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See also: ADULTERY AND FORNICATION, ANGELS, APOSTASY, APPORTIONMENT, ATOM, BEGUELEMENT, BIRTH, BLESSINGS, BOOKS, BREASTFEEDING, CALLING TO ALLAH, CHILDHOOD AND YOUTH, CHILDREN OF ISRĀʾĪL, CHRISTIANITY, CHRONICLES OF THE QURʾĀN, CREATION, DAY OF JUDGMENT, ENORMITIES, FIRʿAWN, HUMANS, ʿISĀ, UPON HIM PEACE, JĀHILIYYA, LEGAL PUNISHMENTS, MARRIAGE AND DIVORCE, ORDER OF SURAS, PARENTS, QIBLA, QURʾĀNIC READINGS, SLAVES AND SLAVERY, REWARD AND PUNISHMENT, TRIALS AND STRIFE, TRIBES AND CONFEDERATES, TWO SONS OF ĀDAM, VEIL, WOMB.

GIBRIL FOUAD HADDAD

CHILDREN OF ISRĀʾĪL

BANŪ ISRĀʾĪL, YAHŪD, QAWM MŪSĀ, ASBĀT, AHL AL-KITĀB

This article comprises the following sections: (i) Definitions and Usage; (ii) Synopsis; (iii) Covenant; (iv) Chosen Nation; (v) Blessings Bestowed; (vi) Clear Signs; (vii) Messengers; (viii) The Book of Mūsā; (ix) Laws; (x) Deliverance from Pharaoh; (xi) The Inherited and the Promised Lands; (xii) Pure Sustenance, Provisions Lawful and Unlawful; (xiii) Twelve Guarantors (*Nuqabāʾ*); (xiv) Some Believers, others Disbelievers; (xv) Corruption (*fasād*) on Earth Two Times; (xvi) Twenty-five Specific Transgressions; (xvii) Muslims and the Torah; (xviii) The Jews of Madina and their interactions with the Prophet, upon him blessings and peace, and Muslims; (xix). Bibliography.

Definitions and Usage

The Qurʾān uses five terms to refer to the Children of Isrāʾīl:

- I. **Banū/Banī Isrāʾīl:** It most frequently uses the possessive constructs *banū* and *banī Isrāʾīl* (lit. sons, but more generally, children of Isrāʾīl). The phrase appears 40 times in the oblique (*banī Isrāʾīl*) and once (Q 10:90) in the nominative case (*banū Isrāʾīl*) in twelve Makkan (Q 7, 10, 17, 20, 26, 27, 32, 40, 43, 44, 45, 46) and four (Q 2, 3, 5, 61) Madinan suras (ʿAbd al-Bāqī, *Muʿjam*). One sura of the Qurʾān (Q 17) is called *Sūrat Banī Isrāʾīl* (also called *Sūrat Isrāʾ* and *Sūrat Subḥān*, Suyūṭī, *Itqān*, Type 17, 1:193).

Isrāʾīl is one of the two Qurʾānic names of Prophet Yaʿqūb (*q.v.*)—the eponymous ancestor of the Children of Isrāʾīl—who was the son of Ishāq

(*q.v.*), the son of Ibrāhīm (*q.v.*), upon them all peace (Ṭabarī; Māturīdī; Wāḥidī, *Wājiz*; Zamakhsharī, *sub* Q 3:93; Rāzī; Thaʿalibī, *Jawāhir*, *sub* Q 2:40). Yaʿqūb, upon him peace, is mentioned twice (Q 3:93; 19:58) as Isrāʿīl and is one of the five Prophets with two Qurʾānic names: Aḥmad—Muḥammad, upon him blessings and peace; ʿĪsā—al-Masīḥ; Dhū-l-Kifl—Ilyās; Isrāʿīl—Yaʿqūb; Yūnus—Dhū-l-Nūn, upon them all peace (Farāhidī, *sub* *ḥ-d-m*; Bayhaqī, *Dalāʿil*, Dhikr asmāʾ Rasūl Allāh ṣallā Allāh ʿalayh wa sallam; *cf.* Rāzī, *sub* Q 21:86; Qurṭubī, *sub* Q 2:136; Ibn ʿĀdil, *sub* Q 2:40). This usage is also found in Prophetic Hadiths (Aḥmad, 4:277 §2471; Abū Dāwūd, 4:450 §2854; Ṭabarānī, *Muʿajam al-kabīr*, 12:246 §13012; also quoted by Ṭabarī; Makkī, *sub* Q 3:93; Ibn Abī Ḥātim; Ibn Kathīr, *sub* Q 2:40).

“Isrāʿīl” is a compound word consisting of two parts: “isrā” (“slave”) and “īl” (“God”); thus the phrase means “slave of Allah” (*abd Allah*; Ṭabarī; Rāzī; Samʿānī; Samarqandī; Māwardī; Ibn ʿĀdil; al-Qinnawjī, *Fath al-bayān*, *sub* Q 2:40; Abī Bakr al-Rāzī, *Mukhtār al-Ṣiḥāḥ*, *sub* *s-r-ā*). It is also said that it was his agnomen (*laqab*), and means *ṣafwatullāh* (“the chosen one of Allah”) in Hebrew (Zamakhsharī; Bayḍāwī; Khāzin, *sub* Q 2:40).

It is a non-Arabic (*aʿjamī*) word for which there is no Arabic etymology (Wāḥidī, *Basīl*, *sub* Q 2:40). Abū Maṣʿūr Mawḥūb b. Aḥmad al-Jawālīqī (460-540/1067-1145) mentions two other vocalizations for *Isrāʿīl*: (a) “*Isrāl*” on the pattern of *Mīkāl*; and (b) “*Isrāʿīm*” with a final nūn. This is so because “when Arabs encounter a foreign word that does not belong to their language, they express it in different vocalizations, such as *Baghdādḥ* and *Baghdād* and also *Baghdān*” (*Muʿarrab*, entry No. 4, *sub* *wa ammā Isrāʿīl*; also see al-Khafājī, *Shifāʾ al-ghalīl*, *sub* *Isrāʿī*; Ibn al-Jawzī, *sub* Q 2:40). Other readings include: *Isrāil* (*yāʾ* suppressed) read by Warsh from Nāfiʿ; *Isrāyīl* (with the transposition of the *hamza* into *yāʾ*), read by Abū Jaʿfar, al-Aʿmash, ʿĪsā b. ʿUmar, al-Ḥasan, al-Zuhrī, Ibn Abī Ishāq, ʿĪsā, Nāfiʿ, al-Azraqī, and al-Muṭawwaʿī. Other variants include *Isrāʿal*, *Isrāʿill*, and *Israʿal* (al-Khaṭīb, *Muʿajam al-Qirʿāt*, *sub* Q 2:40).

- II. **Yahūd:** While the terms *banū* and *banī Isrāʿīl* imply all the branches of children of Prophet Yaʿqūb, including those who believed in Prophet ʿĪsā (that is, Christians), *Yahūd* is exclusively used in the Qurʾān for those who believed in Prophet Mūsā, who are also called *Qawm Mūsā* (see below).

Lexicographers and exegetes offer two explanations for the etymology of the noun *yahūd* (sing. *yahūdī*): (a) it comes from *Yahūdha*, the eldest son of Yaʿqūb, upon him peace, whose name was Arabicized and the letter “*dhāl*” was changed to “*dāl*” (Farāhidī, *sub* *bāb al-hāʾ wal-dāl*; Ibn Maṣʿūr, *Lisān*, *sub* *bāb al-dāl*, *faṣl al-hāʾ*; Māwardī; Jurjānī, *Darj al-Durar*, *sub* Q 2:62); (b) it is derived from the verb *hāda* (“he repented”) (Jawharī, *Ṣiḥāḥ*; Fayrūzābādī, *Qāmūs*; Rāghib, *sub* *h-w-d*), because they returned to Allah and abandoned the worship of the Calf; or because of their saying *innā hudnā ilayka—indeed we have returned to You* (Q 7:156), as per Ibn Jurayj (d. ca.150/767) (Ṭabarī; Māwardī).

The verb *hāda* is used for a person who adopts the ways of the Jews (*ṭarīqat al-yahūd*) in his religion (Azharī, 6:206, *sub* *bāb al-hāʾ wal-dāl*); Rāghib, *sub* *h-w-d*), thus, the phrase *alladhīna hādū* denotes the Jews (*al-yahūd*) and “those who became Jews (*ṣārū yahūdān*)” (Qurṭubī, *sub* Q 2:62); *hādū* means “they repented” (Ṭabarī, *sub* Q 2:62; *cf.* Baghawī; Samʿānī, *sub* Q 2:62). The Form I verb occurs eleven times (Q 2:62; 4:46, 160; 5:41, 44, 69; 6:146; 7:156; 16:118, 22:17; 62:6). The singular noun *yahūdī* is used once (Q 3:67) as *yahūdīyyan*: *Ibrāhīm was neither a Jew nor a Christian* and the nominal *hūdān* (Jews) appears three times (Q 2:111, 135, 140).

- III. **qawm /aṣḥāb Mūsā (People of Mūsā):** Those children of Isrāʿīl, who were contemporaneous to Prophets Mūsā and Hārūn, upon them peace, are the obvious referent in verses where the expression “People of Mūsā” (*qawm Mūsā*; Q 7:148, 159; 28:76) is used as well as where they are ascribed to him as “his people” (*qawmihī/qawmahu*, e.g. Q 2:54, 60, 67; 5:20; 7:128, 150, 155, 160; 14:6); where he refers to them as “my people” (*qawmī*; Q 2:54, 5:20, 21; 7:142; 10:84; 20:86; 43:51; 61:5); once (Q 26:61) they are called *aṣḥāb Mūsā* (lit. Companions of Mūsā). In two verses (Q 23:47; 37:115), they are ascribed to both Mūsā and Hārūn as *their people* (*qawmahumā*). In Q 20:90, Hārūn, upon him peace (*q.v.*), calls them *my people* and in four verses (Q 40:29, 30, 38, 39), *a believing man from the House of Firʿawn, who was concealing his belief* calls them *O my people*. Mūsā, upon him peace, the most-mentioned Prophet of the Children of Isrāʿīl in the Qurʾān, was the son of ʿImrān, the son of Yaṣḥar, the son of Qāhith (or Fāhit), the son of Lāwī, the son of Yaʿqūb (Ṭabarī; Qurṭubī; *Tafsīr*; Māwardī; Thaʿlabī, *Kashf* *sub* Q