 1990, vol. 1, p. 418; Ibn Ṭāwūs, N.D, vol. 2, p. 131), *Sham'ūn b. Hammūn al-Safā*, *Sham'ūn b. Yūḥannā* and *Fetrūs*, and *Sam'a'n* are Peter's well known titles. And *Būlūs* and *fūlos* are Paul's common epithets (Shaykh Ṣadūq, 1997, p. 488; al-Majlisī, 1984, vol. 14, p. 346; vol. 30, p. 76; al-Ṭabarī, N.D, vol. 1, p. 603; al-Mas'ūdī, 1984, vol. 1, p. 343; al-Shahrastānī, 1982, vol. 1, p. 221).

Although there are no direct references to the names of St. Peter and St. Paul in the Quran, Muslim commentators (both Sunnites and Shiites) have drawn some conclusions based on the Quran, 36: 13-14¹ about both of them. According to the Quranic verses, two apostles came to the people of a given township (*Aṣḥāb al-Qaryā*)² but the inhabitants rejected them. Eventually, the third messenger came to them. By interpreting these verses, the commentators have argued that the two apostles or messengers were Simon and John, or John and Jonah, or *Bārūs* and *Mārūs* and the like. For commentators, these apostles were sent to Antioch (*Antākiyya*) but they were rejected by its inhabitants. And some Sunni commentators regarded the third messenger in the above-mentioned verses as St. Peter. Quranic commentators claimed that as soon as the two apostles were sent to do their missionary activities, they were arrested by a king. And *Sham'ūn al-Safā* (St. Peter) as the head of the disciples and Jesus' deputy travelled to release them. It is worth noting that some commentators say the three messengers performed miracles and were even able to heal diseases (al-Ṭabrisī, 1995, Vol. 8, 261-263; Fayḍ Kāshānī, 2000, Vol. 2, p. 1034, Vol. 4, p. 347). Shiite commentators have also understood the verses in the same manner, but at the same time, they have explained the state of St. Peter as Jesus' successor in a more detailed context (al-Ḥuwayzī, 1963, Vol. 1, p. 72).

1. وَاضْرِبْ لَهُمْ مَثَلًا أَصْحَابَ الْقَرْيَةِ إِذْ جَاءَهَا الْمُرْسَلُونَ. إِذْ أَرْسَلْنَا إِلَيْهِمُ اثْنَيْنِ فَكَذَّبُوهُمَا فَعَزَّزْنَا بِثَالِثٍ فَقَالُوا إِنَّا إِلَهُكُم مُّرْسَلُونَ

And set forth unto them a parable, the people of a township, when message-bearers came unto them. Lo! We sent unto them two [apostles] and they rejected both them, and we strengthened [the two] with a third; and thereupon they said: Behold, we have been sent unto you [by God] (Q, 36: 13-14).

² أَصْحَابَ الْقَرْيَةِ

As we have earlier mentioned, in the Quran there is a reference to three apostles. As a result both Shiite and Sunnite commentators generally concentrated on the above-mentioned verses and regarded St. Paul as one of the three messengers who, as Quran mentions, were rejected by *Aṣḥāb al-Qaryya*. In addition, the commentators have also attached additional traditions to the verses and concluded that St. John, Paul, and Peter were the three messengers mentioned in the Quran. Nevertheless, some others have omitted St. Paul and cited the names such as *Sādeq*, *Saduq* and *Salūm* instead of him (al-Ṭabrisī, 1995, Vol. 8, p. 363; al-Suyūṭī, 1996, Vol. 2, p. 392; al-Ālūsī, 1997, Vol. 21, p. 33; al-Jawzī, 1987, Vol. 7, p. 10). They disagreed whether the three messengers were prophets or merely the apostles of Jesus. A few commentators considered them as God's prophets and some others as merely apostles and regarded *Aṣḥāb al-Qaryya* as the inhabitants of Antioch (al-Ālūsī, 1997, Vol. 21, p. 330; al-Jawzī, 1987, Vol. 7, p. 10). It seems that the commentators, drawing on the New Testament, had gained some knowledge of St. Paul and his biography, at the same time, have added some details to their own reports. For them, St. Paul at first was a Jew who began to persecute the Christians. For instance, al-Samarqandī mentions St. Paul (Q, 5: 14)¹ as one who killed the majority of Jesus' followers and gave rise to the emergence of disagreements and conflicts among Jews and Christians. al-Samarqandī, on the basis of Quran, 5: 14², declares that St. Paul blinded himself, went to the Christians and repented and reported that he had seen Jesus in a dream. St. Paul falsely informed them that he had become blind in a dream and considered this event as a punishment by God, for he had persecuted many Christians. While interpreting the afore-mentioned verse, al-Samarqandī views Paul as the main cause of enmity and dissent among Christians (al-Samarqandī, N.D, Vol. 1, p. 401). Other commentators have also mentioned the same stories about St. Paul, and even added some details such as claiming that Paul committed suicide (Abū al-Futūḥ Rāzī, 1988, Vol. 9, p. 221). To summarize the opinions of such commentators, we can conclude that all of them considered St. Paul as one who distorted true Christianity. And to achieve their favorite results, the commentators have also added some fictional details to the story of St. Paul, none of which can be found in the New Testament.

1... فَأَغْرَيْنَا بَيْنَهُمُ الْعَدَاوَةَ وَالْبَغْضَاءَ... (We stirred among them enmity and hatred)
2... فَأَغْرَيْنَا بَيْنَهُمُ الْعَدَاوَةَ وَالْبَغْضَاءَ (We stirred among them enmity and hatred)

Quranic Exegetics and Paul the Apostle

As earlier mentioned, all Muslim commentators viewed St. Paul as a Jew who distorted the true teachings of Jesus. To authenticate their polemical claims, Muslim commentators have used Quranic verses as well. For instance, the Quran tells about "a party of disbelievers" (وَكَفَرَتْ طَائِفَةٌ) who denied the prophecy of Jesus, son of Mary (61: 14)¹. Astonishingly, for some Muslim Commentators, the phrase "a party of disbelievers" here refers to St. Paul and his associates (Fīrūzābādī, *N.D*, p. 456). The commentators believe St. Paul led astray Nestorius in Jerusalem and Jacob in Rome and offered his teachings to them. St. Paul taught Nestour̄ (Nestorius) that God consisted of three persons: God the father, Mary the Virgin and Jesus Christ. And taught the Romans that God was neither human nor possessed human body, rather He was the son of God. And through Jacob he led another person, Melkā, astray, causing him to believe that Jesus was an eternal and immortal God (Abū al-Futūḥ Rāzī, 1988, Vol. 9, p. 221; Kāshānī, 1954, Vol. 4, p. 257). Some commentators based on the Quran (2: 145)² have concluded that Christians at first prayed towards Jerusalem like their predecessors, i.e., the Jews, but later on, St. Paul deceived them and changed their prayer orientation toward the sun. St. Paul, to justify his deviation, referred to a dream in which Jesus asked him to change the orientation from Jerusalem towards the sun (al-Samarqandī, *N.D*, Vol. 1, p. 401; Āmulī, *N.D*, Vol. 1, p. 211).

Some Muslims have attributed the idea of delegation to Paul, allegedly he meant the hands of God are closed, i.e. He delegated His authority to humans. Furthermore, Muslims viewed St. Paul as an antinomianism, for he distorted the Jewish law (Āmulī, 1991, vol. 14, p. 536). In another verse, the Quran (57: 27) rejects Christian monasticism as a heretical invention ("وَرَهْبَانِيَّةً ابْتَدَعُوهَا") and some commentators have considered the verse as a clear reference to St. Paul. In other words, they interpreted the verse to demonstrate that Paul was one

¹ ... فَأَمَنَتْ طَائِفَةٌ مِنْ بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ وَكَفَرَتْ طَائِفَةٌ ... (A party of the Children of Israel believed, and a party disbelieved)

² وَلَكِنْ أَتَيْتَ الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْكِتَابَ بِكُلِّ آيَةٍ مَا تَبِعُوا قِبْلَتَكَ وَمَا أَنْتَ بِتَابِعٍ قِبْلَتَهُمْ وَمَا بَعْضُهُمْ بِتَابِعٍ قِبْلَةَ بَعْضٍ وَلَكِنْ اتَّبَعَ أَهْوَاءَهُمْ مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا جَاءَكَ مِنَ الْعِلْمِ إِنَّكَ إِذْ لَنْ الظَّالِمِينَ

But even if you brought those to whom the Book had been given every proof, they would not accept your direction, nor would you accept theirs; nor would any of them accept the direction of the other. If after all the knowledge you have been given you yield to their desires, then you will surely be among the harm doers.

who built the monasteries, and therefore, he established new heresy and paved the way for the emergence of monasticism and monastics. By realizing the heresy of Paul, Christian monastics tried to save themselves from his distortions and corruptions (Fīrūzābādī, *N.D.*, p. 459).

Muslim Transmitters

It is worth noting St. Peter has got more attention than St. Paul among Shiite *Hadith* works. Thus Shiite transmitters have generally viewed St. Peter as Jesus' successor. From their viewpoint, after Jesus ascension, Peter became his deputy, and immediately he received the divine wisdom from his master (Jesus). The transmitters have quoted through Ali, Shiite first Imam, that he had seen St. Peter in an apocalyptic vision. And when Ali's associates asked him about St. Peter, he told them: "he was one of the earliest and most beloved disciples of 'Īsā (Jesus) who remained faithful to 'Īsā's doctrines and became his successor and 'Īsā, in turn, entrusted his wisdom and divine Book to St. Peter" (al-Majlisī, 1984, Vol. 15, p. 236, vol. 21, p. 291, vol. 6, p. 239; Baḥrānī, *N.D.*, vol. 1, pp. 499-500; Shaykh Mufīd, 1994, pp. 105-106; Ibn Shahrāshūb, 1997, vol. 2, p. 84). Perhaps, some Muslims have been influenced by such traditions and drawn to the conclusion that the Holy Books of 'Īsā were written by St. Peter with the permission of Jesus himself (Anṣārī, 1996, pp. 36ff.). It seems, Shiite Muslims have particularly concentrated on St. Peter's state and credited him with divine wisdom and knowledge to justify his position as Jesus' successor (Ibn Idrīs, 1990, vol. 1, p. 418; al-Ṣaffār, 1990, p. 119; Ibn Ṭāwūs, *N.D.*, Vol. 3, p. 131; Shaykh Ṣadūq, *N.D.*, Vol. 1, p. 251). In another tradition, we read each prophet from Muhammad to 'Īsā had two successors who served as deputies both during the prophet's lifetime and after his death. For instance, during Moses' lifetime Aron served as his successor and as soon as Moses died Joshua became his deputy. And in the similar way, a man known as *Kalīb ben Iofana* acted as 'Īsā's successor during his lifetime. However, after 'Īsā's ascension, St. Peter became his deputy. Nevertheless, Ali was Muhammad's successor both prior to and after the prophet's death (al-Majlisī, 1984, Vol. 25, p. 86). In another tradition, we are told that Jesus informed his disciples that after his ascension his associates will be divided into three sects but only those who followed St. Peter will be saved (al-Majlisī, 1984, Vol. 14, p. 337).

In such writings some miraculous works are attributed to St. Peter: he could cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, and dry land through a prayer (al-Majlisī, 1984, Vol. 14, p. 253). Some Shiite Muslims compared the martyrdom of St. Peter to that of Ali i.e., at the night of their martyrdom under every stone there was blood. Additionally, as St. Peter died and lost his life to safeguard 'Īsā's true religion, likewise Ali was martyred because of Muhammad's true religion (Ibn Qūlawaih, 1997, pp. 152-158, 76).

The way both Sunnite and Shiite Muslims dealt with St. Paul is different. Muslims-whether Sunnis or Shiites- condemned St. Paul because of what they viewed as his new "inventions". For them St. Paul invented new doctrines including the doctrine of the Trinity and Sonhood, and as a result, at the end of time he will be punished alongside other inventors such as Nimrod (a biblical figure), Pharaoh and Nestorius (Ibn Qūlawaih, 1997, pp. 540-541; Baḥrānī N.D, Vol. 6, p. 142; Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal, 1999, Vol. 2, p. 179; al-'Asqalānī, N.D, Vol. 11, p. 365).

Muslim heresiologies and Mutakallemīn

Contrary to Hadith works, Muslim heresiologies have not paid much attention to St. Peter. By quoting Peter's statement that Jesus was the Son of God, al-Shahrastānī regards him as Jesus' deputy. It is important to note that al-Shahrastānī understands the "Son of God" in allegorical terms, in other words, for him Jesus was the "Son" not in the literal sense of the word but in metaphorical terms (al-Shahrastānī, 1982, Vol. 1, p. 222). Even **Ismā'īliyyah**, -a Shiite sect- considered St. Peter as Jesus' successor; for them, he was responsible for revealing the inner aspect of Law (Shari'a). But Muslim writers have mistreated St. Paul, so that al-Shahrastānī regarded him as one who distorted Christianity. According to him, St. Paul mixed Christianity with philosophical reflections and thus distorted its true message (al-Shahrastānī, 1982, Vol. 1, p. 221).

Sunni theologians have also described St. Paul as one who abrogated Jewish law, and therefore, gave rise to the corruption of Christianity. According to Fakhr al-Rāzī, before his ascension, Jesus ordered his associates to observe Torah and its commandments. However, his followers violated the Torah and laid emphasis on the faith alone, as a result, they dismissed

rituals and ceremonies. For such Christians, placing faith in Jesus and his crucifixion was sufficient to achieve salvation. Al-Rāzī refers to Paul's epistle in which justification by faith has been clearly mentioned: Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. Through him we have also obtained access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and we rejoice in hope of the glory of God (Romans, 5: 1-2).

Ibn Qayyem al-Jawzi, another Sunni theologian, remarked the fact that St. Paul attributed to Jesus both divine and human substances and separated between his two natures. For al-Jawzī, prior to St. Paul the associates of Jesus were viewing him as God's servant, His messenger and His creature. But Paul introduced the doctrine that Jesus possessed two natures, meaning, on the one hand he was a human being because he was born from Miriam, and on the other hand, he was the Son of God because he was associated with God (al-Jawzī, 1987, p. 203). Fakhr al-Razi has referred to Paul's epistles (e.g. 1 Co, 7: 20) to show that he dismissed the commandments of Torah and to clarify the fact that Paul had tolerated the heresies. In addition, for Muslim apologists Paul has also violated the Sabbath and replaced it with Easter (Col, 2: 16-17).

Sufi Lore

Sufi writers have also considered St. Peter as Jesus' successor and as an Ideal Man (*Insāne Kāmel*) and compared him to other saints who miraculously could interfere in the cosmos. As the prophet Muhammad could split the moon, St. Peter could likewise slice the sun. As we can see, Sufi master Āmulī highlights Peter's status as an Ideal man and attributes to him some miracles. In addition, for some Sufis, out of various Christian sects, only Peter's associates will be saved (al-Ghazālī, *N.D*, Vol. 11, p. 8). Sufi masters have also condemned St. Paul for what they viewed as his distortions, thus they did not highlight his spiritual status¹. In his celebrated book, *Masnavi w Ma'nawi*, al-Rūmī quotes an interesting story about St. Paul (Balkhī, 2004, pp. 324-327). He recounts an anecdote about a tyrant king and his cunning minister who began to persecute the Christians. At king's command, the ears and nose of

the minister were cut off, and he went among the Christians and introduced himself as Jesus' deputy. The cunning minister- who for al-Rūmi was St. Paul- preached his true faith in Christ, and recommended the Christians that they should tie a special belt (*Zūnnar*). By doing so, the Christians accepted him as Jesus' deputy and acted according to his recommendations. For al-Rūmi the minister was, in fact, one eyed Antichrist who at the end of time will come and fight against the true religion.

For some commentators the roots of the above-mentioned story lie in the Muslim interpretations, and above all in the pre-Islamic stories i.e. Sassanid culture (Forūzānfar, 1983, pp. 6-7). It is important to note that even prior to the Sassanid Empire, during the Achaemenes era, such story was current among people. As Herodotus described in his writings, the efforts of Darius the great to open the gates of Babylonia ended in failure. However, one of his associates i.e. Zupirous voluntarily cut his ears and nose and fled towards the enemy. The injured Zupirous pretended as he was fleeing from his king, but in fact he was spying on the enemy. Finally, due to his cunning strategy, Darius the great succeeded in defeating Babylonia and to opening its gates (Tafazzoli, 1997, p. 31). We quoted this story to show that al-Rūmi described St. Paul as a cunning and decisive person, but the roots of his story lie in the pre-Islamic oral traditions.

Muslim Historians

Muslim historians have viewed St. Peter as Jesus' successor, and added that after Jesus' ascension he began to preach his lord's teachings and sent various missionaries to promote Christianity in foreign countries (c.f. Acts, 9) and was crucified under Roman emperor Nero. In addition, they have credited him with miraculous acts such as healing the sick, giving life to dead and so on (al-Ṭabarī, *N.D*, Vol. 1, p. 606; al-Mas'ūdī, 1984, Vol. 1, pp. 80, 342). However, for them, the fact that after Jesus' ascension Christianity became a sectarian religion and some denominations such as Arians and Maronites deviated from mainstream Christianity was because of Paul's anti-legal attitudes (al-Mas'ūdī, *N.D*, p. 130; al-Wāqidi, *N.D*, Vol. 2, p. 48).

Conclusion

As earlier mentioned, the names of Peter and Paul are not mentioned in the Quran, but commentators have referred to them by citing various stories and traditions. Almost all Muslim writers have accepted St. Peter as Jesus' deputy, but rejected St. Paul, viewing him as one who corrupted the true Christianity. Muslims especially Sufis, have regarded Peter as faithful to God's commandments and compared him to Sufi Ideal Man. Nevertheless, they viewed Paul as an antinomian who, because of his anti-legal attitudes, gave rise to the corruption of Christianity. Perhaps such an approach to two Christian foundational personalities caused Muslims to view them differently. Finally, we can say Muslims have combined some Biblical stories with oral traditions and, on the basis of that juxtaposition, addressed Peter and Paul accordingly. From a theological viewpoint, one can say, for Muslims Paul was the first apostle who declared Jesus as a divine being and regarded him as the son of God and the image of God, and viewed the faith as the only means of salvation, and introduced a kind of antinomianism into true Christianity. And according to Muslim writers, contrary to Paul, Peter was Jesus' faithful disciple, who did not regard his Master as a divine being, but for Peter, Jesus was merely the messenger of God, who through the grace of God performed some miracles. Among Muslim writers, the focus has been more on Peter's succession, perhaps to show that just as Peter succeeded Jesus, Ali also succeeded the Prophet of Islam. However, a comparison of Peter's character in Christianity with Ali's in Shi'ism requires a separate study.

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