This sole occurrence of the word is in a passage descriptive of John the Baptist. Sprenger, *Leben*, i, 125, noted that the word was probably of foreign origin, and Mingana, *Syriac Influence*, 88, claims that it is the Syr.

that it is the Syr. مدال المناف المن

Halévy, JA, viic ser., x, 356, finds The grace de Dieu in a Safaite inscription, which if correct would be evidence of the early use of the word in N. Arabia.

ii, 129; iii, 60, 89; iv, 124; vi, 79, 162; x, 105; xvi, 121, 124; xxii, 32; xxx, 29; xeviii, 4.

A Ḥanīf.

The passages in which the word occurs are all late Meccan or Madinan, so the word was apparently a technical term which Muḥammad learned at a relatively late period in his public career. Its exact meaning, however, is somewhat difficult to determine. Of the twelve cases, where the word is used, eight have reference to the faith of Abraham, and in nine of them there is an added phrase explaining that to be a Ḥanīf means not being a polytheist, this explanatory phrase apparently showing that Muḥammad felt he was using a word which needed explanation in order to be rightly understood by his hearers.

The close connection of the word with the ملة أبراهيم is important, for we know that when Muḥammad changed his attitude

¹ See also i, 581, and ii, 184, n.

³ See Lyall, JRAS, 1903, p. 781.