

to the Jews he began to preach a new doctrine about Abraham,¹ and to claim that while Moses was the Prophet of the Jews and Jesus the Prophet of the Christians, he himself went back to an earlier revelation which was recognized by both Jews and Christians, the

ملة ابراهيم, which he was republishing to the Arabs. Now all our

حنيف passages belong to this second period. Muḥammad is bidden set his face towards religion as a Ḥanīf (x, 105 ; xxx, 29). He says to his contemporaries, “As for me, my Lord has guided me to a straight path, a right religion, the faith of Abraham, a Ḥanīf” (vi, 162). “They say—Become a Jew or a Christian. Say—nay rather be of the religion of Abraham, a Ḥanīf” (ii, 129); “Who hath a better religion than he who resigns himself to God, does what is good, and follows the faith of Abraham as a Ḥanīf” (iv, 124). He calls on the Arabs to “be Ḥanīfs to God” (xxii, 32), and explains his own position by representing Allah as saying to him—“Then we told thee by revelation to follow the ملة ابراهيم a Ḥanīf” (xvi, 124). The distinction between Ḥanīfism and Judaism and Christianity which is noted in ii, 129, is very clearly drawn in iii, 60, “Abraham was neither a Jew nor a Christian but a resigned Ḥanīf—حنيفا مسلما,” and this latter phrase taken along with the من اسلم وجهه لله of iv, 124, was probably connected in Muḥammad’s mind with what he meant by اسلام, and has given the cue to the use and interpretation of the word in the later days of Islam.

The Lexicons are quite at a loss what to make of the word. They naturally endeavour to derive it from حنف to *incline* or *decline*. حَنْفٌ is said to be a natural contortedness of the feet,² and so حنف is used of anything that inclines away from the proper standard.

¹ Hurgonje, *Het Mekkaansche Feest*, Leiden, 1880, p. 29 ff.; Rudolph, *Abhängigkeit*, 48. Torrey’s arguments against this in his *Foundation*, 88 ff., do not seem to me convincing.

² Jawharī and Qāmūs, sub voc.; *LA*, x, 402.