NOTES TO SOME STORIES OF *ARABISCHE MAERCHEN*

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The cultural decline of the Arab world actually began during the second half of the 12th century. However, when Seville surrendered to the Christians in 1248 starting the desintegration of Moslem Spain in the West, and Hulagu's armies destroyed Baghdad in 1258 in the East the cultural and educational centers remained in Damascus and Cairo. The period of the Ayyubids and the Mamluks greatly differred from the preceding Golden Age related to Baghdad and Spain. Although arts and sciences continued to have their impact on civilization, literature mostly concentrated on the collection of existing material and often on imitations. It is well known that the collection of stories "Thousand and one Nights" was edited in Egypt in the 15th century but had never been popular there as it later became in Europe following Galland's translation into French in the beginning of the 18th century and Lane's and Burton's into English in the 19th century.

In *Arabische Maerchen,*[1] Weisweiler published stories from the collections of Al-Ibishi, Al-Jafi'I, Ibn-Hijjah as well as from Damiri's *The Lives of Animals*, which is a treatise on zoology. All these authors lived during the period between the middle of the 14th and the middle of the 15th centuries.

The sotires selected for discussion are taken from the chapter "Von den Wundern der Gnada" (= on the wonders of mercy). The chapter mainly contains stories teaching people moral values and among them the so called "Israiliyyat" in which the protagonists are mostly the Sons of Israel. The question of when and how Jewish stories were absorbed by Moslems as well as the close relationship between a number of Jewish and Moslem legends will be dealt with later.

The following stories were selected for the investigation as Jewish parallel versions were at hand, and I shall try to determine their respective origin: Weisweiler identifies the Jewish origin particularly in five stories:

"On the value of Devotion" — Once, the Sons of Israel selected a certain tree and worshipped it. One day, a righteous man came to the tree with an axe. Satan saw that the man intended to uproot the tree and he appeared before him warning that he must not fell the tree, as this act would prevent him from praying. An argument between the man and Satan ensued and led to a fight in which the man gained the upper hand. Satan came twice again trying to persuade the man not to fell the tree. Each encounter ended in a fight, with the man pervailing over Satan. Satan then tried something else for preserving the tree: he proposed to grant the man two golden dinars every day for leaving the tree untouched, and the righteous man agreed to the deal. After Satan had put twice two golden dinars under the cushion of the man's bed the man decided to fell the tree nevertheless. On his way there, he met Satan who had come to prevent him from fulfilling his intention. Again they quarrelled and fought. However, this time Satan overcame the righteous man and threatened to kill him. How did it happen that the fight ended by the man prevailing over Satan three times? Satan explained: However the righteous man fought for God he won the victory over Satan. However, as soon as he fought for himself he was vanquished by Satan.

Comparing the story with "Der Teufelshort" (Satan's treasure trove) in *Der Born Judas* [2] and its abstract in Gaster Nº 307 [3] some differences are to be noted: In "Der Teufelshort", the righteous man wants to fell the tree (a carob tree) as the people underneath it destroy the field in the middle of which the tree stands. The man does not encounter Satan himself but some devil, and the people are not the Sons of Israel but some worshippers. There is no fight between the man and the devil who immediately offers one dinar for the preservation of the tree. When the man is not inclined to take the offer the devil increases the price of three dinars per day. The man agrees to this amount as it seems to him and adequate compensation for the neglect of his field. He becomes rich but his sons and his servants die. He encounters the devil again near the tree. He had gone there for his daily ration of dinars but had not found it. He decided to fell the tree in spite of the devil's threats of killing him. The man asked the Sanhedrin (court of justice) for advice and was told that he must destroy everything gained by the gold of the devil. He did so, and the devil implored him to leave the tree offering even a greater sum of money. However, the man felled the tree, and the devil vanished.

It is to be noted that the story in *Der Born Judas* has a definite end whereas the end of the Moslem story is uncertain. One does not learn what finally happened to the righteous man, was he killed

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1 Weisweiler, M., *Arabische Maerchen* 2.Bd, Duesseldorf, MdW, 1996.

2 Ben Gurion, M. J., *Der Born Judas*, Leipzing, Insel Verlag ca. 1924, II; 203, 353.

3 Gaster, M., *The Exempla of the Rabbis*, N.Y., Ktav Publ. House Ltd., 1968.

by Satan or did he surrender himself? Anyhow, it seems there are two different versions of the same story, both of them teaching the same lesson. The righteous man of the jewish story learned it in good time, whereas the righteous man of the Moslem story perhaps learned the lesson too late.

In spite of the monotheistic doctrine of Islam, many generations preserved customs and beliefs rooted in ancient times when the Arabians believed in a world full of supernatural beings. This also involved certain trees which were thought to be particularly sacred because of their being the abode of a deity. In *Islam* [4] Guillaume writes: "The practice of hanging scraps of clothing, rags and other personal belongings on the branches of a sacred tree persists to the day in country districts in the Near East…" As was noted, our story points to the belief in a sacred tree inhabited by a god. The central motif of the Moslem version is the struggle between the righteous man and Satan. The struggle between Evil and Righteousness perhaps originates from a Christian legend. It is said that the people who worship the tree are of the Sons of Israel while nothing is being told about the religion of the righteous man of whom one may only assume that he was a Son of Israel as well. Usually, the Sons of Israel acting in the "Israiliyyat" are seen in a positive light. They are humble, sticking to their faith and serve as a model to anyone who has chosen Islam as his religion. It seems that our story doew not demonstrate a man walking in the way of God but on the contrary, it attacks the jews. It may well be that the story circulated at a time when a fanatic Halif was ruling the country and intended the population to hate the Jews.

Contrary to the Islamic story, the Jewish one is more realistic. The righteous man owns a field in the cneter of which stands a tree. The people worshipping the tree destroy the field and thereby his livelyhood. The man realizes that he cannot keep the people away and therefore contemplates felling the tree. When he encounters the devil he again feels that he cannot realize his plan. He choses the easier way out, he is willing to receive an amount of money which would compensate him for the loss of his field. The religious tendency of the Islamic story puts the accent on the struggle of the righteous man with Satan, without mentioning the field being destroyed by the worshippers, whereas the jewish story centers around the livelihood of the farmer. On the other hand, the farmer is not aware of the fact that he receives a compensation for the fruits of his field. Moreover, he is not aware of the sin he is committing by accepting the easy money as compensation.

Weisweiler believed that the Jewish version preceded the Islamic one and served it as a model. However, as the Islamic version seems to be comprised of several elements, pagan, Jewish and Christian it is difficult, if not impossible to determine which version preceded the other.

"Die Himmelskette" (the chain of justice). — There was a chain hanging from Heaven with its other end resting in the center of the Temple at the time of King David. The chain served as an indicator of truth. Whoever spoke truthfully could easily get hold of the chain, but whoever lied the chain would avoid his grasp. However, the chain was returned to Heaven at one time when it was believed that the chain no longer served its purpose after a certain incident: A man left a precious stone with his neighbout who afterwards denied having received it. Both went to the chain after the neighbout hid the stone inside a stick. Addressing the chain, the owner of the stone said: "If I say the truth, the chain shall come to me." And the chain came to him and could easily be held. Thereupon the thievish neighbout gave the stick with the stone in it to the owner and repeated the same words. As a result, the chain came to him as well. Then people said that the chain did not make the difference between the deceiver and the deceived, and because of the trick the chain was returned to Heaven. From then on, King David introduced the oath and the witness for arriving to the truth.

The combination of both motives "Chain of Justice" together with "Money (precious stone) in the Stick" seems to be rare. Anyway, I could not find it among Jewish stories. However, the event causing the chain to disappear, that is the motif "Money (precious stone in the Stick" frequently appears but with the difference that the deceiver is punished by heaven. The stick drops out of the hand of the man who is holding it, and the money (precious stone) falls out.[5]

Ginzberg [6] says that it is difficult to decide whether the story is of Greek or Jewish origin. He however believes it to be certainly transmitted by Jews to Christians and Moslems. Ginzberg points out that the Moslems were just wrong in determining the "time" of the chain of justice, that is they confused David with Salomon. According to late Jewish sources, it was Salomon who achieved great performances of justice by means of the chain. Consequently, the "chain of justice" is one of the motives related to the widely spread "magic reveals truth" such as the "bocca della veritá" in Rome.[7]

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[4] Guilaume, A., *Islam*, Middlesex, Penguin Books, 1973[2], p. 9.

[5] Gaster, M., *op. Cit.*, Nº 121a; AaTh 961B. Comp.: "The Bell of Justice" (AaTh 207c) and uther, H.-J., *Behinderte in populaeren Erazaelungen* Berlin /New York, de Gruyter, 1981, pp. 108-109.

[6] Ginzberg, L., *On jewish Law and Lore*, Cleveland /New York, meridian JP 26, 1962, p. 243 note 38.

[7] Motif H 251.1.

"The Theft of the Hen" — The only thing a poor woman possessed was a hen. One day, a thief came and took it away. The woman patiently bore the loss and poured out her heart before the Lord. However, when the thief was slaughtering the hen and plucking its feathers the feathers stuck to his face. All his efforts in getting rid of them proved futile. He went to a Jewish sage asking for advice. The sage told him that the only cure for his plight was the curse of the woman whose hen he had stolen. The thief sent an agent who was to make the woman curse him. The woman sorrowfully and demurely admitted she had been severely wronged, but no curse left her lips. However, the agent did not leave her until she lost her patience and her mouth emitted a curse. Only then did the feather fell from the face of the thief. As long as the woman had been patient the Lord helped her, but as soon as she helped herself by cursing the thief the sign of the crime left his face. Man must bear his lot and praise the Lord. He must realize that suffering and relief, misery and deliverance are closely related, and that after a series of adversities mourning will change into joy.

4. "The Fisher and the Warrior" — The story deals with a similar subject. The fisher is a poor Jew who succeeds in catching a big fish. The catch is taken from him by a rude warrior. The ruffian is punished by heaven through the fish. When it is fried, the fish opens its mouth and bites the man's finger. As a result, the warrior suffers enormous pain and finally loses the whole arm. In a dream, the warrior is told how he could restore his health. He must go to the fisherman and ask for his forgiveness. He does so, and his arm is restored.

The last two stories are of the same type and of a wide distribution among the jewish people of Eastern Europe and Oriental countries. There is hardly any publication of folkstories collected in Israel where the type is not represented by at least one story. It is registered in the local catalogue as "Desecration Punished" (cat. Nº. 771*) and usually delas with the abuse of a Jewish sage or the assault of a Jew by one or more gentiles who consequently are divinely punished by paralysis or antoher affliction. This kind of stories is particularly characteristic of the Jewish folklore but sometimes of other minorities as well. They convey the physical weakness of a defenceless people within a powerful nation. They seem to say: "Although we have no king of flesh and blood protecting us, we have our Lord in heaven watching over us day and night".

5. "When Your Right Hand Annoys You" — A man unintentionally injures his father with a spade while digging a ditch, and he cuts off his own hand which has caused the injury. Moreover, when he is ordered to accompany the princess travelling abroad he cuts off his private parts; and when he is appointed judge he blinds his eyes by means of an ointment.

The sotry of the self-inflicted mutilations for righteousness corresponds to what a Jewish story tells about Matia ben Haresh.[8] Matia was tempted by Satan in the form of a beautiful woman. He blinded himself rather than see her and fall victim to temptation. He was later cured by the Angel Raphael. Similarly, the man of the Moslem story was cured by the Lord of all of the mutilations he had inflicted upon himself for fear to fall victim to temptations.

The Moselm story seems to convey the idea that the Moslems should become more righteous than the Jews. Their protagonist has mutilated himself on three different and very real occasions, whereas the Jewish hero has mutilated himself once in a more or less imagined situation.

Apart from the five stories above Weisweiler believes to be of Jewish origin, the following seem to be of the same.

6. "Dhu-a-Nun and the Scorpion" — Dhu-a-Nun was approaching the River Nile when a huge scorpion came along and frightened the man. Dhu-a-Nun ran for shelter from where he observed the scorpion. It was crawling towards the river when a frog emerged from the waters, and the frog took the scorpion on its back. They crossed the river, and the scorpion rushed towards a tree. A boy lied fast asleep under the tree, and a huge snake slithered towards him in order to kill him. However, the scorpion attacked the snake and bit its head until it succeeded in killing the reptile. The scorpion then went to the river bank, mounted the frog's back, and both of them returned to the other side of the river. Dhu-a-Nun the woke the boy and told him what had happened while he was sleeping in a drunken stupor. The boy decided to mend his ways, changed his elegant dress for a penitent's garb and was a restless wanderer until the end of his days.

The lesson taught by this story is that God selects His agents no matter who they are, and they fulfil the divine will. The same is taught by the following two Jewish Midrashic legends with the same agents:[9]

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[8] Gaster, M., *op. cit.*, Nº 136. Uther, H.-J., *op. cit*., pp. 36-40.

[9] a)Exodus Rabba 10; Leviticus Rabba 22; b) Genesis Rabba 10.

a) The Lord said to the prophets: What do you think? If you were not my agents, would I have none? 'The advantage of the land is in everything' (Eccl. 5;8 transl. E.S.). Everything may be the tool for my commission, even a snake, even a scorpion and even a frog."
b) This is the story of a scorpion that was on its way to Transjordan on a commission. The Lord sent a frog and the scorpion passed accross the Jordan river on the frog. The scorpion then bit a man who died. The mission accomplished, the frog returned the scorpion home.

The difference between the Moslem story and the second Midrashic legend lies on the emphasis put on the sleeping person on the one hand and on the mission of the scorpion on the other. In the Moslem version the young boy is threatened by a snake which may be an agent of Hell; however, he is saved by a scorpion wwho gives the young boy innocently sleeping off perhaps his first drunken stupor a chnce to mend his ways. The Midrashic legend tells nothing about the sleeping person. The scorpion sent by the Lord bits and thereby kills him. So, the reader must assume that a bad and may be dangerous person was killed in his sleep. In both stories a scorpion, an agent of the Lord, crosses the river on the back of a frog.

7. "The Lord Saves Those who Fear Him" — The story is about a poor dealer in fans who resists the temptations of a beautiful woman by running away and jumping from a roof. In his fall he is caught by an angel who thus saves his life. Schwarzbaum [10] discusses the story at length and shows that the Moslem author has combined two Jewish legends from the Talmud, the one on Rabbi Cahana and the other on Rabbi Chaniah. When Rabbi Cahana is throwing himself from the roof, the prophet Elija comes to his rescue, complaining that he had come a long way in order to save Cahana's life. Cahana then explains that his escape from the tempting but wealthy woman had to be made because of his poverty compelling him to sell his little baskets to whomever wanted one. Thereupon Elija gave him a basketful of golden coins. In the Moslem story, the wife of the righteous man discovers an oven full of the finest bread. Moreover, a priceless pearl is sent from Heaven to the poor couple as an answer to the man'' prayer for relieving him of poverty. In her ddream, the woman saw herself in paradise and was led to see the things provided for the righteous. To her consternation, she discovered a huge hole in the chair of her husband. The hole was caused by the missing pearl. On waking up, the woman convinced her husband to have the pearl sent back to Heaven, which he did. The second part of the Moslem legend parallels the story of Rabbi Chanina whose poverty compels him to ask for some heavenly favour. He receives one leg of the golden table reserved for him in paradise. Like the pearl, the golden leg is taken back to heaven upon the wish of Chanina's wife. [11] Schwarzbaum remarks that the Moslem author embellished and ingeniously and logically combined the two Jewish stories.

8. "The Ineffable Name" — Dhu-a-Nun was the master of the Ineffable name. Jussuf-ibn-Hassan also wanted to know the Name, and he therfore served the master for a whole year. He then said to Dhu-a-Nun that he wanted to learn the Ineffable Name as a reward for his services. However, Dhu-a-Nun did not answer him nor did he satisfy Jussuf for six months. He only hinted that there might be a way to meet Jussuf's request. One day Dhu-a-Nun brought a lidded vessel covered by a towel and asked jussuf to take the vessel to his friend in Fustat. Jussuf started the long trip right away. When he was almost there, he could no longer contain his curiosity, and he lifted the towel first and then the lid. A mouse jumped out and immediately disappeared. Jussuf was furious for he believed that Dhu-a-Nun was making fun of him. On his return, Dhu-a-Nun cried: "You fool! I gave you a mouse, and you deceived me! How can I now believe you and teach you the Ineffable Name"

Dhu-a-Nun al-Misri was a Sufi, a mystic who lived in Egypt and died in 860AD. He is known to have studied hieroglyphs and perhaps had in mind to decipher them. The study of hieroglyphs possibly led to the legendray belief in his knowledge of the Ineffable Name and the working of miracles. The servant who wants to learn the Ineffable Name but fails in his endeavours because of his curiosity is a well known type of humorous story. [12] However, it usually deals with a woman (sic!) who cannot overcome her curiosity. As the hellenistic culture was contributing to that of Moslems and Jews the origin of the legend may be seen in the story of Pandora, the wife of Prometheus.[13]

The knowledge of the Ineffable Name was possessed by many according to Jewish sources. Without mentioning specific names, it shall be here described how the Name was passed on that it should not be forgotten, and who were those regarded as fit for guarding it. Here is a passage from the Talmud:

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[10] Schwarzbaum, H., *The Folkloristic Aspects of Judaism and Islam*, Tel-Aviv 1975 (hebrew), pp. 241-245.
[11] *Thousand and one Nights* the story "The Devout Platter Maker and his Wife", (*Nights* 468-470); Part one: *Tractate Kiddushin* 40a; part two: *Tractate Ta'anit* 24b-25a, and Gaster, M., *op. cit.*, nº 409.
[12] AaTh 1416.
[13] Comp. Krappe, A. H., *The Science of folklore*, London, Methuen, 1965, p. 331; and in Midrashic literature: Genesis Rabba 19 and others.

> Rabba Bar-Bar-Hana in the name of Rabbi Yohanan: A Name comprised of four letters is passed on by sages to their pupils twice a week. Our teachers taught: In the beginning, a Name comprised of twelve letters was passed on to everyone: When breaches (instances of misuse) increased It only was passed on to the most humble of the priests. Rabbi Yehuda in the name of Rav said: The Name of 42 letters is only passed on to one who is humble and modest, middle-aged, who never becomes angry nor drunken, is not pretentious, and is careful to guard in purity everything he knows. He is loved above and esteemed and respected below. He possesses two worlds, this world and the world to come (Kiddushin 71).

9. "The Judge and the Christian" — A very poor woman, the mother of three hungry girls goes to a kadi (Moslem judge) and askd for support from public funds. The kadi tells her to come back again the next day. However, when she does so, he has her thrown out. The poor woman cries her heart out in a ruin near her hut, and implores the Almighty for help. At the same time, a rich Christian by the name of Siduk passed by the ruin and heard the woman's lament. He was deeply moved, and when the woman told him the reason for her grief, he ordered his slaves to give her one thousand dinars and a dress of good material. The same night the kadi had a dream: he saw himself in paradise before a golden palace from where beautiful girls cried: "You are banned! Once this palace with us and its treasures inside was to be yours, but now it belongs to Siduk the Christian." And he, the kadi, was sent to hell forever. The kadi woke up in the middle of the night gripped with fear. He immediately went to Siduk and asked him what kind of a deed he had done that same night. At first Siduk pretended to have been drunk and therefore unable to do anything. However, after the kadu had told him his dream and offered to buy the good deed from him for one thousand dinars, Siduk put on a new dress, sat down in front of the kadi, took his hand into his own and declared: "I hereby witness that there is no God besides Allah and Mohammed is His prophet (declaration of faith in Islam)." The lesson: The kadi was sent to Hell because of his avarice, and the Christian came to Paradise thanks to the act of charity. As an afterthought, the Christian became a Muslim.

Apart from the realistic description of paradise similar to its image in the Koran, the story is about a man refusing to help another human being in need as well as about religious tolerance: the generous Christian is promised Paradise. The Christian's name "Siduk" did not seem to be clear to Weisweiler who worte it with a question mark. However, 2Siduk" points perhaps to the Hebrew name "Zadok" (the righteous). The miserly Moslem is punished in his dream. When awake, he wants to repent by buying the good deed from the generous Siduk with the same sum the Christian had given to the woman. However, the repentance was not accepted by Heaven. Stories of evildoers dreming about their future punishment are legion in Jewish folklore but their end is usually favourable. As a consequence of his dream, the miser's good deeds are, at the end of his days, balanced against the bad ones amd the former outweigh the latter in the heavenly court. The dream is often very realistic and leaves its traces not only in the soul of the dreamer but also in his body. It even may leave other "reminders" such as the keys to the money box of the dreamer. The realistic dream leaving its traces after awakening also appears in Moslem folklore, and it seems that it has grown on the common ground of Jews and Moslems.

Scharzbaum [14] discusses at length the way the Jewish legend has been introduced into the Moslem folklore in pre-Islamic times by members of large Jewish communities who had settled in al-Hijaz, in the South-West of the Arabian peninsula since the destruction of the First Temple (ca. 450 BC) or the Second Temple (1st cent. AD). The communities had settled there along the trade route between the Persians in the East, the Byzantines in the North and the Aethiopians in the West. Schwarzbaum points out that the legends of the Bible and the Talmud as well as those about holy places in Palestine had greatly influenced the legends in the Koran and the Hadith. Ginzberg [15] also writes:

> As long as we are in a position to trace Islamic legends to jewish or Christian sources of pre-Islamic times … problems of origin are easily resolved. Difficulties arise, however, when Jewish sources that offer parallels to Islamic legends postdate the Koran, for we must reckon with the possibility that the jewish authors drew upon Islamic sources.

[14] Schwarzbaum, H., *op. cit.*, pp. 239-240, 319-323.
[15] Ginzberg, L., *op. cit.*, p. 72.

Difficulties also arise on the examination of the "Israiliyyat" which introduce the acting figures as being the Sons of Israel. Such legends are not necessarily to be regarded as of Israeli origin. "Israiliyyat", according to Heller [16]

> (…) are mainly stories on the dark ancient times, as an exception even fantastic stories of lying, usually however legends about bilbical persons or events as well as stories about devout Jews such as we meet in the Jewish layer of *A Thousand and one Nights.*

"Israiliyyat", according to Goitein [17] are

> (…) the stories which pretend to tell about the ancient Israelites often mentioned in the Koran. What were the special merits of those Children of Israel that they were the first to receive a heavenly book and the Muslims the last? And why, after such distinction, did their kingdom not endure? The answer to the first question gave rise to many beautiful legends of the pious men of the Children of Israel (…) The answers to the second question reflect contemporary Moslem controversies rather than Jewish traditions.

On the other hand, Goitein believes that the stories about the coming of the Messiah and the End of Days are originally Jewish.

Following the investigations of the mentioned scholars, the following five stories seem to be of Jewish origin: 1) "The Theft of the Hen", 2) "The Fisher and the Warrior", 3) "Dhu-a-Nun and the Scorpion", 4) "When Your Right Hand Annoys You", 5) "The Lord Saves Those who Fear Him", as well as the motif of the "Ineffable name". It has been shown that the first two stories dealing with the punishments of gentiles abusing Jews were probably told by the jewish minority in a hostile surrounding. The other three legends appear in Jewish literature preceding the Koran.

The origin of stories such as "oOn the Value of Devotion", "The Chain of Justice" and "The Judge and the Christian" is difficult to be determined as all of the Jewish versions point to a much later date than the beginnings of Islam.

In the chapter on the history of relations between Jews and Arabs, Goitein [18] describes the period of 500 - 1300 as one of a "creative symbiosis" between the two peoples. At first, before and after the beginning of Islam in al-Hijaz when a "segment of the Jewish people (…) stood beside the cradle of the Muslim religion and Arab statehood", and later, during the 11^{th}-12^{th} centuries, the "Golden Age" of the Jewish Diaspora in Spain, the influence went the other way. The jews had adopted the Arab language and way of thought: Jewish philosophers wrote in Arabic, and the Arab language and literature had their impact on the Hebrew language and in particular on Hebrew poetry.

The "creative symbiosis" made itself also evident in popular literature. During the first islamic period, the Arabs had absorbed much from the vast literature of the Bible, Midrash [19] and Talmud into the Koran and Hadith. Professional story tellers however were not only borrowing from Jewish sources but also from Christian and other materials besides drawing from their own imagination. No wonder that in the course of time stories of "mixed" origins were absorbed by Midrashim and Jewish writers.

Though the similarities of the Jewish Talmudic and Midrashic literature on the one hand and the Koran and Hadith on the other are striking one must not forget that the various elements are related to two separate peoples each with its central belief, outlook and culture. The same applies to the folk literature. Goitein [20] stresses this point even further "(…) the very nature of popular literature" still kept alive today by Jews and Moslems demands "utmost care in the search for mutual influence", and then one may only assume "special indications that one culture has borrowed from the other."

It is interesting to note that the Jewish groups originating from Islamic countries and now living in Israel tell what they call "Arab stories" on the one hand and "Jewish stories" on the other. "Arab stories" are mostly versions of international types including *A Thousand and One Nights.* "Jewish stories" may be stories from the Bible or Talmud, legends about rabbis and wonderworkers as well as marvellous rescues of Jewish individuals and communities.

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[16] Heller, B., "Das Arabische Maerchen", in: Bolte, J & Polivka, G, *Anmerkungen zu den Kinder- und Hausmaerchen der Brueder Grimm*, Olms, hildesheim, 1963, Bd. IV, p. 381.

[17] Goitein, S. D., *Jew and Arabs*, New York, Schocken SB83, 1972^{6}, p. 195.

[18] *Ibid.*, pp. 3-12.

[19] Midrash: plural form, Midrashim. A form of post-biblical literature beside the Talmudic legends including poetic illustrations and homilies.

[20] Goitein, S. D., *op. cit.*, p. 192.

It is to be hoped that a “creative symbiosis” will be established once again instead of the present antagonism between Arabs and Jews and particularly between Israelis and Palestinians.