

which has the same meaning as מִשְׁנֶה, but is much nearer the Arabic. The puzzle of what Muḥammad meant by the *seven*, however, still remains.<sup>1</sup>

مِثْقَالٌ (Mithqāl).

iv, 44; x, 62; xxi, 48; xxxi, 15; xxxiv, 3, 21; xcix, 7, 8.

A measure of weight—a mithqāl.

Naturally the Muslim authorities take it to be a form مِفْعَال from ثَقَلَ to weigh (cf. Baiḍ. on iv, 44, and *LA*, xiii, 91), but as Fraenkel, *Fremdw*, 202, notes, the primitive meaning of ثَقَلَ is to be hard, and the word مِثْقَال seems to be from Syr. ܡܬܩܠܐ<sup>2</sup>; Aram. ܡܬܩܠܐ, the equivalents of the Heb. מִשְׁקָל.<sup>3</sup> It occurs in the old poetry, however, and thus would have been an early borrowing.

مَثَلٌ (Mathal).

Of frequent occurrence, cf. ii, 210; iii, 113; vii, 175.

Parable.

The root is common Semitic, and genuine Arabic forms such as مِثْلٌ likeness, similitude; تَمَثَّلٌ to seem like, etc., are used in the Qur'ān. The forms مَثَلٌ and its plu. أَمْثَالٌ, however, where the meaning is that of the O.T. מִשְׁלַל or N.T. παραβολή, which the Peshitta renders by ܡܬܠܐ, would seem to have come under the influence of Syriac usage.<sup>4</sup>

Hirschfeld, *New Researches*, 83 ff., would trace the influence to Jewish sources, but Mingana, *Syriac Influence*, 85, is probably right in thinking that it was Christian Aramaic.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Casanova, *Mohammed et la fin du monde*, 37, thinks that in xv, 87, it does not refer to the Qur'ān, but means *benefits*, as though derived from ثَنَى to double. Mainz in *Der Islam*, xxiii, 300, suggests the Syriac root ܡܬܬܢܐ + ܡܬܬܢܐ = *satietas*, *abundantia*. See also Künstlinger in *OLZ*, 1937, 596 ff.

<sup>2</sup> Whence also the Arm. ԹԹԽԼ, though this may be a late borrowing from Arabic. Cf. Hübschmann, *Arm. Gramm.*, i, 271.

<sup>3</sup> Zimmer, *Akkad. Fremdw.*, 23, suggests an ultimate Mesopotamian origin.

<sup>4</sup> Note al-Khafājī, 192.

<sup>5</sup> On the whole question of the Qur'ānic Mathal, see Buhl in *Acta Or.*, ii, 1-11.