C

Chams

The **Chams** are an ethnic minority and largely Muslim population now concentrated in Cambodia and Vietnam, groups of which practise many varieties of Islam, from syncretist traditions incorporating Hindu beliefs and practices, to a more orthodox version of Sunnī Islam.

1. The Chams before Islam

The Chams, Austronesian-speaking relatives of the Malays, emerged in history as a seafaring people of Southeast Asia. In the first millennium B.C.E., they sailed from the west coast of Borneo across the South China Sea and settled in what is now central Vietnam (Vickery, *Champa revised*, 13–5). Burial jars found there, in sand dunes at Sa Huynh, resemble others found in Borneo. By the late first millennium B.C.E., this prehistoric culture was trading in semiprecious stones from as far away as India (Southworth, 212–3).

The growing sea trade between China and India benefited inhabitants of the long Vietnamese coastline. By 85 C.E., when Chinese records mention southern "barbarians from beyond the frontier," Sa Huynh sites contained iron goods and Chinese coins (Wang Gungwu, 20-4; Keith Taylor, 61; O'Reilly, 129). China never integrated that southern frontier region, where indigenous and Indic cultures mingled. A third-century Cham polity produced Southeast Asia's first writing, a Sanskrit inscription found near Nha Trang, in central Vietnam. A fourth-century Cham-language inscription found in Quang Nam province and written in an Indic alphabet is the oldest text in a Southeast Asian language (Coedès). The Chams "naturalised" Indian gods (e.g., Shiva, Brahma, and Vishnu) and Hinduised local deities. Thus the goddess of Nha Trang, Po ("lord" or "lady") Ino Nagar, became identified with Uma, consort of Shiva (Mus, 36–7). The sixth-century C.E. Cham temple of My Son in Quang Nam is Southeast Asia's oldest monument of Indian style (Maspero, 38). The art of the ninth-century Dong Duong temple complex, also in Quang Nam, has been termed "possibly the most astonishing aesthetic experience produced by Buddhism" (Mabbett, 299).

For centuries, several coastal kingdoms known as "Champa" (in what is now

central Vietnam) competed with one another and with their neighbours. Cham culture, music, and religion influenced the people of Vietnam. Chinese historians record a first tribute mission from "Zhan-po" in 657 C.E. (Wang Gungwu, 122). A Sanskrit inscription from My Son dated 658 tells of a Cham prince who visited Cambodia and married a Khmer princess (Vickery, *Champa revised*, 25–6). More than 210 Cham-language inscriptions survive, dating from the fourth to the fifteenth century (Guillon, 68).

The Muslim writer al-Dimashqī (d. 727/1327) claimed that Islam reached Champa in about the second/eighth century, "in the time of Othman," and even that "the Alids…took refuge there" (Manguin, The introduction, 290–1). Muslim merchants traded between Champa and southern China; one led Cham tribute missions to China in 958 and 960. Fifth/eleventh-century Arabic inscriptions found in Champa confirm the existence of a small Muslim trading colony. One inscription advised Arab, Persian, and Turkish merchants how to use money in the kingdom and to prudently contribute to its coffers. Some traders were highly literate and won local appointment, as attested by the tombstone of a certain Abū Kāmil, dated 1039. Exhibiting Shīʿī influence, its inscription in classical Fāṭimid Kūfic script records his title, "The Guardian of Roads" (Manguin, The introduction, 289–92). This may be early evidence of foreign Muslim traders serving the courts of Southeast Asian port kingdoms by assuming responsibility for other merchant travellers. In some cases, members of a Muslim trading community eventually converted the king and court, but there is no evidence for a continuous Muslim presence in Champa. Buddhism and, especially from the thirteenth century, Hinduism, dominated religious life there until the late sixteenth century (Manguin, The introduction, 295).

Sea trade was accompanied by naval warfare. Cham fleets sacked the Khmer capital of Angkor in 1178, and, in 1371, Hanoi, the capital of the Vietnamese kingdom of Dai Viet. In 1471, however, Dai Viet forces destroyed Champa's then capital, Vijaya, and killed the Cham king, along with forty thousand to sixty thousand of his subjects (according to Vietnamese chronicles). The victors divided Champa into principalities, and Vietnamese peasants slowly began to settle its farmlands. Sailing from Champa's ports, Cham merchants remained active throughout the seventeenth century, trading in Manila, Makassar, Melaka, Johor, Pahang, Patani, and Siam. Merchant ships from as far away as Japan and Banten (in western Java) visited Cham ports (Manguin, The introduction, 306–7). Chams helped the Malay sultanate of Johor to combat the Portuguese in 1594.

2. Islamisation and colonisation

This new era of international seaborne commerce also brought missionaries from abroad, including Ṣūfī preachers who travelled aboard merchant ships. Islam and Christianity spread across the island world of Southeast Asia. A 1595 Spanish text asserted that "many Mahometans" also lived in Champa, whose pagan king wanted Islam "spoken and taught," with the result that "many mosques" existed in the kingdom alongside Hindu "temples of the gentiles" (Manguin, The introduction, 300). In 1607, a Muslim *orang kaya* (Malay, lit. "high-ranking person," a term used for an official responsible for foreign traders) inspected a Dutch fleet anchored

off Champa. The Hindu king's younger brother also "wished to embrace the religion of the Moors, but he dared not do so because of his brother" (Manguin, The introduction, 300–1). Cham traditions record that King Po Ramo (r. 1627–51) invited Muslim dignitaries to Hindu ceremonies and had Hindu priests attend mosques during celebrations of Ramaḍān. He chose a Muslim as one of his wives, as did his successor (Manguin, The introduction, 303–4).

By 1675, most Chams were said to be Muslims (Manguin, L'introduction, 271). The next year saw the accession to the throne of the first Cham monarch to convert to Islam, whose full name is now unknown. He used the Malay title "Paduka Seri Sultan," and ruled until 1685. Cham Muslims were Sunnīs and followed the Shāfiʿī school but retained many of their own traditional beliefs and practices. A French missionary wrote of the Chams in 1678 that "more than half are Moors with the King, without however understanding their religion; the other part worship the sky, and in their sicknesses, or in accidents which overtake them, offer sacrifices to devils to be cured" (Manguin, The introduction, 302). The Cham goddess Po Ino Nagar re-emerged, as Po Havah, or Eve, wife of the prophet Adam (Ner, 154; Cabaton).

In 1680–2, the Cham sultan sent ambassadors to Batavia, seat of the Dutch East India Company in Java, and merchant ships to Melaka (Manguin, The introduction, 302, 307), but in 1697 the southern Vietnamese kingdom of Dang Trong took over the last Cham port. Some five thousand refugees (including much of Cham royalty) fled into Buddhist Cambodia, where some of their descendants still use the Indic Cham alphabet and practise a Hinduised form of Islam (Baccot). A second Cham migration followed in the 1790s (Po Dharma, À propos), and in 1813, Chams erected Cambodia's most prominent mosque, Noor al-Ihsan, at Chrang Chamres, 7 kilometres north of Phnom Penh. The Vietnamese emperor finally annexed the last Champa principality in 1832 (Po Dharma, *Le Pāṇḍuraṅga*).

Between 1858 and 1867, French forces seized control of southern Vietnam, and in 1863 they established a colonial protectorate over Cambodia. A French census of 1874 counted 26,000 Chams in Cambodia, three percent of the population (Porée and Maspero). By 1936 an estimated 88,000 Muslims, mostly Chams, lived in Cambodia (Ner, 179–80). Their numbers rose to at least 150,000 by 1955, and about 250,000 in 1975. (Lower and higher figures are debated in Vickery, Comments; Kiernan, The demography; Kiernan, *The Pol Pot regime*, and Ysa, *Oukoubah*.)

By 1940, fifteen thousand Chams lived in south-central Vietnam, of whom six thousand were Muslim (Ner, 154). By 1971, the number of Chams living there had risen to sixty thousand. Vietnam's total Cham population was estimated in 1989 at 99,000, and by 2006, at 131,000 (Moussay, 10; Philip Taylor, 59; Ba Trung Phu, 126).

3. Religious beliefs and practices

The Cham populations of Vietnam and Cambodia may each be divided into several religious groups, with a different spectrum of beliefs in the two countries.

Of the Vietnamese Chams, up to ninety percent live in south-central Vietnam near Phan Rang and Phan Ri. About half of these Chams are Muslims, and half are

Hindu or animist (Philip Taylor, 2; Ba Trung Phu, 126). The Muslims call themselves "Cham Bani" ("Cham sons [of the religion]") and call their Hindu compatriots *kafir*, despite the fact that the latter also worship Po Ovlah (Allāh). Conversely, the Muslims worship not only Allāh but also Po Devata Thwor (Sanskrit, Devatā Svarga), as well as Shiva and Po Ino Nagar, whom they equate with Po Adam and Po Havah. Their Qurʾān is incomplete, containing only *sūra*s 96 through 114, handwritten in Arabic in the Kūfic style, and supplemented by instructions in Cham, written in the Indic Cham script. Lay people pray facing Mecca, but leave other religious obligations to religious specialists, such as village preachers, *imöm*s, and the heads of religious orders. Cham Bani practise only symbolic circumcision and ablutions; their mosques (*sang mügik*) usually open only for Ramaḍān (*ramüvan*) and for Friday prayers. They observe Ramaḍān for only three days and preserve elements of traditional Cham matrilineal and bilateral gender relations, including a divorced woman's right to her dowry and most of the couple's joint property. Female Cham dignitaries known as *radja*s play the main part in annual festivals held in December–January, when the *radja* and Cham *imöm*s invoke thirty-eight deities and mountain and forest spirits, including shades of "spirits beyond the sea, which may not be mentioned by name" (Cabaton, 1210–2). Cham Muslims and Hindus alike drink rice spirits, while all abstain from both pork and beef. Shīʿī influence persists in a Cham reverence for Açan and Açai (Ḥasan and Ḥusayn) and ʿAlī, who also figure prominently in Cham manuscripts (Cabaton, 1210). Cham Bani accord the same title *Mbi* to both ʿAlī and the Prophet, *Mbi* Muhammad (Ba Trung Phu, 127–30).

A group of about 13,000 Chams live in the Mekong Delta of southern Vietnam. This smaller, more isolated community define their identity more in terms of their Islamic faith than their connection to Champa or central Vietnam. More intermingled with their Vietnamese and Khmer neighbours, they draw upon Buddhist terminology to describe their religion and to assert its parity with Buddhism (Philip Taylor, 2, 67–81, 20, 112, 140–1). They are led at the village level by *hakem*, or community leaders.

Cambodia is home to most of the Cham people, nearly ninety percent of whom constitute a far more orthodox Muslim community than those in central Vietnam. Even in colonial times the French rulers considered them "fervent" (Delvert, 23). Yet Cambodia's Muslims are also divided into several communities.

A minority, who are descendants of the first Chams to settle in Cambodia, consider themselves keepers of the ancient language, script, and culture of Champa. In 2005, they numbered about 38,000, the majority living in thirty villages near the Tonle Sap river and lake, in Kompong Chhnang, Pursat, and Battambang provinces of western Cambodia. These Muslims hold prayer in their mosques only on Friday. They are variously known as the Imam San, Cham Bani, Jahed, Cham Sot ("pure Chams"), and "the Friday group" (Kom Jumaat). Their centre is O Russei village in Kompong Chhnang, where their religious leader with the title of *on g'nur*, equivalent to *muftī*, also resides (Blengsli, 175; Bruckmayr, The Cham Muslims, 15).

The majority of Cambodia's Chams, by contrast, share a religious hierarchy with local Malays, who are known as Chvea. Both strictly observe Ramaḍān, ablutions, circumcision, and Islamic marriage customs,

and venerate the graves of saints. In the colonial period, many also believed in witches, werewolves, evil spirits, magic, and followed some agricultural practices devolved from animism (Cabaton, 1209–10). Most Chams were concentrated in about seventy villages near the Mekong River, in the eastern province of Kompong Cham, where they practised small-scale family fishing in the rivers. Most of the Chvea lived in thirty-six villages in Takeo and Kampot provinces of the southwest (Kiernan, *The Pol Pot regime*, 255). Muslims formed nearly a majority in one district, Krauchhmar, in Kompong Cham. In the 1950s, Chams there numbered more than twenty thousand, in "very large" communities of fisherfolk, garden farmers, butchers, and weavers (Delvert, 605, 610–1). Others monopolised the livestock trade in Phnom Penh. Kompong Cham province alone was home in 1939 to 33,000 Muslims with forty mosques, and more than five hundred Chams, or two percent of the men, had visited Mecca (Delvert, 23; Loubet, 61, 208).

With the exception of the Imam San community, literature in the Cham language is rarer here than in Vietnam. Most Cham and Chvea villages in Cambodia run local Qurʾānic schools. In the 1930s, Trea village, in Krauchhmar, boasted the country's two most famous schools, to which the Mecca-educated Hajji Osman attracted students from all over Cambodia (Bruckmayr, The Cham Muslims, 3; Bruckmayr, Cambodia's Phum Trea, 48). In 1948, Hajji Sam Sou of Battambang province founded the first of a network of religious schools, teaching a reformed understanding of Islam, Islamic brotherhood, and selflessness. The curriculum included Qur'ānic recitation, *ḥadīth*, jurisprudence (*fiqh*), Ṣūfism, and the Arabic and Malay languages (Blengsli, 178–9, 192). A modernist movement emerged in the 1950s, founded by Tuon Ly Musa, who had completed six years of studies in Kelantan, in the Malay Peninsula, before returning to Cambodia during the Second World War. In the 1950s he founded a school at Svay Khleang, in Krauchhmar, which also attracted pupils from across the country. However, the attempts to "purify" Cambodian Islam, undertaken by Tuon Ly Musa and another reformist from Krauchhmar, Imöm Ahmad, who had studied in India, led to disputes and violence among the country's Muslims. In 1960, six years after Cambodia's independence from France, the government of Prince Norodom Sihanouk briefly exiled both *imöm*s. In the same year Sihanouk appointed the country's first *muftī*, Raja Thipadei Res Lah, to lead the Cham and Chvea communities. The *muftī* criticised the reformist movement or Kaum Muda ("new group") for fomenting divisions with the "old" or traditionalist Kaum Tua (Blengsli, 177, 180–1; Bruckmayr, The Cham Muslims, 4; Bruckmayr, Cambodia's Phum Trea, 48).

Despite these divisions, by 1975 Cambodia's 118 mosque communities, led in each village by a *hakem*, two *hakem rong* (deputies), and six to ten *imöm*s, probably included over one thousand *ḥājjīs*. Twenty-five Cambodian Chams had also graduated from world centres of Islamic learning, and nine had completed six years of study at al-Azhar University, in Cairo (Kiernan, *The Pol Pot regime*, 255–6, 271).

4. The Khmer Rouge genocide and recovery

During Cambodia's civil war of 1970–5, Khmer Rouge insurgents led by Saloth Sar (Pol Pot) forcibly uprooted all the Cham communities of the country's southwest

and others in the north. Khmer Rouge documents from this period described the Chams as a distinct group that had to be "broken up." In 1973, a document entitled *Class analysis and the class struggle* discussed Cambodia's ruling classes and proletariat but added, "All nationalities have labourers, like our Kampuchean nationality, except for Islamic Khmers, whose lives are not so difficult." An image of the archetypal Cham, the independent fisherman, dominated the Khmer Rouge view of the Cham community. Its distinct history, language, and culture, its large villages and independent, countrywide networks seemed to threaten the Khmer Rouge leaders' vision of an atomised, controlled society. A 1974 Khmer Rouge regional document entitled *Decisions concerning the* [party] line *on cooperatives* ordered a "delay" in admitting "Islamic Khmers" into cooperatives and explained, "it is necessary to break up this group to some extent; do not allow too many of them to concentrate." Cham resistance erupted, and by late 1974, arrests of Muslim leaders in Trea village of Krauchhmar provoked a serious rebellion. A Cham-led breakaway group of insurgents, allied with local Cambodian royalists and Vietnamese communists, briefly challenged the Khmer Rouge in eastern Cambodia (Kiernan, *The Pol Pot regime*, 260–1, 268).

The Khmer Rouge won the Cambodian civil war in April 1975. Although Chams made up three percent of the country's population, Pol Pot's new regime (1975–9) falsely asserted that all the ethnic minorities together comprised only one percent. The regime claimed that as long ago as 1471, "the Cham race was exterminated by the Vietnamese" (Democratic Kampuchea, *Livre noir*, 6), yet in 1975 there were probably more Chams living in Cambodia than had lived in mediaeval Champa.

The Pol Pot regime itself set out to exterminate Chams. It massacred their leaders: the *muftī,* Res Lah, both his deputies, and more than 290 of the 339 *hakem* and *hakem rong* all perished (Kiernan, *The Pol Pot regime*, 271). The regime also deported Cham communities from the Eastern Zone, forbade the practice of Islam and use of the Cham language, and even forced Muslims to eat pork in the new compulsory communal mess halls, sometimes on pain of death (Ysa, *Oukoubah*, and Ysa, *The Cham rebellion*). Nearly 100,000 Chams (over one-third) died in four years of genocide, before a Vietnamese invasion overthrew Pol Pot's regime in January 1979. By 1983, Cambodia's Muslim population had risen again to 182,000 (Kiernan, *The Pol Pot regime*, 461–2). By 2005, it had reached 320,000, distributed among 417 Muslim-majority villages, with 244 mosques and 313 *surao* (prayer-houses). In 1996, a new *muftī* was appointed (Blengsli, 173, 177).

Transnational Islamic organisations became active among the surviving Chams, including the Muslim World League, the Fethullah Gülen movement, Darul Arqam, and Ḥizb al-Taḥrīr. In 1989 Suleiman Ibrahim, a former *imöm* of Trea who had spent two decades abroad, returned to Cambodia and established a branch of the missionary Dakwah Tabligh (Tablighi Jama'at). In 1992, he founded the Al Hida Yah Hafiz school in Trea. By 2007, Tablighis had built the country's largest mosque there. The Tablighis, who are considered to exert influence over thirty percent of Cambodia's Muslims, are associated with the "old" or traditionalist school, and criticise the "new" for proselytising through financial aid (Bruckmayr, The Cham Muslims, 13–5; Bruckmayr, Cambodia's Phum Trea, 48; Blengsli, 184–6).

Cham Muslims in both Cambodia and Vietnam have received significant funds from Arab donors from the early 1990s (Blengsli, 172, 187–8, 192–3; Philip Taylor, 18, 121). A large Kuwaiti donation funded the demolition of the historic Noor al-Ihsan Mosque, built in 1813 on the outskirts of Phnom Penh, and the construction of a new one of Middle Eastern design (Widyono, xvii). In 2002, Cambodia's *muftī* criticised divisions fostered by "the new religion from Arabia" (Blengsli, 188). In 2003–4, Cambodian authorities cracked down on two Islamic schools financed and run by Salafī institutions from Saudi Arabia and Kuwait, expelling twenty-eight foreign Muslim teachers, and sentencing two others and a Cambodian substitute teacher to life imprisonment (Blengsli, 172, 187, 190; Bruckmayr, The Cham Muslims, 17–8). In addition to traditional Qurʾānic schools, Islamic schools proliferated, and in 2005 they numbered up to fifty (Blengsli, 189–96).

Bibliography

Ba Trung Phu, The Cham Bani of Vietnam, *American Journal of Islamic Social Sciences* 23/3 (2006), 126–33; Juliette Baccot (pseudonym of Françoise Corrèze), On G'nur et Cay à O Russey. Syncrétisme religieux dans un village cham du Cambodge, Paris 1968; Bjørn Atle Blengsli, Muslim metamorphosis. Islamic education and politics in contemporary Cambodia, in Robert W. Hefner (ed.), *Making modern Muslims. The politics of Islamic education in Southeast Asia*, Honolulu 2009, 172–204; Philipp Bruckmayr, The Cham Muslims of Cambodia. From forgotten minority to focal point of Islamic Internationalism, *American Journal of Islamic Social Sciences* 23/3 (2006), 1–23; Philipp Bruckmayr, Cambodia's Phum Trea as mirror image of religious change, *ISIM Review* 20 (2007), 48–9; A. Cabaton, Indochina, EI2; George Coedès, La plus ancienne inscription en langue cham, in Sumitra M. Katre and Parashurama K. Gode (eds.), A volume of Eastern and Indian studies (Bombay 1939), 46–9; Jean Delvert, Le paysan cambodgien, Paris 1961; Democratic Kampuchea, Livre noir. Faits et preuves des actes d'agression et d'annexion du Vietnam contre le Kampuchéa, Phnom Penh 1978; Louis Finot et al., *Études épigraphiques sur le pays cham*, Paris 1995; Emmanuel Guillon, Hindu-Buddhist art of Vietnam. Treasures from Champa, Trumbull CT 2001; Ben Kiernan, Orphans of genocide. The Cham Muslims of Kampuchea under Pol Pot, Bulletin of Concerned Asian Scholars 20/4 (1988), 2–33; Ben Kiernan, The genocide in Cambodia, 1975–79, Bulletin of Concerned Asian Scholars 22/2 (1990), 35–40; Ben Kiernan, The demography of genocide in Southeast Asia. The death tolls in Cambodia, 1975–79, and East Timor, 1975–80, *Critical Asian Studies* 35/4 (2003), 585–97; Ben Kiernan, The Pol Pot regime. Race, power and genocide in Cambodia under the Khmer Rouge, 1975–1979, New Haven 2008[2]; L. Loubet, *Monographie de la province de Kompong Cham*, Phnom Penh 1939; Ian W. Mabbett, Buddhism in Champa, in David G. Marr and Anthony C. Milner (eds.), Southeast Asia in the 9th to 14th centuries (Singapore and Canberra 1986), 289–313; Pierre-Yves Manguin, L'introduction de l'Islam au Champa, BEFEO 66 (1979), 255–87; Pierre-Yves Manguin, The introduction of Islam into Champa, in Alijah Gordon (ed.), *The propagation of Islam in the Indonesian-Malay archipelago* (Kuala Lumpur 2001), 287–328; Georges Maspero, Le royaume de Champa, Paris 1928; Gérard Moussay, Coup d'œil sur les Cam aujourd'hui, Bulletin de la Société des Études Indochinoises de Saigon 46 (1971), 3–10; Paul Mus, India seen from the East. Indian and indigenous cults in Champa, Clayton, Victoria, Australia 1975; Marcel Ner, Les Musulmans de l'Indochine française, BEFEO 41 (1941), 151–97; Dougald J. W. O'Reilly, Early civilizations of Southeast Asia, Lanham MD 2007; Po Dharma, À propos de l'exil d'un roi cam au Cambodge, BEFEO 72 (1983), 253–66; Po Dharma, *Le Pāṇḍuraṅga (Campā), 1802–1835. Ses rapports avec le Vietnam*, Paris 1987; Guy Porée and Éveline Maspero, Moeurs et coutumes des Khmers, Paris 1938; William A. Southworth, The coastal states of Champa, in Ian Glover and Peter Bellwood (eds.), Southeast Asia. From prehistory to history, London 2004, 209–33; Keith Weller Taylor, The birth of Vietnam, Berkeley 1983; Philip

Taylor, *Cham Muslims of the Mekong Delta. Place and mobility in the cosmopolitan periphery*, Singapore 2007; Michael Vickery, Comments on Cham population figures, *Bulletin of Concerned Asian Scholars* 22/1 (1989), 31–3; Michael Vickery, Champa revised, Singapore 2005; Wang Gungwu, The Nanhai trade. A study of the early history of Chinese trade in the South China Sea, Kuala Lumpur 1958; Benny Widyono, *Dancing in shadows. Sihanouk, the Khmer Rouge, and the United Nations in Cambodia* (Lanham MD 2008), foreword by Ben Kiernan, xvii–xxvi; Osman Ysa, Oukoubah. Justice for the Cham Muslims under the Democratic Kampuchea regime, trans. Rich Arant, Phnom Penh 2002; Osman Ysa, The Cham rebellion. Survivors' stories from the villages, Phnom Penh 2006.

Ben Kiernan

Contagion

Contagion, the transmission of disease by direct or indirect contact, has been a contentious subject in the Islamic world for over a thousand years, having been treated in the fields of Galenic medicine and Prophetic medicine and in *ḥadīth* commentaries and plague treatises. Despite the impression of some European travellers that Muslims were generally fatalistic during plague outbreaks, refusing to take precautions in their interactions with those afflicted by the disease, Islamic practice and scholarship have both exhibited a striking variety of positions on the issue of contagion. In any discussion of contagion in the pre-modern period, however, it must be kept in mind that the phenomenon of disease transmission was understood quite differently than it is in constructions of disease, which have their roots in the laboratories of the nineteenth century.

It is clear from references in poetry that the Bedouin of pre-Islamic Arabia believed in the transmission of disease between animals. While contagion is not addressed in the Qurʾān and only tangentially in Qurʾānic exegesis, a belief in contagion is encountered repeatedly in the canonical and pre-canonical collections of Prophetic tradition of the late second/eighth and third/ninth centuries. Here we find the Prophet denying the existence of contagion *(ʿadwā)*, along with other pre-Islamic beliefs such as evil omens, while warning his followers to flee from lepers as though they were lions and not to water mangy camels with healthy ones. The issue is further complicated by the fact that the Prophet forbade people to enter or leave plague-infested areas, while stating that the plague was a form of martyrdom for his followers. The seeming contradiction between these two stances was acknowledged in the Prophetic tradition itself, in which the (in)famous Companion Abū Hurayra (d. c.58/679), when questioned about his having related contradictory statements from the Prophet, denied having related the Prophet's refutation of contagion.

The issue of contagion thus entered the third/ninth century debates between the Muʿtazila and the traditionists on the reliability of Prophetic tradition, and in Ibn Qutabya's (d. 276/889) defence of Prophetic tradition *(taʾwīl mukhtalif al-ḥadīth)* we find an attempted reconciliation of the traditions. Ibn Qutayba argued that while diseases cannot transmit themselves, there are cases when diseases are transmitted between animals and people; this view sets the tone for the extended discussion of this subject in the genre of *ḥadīth* commentaries in following centuries. In this discussion there was an emphasis on the idea that all things come from God and that His is the only true causal power.