
America, The Second ‘Ad: Prophecies about the D ownfall of the United States ¹

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1. Introduction

Predictions and prophecies about the United States of America appear quite frequently in modern Muslim apocalyptic literature.² This literature forms a developing synthesis of classical traditions, Biblical exegesis— based largely on Protestant evangelical apocalyptic scenarios— and a pervasive anti-Semitic conspiracy theory. These three elements have been fused together to form a very powerful and relevant scenario which is capable of explaining events in the modern world to the satisfaction of the reader. The Muslim apocalypticist’s material previous to the modern period has stemmed in its entirety from the Prophet Muhammad and those of his generation to whom apocalypses are ascribed. Throughout the 1400 years of Muslim history, the accepted process has been to merely transmit this material from one generation to the next, without adding, deleting, or commenting on its significance to the generation in which a given author lives.

There appears to be no interpretation of the relevance of a given tradition, nor any attempt to work the material into an apocalyptic “history,” in the sense of locating the predicted events among contemporary occurrences. For example, the

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apocalyptic writer Muhammad b. 'Ali al-Shawkani (d. 1834), who wrote a book on messianic expectations, does not mention any of the momentous events of his lifetime, which included the Napoleonic invasion of Egypt, his home. There is not a shred of original material in the whole book, which runs to over 400 pages, and the "author" himself never speaks— rather it is wholly a compilation of earlier sources, and could just as easily have been compiled 1000 years previously. Similar compilations are indeed still being made during our own time, but they are no longer the dominant trend. For this reason writers of the traditional school are called compilers, because they do not actually add anything new. This type of derivative religious writing has been prevalent in the Muslim world for at least seven centuries, and in some cases long before that. Apocalyptic writing is no exception to this.

Before examining modern Muslim apocalyptic writings it would be helpful to review briefly the classical apocalyptic tradition. This material can be classified into historical, metahistorical, messianic and moral apocalypses.³ The historical apocalypses are primarily those concerned with the description of the conquests during the first and second centuries of Islam. Some themes most commonly repeated in this sort of apocalypse are the capture of Constantinople (which was eventually occurred in 1453), the defeat of the Byzantine Empire and the conquest of other lands bordering upon the Muslim empire. This sort of material attempts to portray the events preliminary to the messianic revelation using recognizable events and personages. Metahistorical apocalypses, on the other hand, are concerned with the signs of the end of time and the horrifying events scheduled to occur at that time. These traditions are filled with the terrifying appearance of the Dajjal (the Muslim Antichrist), and that of Yajuj and Majuj (Gog and Magog), along with several other minor figures.

Essentially this material is very close to the analogous traditions in Christianity and has borrowed heavily from it.

Beyond these two categories there are messianic traditions, which were frequently circulated by the Umayyad and 'Abbasid dynasties to legitimate their rule by giving it a messianic tinge. Messianic traditions show the campaigns of the Mahdi (the Muslim messiah) as he conquers and purifies the Muslim world, and embarks on a series of conquests of the non-Muslim world designed to lead up to an ideal age where the entire world is a peaceful Muslim empire. The apocalypticist also circulated moral apocalypses through which he attempted to promote his vision of the ideal society in the negative. This material portrays universal actions (numerous sins, perversions and so forth) as being symptomatic of the end of the world, thereby enabling the apocalypticist to condemn the evil of his own time because of the tacit belief that such evil will be widespread at the end of the world.

2. The Importance of America in Muslim apocalyptic

In this paper we shall examine a number of popular Muslim apocalyptic writers and show how they have dealt with the problem of the United States, what prophecies are at their disposal for this purpose, and how its power and domination in the world have to some extent caused a reinterpretation of verses in the Qur'an. An example of the later tendency can be found in the writings of Hisham Kamal 'Abd al-Hamid, in his volume *Halak wa-damar Amrika al-muntazar* (*The Expected Perishing and Ruin of America*) says this:

“Why did God not mention America in the Qur'an, and the Prophet [Muhammad] not mention it in the prophetic *hadith*? This is a question which every Muslim has asked himself, and has

been confused in finding the answer to it... God has pointed to America in the Qur'an when He has told us of 'the first 'Ad [Qur'an 53:50], and the Prophet has pointed to it in the telling of tribulations and apocalyptic wars and the signs of the Hour, just as the Torah and the Gospels bring a separate mention of America, and its characteristics and actions, and the time of its appearance and its end on the tongues of the prophets of Banu Isra'il."⁴

Negative feelings about the United States are not lacking in modern Muslim apocalyptic literature. Sa'id Ayyub, one of the most prominent of Muslim apocalyptic writers, writes "[The U.S.] is now the principal center for the Jews. History bears witness that the United States of America, which has been occupied in all areas by the beliefs of the Antichrist, is the chief enemy of Islam in every place."⁵ Other writers, such as Bashir Muhammad 'Abdallah, state:

"As to the rule of the Jews or the Children of Israel over the land [of Israel], it is dependent upon their ruling America, and their dominating grip over it economically, politically, media-wise, culturally, militarily, and educationally as well. The American people have become a colony and are humiliated by the Jews, despite their minority position... The American people are the most sunk, debased and slavish to the Jewish devil; they labor and toil to fill the storehouses of the Jews with gold— their life is for the sake of the Jews, and they make war and die to fulfill the Jews' strategic interests throughout the world."⁶

These prominent apocalyptic writers show the importance by them attached to the United States and the concern Muslims have felt about the apparent lack of material about this country in the traditional *hadith* literature. Essentially, the Muslim traditions touch upon every area of the world known during classical times. Therefore, there are extensive traditions about Europeans which can be pressed into service whenever there is a conflict with that region of the world. Even 1300 years ago, Europe was still the Muslims' greatest and most dangerous enemy. Other nations such as the Turks, Indians and various African peoples are also mentioned and placed within the apocalyptic world either as destructive agents or as objects of conquest. It goes without saying that in the same manner as in modern Christian Catholic or evangelical apocalyptic scenarios, reinterpretation of names is common among Muslim apocalyptists. For example, since Gog and Magog play an important part in Muslim apocalyptic, but are nowhere to be found in the modern world, these names are reinterpreted to mean either Russia (because of its repeated attacks upon Muslims in Afghanistan and Chechnya) or perhaps China, which also has an apparently inexhaustible supply of people.⁷

Naturally, the United States does not have an apparent place in the classical schemes. This would not ordinarily present a problem if it were not for the fact that the United States is so *obviously* affecting the Muslim world on a vast range of issues which cannot be satisfactorily explained without reference to it. For example, one of the most pressing issues for the Muslim apocalyptist is how to deal with the state of Israel, and to answer the question of how it will be overcome and defeated, close to the end of the world. This is not something which can be pushed to the back burner, since it is of major concern for vast numbers of Muslims, who look to the future to bring

them some hope concerning this issue. While the whole question of the anti-Semitic conspiracy theory and its effects upon Muslim apocalyptic will not be dealt with here, its power cannot be denied. In other papers I have shown that it is already changing Qur'anic exegesis, so powerful and relevant is it to the everyday concerns of the Muslim.⁸

The issue of Israel cannot be dealt with properly without reference to the United States. Without going into the question of the relationship between the two countries, I will simply expound the view most commonly expressed in the apocalyptic literature. This view holds that there is a world-wide conspiracy of Zionism which controls a large if not the whole of the western world, and through this the rest of the world as well.

“America before its independence (sic!) was a peaceful, neutral state, but after its independence Zionists dominated it, and since its independence it has become a completely Zionist state, especially after the Jews emigrated to it and the number of Jews in it became more than that in the state of Israel. The principal concern of America became the tending of the interests of the Zionists, and the state of Israel in Palestine became an American state. For this reason the end of the Jews is interconnected with the end of America, and the end of America is interconnected with the end of the Jews.”⁹

It is not unusual for Muslim apocalyptic writers to have bizarre ideas about the United States, and about its history because of the nature of this conspiracy theory. According to one popular Palestinian author, Fa'iq Muhammad Da'ud, for example, we find that support for Israel is already mandated in

the U.S. Constitution, and that it is legally impossible for a president to be elected without swearing to abide by Israel's dictates.¹⁰

This American-Zionist conspiracy is given meaning because it is generally known that the western world has overwhelming power over the destinies of both the larger Muslim world and the lesser Arab world within it. This conspiracy is also given meaning because of the malevolent and intrusive factors of western (and most especially American) cultural and economic domination. It is for these reasons that the Muslim cannot simply ignore the United States, and must somehow or other explain its position at the end of times. As they ask: "How could it be that God did not relate in His Qur'an or the Prophet in his *hadith* about the tribulation of the age, and the greatest power known to the history of humanity, at the same time as God says in the Qur'an 'We have not left anything out of the Book' [Qur'an 6:38]?"¹¹

Although perhaps we shall not deal with this issue at too much length, perhaps the question of the timing sequence of modern Muslim apocalyptic, and why has it achieved so much prominence at this particular moment does arise. As will be indicated, and as I have shown in a number of papers on this subject, this literature has received a huge shot in the arm from evangelical Christian apocalyptic writings.¹² This has led to a wide acceptance of Biblical exegesis within the genre, and even given it— to some degree— precedence over the traditional *hadith* literature. Since evangelicals (and by extension and negative perception, Jews) attach importance to the year 2000, it has come to have a great deal of meaning, albeit negative meaning, for Muslims as well.

Moreover, in addition to this foreign-based material, there are several corresponding Muslim calculations as well. The year 1500/2076 is one universally said to be the end of the

world, according to the interpretations given in al-Suyuti's important treatise *Kashf 'an mujawazat hadhihi al-umma al-alf*.¹³ This treatise, written about 100 years previous to the year 1000/1591, when Muslims were preparing for the expected end of the world at that time, was designed to put off speculation about the subject. In this attempt it succeeded; unfortunately it put off the speculation until our own time, as it suggested that the end of the world would occur in the year 1500/2076. Therefore, since the events deemed to occur previous to the end of the world take up approximately 40-80 years, we should be seeing the beginnings of the end. In addition to this classical treatise, there are a number of modern calculations available. Virtually all of the apocalyptists cited in this paper have made predictions at one time or another. Muhammad 'Isa Da'ud for example says:

“The *sahib al-amr* [a messianic title] will emerge at the festival of the hajj in 1419 [1998-99], and in Muharram 1420 [1999-2000] he will proclaim the return of the caliphate. If the issue is delayed, it will not be beyond 1425 [2004-05], as the exact people tend towards [i.e., those people calculating the end exactly], and a personage whose *kunya* is al-Sufyani will precede him,¹⁴ destroying the Gulf and striking at Israel... and in 2000¹⁵ there will be the battle of the Mediterranean and in 2001 will be Armageddon, which will be preceded by or be close to a great nuclear battle between France and America in which Paris will be destroyed, and the sea will swallow up New York...”¹⁶

3. “..the second ‘Ad”

The people of ‘Ad are mentioned in the Qur’an 24 times.¹⁷ Unfortunately, the vast majority of these references do not convey much information about them to the reader who does not already know something about them beforehand. The Qur’an’s style makes a number of demands upon its audience, one of which is to be privy to a pool of common knowledge often not shared by later exegetes, who could not understand these verses.¹⁸ Some of the relevant verses dealing with ‘Ad are the following (Qur’an 46:21-26):

- “(21) And remember the brother of ‘Ad, when he warned his people upon the sand-dunes, warners having gone before him and after him, saying ‘Do not worship any one but Allah. I fear for you the punishment of a great day.’
- (22) They said: ‘Did you come to divert us from our deities? Bring us then what you are promising us if you are truthful.’
- (23) He said: ‘Knowledge is only with Allah and I am conveying to you the message I was charged with, but I see that you are an ignorant people.’(24) Then, when they saw it as a cloud-burst coming towards their valley, they said: ‘This is a cloud-burst raining upon us.’ No, it is what you sought to hasten, a wind wherein is a painful punishment,
- (25) Destroying everything at the behest of its Lord. Then when they woke up, there was nothing to be seen except their dwellings. Thus do we reward the criminal people.
- (26) We had established them firmly in a manner We did not establish you, and We gave them hearing, eye-sight and hearts; but their hearing, eye-sight and hearts availed them nothing, as they repudiated the signs of Allah; and so they have been overwhelmed by that which they used to mock.”¹⁹

'Ad was apparently a nomadic people, according to the early commentary of Muqatil b. Sulayman (d. 150/762).²⁰ They are said to have lived in Dakk al-Ramal in the Yemen near Hadramawt. While the commentaries are quite indistinct about the time-frame of their existence, it was apparently at some point in the immediate aftermath of the Flood, since both Noah and Idris [Enoch] are said to have been active among them (they are described as being Noah's in-laws). Their prophet, however, was Hud, who is a non-Biblical figure still revered in the area of Hadramawt.²¹ He ministered to the people of 'Ad in a fashion reminiscent of Elijah, speaking to them about God's judgment upon their sins, bringing natural disasters for a period of time, and finally a devastating flood of rain and a wind lasting seven days which completely destroyed the area.

The location most closely associated with 'Ad is the mysterious *Iram dhat al-'Imad* (Iram of the columns, Qur'an 89:7). The "columns" or poles mentioned in the name according to the early commentators were simply those which the tribe of 'Ad used as tracking devices in the shifting sands of the desert (something akin to the snow-poles common in areas known for deep snow). Gradually, from the time of al-Tabari (d. 310/922), onwards the mysterious *Iram dhat al-'Imad* became ever more prominent in the imagination of the commentators. Great cities such as Damascus and Alexandria vied for the name, although most serious commentators dismissed these claims.²² By the period of al-Khazin al-Baghdadi (d. 725/1324) the commentators are in possession of detailed "knowledge" about the city including details of expansive buildings in it.²³

Some commentators then began to wonder whether there was not some connection between these extensive building projects and the judgment inflicted upon the unfortunate city.

The Shi'i commentator al-Fayd al-Kashani (d. 1090/1679) cites the following tradition to explain the punishment: "Every building being built is a curse (*wibal*) upon its owner (*sahib*) on the Day of Resurrection, other than that which is strictly necessary."²⁴ This tradition belongs to an apocalyptic leveling strain which has its roots in early Muslim expectations of the imminence of the Day of Resurrection:²⁵ one's actions should not be focused upon this world but upon the next. It is for this reason that we find traditions against building fancy mosques or other places of worship since the Hour is close, there is no point in investing one's time and energy in this effort. Ibn Kathir (d. 774/1372) cites a *ma'wiza* [hortatory sermon] in the commentary on the destruction of 'Ad, put into the mouth of Abu al-Darda' (an early Companion):

"...when he saw the new buildings that the Muslims had built in the Ghuta (the valley of Damascus) and the trees that they had planted, he rose in the mosque and said: 'O people of Damascus! Are you not ashamed, are you not ashamed that you are collecting wealth you cannot eat, building what you cannot dwell in, hoping for what you will never attain. Before you there were ages [of civilizations] which collected and contained [water and so forth], built and were certain [about the future], hoped and lengthened [their time on earth], and their hopes became illusions, their collection was destroyed, their dwellings graves. 'Ad ruled what was between 'Aden and 'Uman with horses and riders, and who [today] would buy the inheritance of 'Ad from me for two dirhems?' "²⁶

Therefore, the apocalyptic sense of these verses is still quite strong, and even in classical times they were associated with the idea of judgment upon a (supposedly) advanced society which sought to go beyond the limits placed upon it by God. This idea is strikingly similar to that of the judgment of the people of the Tower of Babel (Gen. 11), and other stories in the Qur'an in which God's judgment of a civilization is featured. In this regard, the story of 'Ad is one which is ripe for use by modern apocalyptic writers.

Interpretations are currently coming into vogue as a secondary sort of Qur'anic commentary. Bashir Muhammad 'Abdallah, the writer who popularized the interpretation of 'Ad = America is aware that this exegesis is new. "What is the certain foundation for our saying that the United States is the most deserved land for the punishment of God encapsulated in the earthquake of the Hour and the western swallowing up [in the earth]?"²⁷ He begins with a review of the Qur'anic view of warning, and punishment by God after being warned by prophets (mostly Biblical, albeit as viewed through the Qur'anic interpretation). Moses' mission to Pharaoh is a good example; Pharaoh was arrogant and refused to listen to God's message to him, and so he was punished.

There can be no question but that these qualities are true of the United States, according to his analysis. 'Abdallah says gives the following reasons for God's judgment: [skipping the first point]

"2. Denial of messages and calling messengers liars... these atheistic beliefs have been spread, which were propagated by Jewish Zionists elements as part of the disgusting Jewish plan— all of this is in the framework and shadow of what they call 'freedom of thought' and 'belief in humanism' and what is known as the positivist school in modern contemporary philosophy.

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3. Physical harm to messengers and their followers from among the *'ulama* and the missionaries and the fighters in the path of God, and expulsion, torment and killing of them— indeed an attempt to uproot them completely from the earth.
 4. Finally, the last stage are the terrifying plans to uproot all believers and empty the earth completely of them, and this will be accomplished by forcing a decision between a) joining infidelity, atheism and life in accordance with lusts, and thinking ways of pleasurable life which infidels and atheists live; or b) being expelled, killed and annihilated.”²⁸

Therefore, the choice for the apocalyptic Muslim believer is clear: to submit to the evil atheistic world order or be killed. ‘Abdallah feels that the annihilation is taking place this very minute under the guise of what “they” (his euphemism for the larger world conspiracy) call “ethnic cleansing” and the “war against terrorism.” The underlying reasons for God’s inevitable judgment is the U.S.’s supposed transgressions of excessive immorality, economical and fiscal crimes, and political tyranny. The entire idea of freedom offends ‘Abdallah, and he says of it: “The proclaimed and practiced freedom in America especially and in the western world in general is not freedom from slavery of a man to a man... but it is freedom from the worship a human being owes the Lord of Worlds.”²⁹ For this reason, the American type of freedom cannot be accepted and must be fought against at all costs, because it is essentially against the nature of man as God created him (remembering that for Muslims man is not fallen by nature, but a Muslim by nature, and that it is his environment which changes him for the worse). In a later passage he expands on

this idea by saying that the entire 'new world order' is an attempt to nullify the *sunna* of God.³⁰

The United States' alleged economic crimes are equally serious. Colonialism stole the wealth of the world and took it back to Europe and the United States. Jewish banks control the world's finances and manipulate them in such a way as to ensure that no one but they themselves has any money, and place impossible demands upon those countries in need of loans from the supposedly Jewish International Monetary Fund. It goes without saying that this usurious banking system is against the principles of Islam to begin with.³¹ But

“probably the greatest theft, swindle and fraud in the history of humanity is what the Zionists have done secretly in the United States of America—the swindling of the Arab Muslim oil wealth—because they [the Zionists] determine the price and the amount of oil produced in such a way as to return the greatest profit and benefit to the Jews and the least little bit to the possessors of the oil.”³²

American political crimes are literally innumerable. In this 'Abdallah compares the democratic world order to that of Thamud mentioned in the Qur'an (7:73-79, 11:61-68), preparatory to his exposition of America as the second 'Ad. Thamud was a group (called by 'Abdallah democratic, anachronistically) warned by God, which stands in contrast to the warning given to Pharaoh (28:4-6) alone as a single dictator. Egyptians as a whole are not said to be responsible for Pharaoh's evil, whereas in the case of both 'Ad and Thamud the entire group participated in the rejection of God's message. Thus, when Pharaoh was judged, he alone received the punishment. 'Abdallah sees the behavior of western

democracies as more culpable than that of Third World countries, since the former have the capacity to change and repent, whereas the latter do not and their sins are the responsibility of one man (or a small group) alone.³³ What are the factors which enable a nation to be judged by being totally uprooted?

- 1) freedom of choice (such as in a democracy); God does not judge dictatorships like this;
- 2) the absence of Muslims inside the society, except those few who can leave in the event of the judgment; and
- 3) arrival at such a level of error which is causing other nations and peoples to go astray.³⁴

If there is a possibility that part of the society will eventually believe in Islam, as ‘Abdallah says there is with Christians, then God will not judge them with a complete uprooting, but with a partial uprooting. “Therefore we can say that the *sunna* of God as regards a complete uprooting is not absolutely necessary upon the community of Christians, who the Zionists have worn [like a shoe], and have realized evil and corruption in the land because of them.”³⁵ He forecasts a partial uprooting that will also hit Europe and Russia in judgment for their crimes, and at the same time there will be another partial uprooting, but more severe, which will focus on the principal guilty parties: Israel and the United States.

‘Abdallah then begins to compare the U.S. to ‘Ad. According to his description, ‘Ad was an advanced society with amenities. They could predict weather (Qur’an 46:24)³⁶ and possessed other advanced technology. They had advanced weaponry and organized sports and cultural events (26:127). These, however, were merely for pleasure, not for the purpose of glorifying God. Their advanced weaponry included nuclear weapons (26:129), similar to those of the United States. And

they had a secular humanistic culture together with public approval of sexual perversions.³⁷ Their buildings were skyscrapers (speaking of their capital, *Iram dhat al-'Imad*) just as in New York (89:7-8). Its arrogance was also the equal of that of the United States:

“America has proclaimed a ‘new world order’ after the collapse of the Soviet Union, and announced the imposition of submission and the necessity of obedience upon all of the peoples and nations of the world to the Security Council and the General Assembly of the U.N., which it rules openly and the Jews in secret and in reality. She [America] does not conceal her rule over the Security Council... America says openly ‘Who is superior to us in strength?’ [Qur’an 41:14]. The President of America, Bush, openly proclaimed this after the end of the Kuwait War, saying ‘The 21st century is the century of the United States of America’.”³⁸

America is to be judged therefore not for the power it has amassed, but for the attitude which that power has engendered in its rulers:

“This is America’s unlawful arrogance in the world. If it had proclaimed that it is the most powerful country ruling countries and nations, and done justly and ruled with righteousness, and taken what was deserved from the powerful [and given] to the weak, and preserved peace righteously between peoples it would not have been like the first ‘Ad.’”³⁹

But since it attacked Iraq on the pretext of the invasion of Kuwait, ganging up on it with 30 other countries,⁴⁰ and

ignores the alleged evil of Israel and the actions of the Serbs in Bosnia⁴¹ it has not done justly and must be punished for its arrogance.

“Therefore, America deserves now, according to the *sunna* of God regarding the punishment of nations, a partial strike [like that] which caught ‘Ad, and it is only because of the spread of Islam among millions of people in America, and God’s knowledge that from the loins of the Christians of America there are those who will believe in God and His prophet, and His final book at the hand of the messiah Jesus the son of Mary, that this partial strike coming upon the second ‘Ad is not a total uprooting.”⁴²

‘Abdallah’s analysis of the Qur’an is a new one— it has internal coherence and power, and there are no obvious inconsistencies. For the most part it is too soon to say whether or not this analysis will pass into the mainstream of Muslim apocalyptic literature, but those writers who follow ‘Abdallah chronologically speak of him with respect, and often parrot his views.⁴³ From the aesthetic point of view he is far more pleasurable to read than most Muslim apocalyptic writers since he eschews the bombastic and blood-thirsty style they favor. His book tends to be more analytical and cooler-headed, although he is clearly a paranoid anti-Semite as well.

4. Predictions for the future: the Antichrist and the earthquake of the end

Predictions for the United States can be divided into several different groups. First of all there are those apocalyptic scenarios which present the country as functionally ruled by the

Antichrist, through the “world Zionist conspiracy.” Opinions frequently differ regarding the unholy alliance between the United States and Israel with respect to the question of whether Israel is in control of the United States or vice versa. This question is not merely academic, since the correct answer will also indicate where the Antichrist currently resides. The Antichrist’s personality is nebulous, and it is frequently difficult to get a firm picture from Muslim apocalyptic sources as to whether he is a person (that is, an identifiable living person), a group of people (the Jews), a country (usually either Israel or the United States), a tendency (such as westernization) or the collective mind of the world Zionist conspiracy. In this article we focus on those who tend to either see the United States as the Antichrist or to interpret him as one residing there.

Figures for this position are not lacking, however many writers are reluctant to name names and prefer to use the anonymity of the name “Antichrist.” Most recent U.S. presidents have qualified for the title “Antichrist” (with the noted exception of Jimmy Carter) at one time or another, or at least for being an agent of the Antichrist (like Ronald Reagan or George Bush).⁴⁴ The sources are divided about Bill Clinton: is he the Antichrist or an agent?⁴⁵ The citations from ‘Abdallah indicate that he is the personification of the evil in the United States; however what his exact relationship is to the evil Antichrist is left unclear. Biblical verses are cited for his punishment; his given name is connected to Jer. 50:2, where the figure of “Bel” (a Babylonian god) appears (also to Jer. 51:44 reading, “I will punish Bel [Bill Clinton] in Babylon...”).⁴⁶ This dovetails perfectly with ‘Abdallah’s scheme of things, since for him America is the modern Babylon (i.e., such as in Rev. 17:3-4).⁴⁷ Many other distinguished figures have also qualified for Antichrist status,

including Henry Kissinger, as have a number of actors or cultural personalities (Clint Eastwood and Burt Lancaster for example, as well as the magician David Copperfield, with whom Muhammad 'Isa Da'ud is obsessed and whom he is convinced is demon-possessed).⁴⁸

At the end of the Antichrist scenario, concurrent with the appearance of the Mahdi (about whom below), who will liberate the Islamic state from the current American occupation, there will be an enormous earthquake which will “totally uproot” the sinful American nation:

“And the results of the general earthquake are a total uprooting for some of the infidels who have penetrated deeply into evil and tyranny, being arrogant in the land. God said: ‘O people, fear your Lord. Surely the clamor of the Hour is a terrible thing’ [Qur’an 22:1].”⁴⁹

However, this earthquake will be unusual for it will strike down all the enemies of Islam, which 'Abdallah had listed. In addition to Christians, there are Buddhists, Hindus, Chinese, and “sun-and emperor-worshippers in Japan.”⁵⁰ A series of *khasfs* (swallowing up by the earth) will be previous to this event. One will occur in the Arabian Peninsula, where 'Abdallah feels that the rich Gulf Arabs will be swallowed up and judged for their arrogance and waste of resources. Another will take place in the Far East, in either Russia or Japan, the two most evil countries in the area. He does not preclude, however the possibility of the Hindus receiving a similar judgment: he states merely that no final conclusion has been reached on the matter.⁵¹

In the matter of the western “swallowing up” there is more certainty. America will be targeted, most specifically New York City (called the ‘great Babylon’ of Rev. 18):

“God’s punishment falls on the evil of His creation, and the more evil, the more intense the punishment. Since America is now the chief and first Zionist power (the dragon [of Rev. 12]), and the strong arm of the Antichrist (the false prophet), and the first head of the beast which leads the other six heads, so the punishment will be more intense upon it than upon others. Since in New York especially there are more Jews than in other places, and in it is their wealth, their banks, their political foundations which control the entire world (the U.N., the Security Council, the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, and the principal media networks), so there is no evil greater than in New York in any other place on the inhabited earth, and for this reason their portion of the punishment will be greater in measure and it will be a total uprooting.”⁵²

One can easily see how indebted ‘Abdallah is to Revelation and to Christian writers in general in this portrayal of the judgment of the United States. He has taken the prophecies of Revelation, attached to them anti-Semitic based hatred of both New York and the world institutions located there, and placed their judgment within an Islamic context. Like many of the other apocalyptists, ‘Abdallah does not hesitate to date the approaching great event: the earthquake will take place during 10 Dhu al-Hijja [April 19], 1997— 50 years, according to him, after the foundation of the state of Israel⁵³ —probably at dawn.⁵⁴

At the end two great battles will take place. The Antichrist’s Jewish and Christian supporters (‘Abdallah believes that the ten crowns of the Beast in Rev. 13:2 are the

European Community) will fight the Muslims in Jerusalem, where the former will all be slaughtered.⁵⁵ After this, the victorious Muslims will conquer Europe and destroy the “idolatrour church in the Vatican.”⁵⁶ This will lead to the brief reign of the Mahdi, which will be ended by the physical appearance of the Antichrist himself (ruling for only 429 days), who will gather another huge army to fight the Battle of Armageddon.⁵⁷

In short, ‘Abdallah presents a powerful and coherent vision of the future. ‘Abdallah is at home with Biblical material, and so much of his scenario is related to the west and is dependent upon evangelical apocalyptic interpretations. It is a reactive scenario, a judgment upon the evil of the west, which ultimately is based on western critiques of its own culture and society. These are adopted and then amplified by the Muslim apocalypticist and made only the more powerful by their obvious origins. While some Muslim material is used, it clearly plays a mere supporting role, and is simply present to deflect critics who would rightly say that this is an Islamized Christian apocalypse with the anti-Semitic conspiracy theory as a unifying factor and in order to provide it with the necessary connection to the state of Israel. ‘Abdallah, insofar as the United States is concerned, does not express a very positive outlook. Unlike other Muslim apocalypticists who foresee the future conversion of the U.S. to Islam (to which he alludes, but upon which he does not expand), ‘Abdallah chooses to concentrate on God’s judgment of the sinful nation, and its ultimate removal from the world scene. Others, however, take a different path in their apocalyptic predictions to which we will now turn.

5. The Downfall of the “Second ‘Ad” at the hands of the Mahdi

The scenarios involving the Mahdi differ slightly from those involving the Antichrist and these do not necessarily overlap. Whereas previous accounts depict the United States as trying to gain control over the world, as being punished for having already seized control illegitimately, this group of interpretations views the U.S. as trying to resist the world-wide conquests of the Mahdi who will bring a vast Muslim empire into being and ultimately convert the world to Islam. In this vision, the downfall of the United States will come in a number of successive stages:

- a) the initial attack on the Mahdi (the “swallowing up by the earth” traditions)
- b) the incompetent attempts of the U.S. to defend its allies (Kuwait, Lebanon, Israel, the Europeans) from the Mahdi; and finally
- c) its inability to overcome the Mahdi and Jesus at the very end of time.

According to Muhammad ‘Isa Da’ud,⁵⁸ the Mahdi will proclaim himself in Mecca (as in the classical traditions), and will seek to obtain the oath of allegiance from all the Muslim nations of the world. His first difficulty will be with the United States’ forces located in the Arabian and Sinai peninsulas where they serve as peace-keepers between Egypt and Israel. Since Egypt will be the first country to swear allegiance to the Mahdi, the following will ensue:

“The king of Egypt during that time will be the man who devastated the Jews in the Sinai and exiled their remnants from it, and let in the forces of the [foreign] agent U.N., which removed weaponry from most of the Sinai and stayed to guard the illusions of peace or the deluded peace...

so the king of Egypt will proclaim the union of Egypt with the caliphal state and the Egyptian armies in expectation of the Mahdi will combine together to aid the religion of God...”⁵⁹

This generous offer on the part of the Egyptian ruler, however, conflicts with American interests in the area, and there will be a brief first battle in which the American troops located in the Sinai desert are defeated. This will not be a good omen for future conflicts. Initially, the Mahdi merely gains the allegiance of the Muslim countries around him, many of which fall into line fairly quickly; however, several do not. Kuwait, for example, apparently cognizant of its dependence upon American arms during years previous to the appearance of the Mahdi, chooses to resist and rely on its powerful ally. “Quickly the Islamic armies belonging to the caliph of the Muslims surround the land of Kuwait, and [have] the keys of entering and departing (i.e., he will besiege it). The foreign presence is obvious, clear to the eye and cowardly!”⁶⁰ The Americans unsurprisingly will lose the battle in Kuwait this time around.

Other Muslim states, including Turkey, which requests help from its NATO allies (who are then defeated), and the North African states, which according to Da’ud are functionally ruled by Jews, oppose the Mahdi’s armies. Oddly enough, Libya is said to be hesitant to join the Mahdi, even though Qaddhafi will be an ally in general terms. His opposition stems from the fact that he is an alternative messianic figure, who is known to the classical texts as al-Barqi (from the Libyan town of Barqa).⁶¹ By this time in the scenario, the United States together with the other “Jewish controlled” western countries will have declared the Mahdi to be ‘world dictator’ and a ‘tyrant in the land’ (similar to Saddam Husayn).

However, the power of the United States will shortly afterward be curtailed by its own difficulties. As the Mahdi moves against Jordan, that country's Jewish ruler⁶² will ask for the help of the U.N. and the U.S. (both of which are ruled by the "Jewish world conspiracy").

"... then America will live through the worst disaster in its history. This disaster will be the destruction of New York by a terrible flood after a terrifying series of explosions nearby makes the surrounding waters swallow it up as if it is an ant inside of a terrifying star of heat and water. Not a single one of its inhabitants will be saved. Some will say: the disaster will be as a result of the American bombing of Paris,⁶³ and the French will respond paying them back with nuclear missiles... or some will say: this is a new flying saucer, which missed its calculations and estimates and blew up."⁶⁴

Florida will also suffer nuclear explosions of unknown origins and this will trigger even more explosions as the American nuclear arsenal in the area detonates. Since the American Antichrist has at his disposal flying saucers, he will then decide to use them against the Mahdi and attack Mecca, but God will cause the flying saucers to miss and hit the United States once again. God will then continue to cause natural disasters to hit the already shell-shocked people.⁶⁵ But when the Mahdi attacks Lebanon, then "America will forget its sufferings and announce that it will not remain quiet if the armies of the Mahdi enter Lebanon..."⁶⁶ (this is said by the President, said to be a "rabbi who hides in Christian Torah garb," whatever that means).

America together with the Europeans— who seem to have both forgotten that they have just had a nuclear exchange during the course of which vast numbers on both sides perished— gather an army to protect Lebanon and Israel from the Mahdi. Da'ud is puzzled as to why anyone would be afraid of the Mahdi anyway,

“Why is there this fear of Islam? The Mahdi will not force anyone to convert to Islam, because God has set down the law ‘there is no compulsion in religion’ [Qur’an 2:256], and his armies will not touch anybody hurtfully unless they lift up arms against them. The return of the Islamic caliphate is a return of the truth to its people, and a calling of things by their [proper] names. But blind hatred has no logic, and oppression and tyranny has no intelligence.”⁶⁷

He attributes the negative American attitude towards Muslim unity under the Mahdi to America’s desire to stand as the only power on earth. The government of the United States apparently will have some difficulty deciding how much force it wants to use against the Muslims. Since the U.S. already lost a flying saucer in the failed previous nuclear attack, perhaps it would be wise not to use them again? However, the policy of fighting the Muslims is really that of the Antichrist, who controls the American government entirely, and his policy is not beneficial to the Americans themselves.

“Didn’t I say to you: he [the Antichrist] is a Jew, and his morals are those of Jews. But he is a Jew of a special type: he is a Samaritan Jew— those who only recognize of the Torah the five books of Moses, and whatever other than that is idle talk. These are Jews who despise the Jews. The race of Samaritan Jews is a superior race in his opinion,

and so most of his close associates are Jews, but they will never be lords of the world, like they have fancied for so long. Destruction is waiting in ambush for them.”⁶⁸

Eventually the American fleet comes to Lebanon, and is totally defeated (for this Da'ud actually has a source: a supposedly previously unknown manuscript, which he does not identify).⁶⁹ Thousands of prisoners will be taken and the rest will flee in every direction because of the terror struck in their hearts by the Muslim army. This will constitute the beginning of the Battle of Armageddon, according to Da'ud's rendition, the last part of which will be fought in Israel proper. Magnanimously, the Mahdi will allow the prisoners to return to their own lands on the condition that they abandon their weapons, but the Christians raise their crosses in protest and challenge, and the Mahdi will be forced to destroy the entire army and kill them all.⁷⁰ Before he does this (apparently; the chronology is somewhat confused) the Christians will once again betray the Muslim forces, and treacherously try to bomb them. But technical problems will once again beset them (he adds, “just as when Carter tried to save the hostages in Iran”), and they will miss their targets and bomb their own forces instead.

The last round of the battles will form that of Armageddon proper. Typically, he quotes the western military leaders as making crude statements about the Muslims and how they will be treated when they are defeated. All throughout the discourse, as a matter of fact, the statements made by the western leaders are very bombastic in tone; many of them tend to talk like Saddam Husayn.⁷¹ The Mahdi will respond with a message which could be considered to be his statement of purpose:

“Jerusalem is truly the city of peace, and God is peace, and Islam is peace. The mobilization of America and the west here is a war against the Lord of peace, and they are the aggressors under the flag of the Jews, just as the Jews were the aggressors under their flags previously. Jerusalem is Arab Muslim, and Palestine— all of it, from the river to the sea— is Arab Muslim, and there is no place in it for any who depart from peace or from Islam other than those who submit to those standing under the rule of Islam. They will have to pay the *jizya* if they wish peace or life under the shadow of Islam, keeping their own religions, or convert to Islam (lit. submit to God) loving what was before it [i.e., the previous faiths], or fighting will decide between us, and God will judge in our dispute— God is the best of judges and we are marching on Palestine.”⁷²

Most of the armies of the world will be concentrated in the area, with the exception of those from northern Europe (Da’ud has a clear pro-Scandinavian bias), which are not controlled by the Jews and will either join the Muslim side or remain neutral. Australia and New Zealand also will not participate in this adventure, and Austria, which will be ruled by a man who is openly Muslim, also will not join the E.C. army.⁷³ The end result of this war will be a massive victory for the Muslims, who will be aided by the sea rising against the enemy western fleet, overturning it and drowning the vast majority of the Christians. Still, the Mahdi will be conciliatory. “The Mahdi does not wish to destroy anyone; he was forced to fight and to defend against aggression. He is a conqueror (*fatih*) and not an occupier.”⁷⁴

At this point, with the western armies totally defeated and wiped out and the Mahdi on the verge of entering Jerusalem in triumph, the western leaders will decide to use nuclear and chemical weapons once again. There will be sabotage at work, however, and a Palestinian will be able to plant a mine in one of the first planes to take off from an American aircraft carrier in the Mediterranean Sea. It will blow up, and fall back down upon the fleet in a nuclear explosion into the midst of the other planes waiting to take off, destroying the whole air-fleet in an apocalyptic finale. Similarly, the missiles launched against the Muslims will be sabotaged by the Mahdi's men.⁷⁵ Part of this conflagration will occur close to Jerusalem and much of the city burned together with its Jewish population (the Muslim Arabs will be saved however).⁷⁶ For the most part, the winds will direct the nuclear fall-out away from the Muslims because that is what God wishes.

In light of this situation, the Mahdi will announce to the people of the world that he is entering Jerusalem, and that Palestine will be Muslim once more (because all of the Jews are now dead). Da'ud says: "We would not exaggerate if we say that despite their fear and apprehensiveness most of the Europeans and Americans, even most of the people of the world, will be overwhelmed with joy and happiness thanks to the removal of this thing, the claimed state of Israel."⁷⁷

After the end of the Jews or at least those in Israel⁷⁸ many westerners will fundamentally reappraise the situation, and many Europeans will convert to Islam. American and western ambassadors will sue for peace and try to make treaties with the Mahdi, who will busy himself rebuilding the ruined city of Jerusalem in preparation to its becoming his capital. Only those Jews left scattered around the world, primarily in the U.S., will have any real desire to fight after this long series of disasters which has left the western countries militarily

indefensible. Certain European states, such as Sweden, will openly ally themselves with the Mahdi and convert to Islam in their entirety, and Da'ud says that an army of Muslim thinkers and *ulama'* will descend upon them to lead them in their new faith. "But as for Europe and America there will be varied reactions, and the idea of a Satanic vengeance will begin to dominate them, with the Antichrist stoking the flames, but still the fear of the great power of the Mahdi will rule the hearts of these countries."⁷⁹

There will be tentative peace overtures, since many of the countries— at least on the outside— will want to make peace with the Mahdi and join the 'new world order' (Da'ud apparently delights in using that particular phrase for the Mahdi's state), so that the Mahdi will not try to conquer them. Many American and European youth will come to Jerusalem to see the Mahdi and breathe in his superior spirituality. It will be an age of technological wonders since one of the planks of the peace negotiations with the defeated west will be a massive technology transfer from Europe and the U.S. to the Mahdi's empire, and "the United States of America will never again be able to do anything against him" (which is not strictly speaking true in light of following events). None of the delegations which visit him will depart without declaring their conversion to Islam.

This ideal state of affairs will be wrecked by the Vatican, since groups of saboteurs under Roman Catholic control will be caught, and brought before the Mahdi. They confess who sent them both to him personally and to representatives of the foreign countries. Then the Mahdi proclaims that his armies are moving to the Vatican and going to attack Rome. Since the western powers by this time are almost totally stripped of their weapons, they are left, as Da'ud says "crying in the wilderness" and unable to stop him. Now it is they who will suffer from

famine and all sorts of natural disasters about which they can do nothing (just as they supposedly allowed the Muslims to suffer during the period previous to the Mahdi's appearance). As the Mahdi moves into Europe, most of the Scandinavian countries will already be on his side, and have proclaimed their conversion to Islam. The Mahdi will make a speech to the world in which he says:

“ ‘Islam is the final word of God, and the final word of God to His obligated creatures is the Qur'an, and it is necessary that His word be generally [accepted] throughout the world.’ War is the final solution, but he will send ambassadors to those non-Muslim states in Europe to teach them Islam and the oath of allegiance.”⁸⁰

The Europeans initially refuse this offer. Jews still control many of the European governments, and they dictate to the people not to obey the Mahdi. Once again, however, natural forces come to the Mahdi's aid. Europe will be hit by a massive tidal wave which drowns the peoples' desire to oppose him. Sweeping in from the north together with his allies from Scandinavia, the Mahdi enters first Germany, where he will receive intelligence that many of its people have an intense desire to accept Islam, and then moves through Austria on his way to the Balkans. No wars need to be fought to gain these peoples' allegiance. Only the Serbs and the Greeks in eastern Europe seriously fight against the Mahdi. Upon both nations he wreaks a terrible vengeance. Poles, Bulgars and Rumanians accept him without a fight. However, both Great Britain and France are made of sterner stuff, and both refuse the oath of allegiance and prepare to fight with the support of America.

The Mahdi gives them an ultimatum, for they have oppressed the world long enough; if they do not surrender

unconditionally and swear allegiance within 24 hours, he tells them that they alone will be responsible for what follows. When this period is up, the three capitals of the recalcitrant countries are reduced to ruins. “Washington, the city of the American White House, where the policies of Satan [are made], and the cursed Congress, whose decisions are led by the devil, and approved by the Antichrist— fires swallow them up and they become past tense.”⁸¹ The Mahdi then physically attacks the two European countries. Despite warnings to the United States not to aid them, the Americans will provide their allies secret aid. As a punishment, the Mahdi’s nuclear missiles will completely destroy five unnamed American states, killing virtually all of their inhabitants. At that point both Great Britain and France will accept the oath of allegiance and their peoples become Muslim for the first time in history. All of the southern European states (Spain, Portugal, and Malta) likewise accept the oath, and many of their people convert willingly. Italy and most especially Rome, and the Vatican within it, will be conquered, and Europe will become completely Muslim-controlled. Rome will be utterly destroyed, as predicted in the classical Muslim sources, and the remaining people convert to Islam. For a brief, fleeting moment the messianic age is a reality, as the Mahdi establishes a completely new order.⁸² However, the Antichrist, yet enthroned in the United States, manages to gather together a new coalition of enemies of Islam from East Asia, India and South America. He will lead the American and Chinese soldiers from the east, through Khurasan in eastern Persia, where they will advance all the way to Syria and besiege the Muslims there. Just at the point where all hope is lost, Jesus will return to the world, kill the Antichrist, and destroy his Jewish and American followers.

This fantastic interpretation of Muslim, Christian, Gnostic and pseudo-scientific materials, combined with an immense hatred of the west and an envy of its power, forms a complete apocalypse in the sense of future history. While it can obviously be criticized on many grounds, not the least of which is plausibility— but one should not forget its weak connection to the original Muslim sources as well— it still has the power to give hope to a group of people otherwise lacking in hope. Muslims do not see much hope in the modern world: in which their culture and values are irrelevant, their opinions and positions ignored or ridiculed, and many of their best and most promising people either emigrate to the west or take on its culture wholesale. This fantasy provides a hopeful future in which the world will finally be righted. Islam will be generally accepted, rule will once again be in the hands of the rightful caliph and the technology which should have been Muslim will be returned to the reconstituted Muslim empire. The lands of Islam will be peaceful, and people will convert to the true faith on a consistent basis. The hated power-houses of the west, led by the U.S., will be humiliated and recognized to be false and anti-God, and the Jews, the most malevolent of all the enemies of Islam, will be wiped out entirely or converted to Islam.

5. Conclusions

One cannot doubt of the profound hostility entertained by Muslim apocalyptic writers towards the United States, nor can one discount their intense desire to humiliate it and see it destroyed or converted to Islam.⁸³ Qur'anic exegesis has proved a fertile field for Muslim apocalyptists with regard to the United States and it is clear that they are make every effort to maximize the possibilities of the text. This exists in sharp

contra-distinction to classical trends in which the Qur'an was rarely quoted and was never used as a source for apocalypses.⁸⁴ The interpretation of 'Ad as a type of the U.S. stands as one example of the contemporary trend of trying to anchor important apocalyptic beliefs about present-day peoples in the Qur'an. This is most likely a reaction to the heavy use of Biblical passages which is more common in Muslim apocalyptic writings. Many conservative opponents of apocalyptists condemn these exegetes for using the Biblical passages; in using the 'Ad interpretation writers such as 'Abdallah and 'Abd al-Hamid show they are knowledgeable about the Qur'an, and capable of producing an entirely new line of commentary on it.

This level of fantasy, especially that of Muhammad 'Isa Da'ud, shows in a strange manner the perception of the outer world. For example, the appearance of the Mahdi gives us insight into the perception of how the world would be conquered for Islam. It shows no realistic approach, however; indeed the principal battles are won not because of preparation, intelligence or strategy, but because of God's active support of the Muslim armies. The attack on the U.S. is facilitated by the incredible strategic blunders made by the American forces (which are not out of the question, of course, but recent wars should give Da'ud no cause for optimism on this account). Da'ud's blatant desire for Muslim power and domination over the world is remarkable in its ignorance of how like the westerners he himself sounds in his pronouncements. There is absolutely nothing in what the Mahdi says, either in rationalization nor in justification of his actions, which has not been used by western leaders many times over, mainly in their aggressive and imperialist ventures. Da'ud's Mahdi sounds exactly like many who have been prominent on the

world scene, claiming to bring peace and being aggrieved when their “peaceful” overtures are rejected.

The most amazing element of this new Muslim discourse lies in the fact that they have simply allowed their western opponents to dominate the discourse of their “own” scenarios. Both 'Abdallah and Da'ud are especially guilty of this— they clearly want to be a westerners, but without the elements of western civilization which made the technological leap in the west possible in the first place. All Muslim apocalyptists, of course, wish for the west to become Muslim, and many predict this will occur in the near future. However, some of these apocalyptic writers seem to want to transfer the entirety of western civilization to the Muslim world. One must ask in the final analysis: is Da'ud's portrayal of the Mahdi a Muslim one? Or is 'Abdallah's presentation of the divine judgment upon the United States one really mandated by the Qur'an? In the Qur'an, while, for example, judgments are inflicted upon nations (or alleged nations, such as 'Ad), there is always the warning of a prophet and frequently divine signs previous to the absolute judgment. Where have these occurred vis-a-vis the United States? 'Abdallah never answers this question.

One must also honestly ask the question of whether this type of apocalyptic discourse actually provides the Muslims with the hope they need to overcome the negative present-day circumstances. Here hope is provided through the humiliation of one's opponents and their forced acceptance of Islam. Da'ud makes every effort to point out that there “is no compulsion in religion” (Qur'an 2:256), but where is the freedom to chose when nations are forced to take the oath of allegiance? It is clear that he wants to have his cake and eat it, too. Some apocalyptists seek to emphasize a more positive aspect of the hope in the brighter Islamic future in a different manner:

“The community of Muhammad is like the rain which grows good [things] in the earth and causes the earth to live after its death, and so too people live in Islam after they were dead in infidelity. The [Prophet] said: ‘My community is like the rain, it is not known whether the first part is best or the last part.’ This has been difficult for some people, what he says ‘... it is not known whether the first part is best or the last part.’... this tradition shows that the generation of the end times will be close [in merit] to that of the Companions.”⁸⁵

At least one can say for Da‘ud’s Mahdi that he does make a concerted attempt to rebuild the world after the destruction he has provoked and thus despite its negative overall tone, it ends off on a constructive note.

Notes

¹ I would like to thank the Center for Millennial Studies at Boston University for providing a partial grant for obtaining the materials used in this study. I would also like to thank Valerie Haeder, Shari Lowin and Deborah Tor for reading the text and editing it.

² See, e.g., Wilferd Madelung, “Abdallah b. al-Zubayr and the Mahdi,” *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 40 (1981), pp. 291-306; *idem*, “Apocalyptic prophecies in Hims during the Umayyad Age,” *Journal of Semitic Studies* 41 (1986), pp. 141-85; *idem*, “The Sufyani,” *Studia Islamica* 63 (1986), pp. 5-48; Suliman Bashear, “Early Muslim Apocalyptic Materials,” *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* 1991, pp. 173-207; *idem*, “Muslim Apocalypses,” *Israel Oriental Studies* 13 (1993), pp. 75-99; Michael Cook, “Eschatology, History and the Dating of Traditions,” *Princeton Papers in Near Eastern Studies* 1 (1992), pp. 23-48; *idem*, “The Heraculean Dynasty in Muslim Apocalyptic,” *al-Qantara* 13 (1992), pp. 3-24; *idem*, “A Muslim

Apocalyptic Chronicle," *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 52 (1993), pp. 25-29; Lawrence Conrad, "Portents of the Hour," forthcoming in *Der Islam*; and my "Muslim Apocalyptic and *jihad*," *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam* 20 (1996), pp. 66-104; *idem*, "Moral Apocalyptic in Islam," *Studia Islamica* 86 (1997), pp. 37-69 among numerous studies.

³ See my *The Hour shall not arrive until... Studies in Classical Muslim Apocalyptic* (forthcoming Princeton: Darwin Press).

⁴ Hisham Kamal 'Abd al-Hamid, *Halak wa-damar amrika al-muntazar* (Cairo: Dar al-Bashir, 1996), p. 5.

⁵ Sa'īd Ayyub, *al-Masih al-Dajjal* (Cairo: al-Fath li-l-'Alam al-'Arabi, 1987), p. 64.

⁶ Bashir Muhammad 'Abdallah, *Zilzal al-ard al-'azim* (Cairo: Dar al-Tiba'a al-Haditha, 1994), p. 98, and see similar comments pp. 99, 132, 151-52, 182, 405f., and about the former Soviet Union, pp. 99-100. Indians and Buddhists are also said to be slaves to the Jews, pp. 102, 132.

⁷ E.g., Hisham Kamal 'Abd al-Hamid, *Yajuj wa-Majuj qadimuna* (Cairo: Dar al-Bashir, 1997), pp. 120-31.

⁸ See "Banu Isra'il to the State of Israel: the changing exegesis of Qur'an 17:4-8," forthcoming.

⁹ 'Abd al-Hamid, p. 64.

¹⁰ Fa'iq Muhammad Da'ud, *al-Umur al-'izam qabla zuhur al-mahdi* (n.p., 1999), pp. 28-29; other strange ideas appear in Amin Jamal al-Din, *al-Qawl al-mubin fi al-ashrat al-sughra l-yawm al-din* (Cairo: al-Maktaba al-Tawfiqiyya, 1997), p. 86 where he compares the Islamic Republic of Iran's political system to that of the United States and states that there is no real difference because in both the presidents serve a term of four years.

¹¹ 'Abd al-Hamid, p. 96; all Qur'anic translations from Majid Fakhry, *The Qur'an: A Modern English translation* (London: Garnet, 1997).

¹² See my “Muslim Fears of the year 2000,” *Middle East Quarterly* June 1998, pp. 51-62; and “Jerusalem, the year 2000 and modern Muslim apocalyptic expectations,” forthcoming (Boston University: The Center for Millennial Studies).

¹³ Jalal al-Din al-Suyuti, *al-Hawi li-l-fatawi* (Cairo: Idarat al-Tiba‘a al-Muniriyya, 1352/1933), II, 86-92.

¹⁴ Although this will not be the topic of this paper, Muhammad ‘Isa Da’ud believes that Saddam Husayn is the Sufyani. See *al-Mabdi al-muntazar*, pp. 129-32; and see also Mansur ‘Abd al-Hakim, *al-Harb al-‘alamiyya al-thalitha qadima wa-tadiqq al-abwab* (Cairo: al-Maktaba al-Tawfiqiyya, 1998), where he says that Yasir ‘Arafat is the figure known in classical sources as al-Abqa’ (also repeated by Fahd Salim, *al-Sharr al-qadim* [Cairo: al-Madbuli al-Saghir, 1998], p. 137), Hafiz al-Asad is the one known as al-Ashab, and Saddam is probably the Sufyani: pp. 28-31.

¹⁵ Note how in the midst of a paragraph without any explanation he changes between *hijri* and Christian dates.

¹⁶ Muhammad ‘Isa Da’ud, p. 56.

¹⁷ 7:65, 74, 9:70, 11:50, 59-60, 14:9, 22:42, 25:38, 26:123, 29:38, 38:12, 40:31, 41:13, 15, 46:21, 50:13, 51:41, 53:50, 54:18, 69:4, 6, 89:6; and see material about Iram dhat al-‘Imad in 89:7..

¹⁸ Most of the relevant information is summarized in *Encyclopaedia of Islam?* ed. Bosworth, Lewis, *et alia* (Leyden: E.J. Brill, 1960-), s.v. “Ad” (F. Buhl), and “Iram dhat al-‘Imad” (W.M. Watt); and see also Shakir Mahmud ‘Abd al-Mun‘im, “Hiwar al-mufassirin wa-l-mu’arrikhin fi qissat Iram dhat al-‘Imad,” *al-Mu’arrikh al-‘Arabi* 19, no. 47 (1994), pp. 149-56.

¹⁹ Trans. Majid Fakhry.

²⁰ Muqatil b. Sulayman, *Tafsir*, ed. Mahmud Shahata (Cairo: al-Ha'iya al-Misriyya, 1983), III, pp. 273-74 (on 26:126-29), IV, p. 23 (46:21-26), pp. 687-88 (89:7-8).

²¹ R. Serjeant, "Hud and other pre-Islamic prophets of Hadramawt," *Le Muséon* 67 (1954), pp. 121-79.

²² al-Tabari, *Jami` al-bayan fi ta'wil ayy al-Qur'an*, ed. Salah 'Abd al-Fattah al-Khalidi (Beirut: Dar al-Qalam, 1997), V, p. 664, VI, pp. 674-78, VII, pp. 620-24. For different claims about 'Iram see Ibn 'Asakir, *Ta'rikh madi-nat Dimashq* (Beirut: Dar al-Fikr, 1995), I, pp. 216-18; Nu'aym b. Hammad, *Kitab al-fitian*, ed. Suhayl Zakkar (Beirut: Dar al-Fikr, 1993), pp. 124, 171-72; and al-Majlisi, *Bihar al-anwar* (Beirut: Mu'assasat al-Wafa', 1983), LII, p. 274. I. Lichtenstater, "Origin and interpretation of Qur'anic symbols," in *Studi orientalistici in onore di G. Levi della Vida* (Rome: Istituto per l'Oriente, 1956), II, p. 69 has suggested that *Iram dhat al-'imad* is a symbol for paradise.

²³ al-Khazin al-Baghdadi, *Tafsir* (together with al-Baghawi, *Ma'alim al-tanzil*) (Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyya, 1995), V, pp. 445-47, VI, pp. 419-21; see also 'Umar b. 'Adil al-Dimashqi al-Hanbali (d. 880/1475-76), *al-Lubab fi 'ulum al-Qur'an* (Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyya, 1998), XV, pp. 59-63, 404-13, XX, 315-20; and al-Bursawi (d. 1166/1752), *Tafsir ruh al-bayan* (Beirut: Dar al-Qalam, 1989), IV, pp. 67-69. The Shi'i al-Bahrani, *al-Burhan fi tafsir al-Qur'an* (Qumm: Mu'assasat al-Bi'tha, 1996), V, pp. 46-47 cites traditions about well-diggers in al-Batahiyya who fell down into a city beneath the sand and discovered 'Ad.

²⁴ al-Fayd al-Kashani, *Tafsir al-safi* (Beirut: Mu'assasat al-A'la li-l-Matbu'at, 1982), IV, p. 45; and compare al-Majlisi, *Bihar*, LXXVI, pp. 3, 13 and Wensinck, *Concordance* (Leyden: E.J. Brill, 1936-62), s.v. *wibal* for other versions of this tradition.

²⁵ M.J. Kister, "A Booth like the Booth of Moses..." *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 25 (1962), pp. 150-55.

²⁶ Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir* (Beirut: Dar al-Qalam, n.d.), III, p. 294; other material on 'Ad is in IV, pp. 142-44, 443-45. For a considerably different and

probably earlier version of this tradition (without the mention of the name 'Ad), see Ibn 'Asakir, *Tārīkh madīnat Dimashq* (Beirut: Dar al-Fikr, 1995-98), XXXIII, p. 400.

²⁷ 'Abdallah, p. 193.

²⁸ 'Abdallah, p. 196 (there are two more points as to what God's reaction is). For a similar view of what modernity holds, see Jalal 'Alam, *Qadat al-gharb yaqulun: dammiru al-Islam, ubidu ablahu* [*The leaders of the west are saying: Destroy Islam and annihilate its people*] (Cairo: al-Mukhtar al-Islami, 1977).

²⁹ 'Abdallah, p. 214.

³⁰ 'Abdallah, p. 230.

³¹ Hamza al-Faqir, *Thalatha yantaziruhum al-'alam* ('Amman: Dar al-Isra', 1995), pp. 34-35.

³² 'Abdallah, p. 202; and compare al-Faqir, *Thalatha*, p. 39, who accuses America of being "the Pharoah of this present world" in this regard.

³³ 'Abdallah, pp. 205-10.

³⁴ 'Abdallah, pp. 211-12.

³⁵ 'Abdallah, p. 213.

³⁶ One should note that this one of the five things that God says humans cannot know according to Qur'an 31:34. for the reason weather forecasting has occasionally been curtailed in Muslim countries by the orthodox. See Parviz Hoodbhoy, *Islam and Science* (London: Zed Books, 1991), pp. 46-47.

³⁷ 'Abdallah, pp. 216-19. He is referring to homosexuality, about which he says "and they even call this act 'gay' (*mazh* or *mazih*):" p. 225. He also is familiar with the AIDS virus and uses it to prove the degeneracy of the west: pp. 315-16; and see also Mustafa Mahmud, *al-Mu'amara al-kubra* (Cairo: Akhbar al-Yawm, 1993), p. 107.

³⁸ 'Abdallah, p. 221.

³⁹ 'Abdallah, p. 222.

⁴⁰ Note that in the Palestinian daily newspaper *al-Nabhar* for Dec. 15, 1990 the following apocalyptic prediction appeared: "Believing tongues these days are passing around an unknown traditio, whether it proceeded from the great Messenger [Muhammad] or not. An examination of [whether] the source is trustworthy and the transmitters reliable has occurred, and until now a large number of religious authorities have refused to confirm or deny the reliability of this tradition, [that it] came from the Messenger [of God] Muhammad. The tradition says: "The Messenger of God said: "The Banu al-Asfar [whites], the Byzantines and the Franks [Christian groups] will gather together in the wasteland with Egypt[ians] against a man whose name is Sadim [i.e., Saddam Husayn]— none of them will return." They said: "When, O Messenger of God?" He said: "Between the months of Jumada and Rajab [mid-November to mid-February], and you will see an amazing thing come of it".' " Most probably this originated with Saddam Husayn's propaganda machine.

⁴¹ See on them, 'Abd al-Hayy al-Farmawi, *al-Sirbiyyun khanazir Uruba yuhawalun ibadat al-wujud al-Islami fi al-Balqan* (Cairo: Dar al-I'tisam, 1992).

⁴² 'Abdallah, p. 223.

⁴³ E.g., Muhammad 'Isa Da'ud, *Ma qabla al-damar* (Cairo: Dar al-Bashir, 1999), p. 186; Mansur 'Abd al-Hakim and Hisham 'Abd al-Hamid cite him frequently; and Muhammad Mustafa, *Damar Amrika qadim, qadim* (Beirut: Mu'assasat al-Rihab al-Haditha, 1998) builds much of his thesis upon 'Abdallah's work.

⁴⁴ Sa'id Ayyub, pp. 166-67; Fa'iq Muhammad Da'ud, *al-Umur al-'izam*, p. 20; Salim, *Sharr*, pp. 186-87 (on p. 188 he states that many Masonic agents are named George, such as George Washington, George Bush, etc.).

⁴⁵ Salim, *Sharr*, p. 180 says that Clinton is the president who will preside over the Battle of Armageddon.

⁴⁶ 'Abdallah, pp. 449-51.

⁴⁷ 'Abdallah, p. 182f.; and on pp. 406-09 he lists off the references to Babylon in the Bible, and arbitrarily attaches them to the U.S. *en masse*.

⁴⁸ See Sifr b. 'Abd al-Rahman al-Huwayli, *Wa'd Kissinjur wa-l-abdaf al-Amirikiyya fi l-khalij* (Dallas, Texas: Mu'assasat al-Kitab al-Islami, 1991), *passim*; and Muhammad 'Isa Da'ud, *Ihdharu: al-Masih al-Dajjal yaghzu al-'alam min muthallith Bermuda* (Cairo: al-Mukhtar al-Islami, 1991), pp. 117, 131f.

⁴⁹ 'Abdallah, p. 377-78; he also cites Rev. 16:20 to support his thesis and a number of *hadiths*.

⁵⁰ 'Abdallah, p. 382.

⁵¹ 'Abdallah, pp. 392-95. It is curious that he would have such a hostile attitude towards the Japanese, which is not very common among apocalypticists.

⁵² 'Abdallah, pp. 395-96; Mustafa, *Damar*, pp. 70-71; and see also 'Abd al-'Aziz Mustafa, *Qabla an yuhdam al-Aqsa* (Cairo: Dar al-Tawzi' wa-l-Nashr al-Islamiyya, 1990), pp. 251-52 where he talks about the effects of the Jews' beliefs upon themselves and their society.

⁵³ 'Abdallah, pp. 476, 478f.

⁵⁴ 'Abdallah, p. 486. It is curious that he would chose the day of the Waco disaster (and the Oklahoma City bombing two years later) for his apoca-

lyptic moment; he wrote slightly previous to Waco and shows no awareness of it.

⁵⁵ 'Abdallah, pp. 132f., 160. His Biblical support for this comes from Is. 34:1-8 and Zeph 1:14-18, where God takes vengeance *for* Zion. He reads it quite the opposite.

⁵⁶ 'Abdallah, p. 131.

⁵⁷ 'Abdallah, pp. 160f., especially 167.

⁵⁸ Muhammad 'Isa Da'ud also subscribes to the idea of 'Ad being the U.S., and has comment on it: *Mahdi*, p. 109f.

⁵⁹ Muhammad 'Isa Da'ud, *Mahdi*, p. 114.

⁶⁰ Muhammad 'Isa Da'ud, *Mahdi*, p. 132. Since many of these apocalyptic writers are Egypt-based, and actually supported the Allies in the Gulf War (1991)— and some of them actually penned pamphlets prophesying the downfall of Saddam Husayn (such as Muhammad 'Izzat 'Arif, who wrote *Nihayat Saddam* during that year)— it is amazing to note the turnaround in hostility towards Kuwait which has spread through the genre.

⁶¹ Muhammad 'Isa Da'ud, *Mahdi*, pp. 138-39. For the classical material about al-Barqi see al-Qurtubi, *al-Tadhkira fi ahwal al-mawta wa-umur al-akhira* (Cairo: Dar al-Qudsi, n.d.), p. 694.

⁶² According to Da'ud, King Husayn and his family are totally Jewish and regularly attend the Jewish synagogue in Jordan since (pp. 147-48), "they sucked the milk of the Jews or perhaps their original sperm was Jewish sperm."

⁶³ Da'ud does not expand much upon this attack, but alludes to it several times.

⁶⁴ Muhammad 'Isa Da'ud, *Mahdi*, p. 159.

⁶⁵ Muhammad ‘Isa Da‘ud, *Mahdi*, pp. 161-63.

⁶⁶ Muhammad ‘Isa Da‘ud, *Mahdi*, p. 167.

⁶⁷ Muhammad ‘Isa Da‘ud, *Mahdi*, p. 168. So, too, Mansur ‘Abd al-Hakim, *al-Harb al-‘alamiyya al-thalitha*, p. 87: “This will be the Islamic Army of Salvation— this name is ours because the goal of the Islamic Army will be to save humanity in its entirety during the age of the Mahdi from error and tyranny into right and justice.”

⁶⁸ Muhammad ‘Isa Da‘ud, *Mahdi*, p. 169.

⁶⁹ Thanks to the manuscript he is able to bring out the identification of America with ‘Ad, since it says (among other things) “The battle-days of God during the time of the Mahdi will be like those during the time of ‘Ad...” (Da‘ud, *Mahdi*, p. 212) and goes on to describe the destruction.

⁷⁰ Muhammad ‘Isa Da‘ud, *Mahdi*, pp. 170-74; and see Jamal al-Din, *Qawl al-mubin*, pp. 123-25 on this scenario.

⁷¹ Muhammad ‘Isa Da‘ud, *Mahdi*, p. 179.

⁷² Muhammad ‘Isa Da‘ud, *Mahdi*, pp. 179-80.

⁷³ Muhammad ‘Isa Da‘ud, *Mahdi*, p. 184.

⁷⁴ Muhammad ‘Isa Da‘ud, *Mahdi*, p. 200.

⁷⁵ Muhammad ‘Isa Da‘ud, *Mahdi*, pp. 220-21.

⁷⁶ ‘Arif, *Nibaya*, p. 126.

⁷⁷ Muhammad ‘Isa Da‘ud, *Mahdi*, p. 224.

⁷⁸ According to his calculations 85% of world Jewry will perish in this war, Da'ud, *Mahdi*, p. 226; and Jamal al-Din, *Qawl al-mubin*, p. 126 also says that most of them will be dead as a result.

⁷⁹ Muhammad 'Isa Da'ud, *Mahdi*, p. 236.

⁸⁰ Muhammad 'Isa Da'ud, *Mahdi*, p. 241; and compare the version in Ayyub, pp. 199-202.

⁸¹ Muhammad 'Isa Da'ud, *Mahdi*, p. 273.

⁸² See my comments on it in "Modern Muslim apocalyptic literature: Part I, the Arabic material," forthcoming in *Studia Islamica*.

⁸³ Wilfred Cantwell Smith, *Islam in Modern History* (Toronto: McGill, 1957), pp. 76-79.

⁸⁴ This tendency was already noted by Muslims in classical times, where we find casual comments like "people everywhere follow after *hadith* and have left the Qur'an entirely": Ibn 'Asakir, *Tā'rikh madinat Dimashq* (Beirut: Dar al-Fikr, 1995-99), XXVII, p. 309.

⁸⁵ Hamza al-Faqir, *Thalatha yantaziruhum al-'alam*, p. 13.