

- ‘Abd Allāh b. ‘Abd al-Muḥsin al-Tūrki. Cairo: Hajar, 1417/1997.
- Ibn Qudāma al-Maqḍisī, Muwaffaq al-Dīn Abū Muḥammad ‘Abd Allāh b. Aḥmad b. Muḥammad. *al-Muḥni‘* (with Shams al-Dīn Ibn Qudāma’s *al-Sharḥ al-kabīr* and Sulaymān b. Aḥmad al-Mardāwī’s *al-Inṣāf fi ma‘rifat al-rājih min al-khilāf*). Cairo: Hajar, 1416/1995.
- Ibn al-Ṣalāh, Abū ‘Amr ‘Uthmān b. ‘Abd al-Raḥmān al-Shahrazūrī. *Ulūm al-Ḥadīth*. Damascus: Dār al-Fikr, 1406/1986.
- Jalālayn. *Tafsīr*.
- Jaṣṣāṣ. *Aḥkām al-Qur‘ān*.
- Jawharī. *Ṣiḥāh*.
- Makkī b. Abī Ṭālib al-Qaysī, Abū Muḥammad. *al-Idāh li-nāsikh al-Qur‘ān wa mansūkhīh wa ma‘rifat uṣūlih wa ikhtilāf al-nās fih*. Ed. Aḥmad Ḥasan Farḥāt. Jeddah: Dār al-Manāra, 1406/1986.
- Mālik. *Muwatṭa‘*’.
- Māwardī. *Nukat*.
- Muqātil. *Tafsīr*.
- Muslim. *Ṣaḥīh*.
- Nasafī. *Tafsīr*.
- Nasā‘ī. *Sunan*.
- Qurṭubī. *Tafsīr*.
- Rāghib. *Mufradāt*.
- Rāzī. *Tafsīr*.
- al-Ru‘mī al-Ishbīlī al-Muqri‘, Abū ‘Abd Allāh Muḥammad b. Shurayḥ b. Aḥmad. *al-Kāfi fīl-qirā‘at al-sab‘*. Ṭanṭā (Egypt): Dār al-Ṣaḥāba lil-Turāth bi-Ṭanṭā, n.d.
- Suyūṭī. *Durr*.
- Suyūṭī. *Itqān*.
- Ṭabarī. *Tafsīr*.
- Ṭabarī. *Tārīkh*.
- Tha‘labī. *Kashf*.
- Tirmidhī. *Sunan*.
- ‘Umar, Aḥmad Mukhtār and ‘Abd al-‘Alī Sālim. *Mu‘jam al-qirā‘at al-Qur‘āniyya*. 8 vols. 2nd ed. Kuwait City: Maṭbū‘at Jāmi‘at Kuwayt, 1408/1988.
- al-Wāḥidī, ‘Alī b. Aḥmad al-Naysābūrī. *Asbāb nuzūl al-Qur‘ān*. Riyadh: Dār al-Maymān, 1426/2005.
- Zabīdī. *Tāj*.
- Zajjāj. *Ma‘ānī*.
- Zamakhsharī. *Kashshāf*.
- Zarkashī. *Burhān*.

See also: ABROGATION; ALLIANCE AND TREATY; BADR; BOOTY; READINGS OF THE QUR‘ĀN; CLIENTS AND PATRONAGE; DREAMS; EGYPT; KINDRED; AL-MAJŪS; MANIFEST AND HIDDEN; MUḤKAM AND MUTASHĀBIH VERSES; PEOPLE OF THE BOOK; WEIGHTS AND MEASURES; YŪSUF, UPON HIM PEACE; ZAKĀT.

CARAVAN

SAYYĀRA, ‘ĪR, RAKB

Definitions and Usage

The Qur‘ān refers to caravans directly with three terms: *sayyāra* (Q 5:96; 12:10, 19), *‘ir* (Q 12:70, 82, 94), and *rakb* (Q 8:42). Two implied references occur as *one of the two parties* (Q 8:7) and *journeys of summer and winter* (Q 106:2).

Al-Rāghib al-Aṣfahānī (d. ca.502/1108) says “*al-sayr* is to travel on earth, one who travels is called *sā‘ir* and *sayyār* and *al-sayyāra* is “a group [traveling together]” (*Mufradāt, sub s-y-r*). Abū al-Faḍl Jamāl al-Dīn Muḥammad b. Mukarram Ibn Manzūr (630-711/1233-ca.1312) explains *sayyāra* as a synonym of *al-qāfila* (“Caravan”) and Muḥibb al-Dīn al-Sayyid Muḥammad Murtaḍā al-Zabīdī (1145-1205/1732-1790) defines it as “a traveling group (*al-qawm yasīrūn*)”. Both al-Rāzī (543-606/1148-1209) and al-Qurṭubī (600-671/1204-1273) draw together these lexical meanings and gloss *sayyāra* as “a group of people who traverse the road together” (*Tafsīrs, sub Q 12:10*). The term also appears in a hadith where it refers to groups of travelling angels: Abū Hurayra (d. 57/681), Allah be well-pleased with him, said: “The Messenger of Allah, upon him blessings and peace, said: ‘Verily, Allah, the Glorified and Exalted be He, has travelling Angels (*li-Ilāh malā‘ika sayyāra*), excellent [they are], who seek out assemblies of remembrance (*majālis al-dhikr*). When they find such assemblies in which there is remembrance [of Allah] they sit among [them], and encircle them with their wings until they fill the space between them and the lowest heaven. (...)’” (Muslim, Dhikr wal-du‘ā’ wal-tawba wal-istighfār, faḍl majālis al-dhikr)

The term *sayyāra* occurs once in the context of permitted game (see FOOD AND DRINK; LAWFUL AND UNLAWFUL) and twice in the chronicle of Prophet Yūsuf, upon him peace (*q.v.*): *Lawful for you is game from the sea and its food as provision for you and for travelers (wa-lil-sayyāra)* (Q 5:96); *One of them said: Do not kill Yūsuf, but throw him into the bottom of the well; some caravan of travelers (ba‘du s-sayyārati) will find him* (Q 12:10); and *There came a caravan of travelers (sayyāratun)* (Q 12:19).

The second term, *‘ir* (pl. *‘iyarāt*), a feminine noun, is defined as “a group of people bearing loads of provision (*aḥmāl al-mīra*); it is used for men and camels that bear loads” (Rāghib, *sub ‘-y-r*). Ibn Manzūr glosses it as *al-qāfila* and says it also means a camel (*al-ibil*). Abū al-Haytham, however, rejects the restriction of the usage

to camels only and says “*al-ʿir* is any kind of animal, whether camels, asses, or mules, when goods are loaded upon them” (*Lisān*; Rāzī, *sub* Q 12:70). Al-Zabīdī integrates these earlier definitions: “*al-ʿir* is a caravan (*al-qāfila*), its verbal form is *ʿarāyaʿiru*, in the sense of ‘to travel.’ The word *al-ʿir* can also mean a camel that carries commercial goods (*al-mīra*); some add to this that *al-ʿir* is a caravan of asses (*qāfilat al-ḥamīr*)” (*Tāj*).

Abū Ḥafṣ ʿUmar b. ʿAlī Sīrāj al-Dīn Ibn ʿĀdil (d. ca. 880/1475) says there are two opinions concerning the original meaning of the word *ʿir*: (i) it denoted a group of camels (*jamāʿat al-ibil*), because they would go from one place to another; (ii) it denoted a caravan specifically of asses (*qāfilat al-ḥamīr*), as if *ʿir* were the plural form of *ʿayr* (i.e., the domestic or wild ass), and then its usage extended to caravans of other animals (*Iubāb*, *sub* Q 12:70). Al-Qurṭubī reports various opinions regarding the term in Q 12:70: “Mujāhid said: *ʿir* is [a pace] of asses. Abū ʿUbayda stated: *ʿir* is used to denote camels that are loaded up and mounted; and the meaning of [*ayyatuḥal-ʿiru*] is *O caravan!* It is a construction similar to *And ask the town (wa-sʿal al-qarya)* [Q 12:82]” (*Tafsīr*; *sub* Q 12:70). Such a construction is called *dalālat al-itqīdāʿi*, where the genitive construction elides the possessed noun—hence its implied meaning is “*O members of the caravan!*” (al-Āmidī, *al-Iḥkām*, Part III, al-qism al-thānī fī dalālat ghayr al-manzūm).

All three Qurʾānic occurrences of the word *ʿir* are in the context of the story of Prophet Yūsuf, upon him peace: *So when he had furnished them with their provisions, he put the [golden] vessel in his brother’s saddle-bag. Then a crier called out: O caravan (ayyatuḥā l-ʿir), indeed you are thieves!* (Q 12:70); *And ask the city in which we were and the caravan (wal-ʿir) in which we returned. Verily we are speaking the truth* (Q 12:82); and *When the caravan (al-ʿir) departed ...* (Q 12:94).

Finally, the noun *rakb* in Q 8:42 is glossed as *ʿir* (caravan), referring to the caravan of Abū Sufyān (Ṭabarī; Rāzī; Māturīdī; Māwardī; Makkī). Al-Rāghīb writes that *rakūb* originally pertained to being on the back of an animal, but then also came to mean embarking on a sea-vessel (see also Q 18:71; 29:65; 43:12) (*Mufradāt*, *sub r-k-b*). The Prophet, upon him blessings and peace, defined the smallest *rakb* as comprising three travelers together, recommending that Muslims travel in company (Ḥākim, *Jihād*, 2:102). In another hadith narrated by Saʿīd b. al-Musayyib, the Prophet, upon him blessings and peace, said: “The devil concerns himself (*yahummu*) with [misleading] one or two persons; but if they are three, he does not” (al-Baghawī, *Sharḥ al-Sunna*, *Jihād*, *karāhiyatu-l-safar waḥdahū*).

Three non-Qurʾānic terms which exegetes and linguists use in glossing the Qurʾānic usage of *sayyāra*, *ʿir*, and *rakb* are *qāfila*, *laṭīma*, and *ʿasjadiyya*. The most common Arabic term is *qāfila*, from the root *q-f-l*; the verbal form (*qafala/yaqfulu*). It is defined as a group’s return from a journey (Ibn Manẓūr), but al-Zabīdī quotes Muḥammad b. Aḥmad al-Azharī (d. 369/980) as saying, “Ibn Qutayba (213-276/828-885) thought that common people erroneously hold that *qāfila* was only used for a returning caravan. This is a mistake. The Arabs would use *qāfila* for those who begin a journey, hoping that Allah Almighty would make their return (*al-qufūl*) easy. This expression is widely used in the speech of the most eloquent amongst them up to our present day” (*Tāj*).

Ibn Jarīr al-Ṭabarī (224-310/839-923) cites the gloss of al-Suddī (d. 127/745) in explaining Q 8:7 (*And [remember] when Allah promised you one of the two parties...):* “Abū Sufyān (d. 30/652) was returning with a caravan (*ʿir*) from Syro-Palestine that carried the goods of Quraysh. This kind of caravan is called *al-laṭīma*” (*Tafsīr*). Ismāʿīl b. Ḥammād al-Jawharī (d. 393/1002) defines *al-laṭīma* as “a camel or a caravan that bears perfume” (*sub l-t-m*); al-Zabīdī adds, “*al-laṭīma* is a container of musk, and its plural form is *laṭāʾim*” (*Tāj*). The word *ʿasjadiyya* (“golden”) refers to “the mounts of kings” (Jawharī, *sub ʿ-s-j-d*). Al-Azharī (d. 369/980) cites Ibn al-Sikkīt in describing an *ʿasjadiyya* as “the camels of kings bearing fine things of high value” (*Tahdhīb*). Al-Zabīdī defines *ʿasjadiyya* as “a group of camels bearing gold” (*Tāj*).

Implied References

Summer and Winter Caravans of the Quraysh

The Quraysh had two annual trading caravans which used two routes: a winter caravan to Yemen and a summer caravan to the Levant (see SYRO-PALESTINE) (Ṭabarī, *sub* Q 106:2). These caravans were secured by treaties (see ALLIANCE AND TREATY): “The guarantors of this protection (*aṣḥāb al-ilāf*) were four brothers: Ḥāshim, ʿAbd Shams, al-Muṭṭalib, and Nawfal, sons of ʿAbd Manāf. Ḥāshim concluded a pact with the king of al-Shām so that his commercial goods were secured in the Syro-Palestine; his brother ʿAbd Shams entered into an agreement with the Abyssinian ruler; al-Muṭṭalib with leaders of Yemen; and Nawfal with Persia... this way the traders (*tujjār*) of Quraysh could travel [in safety] to the different regions (*ilā-l-amṣār*)” (Ibn ʿĀdil).

Q 106:2 (*Their security in the journeys (riḥla) of winter and summer*) refers to these caravans. The term journey (*riḥla*) is itself related to camels, in that the verbal noun *raḥl* (pl. *riḥāl*, *arḥul*) from the root *r-ḥ-l* refers to