

# The Children of Israel

## 1. Their Food

The Prophet (S) said, “Verily, Allah sent down a spread to Jesus ('a) and blessed him with a flat loaf of bread and fishes, so four thousand seven hundred people ate of it and were sated.”<sup>1</sup>

The Messenger of Allah (S) said, “O servants of Allah! Verily, when the people of Jesus asked him to have Allah bring down a spread from heaven, Allah said,

***I will send it down to you, then whoever of you disbelieves after that, I will punish as I will not punish any other being. (5: 115)***

Then He sent it down to them, and all of them who disbelieved after that, Allah transformed into a pig, monkey, bear, cat, or in the form of some birds, animals of the land or sea. So, they were transformed into four hundred forms.”<sup>2</sup>

It is reported that Abu al-Hasan said, “Verily, the swine among the people of Jesus ('a) asked for a table spread to come down. Then they did not believe. So, Allah transformed them into swine.”<sup>3</sup>

## 2. Their Denial

1. 'Anas ibn Malik said, “The Apostle of Allah (S) said, ‘Verily the children of Israel split into seventy-one sects after Jesus. Seventy sects perished and one sect was saved. My community will split into seventy-two sects. Seventy-one sects will perish and one of them will be saved.’ They said, ‘O Apostle of Allah! What is that sect?’ He said, ‘The community, the community, the community.’”<sup>4</sup>

2 Muhammad ibn Ja‘far said, “Abu ‘Abd Allah ('a) narrated to us from his fathers, peace be with them, ‘I heard from ‘Ali that he said to the chief of the Jews, ‘How many sects did you split into?’ He said, ‘So and so many sects.’ ‘Ali ('a) said, ‘You lie.’

Then he faced the people and said, ‘By Allah! If the seat [of government] is returned to me, I will judge

among the people of the Torah by their Torah, among the people of the Gospel by their Gospel and between the people of the Qur'an by their Qur'an.

The Jews split into seventy-one sects, seventy of them will be in the Fire. One of them will be saved and will be in heaven and it is the sect that followed Yusha' ibn Nun, the executor of Moses. The Christians split into seventy-two sects. Seventy-one of them will be in the Fire and one of them will be in heaven, and it is the sect that followed Simon, the executor of Jesus.

And this community will split into seventy-three sects. Seventy-two of them will be in the Fire. One of them will be in heaven, and it is the sect that follows the executor of Muhammad.'

Then he beat his breast with his hand and said, 'Thirteen sects, among the seventy-three sects, will accept my kindness and love, but one of them will be in heaven. It is the middle rite, and the twelve sects will be in the Fire.'<sup>5</sup>

3. Imam 'Ali ('a) said, "O Kumay! Neither the Christians denied Allah, the Exalted, nor the Jews, and they did not refuse Moses or Jesus, but they increased, decreased, perverted and misled. So they were cursed and hated, and did not repent or accept.

O Kumay! Our father Adam ('a) was born neither as a Jew nor a Christian, and he was not His son, but he was *hanif* (upright) and Muslim. He did not do something that was obligatory, so what happened, until Allah accepted a sacrifice for him."<sup>6</sup>

4. Mughayrah narrated from Abu 'Abd Allah, and he from his father, and he from his grandfather, peace be with them, that he said, "The transformed among the children of Adam are thirteen kinds: monkey, swine and... As for the monkeys, they were a group that came down to a town near the beach of the sea, acted unlawfully on Saturday and fished. So Allah, the Exalted, transformed them into monkeys.

As for the swine, they were a group among the children of Israel that Jesus the son of Mary ('a) cursed. So Allah, the Exalted, transformed them into swine."<sup>7</sup>

5. It is reported that Abu 'Abd Allah ('a) said, "Moses told his people something that they could not bear, so they exiled him to Egypt. They fought with Moses, and he with them, and he killed them. Jesus told his people something that they could not bear, so they exiled him to Takrit. They fought with Jesus, and he with them, and he killed them. This is the saying of Allah, the mighty and magnificent,

***So a party of the children of Israel believed and another party disbelieved; then We aided those who believed against their enemy, and they triumphed over them. (61: 14).<sup>8</sup>***

6 It is reported that when this verse descended,

***And there is not one of the followers of the Book but most certainly believes in this before his death, and on the day of resurrection he (Jesus) shall be a witness against them. (4: 159),***

Abu ‘Abd Allah Al-Sadiq (‘a) said, “There are none who remain in rejection of what has descended about Jesus the son of Mary (‘a) but disbelievers.”<sup>9</sup>

7. Ja‘far ibn Muhammad reported from his father (‘a) that the Apostle of Allah (S) said, “O ‘Ali! There is a likeness between Jesus the son of Mary and you. Allah [the Exalted] said,

***And there is not one of the followers of the Book but most certainly believes in this before his death, and on the day of resurrection he (Jesus) shall be a witness against them. (4: 159).***

O, ‘Ali! Nobody who slanders Jesus dies unless he believes in him before his death and tells the truth about him, when it is no use for him at all. And you are like him. Your enemy does not die until he sees you near his death. When he sees you, you will be angry and sad for him. Then he will confess the truth about you, will say the truth about you and will confess your *walayah*,<sup>10</sup> while it is no use for him at all.”<sup>11</sup>

8. Al-Imam al-’Askari (‘a) said, “Allah, the Exalted, blamed the Jews and faulted their disbelieving in Muhammad... He said,

***Evil is that for which they have sold their souls—that they should deny what Allah has revealed, and there is a disgraceful punishment for the unbelievers, so they have made themselves deserving of wrath upon wrath. (2:90)***

That is, they came back while the wrath of Allah was upon them after another wrath. The first wrath, when they falsified Jesus the son of Mary and the second, when they falsified Muhammad...”<sup>12</sup>

### **3. Their Extremism**

1. ‘Ali (‘a) said, “Verily Jesus the son of Mary is a servant and a creature. They took him as a Lord,

***but they forgot a portion of what they were reminded of*** (5: 14).<sup>13</sup>

2. Some of our companions have reported that Ja‘far ibn Waqid and some of the companions of Abu al-Khattab were mentioned, and someone that he had often seen ibn Waqid, who said,

***“He it is who is God in the heavens and the earth” (43:84),***

He is the Imam.” Abu ‘Abd Allah (‘a) said, “No, by Allah! May I never be under one roof with him. They are worse than the Jews, the Christians, the Magians, and the pagans! By Allah! Their belittling Allah never belittles His greatness a bit. What the Jews said about him was on Ezra’s mind, and for this his name was erased from prophethood.

By Allah! If Jesus had confessed to what the Christians said about him, Allah would have left deafness to him until the Resurrection Day. By Allah! If I were to confess to what the people of Kufa say about me,

the earth would swallow me. I am nothing but a servant, a slave, who has no power to harm or benefit.”<sup>14</sup>

3. It is reported that ‘Ali (‘a) said, “The Apostle of Allah said, ‘The example of you in my community is as the example of Christ Jesus the son of Mary. His people split into three sects: a sect of believers, and they were the disciples, a sect of his enemies, and they were the Jews, and a sect that exaggerated about him, and they left the faith.

And verily, my community will split into three sects on account of you. One sect is your Shi‘ah, and they are the believers; one sect is your enemy, they are the doubters; and one sect are those who exaggerate about you, and they are the deniers. O ‘Ali! You are in heaven, and your Shi‘ah, and the lovers of your Shi‘ah. And your enemy and the exaggerator are in the fire.”<sup>15</sup>

4. It is reported that Hasan ibn al-Juhm said, “One day, I was present at a session with Ma’mun, and ‘Ali ibn Musa Al-Ridha’ (‘a) was beside him. Jurists and theologians of various sects were gathered, and some of them questioned him (‘a)...

Ma’mun said to him, ‘O Abu al-Hasan! I have heard that there is a group that exaggerates and goes beyond the bounds about you.’ Al-Ridha’ (‘a) said to him, ‘My father, Musa ibn Ja‘far reported from his father Ja‘far ibn Muhammad, from his father Muhammad ibn ‘Ali, from his father, ‘Ali ibn al-Husayn, from his father, al-Husayn ibn ‘Ali, from his father, ‘Ali ibn Abu Talib, that the Apostle of Allah said, “Do not exalt me above what is my right, Allah, the blessed and exalted, took me as a servant before He took me as a prophet. Allah, the blessed and exalted, says,

***It is not for a man that Allah should give him the Book and Judgment and apostleship and yet he should say to people, “Be worshippers of me besides God;” but rather, “Be lordly that you teach the Book and what you read” And nor would he enjoin you that your should take the Angels and the Apostles for lords. What! Would he enjoin you with disbelief after you submitted?. (3:79–80)***

And ‘Ali (‘a) said, “Two will be destroyed because of me, although it is not my fault: The exorbitant lovers and the extreme haters.” We absolve ourselves from those who exaggerate about us, so that they exalt us above what is our position, just as Jesus the son of Mary absolved himself from the Christians. Allah, the mighty and magnificent, said,

***And when Allah will say, ‘O Jesus son of Mary! Did you say to men, “Take me and my mother for two gods besides Allah?” He will say, “Glory be to You! It did not befit me that I should say what I had no right to say; if I had said it, You would indeed have known it; You know what is in my soul, and I do not know what is in your soul. Surely, You are the great Knower of the occult./ I did not say to them aught save what You did enjoin me with: to serve Allah, my Lord and your Lord, and I was a witness of them so long as I was among them, but when You caused me to die, You were the watcher over them, and You are the witness of all things. (5: 116–117).***

And He, the mighty and magnificent, said,

***The Messiah does by no means disdain that he should be a servant of Allah, nor do the angels who are near to Him, and whoever disdains His service and is proud, He will gather them all together to Himself. (4: 172).***

And He, the mighty and magnificent, said,

***The Messiah, son of Mary, is only an apostle; apostles before him have indeed passed away; and his mother was a truthful woman. They both used to eat food. See how We make the communications clear to them, then behold, how they are turned away. (5:75).***

The meaning of this is that these two persons defecated, so whoever claims that the prophets were Lords, or who claims that the Imams are Lords or prophets, or who claims that those who are not Imams are Imams, we absolve ourselves from them in this world and in the other world....”[16](#)

5. The Commander of the Faithful ('a) said, “O Allah! I absolve myself of the exaggerators, just as Jesus the son of Mary absolved himself from the Christians. O Allah! Abandon them forever and do not help any of them.”[17](#)

6. It is reported that [Imam] ‘Ali ('a) said, “The Messenger of Allah called me and said, ‘O ‘Ali! Verily, there is a similarity between you and Jesus the son of Mary. The Christians love him so much that they put him in a position that was not for him; and the Jews hate him so much that they even slandered his mother.’

And [Imam] ‘Ali ('a) said, ‘Two [groups of] men will be ruined because of me, he who goes to extremes in love of me for what I do not have and he who hates me with a hatred that makes him slander me.’[18](#)

7. It is reported that Abu Basir said, “One day the Apostle of Allah (S) was sitting among us when the Commander of the Faithful came. The Apostle of Allah (S) said to him, ‘Indeed, you are similar to Jesus the son of Mary.

If it were not the case that some groups from my community would say about you what the Christians have said about Jesus the son of Mary, I would speak about you in a way that you would not pass by any group without them taking the dust from your footprints in hopes of a blessing.’

Two Arabs, al-Mughirah ibn Shu‘bah and a group from the Quraysh that was with them became angry. They said, ‘He was not satisfied to make a comparison for his cousin with anyone but Jesus the son of Mary.’ Then Allah sent down to His prophet,

***And when a comparison is made with the son of Mary, your people raise a clamor at it! And they say, ‘Are our gods better or is he? They do not set it forth to you save by way of disputations; nay, they are a contentious people./ He was naught but a servant on whom We bestowed favor,***

***and We made him an example for the children of Israel./ And if We please, We could make among you angels to be successors in the land. (43:57-60)***

Then Harith ibn ‘Amr al-Fahri became angry and said, ‘O Allah! If this is the truth from You, that the Bani Hashim will be successors like one Caesar after another, then rain stones down upon us or chastise us with a painful torment. Then Allah sent down to the Prophet what they had said (8:32), and this verse was sent down,

***But Allah was not going to chastise them while you were among them, nor is Allah going to chastise them while yet they ask for forgiveness. (8:33).***

Then the Prophet said to him, ‘O son of ‘Amr! Either repent or get out of here!’ He said, ‘O Muhammad! Give something from what you have for those who are not of the Quraysh. The Banu Hashim have taken the nobility of the Arabs and non-Arabs.’ The Prophet said to him, ‘It is not up to me. It is up to Allah, the blessed and exalted.’...”<sup>19</sup>

## **4. Their Monasticism**

1. It is reported that the Apostle of Allah (S) said, “...O Abu Dharr! Allah sent Jesus with monasticism but I was sent with simple uprightness, and women and perfume are beloved by me, and prayer was made the delight of my eyes....”<sup>20</sup>

2. Ibn Mas‘ud said, “I was behind the Apostle of Allah on a donkey when he said, ‘O son of Umm ‘Abd! Do you know how the Children of Israel established monasticism?’ I said, ‘Allah and His Apostle know better.’ He said, ‘Tyrants dominated them after Jesus (‘a) who rebelled against Allah. Then they became enraged at the people of faith and fought with them. They defeated the people of faith three times. Only a few of them remained.

They said, “If we appear, they will annihilate us, and no one will remain for the religion to invite people to it. So, come. Let us scatter over the earth until Allah commissions the prophet promised by Jesus (‘a) (that is, Muhammad (S)).”

So they scattered into the mountains and initiated monasticism. Some of them clung to their religion and some disbelieved.’ Then he recited this verse,

***As for monasticism, they invented it themselves; We did not prescribe for them anything but seeking the pleasure of Allah, and this they observed not as they ought to have observed it. And we gave to those of them who believed their due recompense; but many of them are transgressors. (57:27).***

Then he said, ‘O son of Umm ‘Abd! Do you know what the monasticism of my community is?’ I said, ‘Allah and His Apostle know better.’ He said, ‘Hijrah (migration), jihad, prayer, fasting, hajj and ‘umrah

(the major and minor pilgrimages).”<sup>21</sup>

- [1.](#) Bihar, 14, 249, 37
- [2.](#) Bihar, 14, 235, 8
- [3.](#) Bihar, 14, 236, 10
- [4.](#) Al-Khisal, 2, 584
- [5.](#) Bihar, 28, 4, 5
- [6.](#) Bisharah al-Mustafa li Shi‘ah al-Murtada, 29
- [7.](#) ‘Ilal al-Shara‘i, 2, 487
- [8.](#) Bihar 14, 279, 11
- [9.](#) Tafsir Furat al-Kufi, 115
- [10.](#) The term wilayah means “authority” or “guardianship”; and walayah is used for love of the Ahl al-Bayt, devotion to them, obedience to their commands and holding them as models in morals and practice. See the explanation of Asaf A. A. Fyzee in his A Shi‘ite Creed (Tehran: WOFIS, 1982), 149.
- [11.](#) Tafsir Furat al-Kufi, 116
- [12.](#) Tafsir al-Imam al-‘Askari, 402
- [13.](#) Tafsir Al-Qummi, 1 164
- [14.](#) Bihar, 25, 295, 53
- [15.](#) Bihar, 25, 264, 4
- [16.](#) Bihar, 25, 134, 6
- [17.](#) Bihar, 25, 266, 7
- [18.](#) Bihar, 35, 319, 13
- [19.](#) Kafi 8, 57, 18
- [20.](#) Bihar, 79, 233, 58
- [21.](#) Bihar, 65, 320

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