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**DIFFERENCES IN THE ASCETIC BEHAVIOUR
IN THE SAHIH AL-BUKHARI AND THE SYNOPTIC GOSPELS
THROUGH THE STORIES RELATED TO MUHAMMAD AND JESUS**

Master's thesis

by

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1. INTRODUCTION

The interpretations of asceticism/austerity in Islam and Christianity and their relevance today can even be found in the contemporary best-selling novels.

The man uses PowerPoint in his sermons, for God's sake, and has replaced the village organist with Lucie Levalois playing guitar. The result is undoubtedly popular – we've never had so many people coming from other villages – but I wonder what you'd think of it, pere, who always used to be so austere./ The Bishop feels that, nowadays, worship should be more about fun than austerity. (Harries J., 2012:79).

My jiddo says that the rules of Islam have become a veil that hides the face of Allah. People are afraid to look. All they care about is the surface. (Ibid, 267)

Reading around the given lines of the book, one finds the same question towards Islam and Christianity: what is the most appropriate way of expressing the core religion? The answer given for both traditions is austerity, with which the implications of interreligious dialogue arise.

1.1. Rationale (Why is it important?)

Religious people consciously change their behaviour during their lifetime, but their reasoning for doing it differs. This is true for both Christians and Muslims, who use their respective canonical textual compilations for inspiration and advice on ascetic practices. Collected textual examples of self-mastery with an aim of higher religious reward imply or directly render reasoning and references to the functioning of the ideal Muslim and Christian world. Comparative perspective on the two with a focus on two particular texts is a window to the deeper understanding of the particularities, as the latter can be peculiar only in the context (i.e. we know that something possesses a specific characteristic only when we see that other types of the same thing do not share it). From this acknowledgement of the idiosyncratic traits, my study contributes to the development of perspicacious intercultural/interreligious communication and mutual understanding between Christians and Muslims. This is especially relevant when we look behind the headlines today and see that Gospels and *hadith* are at the vortex of most salient academic, theological and political Christian and Muslim debates.

Sheer asceticism as (stereotypically perceived) radical self-control according to divine rules is rare, while traits of the ascetic behaviour transgress the limits of religiously-ideological stance, conveying common features that allow two cultures to be comparable. Attempting to compare the two textual stances through certain implied values and bodily practices, ascetic behaviour should neither be perceived as simply condemning culture nor simply endorsing it, but doing both

(Harpham G., 1993: xii). In my analysis, the concepts of asceticism is used to assemble and collate examples of the purposeful, self-mastering practices, framed by religious beliefs and directed towards divine rewards (cf. Clark E., 1995; Flood G., 2004). As such actions are closely interrelated with the human body, one main presupposition underlies many of my arguments: even - or especially - the body can participate in symbolization, can acquire and bear meaning and value in the communication of religious meanings (cf. Harpham G.G., 1993:xiv; Krawiec R., 2008:775).

1.2. Key concepts

In order to focus the potential analysis on the particular textual examples, the key concepts have to be defined. Therefore, the following three are the most important.

Ascetic behaviour/asceticism: a set of bodily actions directed at conscious self-mastering with an aim of divine reward.

Bodily communication: an action when body is purposefully used to convey religious meanings to the surrounding people and/or God.

Religious: rendering combinations of features of practices and beliefs of Christian or Muslim tradition.

1.3. Contextualisation of the research

Every contemporary study is written in a certain academic context of the previous scholarship on the topic. Presenting earlier discussions on the issue not only help to acknowledge the input of the potential research in them but also benefits in defining a framework of the study and the indication of what it is not.

1.3.1. Literature on ascetic behaviour in various religions

There is a wide spectrum of religious actions related to asceticism in the scholarship. Starting with Peter Brown's study (1988), asceticism received connotations of a performed embodiment of theology. At the same time, it introduced new stance and claimed ultimate reality. In this thesis I also consider asceticism as the vision of embodied theology.

The above perspective was much widened by Geoffrey G. Harpham (1993) who directly related asceticism with abstract but universal cultural phenomenon of self-restraining. He tried to use asceticism as a heuristic tool for cultural theory and was able to support his argument.

Nevertheless, he received much criticism as his theorizing implied generalisations, which made almost all human actions appear ascetic (cf. Freiburger O., 2006:4). Thus, a religious, politic or artistic person could equally be treated as ascetic. Acknowledging this, I try to find balance between too general and too meticulous definitions of asceticism, based on the examples found in the chosen sources.

Quite a few authors also followed a similar line of argumentation as Harpham's. One of these was Johannes Bronkhorst (2001:374-418), who applied this vision towards art. One of the critics of such perspective when one word is employed in so many various instances, Patrick Olivelle, illustrated this situation when he recalled Alice saying to Humpty Dumpty: "That's a great deal to make one word mean" (Olivelle P., 2011:30). With this we see Olivelle's attempts to withstand too wide definitions, but trying to find balance between too wide and too narrow, he agreed with Harpham and Bronkhorst when he urged not to limit the term to its extreme forms (ibid.). As an alternative he presented a three-fold scheme of root, cultural and elite asceticism, where religious practices would fall under the last two. Nevertheless, not rooted in any particular religious context both branches of the scheme still can receive various meanings depending on what is taken as ordinary or natural. Thus, it is still a proposal that needs revision, and it is also needs to acknowledge potential modifications appearing from the comparison of two concrete examples of ascetic visions from two different religions. That is attempted with this thesis.

Gavin Flood also developed quite a broad idea that "ascetic traditions are forms of collective memory enacted in body through praxis and enacted in language through discourse" (2004:9). The latter idea directly relates to the comparison of this thesis: it claims that discourse is an important element of the ascetic behaviour and through it the core of asceticism appears. Thus, through the discourse of asceticism (in a particular source) aspects of tradition appear.

John Renard (2011) has noted useful insights on the relation between Muslim and Christian interpretation of comparable theological issues concerning asceticism. These I took as inspirational ideas for my own analysis. In addition to it, interesting observations on the celibacy issues both in early Islam and Christianity can be found in Carl Olson's (2008) study. Relating to the previous scholarship he tries to render how body is used for religious celibacy as a sign, symbol, metaphor, mode of conceptualisation, how its biology is framed by cultures and how it is related to purity issues. In this thesis similar weight is put on body not only concerning celibacy but also other ascetic actions.

1.3.2. Literature on the ascetic behaviour in the Synoptic Gospels

As Gospels are so widely read and used in research, academic studies on the various aspects of ascetic behaviour as one of the many thematic lines in the Gospels are plentiful, especially starting with 1980s. Nevertheless, just as it is mentioned in a broad study edited by Vincent L. Wimbush and Richard Valantasis, even with the impressive scope of scholarship on asceticism in the New Testament, it has been so far “without the benefit of a broad cross-cultural view” (1995:xxv). The above mentioned book reflects on the modality of conversation, discusses various (even contradicting) notions ascribed to asceticism, relating them to the New Testament. What it does not present is any finite concept of asceticism; it urges for further academic debate, which is relevant to this day. My study is complement with the above, as it acknowledges the findings but tries to get use from inter-cultural view and with it propose alternative definitions.

An important collection of essays is presented in a book by V. L. Wimbush and Leif E. Vaage (eds.) (1999). It is important as it presents new ways of employing asceticism for the reading and interpretation of the canonical texts. For the purposes of the thesis I looked at these texts from the compilation mostly for inspiration but did not directly follow the presented definitions of asceticism or its systematic analysis.

One of the articles in the above mentioned book on the Gospel of Matthew criticises the ideas on inter-religious comparisons through abstract categories of asceticism (cf. Saldarini A., 1999:11) as these tend to universalise traits and conceal particularities. I took this as a warning and tried to pursue the comparison acknowledging possible threats of overindulgence with universalism and meticulousness as the other extremeness.

One of the studies most directly related to my topic within the collection of essays mentioned above is Mary N. Tolbert’s (1999) study on the Gospel of Mark. It is also the only study which aims to look for asceticism in the Gospels of Mark - there are no such cumulative studies on the Gospels of Luke and Matthew. Tolbert identifies important aspects of behaviour that could be considered as asceticism by presenting much background cultural information and most importantly leads the way to critical but open examination of the text for deduction of the meanings from the complexes of visions. Thus, in the thesis such position is important in order not to see the asceticism in details too loosely related to the general picture of the vision.

The newest work of R. Valantasis (2008) (included among the most important in the contemporary Encyclopaedia of the Bible and its Reception (2009), presenting asceticism)

overlaps and repeats previously published ideas of the author, and presents refined aspects. The most valuable for the thesis might be the ideas by R. Valantasis on how Christian ascetic actions relate to economic, social and political aspects of life. It is important to acknowledge the influences of the implied employment of asceticism and thus cover a big part of the scope of potentially phenomenological lines of thinking within the sources as it is done in the thesis.

Another prominent author important for the study is Elisabeth A. Clark, who concentrates on sexual renunciation and tries to “dissect the interpretative devices that were employed to create ascetic meanings” (Clark E., 1999:11). She enumerates 11 modes of reading, which were the ways how contemporary literate people (in early Christianity) extracted meanings from the biblical texts. This type of study encouraged paying attention in my own study to multiple meanings of ascetic behaviour and suggested seeing all of them before making generalisations.

1.3.3. Literature on the ascetic behaviour in the Sahih al-Bukhari

Sahih al-Bukhari (SaB) is one of the most important compilations of hadith, but academic studies on it are not many (cf. Melchert Ch., 2010:425).

An important scholar within the field is Christopher Melchert. His study on SaB and its relation to the Islamic renunciatory tradition is especially valuable (cf. Melchert Ch., 2010). Not only does Ch. Melchert try to see how SaB was influenced the prevailing traditions of Early Islam but also how the transmission of such transmission influenced the development of ascetic tradition (cf. Melchert Ch., 2002). However, he does not aim to describe asceticism of the Sahih al-Bukhari or even so to explain its potential meanings. Therefore, my study benefitted from the insights on self-restraining ideas in Islam, and took into consideration the noted developments.

An important book edited by Michael Bonner, Mine Ener and Amy Singer (2003) discusses charity, a feature that is even more explicitly discussed in the latest book by A. Singer (2008), and poverty issues in Islam and gives some examples from SaB. Having a specific perspective, the book contextualises textual representations of the respective actions in Islam, showing their functioning. One of the directly related articles from the book is “Poverty and Charity in the Rise of Islam” by M. Bonner. Muslim poverty in it is directly related to the concept of an economy of poverty in Islam and the importance associated with the need to return the given wealth. The above books proposed valuable examples for the thesis and encouraged me to pay attention to the functional aspects of ascetic acts and their importance in the overall vision of asceticism.

Jonathan A.C. Brown's work on canonisation of Bukhari (2007) and Hadith as Muhammad's legacy (2009) also contributed to the overall scholarship. Both of the books are comprehensive studies, presenting specific aspects of SaB (touching and upon its asceticism) and most importantly its functioning in Islamic law. The ideas found in these sources were added to the insights of the above mentioned books on the functions of ascetic acts in Islam.

A book with valuable insights on Early Muslim asceticism but less relation to SaB is Ruqayya Y. Khan's (2008). Its specific contribution to this thesis lies within discussion of body and sexuality as well as issues of seclusion in Islam, relating to many hadith. Jonathan Benthall (2012) showed how related to the Muslim concept of charity is the ascetic bodily issues. Both of these books guided me to pay more attention to the bodily issues in the ascetic behaviour.

1.4. Framework of the research

Acknowledging the specificities of the primary sources and using the results of the related previous scholarship, I named the following lines of the framework for the thesis.

1.4.1. Primary sources

Both of the chosen primary texts are canonical (cf. Brown J., 2007; Pokorny P., 2013), widely read up to this day, have helped to shape respectively Christian and Muslim traditions and speak about ascetic behaviour. These texts also have a common characteristic of inner contradictions/conundrums. That means that the same thing in one place can be promoted and in other it can be warned against. Though the chosen primary sources belong to different religious traditions, many of the covered topics (one of which is the ascetic behaviour) could be seen as shared. The thesis will not try to compare their authenticity issues or put one of the main subjects of the narratives above the other (i.e. Muhammad over Jesus or vice versa). What will be aimed for is to include incongruous, contrasting elements and through the deduced inner main elements draw comparisons and identify differences, rendering certain phenomenological qualities, which depict general perception of ascetic behaviour in the respective texts.

Translated excerpts provided in the thesis were made by the author of this thesis, unless stated differently.

1.4.1.1. The Synoptic Gospels

The Gospels of Matthew, Mark and Luke are called synoptic because they follow the same pattern of presentation of the stories, sometimes with a very similar wording, and share many topics. Their synoptic similarities and differences render insight into the perception of ascetic behaviour in Early Christian Church. And though traditionally these three texts are ascribed to respectively the apostle Matthew, Peter's interpreter Mark, and Paul's companion Luke, the historical authors of the wordings are not known. What is historically known is their approximate dating: respectively Mark around 70 ACE, Matthew around 80-90 ACE and Luke around 75-100 ACE. The texts of Synoptic Gospels resemble biography as the stories are presented chronologically. At the gist of all three there are the Passion narratives, which in Matthew, Mark and Luke are presented in the 3 last chapters.

All of the Synoptic Gospels (SG) were composed in Koine Greek, but later their translation into Latin (Vulgate) was also influential and widely used. Looking at the quantitative qualities of the SG, they are comprised of three main parts of texts, which are divided in total into 68 chapters. Only part of these chapters renders ascetic behaviour. One of the important reasons for this is the implied aim of the SG; it is to inform about the life of Jesus rather than to identify the rules of asceticism.

For the thesis, Aland Barbara, Aland Kurt et al.'s (eds.)(1993) *Novum Testamentum Graece* (NTG) was chosen. This edition is considered to present academically reliable wordings and is available on BibleWorks database, where the information can be obtained more efficiently.

1.4.1.2. The Sahih al-Bukhari

Following the shared characteristics of *hadith* (lit. conversation) literature as it appeared in the mid eight century, the Sahih al-Bukhari (SB) is a collection of reports related to Muhammad. It is one of the most reliable because of the clear methods of compilation, taking only those with full *isnads* or having known lines of trustworthy testifiers leading to the Prophet himself. Bukhari started the work at the beginning of the ninth century and finished it around 870 ACE. As hadiths were functional in communication, the wording of the Bukhari text renders features of spoken language and does not coincide with the structures of texts, intended to be in the written form from the emergence.

The text of Sahih al-Bukhari is not a thematically structured description of early Muslim asceticism. Being comprised of more than 7500 verses (with repetitions) in 97 books, it is a thick

text of various stories. Even choosing only the ones related to Muhammad, the material on ascetic behaviour is not prescriptive but rather descriptive, where the general lines of ascetic behaviour are deduced from a number of unrelated verses.

The version chosen for the study is one of academically most reliable and critical, and it is found on the Internet database <http://sunnah.com/bukhari>, which has both Arabic and English versions of the text and provides a search engine based on Lucene.

1.4.2. Aim

The aim of the thesis is to compare two textual blocks from two different religious traditions and deduce the most vivid particularities of the respective visions of asceticism, situating the findings in context of the related academic scholarship.

1.4.3. Research question

The main research question is what meaningful religious differences (rendering more than the distinctions per se) of the ascetic communication could be seen between the Sahih al-Bukhari (SaB) and the Synoptic Gospels (SG) through the stories related to Muhammad and Jesus. Thus, similarities will be acknowledged in the thesis, but they will not be the main focus. Moreover, it will not be attempted to list and discuss all of the possibly related passages; only the most illustrative instances will be analysed to render related ideas and understanding of a particular thematic group.

1.4.4. Theory

For the research, the following theoretical framework will be used.

Harpham has claimed that:

“No matter how hedonistic, materialistic, self-indulgent, wicked, or atomistic they may be, all cultures impose on their members the essential ascetic discipline of “self-denial”, formulated by the Christian ascetics as the resistance to what Augustine calls “nature and nature’s appetites.” (Harpham G., 1992:xii)

Given this, ascetic life could be seen from a two-fold perspective: self-denial is an obstacle to embrace life, and a particular behaviour which helps to concentrate on the most important things (at the same time leading to a higher religious goal) in life. The first part of this relates more with Harpham’s (1992) cultural ascetic imperative, which subjugates a person and does not allow him

to embrace all of the appearing possibilities. The second part associates more with Flood G. (2004) emphasis on ritual rationality.

Dealing with ascetic behaviour in Christian and Muslim traditions, it is important to acknowledge the wide scope of particular bodily acts related to it. In addition to this there are guiding intentions of particular acts (i.e. the reasons, why a person chose to do what he did, even if they are only implied), which should also be considered. This might lead to a similar position of William E. Deal's (1998:425), when he refused to present any universal definitions of asceticism, because it was so problematic to delineate a potentially functional concept. Especially this might be true when it has to pertain both to Christianity and Islam. Nevertheless, Deal (ibid.) also mentions that texts themselves propose certain frameworks for definitions. Following the ideas of Walter O. Kaelber (1987: 441) (who is the member of "Asceticism Group", which produced influential ideas on asceticism and especially Christian asceticism) but using only parts of them, the following gist to the argumentation of the thesis could be proposed:

Ascetic behaviour is comprised of voluntary, rational, conscious, sustained and at least partially systematic program of transforming self-discipline, which might take forms of self-restriction (e.g. when body is consciously used not according to biological instincts) and/or worship with the implied and pursued religious goals with regard to respective religious tradition and which perceives body as a medium of expression and perception of meanings.

This definition, compared to the one presented by R. Valantasis (2008:38), is more particularized and, thus less universal; it aims to follow actions bearing particular values within cultural/religious systems. In addition to this, reciprocal relation between the cultural norms in general and religious meanings has to be acknowledged. Just as cultures shape ascetic behaviour, through their usage of particular socio-cultural meanings, these, in turn, are influenced by particular ascetic bodily/self-subjugating actions, as an important aspect of every-day life of the believers. Just as systems direct uses of signs in the form of ascetic actions and have an effect on particular ones of them, individual actions form the whole religious system. Furthermore, certain patterns of self-discipline are present in many cultural systems not related to religion, but awareness should be kept of the negative connotations of radical religious self-denial, and separate examples of complete defiance of biological bodily needs. These derive from the relation with the idealised radical self-restrictive acts, when a person withdraws completely from the functioning in social world but do not fit the particular religious system (as a combination of ascribed actions) of asceticism.

In all systems of ascetic behaviour, "asceticism involves an audience (whether personal, social or divine), and, therefore, every asceticism becomes a performance" (Valantasis R., 2008:40). To be

understood, each of these performances functions upon patterns of meanings. Traditions of the patterns of the functioning of signs are recorded in the canonical compilations of religious texts, which later on form the basis for (re)interpretation of traditions. Tradition is reintroduced with signs as means of maintaining cultural memory; this happens through religious rituals, which are usually part of the ascetic behaviour. In this way, such actions are part of the functional cultural memory, when praxis is framed by tradition. Religious praxis is intertwined with bodily actions, but it could not be reduced to such acts. Sure thing is that ascetic behaviour is related to body and is directed towards gaining more control over it. Therefore, it continuously transforms a believer through his rational choices.

1.4.5. Methods

The aim of the paper will be reached through the implementation of comparison together with textual and semiotic analysis of the corresponding texts (See Figure 1).

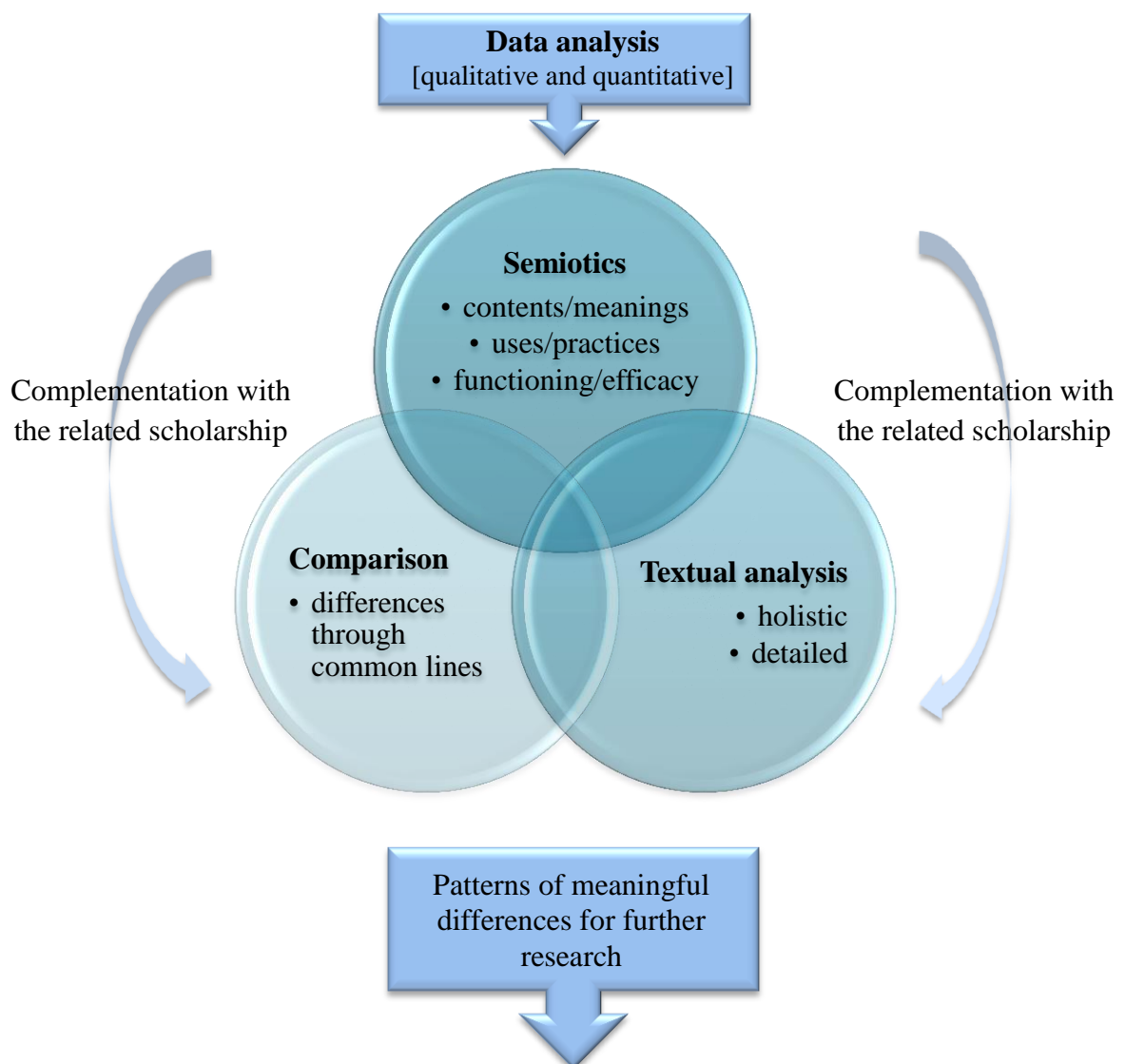


Figure nr. 1. Method map of the thesis (R. B.-S.)

Textual analysis in the study is necessary as it is intended to peruse two different textual compilations as phenomenological units. Even saying this, there are various strategies to implement it in practice. Therefore, I will follow the line of thought of H.G. Gadamer (1976). He claimed that parts of the ascetic behaviour are to be understood in the context of the whole text and the whole textual representation should be perceived through the coherence of the compilation of smaller elements. It means that one instance of the mentioned ascetic act cannot present the full meaning which can be received from the analysis of the whole set of mentioned acts. Similarly, certain information can be deduced from the form of rendered messages and inner, textual links of underlying reasoning. Such theoretical discussion inevitably touches upon the issue of the reader and its relation to the researcher. In this study, the contextual distance of the researcher is acknowledged and perceived as a positive and productive condition enabling understanding (cf. Gadamer H., 2013:308). The researcher is identified with the reader looking for potentially ascetic ideas in the particular texts from the contemporary point of view and acknowledging the up to date scholarly finding within the field. This means that it is not a historical study and it is not a study of certain temporal point of ascribed implications. As I will concentrate on the texts themselves, it is important to note that they do not provide reasons for the appearing ascetic differences. And though some of the differences in the findings are likely to be the result of the two texts belonging to specific genre, periods of their compilation and cultural/historical contexts of the implied characters, the noted differences are there in the texts and accentuate specificities of the ascetic visions.

In the paper a combination of textual analysis and *comparison* is used, which, through the reciprocal illumination (cf. Sharma A., 2005:45), enables to discern between the particularities and meaningful differences. To compare in this instance does not mean trying to find alternatives for particular aspects in the other text from the other religious tradition; it also does not mean any attempt to put one religious tradition above the other or analyse which eschatological grounding is more worthwhile pursuing. Reciprocal illumination does not allow the researcher to be religious in his study of religions because otherwise he would engage into evaluation and quest for pragmatic reasons for choosing one particular religion. In this paper a thematic selection in the Synoptic Gospels and the Sahih al-Bukhari will be compared; this will be followed by the identification of common lines of interpretation within the data and interpretation of elements from the respective frameworks which allow particularities of the other religious worlds to be manifest. In addition, “it is, as it were, through a network of comparisons located within the compass of the tradition that

the historical significance of an important social arrangement is communicated.” (Sharma A., 2005:57)

Both methods, hermeneutic and comparative, mentioned above will benefit from the introduced aspects of *corporeal semiotics*, where the latter conduces to the holistic and detailed understanding of meanings, detailed functions of the ascetic actions/presumed results of such actions, and particular bodily practices involved.

Speaking of the term “corporeal”, various ideas might be presumed: Is a body a subject or an object? Is it a biological device or/and a vehicle for religious self-expression and perception? (cf. Faccio E., 2013:1) The most relevant for this study is the religious construct of the human body, its usage for communicating messages for the divine within a particular religious world and for (re)creating identity. Sociologist Marcel Mauss (1973), whose idea was that body is an instrument, which is covered by every society in customs and traditions, was one of the first to discuss the usages of the body in such way; in this this thesis body should also be assumed as covered in religious customs and traditions. Analysing religious bodies, it is important to note that they have to be addressed both holistically and in detail. In the first case, body should be placed into a particular religious system, and the overall meaning of ascetic behaviour mentioned in the text could be extracted from the scope of usages employed. In the second case, each example of usage has to be examined and the overall meanings of ascetic behaviour mentioned in a particular text deduced from the various nuances. What is more, body in religious communication can be used individually and communally. Individual communicative aims also might have parallels with their presumed celestial rewards, which will be reached after certain transcendental change and to some extent will be the reflection of the efficient earthly usages of the body. It means that each religion allows individuality, slight changes occurring from individual particularities, but frames it, rendering the borders not to be trespassed and, therefore, conceptualises body, enable the believers to keep to the guidelines. From the viewpoint of incorporate experience, religious texts present a specific picture, where physical body is directly influenced by the social and vice versa; this enriches the understanding of socio-cultural realities of religions. Only in these realities, social bodies can fully unfold and gain meanings, interpreted through the set of collective meanings.

Making use of the combination of the above mentioned methods, implied textual meanings of ascetic behaviour can be extracted from structural, linguistic, discourse features (narrative compositions, dialogues, etc.), described bodily actions, contextualization and comparison. What

the chosen methods do not suggest is the hierarchy of meanings or finite interpretations of the potential applications of ascetic behaviour within respectively Islam and Christianity.

1.4.6. Outline of the thesis

1. Introduction. The aim and tasks of the thesis will be identified here, presented discussion of the relevant previous scholarship relating to the topic of the thesis.

2. Concepts used for describing ascetic behaviour/bodily acts in the texts. This chapter would *enlist, discuss* and *compare* concepts used for describing ascetic behaviour in the texts. It should shed light on how the terms used influence the perception of the presented discourse. Here the problems with naming certain actions and excluding other should be touched.

3. Particularities of the ascetic discourse in the respective texts. Paying attention to stylistic, grammatical and other textual specificities, this chapter would compare and discuss particularities of discourse (i.e. how information about asceticism is presented) and how does that influence the perception of the overall message.

4. Forms of ascetic behaviour. The following subchapters are intended thematically to enlist, discuss and compare ascetic bodily actions and values related to them. It would also present and compare various forms of asceticism and their functions (with respect to dichotomy of usage in perception and expression of meanings, and worship and penitence within the latter category). It would be attempted to identify patterns of behaviour, their relation to other religious ritual actions within the respective tradition, compared the aspects related to ritualization and fortuity.

4.1. Asceticism in the every-day treatment of the body (dietary asceticism, weakness/illness, purification, clothing, beauty treatments);

4.2. Ascetic behaviour pertaining to social relations (physical closeness, good deeds, chastity, verbal communication and intercultural relations)

5. Conditions for pursuing ascetic behaviour. This subchapter should add additional meanings to the overall picture of ascetic behaviour through the implied limits denoting what that ascetic behaviour is not.

6. Conclusion. This study intends to use the accomplishments of contemporary scholarship on the ascetic behaviour to proceed with the analysis on the texts of the Synoptic Gospels and the Sahih al-Bukhari. By applying a specific methodological combination and theoretical background, the research results will be discussed as contribution to the scholarship on the topic of asceticism with unique insights deduced from the identified inter-textual differences.

2. CONCEPTS USED FOR DESCRIBING ASCETIC ACTS IN THE TEXTS

The unanticipated re-appropriations of the given works in areas for which they were never consciously intended are some of the most useful (cf. Butler J., 2011:19)

Neither the SaB nor the Synoptic Gospels present general words for the ascetic behaviour. The closest to the definition of the phenomenon could be the terms *austerity* and *zuhd*. The former word in the Gospel of Luke is limited to a description of a strict and demanding person (Lk 19:21-22). The word *zuhd* in turn is not found in this form in the SaB but the descriptions of situations in it are ascribed to the term used in the other hadith (cf. Al-Qurtubi M., 2008:25).

Various concise definitions could be found in the secondary literature on the SG, but not in the Synoptic Gospels themselves. Though commonly referred to, ascetic practices in the SG are not described in detail, or openly promoted. What seems to be a continuous line in it from the Greco-Roman tradition is the acknowledgement of self-control as a virtue, but even this is not highlighted as conditional for ascetic behaviour. Nevertheless, several concepts describing those employing asceticism could be deduced: *the poor in spirit* (Mt 5:3); *the children of the kingdom* (Mt 13:38); *eunuchs* (Mt 19:12); *those enduring till the end* (Mt 24:13); *vigilant ones* (Mt 25:13). All of these are more or less described in the text of the SG. The idea of the ascetic behaviour that emerges from the concepts above is this: humbleness; close involvement with the religious vision of the world; innate, chosen or ascribed commitment to the employment of religious vision on the earth and continuous self-awareness in order to self-check the keeping on the right track.

Additional ideas about the approved asceticism in the SG could be traced from the names used, e.g. *zealous* (Lk 6:15; Mt 10:4). Looking at the context of the stories that Jesus tells to his disciples and relating them to the name above, we get the implication that self-control in order to gain the divine merits also pertains to mastered emotional commitment to God.

The SaB is not a compilation of legal definitions for ascetic behaviour, though it presents much of the Islamic legal material. Among the thickness of particular names for small ascetic/religious practices, three more general ideas for the important elements of religiously motivated self-control could be discerned: *bab* (SaB 3:10); *ihram* (SaB 28:4) and *haya* (SaB 78:77). The first one would be most commonly translated into English as “door”, but in the SaB it describes repeatedly emanating or employed religious process. The second one is used for the compulsory religious state of the believers, especially when they are on the pilgrimage. The last is not of the least importance as it pertains to the required pious shyness, which helps one to withstand religious

indiscretions. From the concepts above, the idealised ascetic behaviour in the SaB is closely related to the continuous and repeated (according to certain patterns) religious rituals, aspiration for relevant religious stance according to situation and pious shyness as a condition granting positive outcomes.

Significant in the picture of the ascetic behaviour in the SaB are some of the features ascribed to Allah. One of the essential is *al-ghaira* (SaB 67:108) which means honour and self-respect. This adds up some information of the awaited, implied qualities of the believers. Allah is the most self-respecting and he created man, therefore a believer has to stay self-respecting because he is a creation of the most honourable and because he should always strive to be like Allah.

Not all of the names related to ascetic behaviour in the SaB and the SG could be used for drawing parallels. Two of the following could be compared. *Anachoreo* (Mk 3:7) and *I'tikaf* (SaB 57:4) are important and relevant to the discussion as they both mean seclusion and withdrawal. This aspect is part of the respective picture of asceticism, but it is not of the furthestmost weight.

An unexpected parallel could be found in the usage of words righteousness in the SG and charity in the SaB. The term used in Greek is *dikaiosune*, which means the state of righteousness as a condition acceptable to God. In Hebrew this same term is *zekut* or *sedaqah* and correlates with blamelessness. Knowing that *zakat* and *sadaqa* are the terms used for Muslim charity, we can deduce that both the word *dikaiosune* and *zakat/sadaqa* pertain to conditions acceptable to God/Allah. Trying to interpret possible meanings of such usage, one might say that Muslim giving in charity cleanses him before Allah and thus he has no blame for accumulation, which is one of the biggest threats for every person.

The SaB and the SG were never intended as a programme for ascetic conduct. Nevertheless, putting the texts through the filter of particular definition of asceticism, one gets new insights into the phenomenon. It would not be valuable to compare the terms themselves but the general ideas could be compared. Thus we see that the SG put more emphasis on self-restriction, while the SaB highlights practices that have to be learnt and then repeated. Together with the expected stance – respectively pious shyness and self-awareness – the above nuances hint on the outward directed behaviour in the SaB and inwards directed in the SG.

3. PARTICULARITIES OF THE ASCETIC DISCOURSE IN THE RESPECTIVE TEXTS

All information has its way of presentation and this form has direct influence of the rendered meanings. The same is true for the SaB and the SG, which are very specific textual combinations in their exposition, relation with the main characters and multiple functions of the texts.

3.1. Structural features of the text

Considering structural features of the SaB and the SG, two things should be discussed foremost: *the way topics are presented and sequence issues.*

The considered version of SaB is divided into 97 books, which consist of over 7500 hadith with repetitions. These distinguish the SaB and from other compilations of hadith (cf. Siddiqi M., 1993:57). What this also means is that the same story might be found in different books, arranged according to their relation to certain topic. Thus a story about a very poor man, who cannot afford to spend anything in charity, can be found in the book of Fasting (SaB 30:31), Good Manners and Form (SaB 78:68), Expiation for Unfulfilled Oaths (SaB 84:3), Gifts (SaB 51:20), Supporting the Family (SaB 69:13), and Limits and Punishments set by Allah (SaB 86:26). Though such trait of the text might aggravate the reading process and understanding of the overall message, it also implies on the interrelatedness of various aspects of teaching through some of the topics discussed.

The Synoptic Gospels are not a monolithic text. They are comprised of three main parts: the Gospel of Matthew, the Gospel of Mark, and the Gospel of Luke. All of these three share how discourse is outlined: they begin with the birth of Jesus (Mt 1:1, Lk 2:16) or the beginning of his mission (Mk 1:9) and end with his Resurrection (Lk 24:51; Mk 16:19; Mt 28:7). Texts differ in their thickness of details and accents, but are not a thematic presentation of ethical questions. Therefore, asceticism is clearly not a topic discussed from various aspects but it is one of the discourse lines which can be deduced from the thickness of other things.

Neither the SaB nor the SG distinguishes asceticism into one structural unit, which means that the ideas concerning it have to be deduced by interpretation and through association of various parts. The SaB alleviates the task in that it contextualizes elements of ascetic behaviour in broader topics of Muhammad's teaching, while Jesus presents to what extent asceticism touches upon various aspects of life through the events that happen to him and related to him.

From the above different logical sequences appear too. In the SaB they are ethical lessons of longer or shorter length, within which smaller questions are distinguished. These do not necessarily logically relate to each other or explain/supplement one another, instead they are joined by their association with the more general ethical issue presented in that particular book. The SG in this respect is both similar to and different from the SaB. Though the sequence of presentation of the issues is based on the life sequence of the implied person of Jesus and some of the elements do explain the fore-coming ones, in general quite a few of the textual elements are left as riddles. Therefore, ascetic messages in the respective texts have to be unlocked using different types of logic keys: one example pertains to various ethical elements in the SaB (multi-layering) and various examples relate to one main requirement of faith in the SG (multiple applications).

3.2. Main characters

Jesus and Muhammad are important but not the only characters in the respective texts. Both of them materialize virtuous and eventually liberated bodied beings (cf. Mrozic S., 2006:26); both of them represent body ideals related to gender issue (as they are men), but their status and actions in the text differ.

Jesus and Muhammad not only were in very close relationship with God/Allah (cf. Lk 3:22; SaB 1:3), but also could do more than most of ordinary human being, e.g. perform miracles. Quantitatively, taking ratios of the whole length of the texts to miracle stories, Jesus' deeds supersede those of Muhammad. Nevertheless, this is not a very informative feature for the comparison. Much more conveying is their content analysis. Muhammad's miracles mostly pertain to ritual actions, such as ablution, e.g. when the prophet put his hand in the small pot for people to perform ablution in and water came springing from his fingers till everyone finished the ritual (SaB 4:32). Jesus' supernatural deeds relate mostly to transformations of people, e.g. when Jesus heals bodily illnesses when people become believers (Lk 18:35-43). What distinguishes the status of Jesus the most from that of Muhammad is his personal divinity. The latter becomes apparent not only from the alleged word of God (Mk 1:11), but also from the powers which come with his name (Mk 9:38-39).

Their status was so high among the implied believers that it created conflicts, e.g. when companions of Muhammad were fighting for the remains of water the water left after the Prophet had performed ablution (SaB 4:39); when the sinners were competing for the possibilities to approach Jesus with the righteous (Lk 19:1-10). Thus, the rendering of God's/Allah's message

endowed their presence with high social status produced by the reverence of the implied believers. But their bodily uniqueness in the respective texts emphasizes particular ideas. Muhammad's body was sustained by God's mercy in a unique way (SaB 30:48), while Jesus' body was divine itself as it is assumed to be eternal (Lk 24:5-6).

Both main characters laid the "right path" for the follower with their multi-layered meanings of the messages. What it means is that the message of Jesus is intended only for some who will be able to comprehend its depth (Mt 13:9-11), while revelation through Muhammad might not have been fully understood by those who were closest to the source of information and could be much more efficiently used by those who will receive it later (SaB 3:9). Such emphasis of respectively God's choice and abilities of Muslims puts forward the idea that there is universal pattern implied for the future followers, but Muslims have potentially more chances of perceiving the message on their own as abilities can be improved, while the followers of Jesus have to rely on the absoluteness of God's judgement.

As Muhammad was the tool of Allah (SaB 64:85) and Jesus was God (Lk 24:51), the respective texts use these main characters differently. The Synoptic Gospels describe the story of God's bodily life on earth as a phenomenon for emulation and the SaB refers to Muhammad as the source of validity (only his revelation is the true one). Hence, the SaB provides legitimation for the implied believers and the SG render ideal, which could not be reached by people but should be strived for.

3.3. Functions of the text

Religious texts might have quite a few functions, but it would be problematic to argue for their documentary and innate value concerning ascetic behaviour. Qualities attributed to God/Allah or Jesus/Muhammad (e.g. uniqueness, self-control) in respectively the SaB and the Synoptic Gospels might not have been the features of particular beings. Rather, they are textual constructions from which the interpretations of the religious frameworks are built. In correlation with this, the below discussed and compared functions are the potentially most prominent ascribed ones and not the underlying or unquestionable. The list of the comparable ones is limited in this paper to: *edifying*, *legal*, and those important *for building cultural memory*.

3.3.1. Edifying parts

Soteriological keys for the potential ascetic efficiency of the believers in the SaB and the Synoptic Gospels are presented using various literal devices.

The assumed deep implications in both texts are rendered through parables, metaphors, allegories, conundrums and particular usage of words. Parables in both of the texts have eschatological background, which imply on a warning of possibly unwanted results and awaiting punishment and imperative of moral behaviour with it. The comparable examples could be taken related to the rich fools. The Gospel of Luke (Lk 12:13-21) presents a rich person, who has attached too much importance to wealth and in this way limited his possibilities of efficiently using his time for God's rewards. The SaB tell the believers about two characters, one of which punished himself with eternal torture through his overindulgence with obtaining earthly goods (SaB 56:89). The tiny nuance in the Gospel (which is not seen in the SaB) is the emphasis on the time issue, which threatens with proximity of judgement and is the element used by Jesus to receive the implied "right" response from the believers (cf. Burrige R., 2007:166).

Metaphoric usage of the word journey is found in the Synoptic Gospels. Jesus himself travels (Mk 8:22–10:52), but the ideal of the believer is the development of faith as one has to take his cross and follow Jesus. Related to this is the story about three travelling men in the SaB (78:5). In it, the journey as a metaphor of believer's life pertains to experiences through which Allah tries people. What is important in both texts concerning metaphors is that some things have to be seen just literally and not metaphorically (e.g. Lk 24:51; SaB 30:48), but the line between real and figurative is blurred and open for religious interpretations from the textual point of view: there are no clear indications that this is true and this is just to bring certain effect. For the implied believers, the difference would lie in the possibility to question the tangibility of words: this is allowed in the SG (Mt 20:20-23), but forbidden or at least warned against in the SaB (78:6; 2:39). This means that to some extent the SG are more open for religious discussions than the SaB and the SaB somewhat evades the possibility of the subjectivity of issues.

Allegories are the most illustrative and gripping words of Muhammad and Jesus. Some of those allegories are very similar in both form and meaning:

The Prophet said, "The example of guidance and knowledge with which Allah has sent me is like abundant rain falling on the earth. Some of it was absorbed by fertile soil and brought forth vegetation and grass in abundance. The other was withheld by the hard soil and Allah benefited the people with it and they utilized it for drinking, gave it to their animals and used for irrigation of the land for cultivation. The last part of the land was barren and could neither hold

the water nor bring forth vegetation. The first is the example of the person who comprehends Allah's religion and gets rewards for that knowledge, the second one speaks about those who learn the religion and teach it to others. The last example is that of a person who does not care for it and does not take Allah's guidance revealed through me.” (SaB 3:20)

A sower went out to sow his seed. As he was scattering the seed, some of it fell along the path, the birds came and ate it. Some fell on the rock, where the soil was sparse. This sprang up quickly, because the soil was shallow, but when the sun came up, the plants were scorched, and they withered because they had no root. Other seed fell among thorns, which grew up and choked the plants. Still other seed fell on good soil, where it produced crop—a hundred, sixty or thirty times what was sown. <...> Listen then to what the parable of the sower means. When someone hears the message about the kingdom and does not understand it, the evil comes and snatches away what was sown in their heart. This is the seed sown along the path. The seed falling on rocky ground refers to someone who hears the word and receives it with joy, but since they have no root, they last only short time. When trouble or persecution comes because of the word, they quickly flee. The seed falling among the thorns refers to someone who hears the word, but the worries of this life and the deceitfulness of wealth choke the word, making it unfruitful. But the seed falling on good soil refers to someone who hears the word and understands it. This is the one who produces crop, yielding a hundred, sixty or thirty times what was sown.” (Mt 13:3-8; 13:18-23)

In general, allegories clearly distinguish between what is assumed right and wrong and are congruent with the contrasts used, but the difference is that Jesus both tells the followers both words and their explanations, while Muhammad does not elaborate on the meanings.

Conundrums can be found in both the SaB and the SG. Taking sexuality issue as an example, the restraint on sexual activity is ascribed with the earthly reasoning and promotion in God's/Allah's name, but some things concerning it are both promoted and disapproved. If Muhammad balances between sex in general and restraints on it (SaB 30:10), Jesus presents a full spectrum of full celibacy (Mt 19:12) and the gift of marital relationships (Mt 19:4-6). The conundrums can be found in the SaB when short term marital relationships are allowed (SaB 67:32) and forbidden (SaB 90:4); and in the SG when both full celibacy (Mt 19:12) and marriage is promoted (Mt 19:4-6). The believer in the SaB then has to be able to acknowledge the socio-cultural changes and changes that occurred in the late years of Muhammad's life to implement the words, while the SG are clear in the openness: ascetic way of pursuing God might be personalized and does not necessarily relate to full abstention.

Comparisons prevail in both the SaB and the SG, but the most illustrative might be seen the organic ones. Even more than other types of comparisons (e.g. SaB 8:88; Mt 6:22), organic ones ground ascetic programme on earthly things and make it more comprehensive for ordinary believers. Muslim is said to be like the evergreen tree (SaB 3:50). The followers of Jesus are compared to fruit bearing trees giving good fruit (Mt 7:16) and the salt of the earth (Mt 5:13-14).

The latter is something specific in comparison as it implies that the believers in the SG should be themselves unhandy, inconvenient among others with their message.

Some of the literal traits can be found only in the SG. One of such is sarcasm. Pejorative representations are mostly depicting craving, directed towards self-gratification. One more specific device is zeugma, a figure of speech in which a verb or an adjective is used for more than one noun, thus binding together grammatically and logically different ideas. The most widely found example of such usage is the verb to heal, used for meanings associated with the treatment of bodily illnesses and the supplement of spiritual deficiencies (cf. Lk 6:18; Mk 3:5). These additional devices supplement the regular ones and reinforce the important ethical messages.

3.3.2. Legal parts

Both the SaB and the SG recall the old traditions and stories about the prophets. Many of these are also closely related to the ascetic ideals. The SaB recites the related stories about Job and Moses and their accidents when bathing (SaB 5:20). The idea is that even prophets negotiated with Allah that clothes are important though not essential for the believers. Similarly Jesus reintroduces the story about John, who did not eat or drink (Mt 11:18), and Jonah, who did not listen to the warnings himself and people did not change their behaviour according to the signs given to them by Jonah (Lk 29-30).

The traditions mentioned above reinforce the validity of the messages carried by Jesus and Muhammad, who presented the issues as interpretations of the respective meta-narratives grounded on the texts of revelations - the Old Testament and the Quran. There are quite a few references to them in various parts of the respective sources. Many of them are used in the texts to frame the requirements of the believers, e.g. that Muslims have to go on pilgrimage and fight for Allah's cause (SaB 56:31) as it was revealed in the Quran 4:95 that those who stay at home are disapproved (unless they fit into the enlisted categories). Jesus also used passages from the words of the prophets similarly and maintained them as an important framework for ascetic acts, e.g. peaceful stance is needed towards others and positive attitude fulfilling hard things (Mt 12:18-21).

Jesus affirms parts of the Old Testament and presents his own view on them (Mk 7:6-7), while Muhammad in the SaB literally reiterates the verses from the Quran as guidelines for behaviour (SaB 56:31). In this lies the biggest difference. When Muhammad claims congruence of his message to the smallest details of the Revelation, Jesus re-interprets the old interpretation of the Revelation. Therefore, the way Jesus' message is rendered implies on the potential transformation

of the old stance and some flexibility while Muhammad stays with the idea that there exist limited possibilities to change the traditional interpretation of the endowed.

3.3.3. Building cultural memory

The simultaneously collective and “connecting “, bonding nature of memory is expressed with particular clarity in the English language words re-membering and re-collecting, which evoke the idea of putting “members” back together (cf. Assmann J., 2006:11). Connective semantics introduce into the present something distant and alien for which there is no room in everyday life and which therefore has to be ritually imagined at regular intervals in order to maintain a context that is threatened by disintegration and oblivion. (cf. *ibid*, 16). Thus, the implied task in some parts of the SG and hadith is not to forget the stories/revelation, executed in completely different circumstances and to motivate the continuation to abide.

Values of the function related to the cultural memory building could not be identified with only one particular cultural situation in time and space. They are not concentrated around a particular practical result in the past (cf. Bell C., 1992:71). Rather, the axial feature in both sources is continuation through learning by heart, education, ritualization/re-iteration of making visible what is culturally inherited (cf. Assmann J., 2006:18).

Comparative analysis on both the Synoptic Gospels and the SaB brings forward one main difference. If the SaB is meticulously concerned with small individual (SaB 2:3) and large scale communal rituals (SaB 10:74), the SG emphasize one situation and the need of its re-enactment – the last supper of Jesus and his disciples (Lk 22:14-20). Similarly, the SaB requires the believers to memorize large amounts of religious text (cf. SaB 66:10; 19:16), while the SG highlight one main prayer (Lk 11:2-4). From the above, it could be deduced that the SG are much more concentrated than the SaB on the issue of ritual.

Taking the acts intended for cultural continuation for the closer examination, we see that almost all of them directly relate to the ascetic self-control and particular ways of worship. Jesus in the expressed every-day prayer invites to beg for forgiveness and thus be humble (cf. Lk 11:4). Muhammad showed the example of learning whole Quran by heart and including its parts into the respective prayers, rituals (SaB 97:32; 66:34; 66:36). Hence, the SaB puts more emphasis on the transmission of oral tradition through various day-to-day and annual rituals and recitations (cf. SaB 10:126) and the SG highlight the enactment of tradition in several specific ways. Among these there is baptism (Mt 3:15); taking the full weight of one’s burdens (Mt 11:29), shared prayer

(Mt 18:19), enactment of the last supper (Lk 22:17-20) and incarnate witness of Jesus message to others (Lk 10:3-16). This means that the implied believers in the SaB had to rely a lot on their trained memory for the day-to-day ascetic programme and those in the SG could have less abilities, but were expected to keep to the expected humble stance and train spiritual stamina.

Overall, all the ascetic discourse in both of the respective texts remind the believers of the inevitably upcoming end of the earthly life, which cannot be prevented by any earthly means. The one thing the practitioners can do is to prepare by following particular patterns of ascetic conduct, closely related to bodily acts. Bodies of the believers are perceived as the means to render the message and visible signs of intrinsic vulnerability, impermanence, and temporary earthly worth.

Ascetic discourses in both texts represent body as a container of soiling substances and potential means of gaining divine reward. The SaB puts more emphasis on the details how that happens and the SG stay with the more general ideas. In these ways Jesus and Muhammad direct the attention towards practices that eradicate the desires but do not repudiate bodies. Though both lines of presentation are congruent with Judith Butler's idea that bodies already form the beginning mobilize psychic action (cf. Butler J., 2011:67), the SaB is more precise with the legal material imposed on the believers, while the SG are more eloquent on the issues related to the transmission of the story.

4. FORMS OF THE ASCETIC BEHAVIOUR

All forms of the ascetic behaviour in the Sahih al-Bukhari and the Synoptic Gospels in this paper are perceived in terms of the main definition of asceticism:

Ascetic behaviour is comprised of voluntary, rational, conscious, sustained and at least partially systematic program of transforming self-discipline, which might take forms of self-restriction (e.g. when body is consciously used not according to biological instincts) and/or worship with the implied and pursued religious goals with regard to respective religious tradition and which perceives body as a medium of expression and perception of meanings. (R. B.-S.)

This definition does not in any way imply presumption of asceticism as extremeness in religious views or actions. At the same time it emphasizes the importance of body in the communication of ascetic stance.

4.1. Asceticism in every-day treatments of the body

The SaB and the SG are intended for day-to-day life. In it the believers inevitably are influenced by their bodily needs and preferences related to biological features. Thus, 5 main sub-groups of such ascetic behaviour could be named: *dietary; discussing weakness/illness; related to purification; concerning clothing; and pertaining to additional beauty treatment.*

4.1.1. Dietary asceticism

Dietary asceticism is not a simple hunger strike. (R. B.-S.)

Many cultures link food and spirituality; the foremost method for doing it is fasting as self-restriction from the particular types of food, but this bears no inherent and self-evident meaning except that which is assigned to it in the system (cf. Valantasis R., 1998:548). Analysing the Sahih al-Bukhari and the Synoptic Gospels dietary asceticism appears to be a complex issue, which could hardly be reduced to keeping of the religious rules for eating. It would better be defined as specific position towards food. Thus aiming to deduce contrasting particularities in the depicted representations of dietary asceticism in the respective texts, several important aspects have to be discussed: *expected general stance of the believers towards food; particular problems related to food; and presumed functions of dietary asceticism.*

4.1.1.1. General stance

Believers of almost all religious traditions have to abide to certain framework of thinking, which is in some instances preserved in the form of canonized text. The overall position of Jesus and Muhammad in the respective analysed texts is that human needs have to be satisfied and that food

is important to have. The former point could be illustrated by the excerpts from the Gospel of Mark and the book of Food in the Sahih al-Bukhari:

And he said to them: Have you never read what David did, when he was in need, and was very hungry? What did he, and they who were with him? How he went into the house of God in the days of Abiathar, the high priest, and he did eat the shewbread, which is not lawful to eat except for the priests, and gave also to those who were with him? And he said to them: The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath: Therefore, the Son of man is Lord also of the Sabbath. (Mk2:25-28)

Once while I was in a state of fatigue, I met 'Umar bin Al-Khattab, and therefore I asked him to recite a verse from Allah's Book to me. He thought and interpreted it to me. After walking for a short distance, I fell on my face because of fatigue and severe hunger. Suddenly I saw Allah's Apostle standing by my head. He said, "O Abu Huraira!" I replied, "Here I am, O Allah's Messenger, and Sadaik!" Then he held me by the hand, and made me get up. Then he understood what I was suffering from. He took me to his house, and ordered a big bowl of milk for me. I drank and he said, "Drink more, O Abu Hirr!" So I drank again, and he again said, "Drink more." So I drank more till my stomach became full (SaB 70:1).

The above excerpts are similar and different at the same time. The basic shared line presents two situations of people who starve and expresses the position that hunger has to be satisfied even if with the food which probably would not be the most common in the diet of that particular hungry person. Mark mentions shewbread and Bukhari speaks about milk as the types of nutrients. Referring to the socio-cultural situations of the implied readers, the former was known as composed of flour mixed with water and baked. It was broken (not cut) and was usually used in religious ceremonies by the chosen people for worshipping God. According to Shaw Caldecott (2014), it was a contemporary version (in a different form) of the Christian prayer "Give us this day our daily bread". Acknowledging its significance in the temple service, positive approach towards the satiation with such food brings forward the importance to listen to the bodily needs and even the superiority of tackling such problems. Similarly, a man was given milk to drink in SaB to gain strength and not to starve. Milk was not the common thing for the starving, as it was not the most easily obtained – one had to have an animal giving milk and the starving usually were the poor ones without any animals that belonged to them. Nevertheless, in the illustrated situation the empty stomach was replaced by the full one. With this, it is said that fulfilment of the main bodily needs is important and has to be accomplished using the prevailing food choice, not limiting it to the most basic products. The ones providing food for the others have to give from what they use and not from the leftovers or products of little nutritional value. The examples taken have their reiterations in various forms in the other passages of the respective texts as well, e.g. SaB 60:37, speaking that the believers have to provide their bodies with food and drinks; and Mt

11:19, saying that even Jesus was eating and drinking, what implies that an ordinary person should definitely do that.

4.1.1.2. Particular problems

The need to eat has to be satisfied but the general picture of the stance in the respective texts is not as simple as that. M. Tolbert (1999:29) sees the ideas concerning food in the Gospel of Mark as a conundrum and this could be applied to both the Synoptic Gospels and the Sahih al-Bukhari. In the latter, there are verses warning not to fulfil one's needs without assurance that the neighbour has nothing against such intentions (i.e. does not have personal claims for it):

The Prophet forbade us to eat two dates at a time, unless one takes the permission of one's companions. (SaB 46:14)

Having this with the previous verse mentioned from the SaB, the implied believer has to keep his needs in great consideration and at the same time acknowledge the needs of the others. It seems that the way of possibly solving this riddle is to know by heart all of the thematically related passages from SaB and only then put forward individual demands. Thus the emphasis is on community and sharing.

The SG present a similar issue by praising the needy and belittling earthly food:

Therefore, I say unto you, worry neither about your life, what you shall eat, or what you shall drink; nor about your body <...>. Is not the life more than flesh <...>? (Mt 6:25)

It is written, man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes out of the mouth of God. (Mt 4:4)

If in one place (e.g. Mk 2:25-28; Mt 21:18-19) nutritional needs are essential, in the above they seem to be secondary to the religious. Though none of the verses in the SG denies the bodily dependence on food, it renders it of both primary and secondary importance. How could these be reconciled? One of the suggestions might be to consider the situations of the verses. The other is to find place of religious faith in decision making. With these the implied believer of the SG was expected to rely on faith/religious intuition making decisions in particular situations. At the same time, the above verses imply on the priority of the spiritual over the corporeal and thus emphasize the foremost criteria of personal spiritual belonging.

The picture of a general stance becomes even more convoluted when taking into the consideration specific situations: *travelling, illness, obesity, suffering from gluttony, and particular celebrations.*

All of these oust the implied believers from the normal situations of every-day life, burdening them with specific worries, which are affected by the food issues.

Travelling pertains to the changing of food choice and the breaking of the routine habits. Every-day food for journey and for the stay during it is mentioned in several places in the SaB, e.g. SaB 1:3; 63:33, and the SG, e.g. Lk 10:7; Mk 11:12-14. The Arabic text mentions preparation for the journey and consideration of how much is enough for how many people, e.g.

Allah's Messenger said, "The food for two people is sufficient for three, and the food for three people is sufficient for four." (SaB 70:11);

During the life-time of the Prophet we used to take the meat of the sacrificed animals to Medina [as food for journey, - R.B.-S.] (SaB 56:123).

Rendered in this way, the stance of the implied believer towards food is provision before the journey but with openness to possible changes and sharing with the other fellow-travellers during it. The first line also brings forward the value of sharing, even to the extent that unexpected participants in a meal can always be openly received. Thus it also speaks about hospitality. The second refers more to the storage of food and pertains to the issue of religiously used animals as an approved source of food.

Acknowledgement of the needs of the travel-companions is mentioned in the SG too. For instance,

Jesus said to them, 'They do not need to leave. You should give them to eat'. Mt 14:16.

But in the other places, like in Mt 10:10 Jesus prescribes not to take even a scrip, but take everything what is given for the faith/mission (Lk 10:8). Though conscious unpreparedness of provisions seems to threaten the possibilities to receive food when travelling, it is presumed that God will take care of them through other creations of his, which all have their productivity. When a mishap occurs and the one travelling is not provided where he would have expected food, curse is pronounced. This is the case in Mk 11:12-14:

He was hungry and seeing a fig tree further having leaves, he went to look for something on it: and when he came to it, he found nothing but leaves; at that time figs have not born fruit yet. And that Jesus said unto it, 'No man will eat your fruit forever'.

Comparing the two lines of thought, it appears that one (Muslim) is more rational, meticulous and the other (brought by the SG) is more faith or emotions-based. But this idea should not be taken as absolute or universal as there are other nuanced examples in SaB which could be taken as

arguments for indifference towards journey-food, e.g. SaB 30:33 during the religious journey a person could choose to fast or not to fast without any consequences. What seems to be really noteworthy is that the SaB leaves certain freedom of choice in several issues related to food while the SG do not.

The other specific situation is when a person is affected by *sickness*. Any illness limits a person in some way but at the same time within a religious framework it might allow him more than others. This is foremost vivid in the SaB. For instance, the sick could abstain from fasting when all others had to pursue it to during the month of Ramadan (SaB 30:1): following of the same regulations is required but the marginal line which should not be violated is different. Moreover, in SaB 56:71 we see that a sick person is not required to fast and is assumed to receive the reward for acknowledging his situation and abstaining from fasting when other people would abstain from food. At the same time there is a limit which does not allow any exceptions even to the sick and, therefore, it should not be contravened. This could be illustrated by several examples: when someone is obese or is controlled by gluttony (SaB 52:9; 70:12), food should be carefully limited not only because of the health but also because of religious reasons; other example, the SaB 86:18, shows a situation when somebody violated important religious laws. In such case, their physical weakness or illness is neglected and they are not given even some water. Taking a contrasting example from the ones mentioned above, SaB also warns that fasting with the aim of clemming is viewed as forbidden (cf. SaB 75:19: *Had the Prophet not forbidden us to wish for death, I would have wished for it.*). But at the same time there is a group of people, in particular women, who are almost continuously treated in religious matters as being deficient or almost sick. Because of this, for example, they cannot take up personal fasts without their husbands' presence or supervision (SaB 67:85). Thus, in SaB for women approach towards food is different than that of men.

The interesting thing is that in the SG there are no specific religious regulations for the limitations on the food of the sick or specific awards for abstaining from limitations when sick. This could imply that even the sick had to follow standard regulations of the religious food usage.

In congruence with the above ideas from the SaB, treated in the required manner some food gains positive characteristics, e.g. becomes a cure. In the SaB it heals physical malaise, while in the SG it relates more to the spiritual healing. Giving the examples of the former, edible fungus/truffle and its water cure eye trouble in SaB 65:1; seven *Ajwa* dates every morning protect from poison in SaB 70:43.

Attention in the SG is paid both to physical and spiritual illness as deficiencies, e.g. Lk 13:10-15, and these two forms are even closely linked together when sickness is compared with hunger/thirst. One of the vivid similarities between physical and spiritual deficiency of nutrients is the need to conquer them (though means of doing that and use of food in it is different): malaise has to be treated and hunger appeased. The second is that people having any of those deficiencies are treated as being equally needy: verse Mt 9:12 describes a situation when Jesus approached sinners as the sick and ate/shared a meal with them, and in Lk 15:23-24 we find a story about a weak (from hunger) son who receives a banquet.

There are also many positive lines in the SG on satiation, but gluttony (Mt 11:19) and surfeiting (Lk 21:34) are described as destructive and are to be shunned. Looking at all of these examples from the Synoptic Gospels it appears that differently from the SaB these verses put emphasis on the healing presence through sharing and conscious usage of food as means of employing such behaviour. Though the main prerequisite in the healing process in the text of the Synoptic Gospels is faith or return to it, food plays an important role as a marker of the new spiritual beginning and illustrates the ability of a person control himself.

Acknowledgment of situation (a believer appeared in) is in both the Synoptic Gospels and the Sahih al-Bukhari, but particular uses of food in the betterment of the situation vary. Food is also present expressing joy in both texts in the community and to God through certain celebrations. There are instances when believers are almost warned to consciously celebrate, eat and drink, and not to abstain from nourishment, e.g. in SaB 80:53, which speaks about *walima*/a wedding banquet even with one sheep; in the SG (Mk 2:19) the followers of Jesus do not fast as the situation with Jesus being present is perceived as elation.

There are quite a few specific conditions treating food in the respective texts, when the approach depends on a specific religious interpretation of the situation. But all of the specificities supplement the main guidelines for allowed, or neutrally approached and forbidden food.

If something is not forbidden in the text, it does not mean that it is allowed in all cases. This is not only due to particular interpretations of situations but also additional actions related to the consumption. Nuanced expressions of these are found in both the SaB and the SG: a fasting person has to anoint the head and wash the face (Mt 6:17); recite a blessing (Mt 14:19) and/or give thanks (Mt 15:36); praise of Allah before eating and pronunciation of His name (SaB 81:17); food has to be prepared in the lawful manner (SaB 93:9), it cannot be blown into and must be kept covered (SaB 4:18), drinking from the mouth of water containers is forbidden (SaB 72:24), food

has to be eaten with one's right hand (SaB 70:2) and in a certain bodily position (not leaning, SaB 70:13), Suhur has to be taken before periods of fasting (SaB 30:48). In addition, Jesus in the SG expresses the generalised position that not too much attention should be paid to prohibitions related to food (Mk 7:17).

From this, the overall pictures of the ascetic intake of food in the respective texts seem to follow two distinct lines: in the SG food used is not perceived as threat (of religious impurity), while in the SaB conscious treatment of it is emphasized and much attention to details has to be paid. These should not be treated as universal postulates but ought to be considered with their nuances. Rational choices are expected in both traditions and, therefore, in the SG all intoxicants are not forbidden in general but drunkenness as a form of blurred consciousness is presented as a negative thing (e.g., Lk 7:34). Though consciousness is important in the SaB, in some cases forgetful intake while fasting might also bear blessing with it, as it is assumed that in such a way Allah has given food to the believer (SaB 30:26). In the SaB regulations for food start with its procurement, e.g. hunting: the name of Allah has to be mentioned before the hunt and the animal for food has to be slaughtered in a special way (not with a tooth or a nail – blood has to gush out, (SaB 72:15) and preparation, in which certain types of utensils are even forbidden (SaB 74:8). Where both positions interlink, is that the results of the types of food on a person are important. Thus in SaB only limited number of products can be prepared from certain types of the allowed food, e.g. grapes, dates, honey, wheat and barley (SaB 65:1) and in the SG not all satiation is needful as it might lead to spiritual rottenness (Lk 20:46-47).

When prohibitions in the SG are broad-brushed, in the SaB they relate to particular types of food too. From these, the consumption of beasts having fangs (SaB 72:28), a crow, the kite, the scorpion, the mouse, the rabid dog (SaB 28:7), garlic and meat of donkeys (but allowed the meat of horses), pork (SaB 64:38). All of these prohibitions have their implicit religious grounding: the problem is that readers have to understand it through interpretation and not to question the validity of the inhibitions (SaB 80:35). In turn, the SG, evade such sensitive situations concerning food prohibition and leave the regulations on it more flexible (Mk 7:17).

Looking closely at the respective text we find many types of food mentioned, including the above mentioned ones that are related to prohibitions. Nevertheless, the least valuable information, though illustrative (e.g. on what Jesus and Muhammad eat), can be retrieved from those depicted neutrally as they depend to a big extent upon socio-cultural situations. These are influenced not only by the geographical but also time related particularities, and their textual presentation is very

different. The SaB is much more detail oriented and thus mentions more types of acts. The most commonly mentioned food in the SG is bread (e.g. Mk 6:8) and in the SaB it is date (SaB 34:85), but they do not themselves direct influence on the respective forms of ascetic behaviour.

Ascetic treatment of food in the SaB and the SG through the bodily acts and intentions relate to other categories of ascetic behaviour.

4.1.1.3. Functions

Dietary asceticism is not the same as fasting as it pertains to the specific stance towards food in more general terms and its treatment, where fasting is only a part. Though in such self-restraining behaviour food might be perceived as a sign of the vulnerability of the believers (cf. Bynum C., 1988:34), I would argue that in the SaB and the Synoptic Gospels it is more than that.

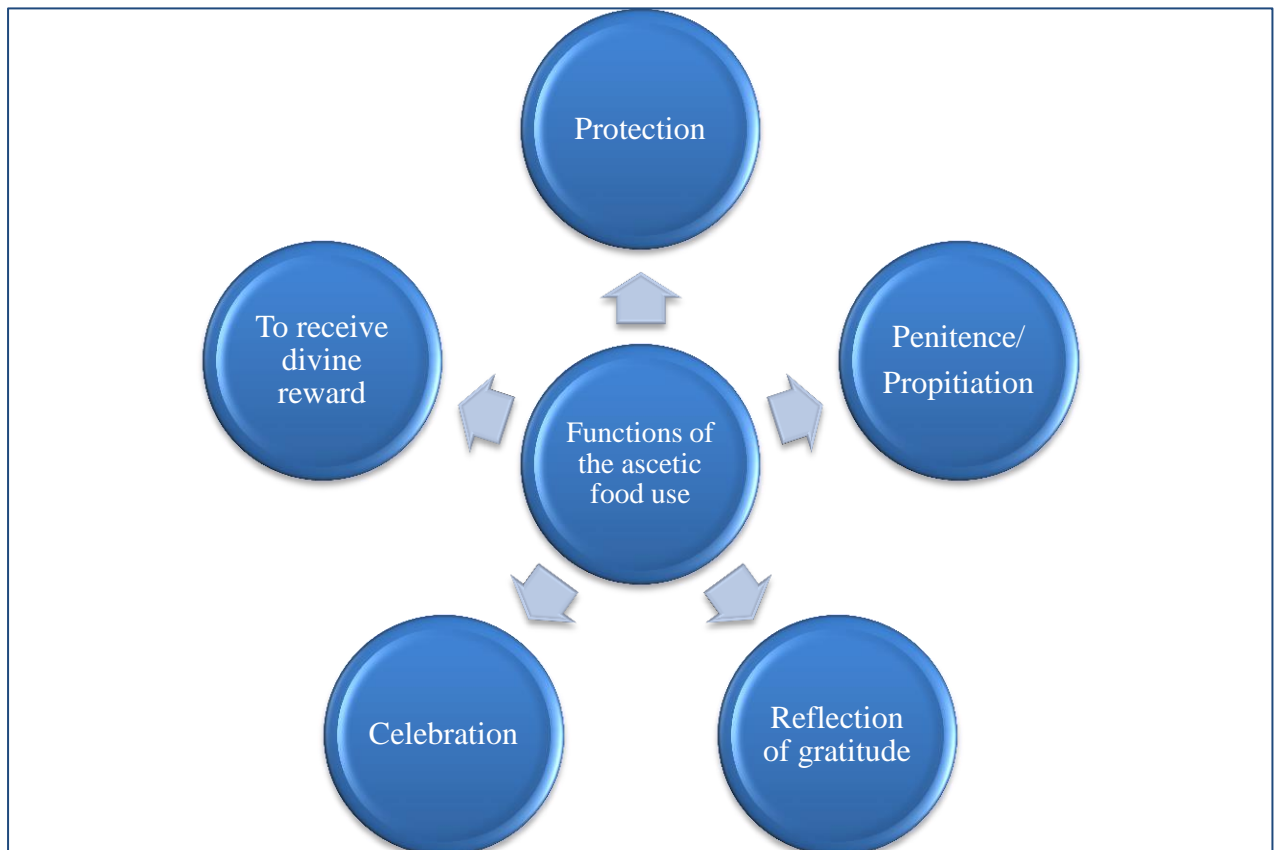


Figure nr. 2. Functions of the ascetic food use in the SaB and the SG (R. B.-S.)

Figure nr. 2 above distinguishes 5 main functions of ascetic food use in the SaB and the Synoptic Gospels. It would be very polemical to put them in a hierarchical order as they are among themselves interrelated and in one source some functions are more detailed than in the other.

Protection is one of the very important functions. In both sources God/Allah is the powerful lord (SaB 97:1; Lk 10:27), but the believers are weak and sometimes are overwhelmed by their ambitions, which lead to errors. In the SaB limitations on food are literally described as a shield (SaB 30:2). They can protect from the human weakness, the inability to control one-self (as with using alcohol, which is intoxicating and thus blurring the mind, cf. SaB 64:60; from gluttony, which physically changes a person and does not allow one to feel satisfaction with moderate amount of food, cf. SaB 70:12) and from forgetting Allah, who is the lord of all things (especially during Ramadan, cf. SaB 65:1). In the Synoptic Gospels specific treatment of food is an insurance against evil and education of will to surrender to the protection of knowing God (this might be seen in the example of the temptation of Jesus, which could have been easily influenced by Satan through food or the lack of it, Lk 4:2), means to maintain awareness of vain ambitions and superficial commitments (as illustrated by the example of pharisaic treatment of edible things, forgetting about essential values; they had to treat food in the similar manner but also acknowledge and employ its relation to the approved values and intentions, cf. Mt 23:23).

Ascetic use of food does not grant divine *reward*, but both texts do show that fasting is intended as a sign for God/Allah and it is rewarded:

that your fasting may not be seen by men but by your Father who is in secret. And your Father who is in secret will reward you (Mt 6:18);

Every good deed of Adam's son is for him except for fasting; it is for Me. And I shall reward for it. (SaB 77:78).

The difference is the emphasis in the SaB that all other deeds of the believers are beneficial for them directly, but fasting is needed by Allah (SaB 30:9) and still brings the reward for the people. Thus it is an obligatory but still chosen act to pursue for reward. To receive it, nevertheless, treatment of food has to be congruent with the “right” intentions and deeds. Similar structure of congruence can be traced in the SG too (were the close relation between bodily and inner control is emphasized, Mt 10:28), but fasting in there is in no way presented as an exceptional practice from other ascetic acts. What is specific is that the divine reward of it is in the inverse correlation to the earthly one (cf. Mt 6:18).

Just as food is needed for every believer in every-day life, the same is said about the *gratitude* from each one of them towards God/Allah. For this, every meal in the SaB and the SG is commenced with a blessing giving thanks or awe rendered by mentioning God's/Allah's name:

Mention the name of Allah and eat with your right hand (SaB 70:2);

Jesus took the bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to his disciples (Mk 14:22).

Important aspect in the treatment of food is sharing which at the same time is a *celebration* of being together as a bigger or smaller community, e.g.

The food for two is sufficient for three, and the food of three persons is sufficient for four. (SaB 70:11); Prepare meals sufficient for five people for I want to invite the Prophet along with four other persons as I saw signs of hunger on their face (SaB 34:21);

I have eagerly desired to eat this Passover with you (Lk 22:15).

In both sources we can find meals as actual celebrations of something: e.g. in the SaB a wedding fest (SaB 80:53), in the SG a new spiritual beginning (Mk 2:17). Indirectly the described usages of food in the SaB are a celebration of equality of personal dignity before Allah, when the same food given by Allah reaches both the lord and the servant (SaB 70:55). From the examples in the SG it could be also deduced that food is along with other things a means to celebrate inequality which allows the believers to gain the rewards from God (Lk 14:14).

Related to the function above, *penitence* in the SG and the SaB is the acknowledgment of one's limitations. This function relates many others and to some extent is an axis in all of the other types. It is because only when one understands that he is limited, does he need protection, can he celebrate sharing and experience gratitude and thus receive a reward after working for it. From the other side, food can also awake penitential spirit (as happened to the prodigal son, Lk 15:17-18) and be penitence for misdeeds (as the believers are urged to feed others with certain food as an atonement, SaB 30:31). The latter lines in the respective texts are important and mark the difference: in the Gospel food is used to stay in joyful, vigilant penitence (Mt 6:16) while in the SaB it is imposed for the "wrong" (SaB 51:20).

Following common lines of the functions of the ascetic treatment of food in the SaB and the Synoptic Gospels, quite a few particularities can be noted. In essence the positions concerning protective use of food against potential misdeeds are shared though the examples differ: more emphasis in the SG is put on vain ambitions while in the SaB on immoderation. Specific thing in the SaB is the outstanding meaning ascribed to fasting as the only action for Allah. This means that Allah has a certain system of ascetic deeds according to which people are rewarded. In the SG, in turn, for the reward people have to fulfil many parts of the puzzle (where actions are of more or less the same value).

Gratitude and celebration are related and are linked by similar ideas in the SaB and the SG, but the latter source diverges by its paradoxical implication on the celebration of inequality followed by the possibility to be in the expected humble mood and be an active agent in the relation with God. Related potential for the believers to gain voice in the communication with Allah is to redeem one's sins by fasting as a type of punishment. In contrast to this, the SG do not speak of food related practices as punishment but as a vigilant and joyful self-restriction.

4.1.1.4. Body in dietary asceticism

Body plays an important role in all of the above mentioned 5 functions of the ascetic behaviour. Looking for the meanings related to it, one has to understand the logic in the respective texts on the *bodily mechanics* and *senses*.

Jesus and Muhammad *move* a lot in the respective texts, their followers do so too. What can be deduced from the examples given is that for every action there is a symbolic, implied meaning. This gives examples for the idea by John Koessler (2003:99) that body does not act independently in such religious narratives. The SaB presents a whole scope of such religiously meaningful actions pertaining to the treatment of food: starting from controlling one's breath while drinking (SaB 72:24), continuing with the eating only with one's right hand (SaB 70:2) and finishing with the general position of the body while eating (sitting and not leaning or lying, SaB 70:13). Majority of such actions also have a possible rational reasoning, e.g. with the breath into a glass minor drops from them nose might fall into it and if one eats while leaning there is a much higher chance of choking. Similarly, the Synoptic Gospels present their scope of actions: from sitting while eating (Mk 8:6) to directing head and eyes towards heaven (Mt 14:19) and finishing with the outstretched arms while sharing meal with the others (Lk 22:19). The SG also use a very strong language when Jesus warns: "if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off" (Mt 5:29). This just reinforces the proximity and interrelation between bodily and spiritual actions. In congruence, in Mt 6:22-23 Jesus ascribes body part - eye – with moral characteristics of "good" and "evil". Overall, both positions in the respective texts keep to the idea that bodily acts help the believers to stay in the respectful stance and sustain certain mood. The SaB puts more emphasis on continuous self-control oriented even to small details, while the SG stay with more general idea: claim that body ministering directs inner intentions towards the divine and offers framework for keeping to one's will.

Dietary asceticism is one of the types of the ascetic behaviour which relates to all of the five *senses* of every believer: *sight, audition, taste, touch* and *smell*. All of these are congruent with the

idea above that there must be equilibrium between will and deeds. With this, when Jesus and Muhammad share their meals they do it not only by being together with somebody but also literally by touching food and giving it to the others (SaB 70:23; Mk 8:6). Sight is important when looking for potential food and together with audition making sure that it is edible/religiously allowed to eat. The emphasis in the SaB is audition, as the believers are not expected to make sure how their halal food is obtained at all times (SaB 4:18). The SG highlight sight, as in the situation when Jesus looked for fruit on the fig tree (Mt 21:19) and fed the masses with what he saw that the disciples had brought (Mt 14:18).

The most interesting particularities can be observed concerning smell and taste. In the SaB Muhammad says that the smell coming out from the mouth of a fasting person is better to Allah than the smell of musk (SaB 30:2). In the SG Jesus suggests anointing the head while fasting (Mt 6:17). From these examples we see that pleasant smell is important and it is religiously related to the treatment of food in general; but in one case it is alleged on the religious transformation of bodily reality (when bad smell is changed into enjoyable) while in the other additional actions are needed for positive self-presentation in the community (even when a person is fasting). This as if implies that ascetic behaviour should not disrupt every-day life (unless make it more pleasant).

Different are the positions of Muhammad and Jesus towards taste and food preferences. In the SaB Muhammad is described as finding pleasure in certain kinds of food (e.g. sweet edible things, SaB 76:4; 70:39) and he would leave the food he did not like (70:21), while in the SG Jesus urges to take all the food one is presented with (Lk 10:7).

Dietary asceticism in the SaB and the Synoptic Gospels foremost means acknowledgement of the limitation of every believer and his constant need for nutrition. If there is no time for having meal, a believer has to seclude (Mk 6:31-32) and he is forbidden to fast continuously (SaB 30:48). The most prominent difference in the positions is that the SaB presents a more flexible position (which is easier to interpret fulfilling personal preferences), while the SG are much more radical (where there is need for food faith has to help to satisfy it but not with any additional pleasure).

4.1.2. Weakness/illness

There are times in every believer's life when ordinary things (as food) do not help they are expected to and a person gets weak or even sick. Such situations pertain to specific *religious interpretations* of the state a believer appeared in and possible *solutions*.

General vulnerability of the believers is presented in both texts (cf. SaB 76:7; Lk 22:46). In the SaB there are diseases/weaknesses that were created by Allah and for his purposes but there are also the ones that are from Satan (SaB 78:125). The example of the latter is leprosy, which should be avoided as a lion (SaB 76:19). Differently, the SG treat the sick with compassion (Mt 9:36) as the needy which should be approached without any exceptions as Jesus did (Lk 5:13; Mt 4:24) therefore, the believers should go to help the sick directly and not just thinking about them (Mt 7:26).

Though in both texts a believer should not try to get sick, the one who is in a potentially menacing situation should stay secluded in order to protect others (SaB 90:13). The SG present the other position. The ones in need should go and actively seek for healing (Lk 5:12) and foremost be concerned with their own situation (Mt 7:7). But God allows the believers to get sick and it pertains to both expectations towards the sick and those who are near them. This is one more detail contributing to the idea that Jesus puts more emphasis on individuals than on communities as it is done by Muhammad.

Universal cures are very different in the respective texts. In the SaB it is black cumin (SaB 76:7), gulp of honey, cupping (SaB 76:3) and Indian or sea incense (SaB 76:10; 76:13) and in the SG it is faith (Mt 8:13; 17:20). Particularity in the SaB is exceptional situation in a case of death, while the SG see faith as cure even in the case of death (Mt 9:24). From this image Allah seems to be much more down to earth and all-calculating (e.g. he put disease in one wing of a fly and a cure in the other, SaB 76:58); the believers, in turn, should be reasonable and use the available medicine (SaB 76:9). The SG promote the idea that believers have to use their bodies motivated by faith and in that would be the best healing (Mt 9 :21-22). Thus, in the SG the key term stays “faith”.

The above idea of cures in the SaB is also based on the idea that for all diseases that Allah created a treatment was also made (SaB 76:1). For example, poor eye-sight can be healed with truffles, which grow naturally and do not have to be cultivated (SaB 76:20). And in the cases when treatment does not help it is the failure of the body as if it has told one a lie about Allah (SaB 76:24) (as Allah never fails). The SG put a completely different emphasis and put forward inner diseases (Mt 8:32) and even sins (Mt 9:2) which cause diseases, aggravated by ingratitude and failure to submit to God (Mt 9:12). Moreover, Jesus claims that physical weakness is much better than the inner one (Mt 18:8). Hence, both Allah and God use diseases but God seems to be more likely to inflict a believer with some illness.

In order not to be affected by the evil weakness, Muhammad used to employ preventive practices: recitation of certain suras (SaB 80:7) and blowing his breath over the body, rubbing his hands over all parts possible three times (SaB 66:14). In addition to this, the believers had to get good rest and use appropriate things to help that (e.g. good leather mattress stuffed with palm fibres, SaB 81:17). The correlated with that in the SG is the urge to stay vigilant and do not fall asleep (Mt 26:40) because falling into sleep means higher risk of entering evil temptation (Lk 22:46). Specific for the SG is also the idea that the longer a person stays strong, faithful and vigilant, the stronger might be his challenge by evil powers which are always close-by (Mt 12:43-45). From these examples, it can be deduced that Jesus requires much more bodily efforts to be on the right religious path than Muhammad.

Weakness of inability to control bodily actions might trouble a person religiously: when one passes wind during the prayer, angels cease to ask for Allah's blessings and forgiveness (SaB 10:73); yawning itself is from Satan so when a person yawns freely or even with sounds, this makes Satan laugh (SaB 78:125). The last example means that Satan overtook charge over a person. Similar situation happens when a believer gets frightened in a dream (SaB 59:11). To regain control and protection from Allah a person should employ specific rituals. In case of a dream, that would be spitting through the left shoulder and praying to Allah. In other instances a more complicated procedure might be needed: for the ailment of scalp a believer has to pay Fida by fasting or feeding the poor (SaB 2:196) or offering sacrifice (SaB 64:35). The message on the same issue in the SG is much more succinctly presented but important: there is a strong correlation between inability to control oneself and evil influence (Lk 9:39). What could be noted from such differences in the respective texts is the wide scope of specific practices needed for particular weaknesses in the SaB, while the SG stay with one and main idea of faith.

The texts mention untraditional cures too. The uniqueness of Muhammad and Jesus in the respective texts presents possibility of saliva as a treatment (SaB 76:38, Mk 8:23). Though the secretions are usually threatening, when used by the chosen people they become healing. But in both cases this option is no longer available as both Muhammad and Jesus passed away (SaB 70:1; Mk 15:37).

Fatal outcomes of certain types of diseases – plague, abdominal disease - in the SaB are perceived as martyrdom (SaB 10:32). They are paralleled with specific ways of dying: drowning, from being buried alive and being killed for Allah (SaB 56:30). Differently from that Jesus claims that he does not want (does not accept?) a sacrifice and elevates compassion (Mt 12:6) as a rewarded

deed. Therefore, it seems that Muslim believers could have become martyrs without doing much for it, while the believers in the SG had to put effort into it.

Overall, bodily weakness is important in both sources but with different nuances. If in the SaB a believer has to discern between evilly and divinely afflicted illnesses and employ particular actions in their treatment, the SG see a lesson of faith in every such situation of bodily or spiritual weakness: both for the one who got ill and the one who is near.

4.1.3. Purification

Every day believers are expected to apply certain purity practices on body in order to stay healthy, but the importance ascribed to such actions in the SaB and the Gospels is different.

Physical and religious purity sometimes are hard to tell apart, e.g. after one has urethral (SaB 3:51) or sexual (SaB 3:49) discharge he becomes impure in both ways and the ritual of religious purification helps him to obviate both. There is even a blessing in cleaning one's teeth with siwak (4:73) and that would mean that taking care of your body brings both bodily and religious merits. What seems particular to the SaB, though, is the amount of details presented for the employment of bodily purification rituals (using water, a spear-headed stick, stones, cf. SaB 8:94; 4:17; a piece of cloth, cf. SaB 5:11). In addition, there are even prohibitions to touch some private parts (SaB 4:18) (and even perform additional ablution after washing them, cf. SaB 5:13) and emphasis on the difference between the right and the left part of the body, where right is cleaner and should not be used for filthy deeds (SaB 63:32). Important in the purification become even the slightest movements of the body, e.g. starting with one's right hand (SaB 74:25), lying more towards the right side (SaB 4:75), starting purification by washing upper limbs with which one will perform ablution to the other parts of the body (SaB 5:1). Moreover, after the act a person has to be in a better condition than normally (e.g. smell better, cf. SaB 5:6).

The SG also present an interpretation of distinctive relation between religious and bodily purity. Jesus claimed that nothing that went into someone from outside could make the person unclean (Mk 7:15), but it did not mean that body itself cannot affect the soul of a person and infringe it (cf. Mt 5:29). Therefore, a believer should take good care of his body in order to keep to religious purity framework. How he does that is another thing, e.g. the disciples of Jesus did not even wash their hand before meal (Mk 7:2). That could cause health problems. In this instance Jesus seems to present a clear dichotomy of bodily and religious purity and even negligence of bodily vulnerability. From this it might be deduced that, if taken consciously by the implied believers,

Jesus' teaching pertained to presenting inner vulnerability before bodily and complete trust in God to prevent any malfunction. What a person himself should do is taking the measures of precaution to evade evil thoughts, debauchery, thefts, murders, adultery, greed, fraud, treachery, shamelessness, envy, slander, pride and ignorance (Mk 7:21-22). The list is remarkably long and detailed but has one axial idea of being too self-centred.

Taking both the examples from the SaB and the SG it appears that the former invites the believers to spend more time on their bodies while the latter pertains to inner self-restraints. In this sense the first one is presented as more efficient for preventing health issues while the other is assumed to be needed for the psychological hygiene. Thus in the SaB body is the foremost means of keeping pure while in the SG it is of secondary importance but still closely related with being smeared.

Both in the SaB and the SG impurity which appeared from bodily deeds is related to fault. In the SaB it could be illustrated by the example of spitting: if a person wanted to do so, he should spit either on his left or under his left foot because these are related with Satan while from the right side good spirits protect a person (SaB 8:34). In addition, spitting makes one impure if he does that in the mosque (SaB 8:37). Nevertheless, it seems that biological needs are put before the religious: when one wants to urinate and starts doing that, even if a situation is not appropriate and defiles a place, such person should not be disturbed and purification rituals should follow (cf. SaB 4:57). At the same time soiling is still foremost described through wastes: sperm, menstrual blood, and cleansings, which in turn are related with *Shaitan* and endowed faults.

Religious ritual of purification has to be accomplished in the right way or otherwise it will not be approved in the SaB, e.g. when somebody just passes his hands over feet and does not wash them properly, unwashed parts will allegedly suffer from the fire in the Hereafter (SaB 4:29). To perform an action properly a believer had to know what kind of purification to pursue as in the SaB there is a scope of them (from dry one to total submersion in water) (SaB 5:28; 6:13; 7:4). There are no such convoluted guidelines for the believers in the SG. As bodily purity is of secondary importance, a person does not have to remember many regulations for outer purification. All of the meticulous attention should be directed towards keeping inner purity by unreserved faith (Lk 13:3) and humbleness (Lk 7:38). There are not presented guidelines for doing that but for several examples from common people.

An important thing in the SaB is the purification before the prayer (SaB 61:23). Without doing that a believer cannot fulfil his religious obligation. Differently from that Jesus required appropriate inner stance. Thus illness could be treated as impurity and a sign of lack of

faith/religious submission in that person (Mt 11:5). Moreover, the most attention in the SG is concentrated on the pleading to God and not the preparation to it (Lk 22:40). Prayer here is means of preventing inner impurity but there are not too many details of how one should employ it, except for one prayer:

Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be your name, thy kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread and forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen. (Mt 6:9-13).

The SG present quite a romanticised version of Jesus life, excluding bowel movement or details on handling gender specific bodily needs. A specific thing for the SaB is obligation to follow religious patterns even answering the call of nature (SaB 4:11): when Muhammad had to do that, he would recite certain words, requesting from Allah refuge from all the threatening and wicked things. In addition, Muhammad warned not to mix bodily discharge with the things one performs ablution with (SaB 65:1), e.g. not to urinate where one takes bath as this would mean that whole body becomes impure when bathing and new ablution is needed. From this detailed picture in the SaB and different in the SG we can say that textually particular are the presentation of personal purity of Muhammad and Jesus, where the former is much more ordinary and sharing every-day bodily concerns while the latter is somewhat distant from all of these.

The SaB presents a particular day for more important purification, i.e. every Friday taking a bath (ghusl) is compulsory for every Muslim reaching the age of puberty (SaB 10:161). If available, such action should be complemented with the usage of perfume and cleaning of the teeth with siwak (SaB 11:3). Given lesser attention to bodily purification, the SG do not talk about a special day for purification but also to some extent violate the prevailing traditions of Sabbath (Mt 15:2).

The SG express a continual need for observance of purity (Mt 24:46) and this relates to the dead too in some way as people for God are all alive because they will be resurrected and thus their earthly practices will affect their life in the Hereafter (Mt 22:32). In turn, in the SaB purity is needed even for the deceased and thus laws of performing ablution pertain to them too, just they have to be accomplished by other people to them (SaB 23:10). The instances in the respective texts speak about provisory universal employment of purity. On the other hand, there are instances in the SaB when filth on the body is rewarded and that is when a person is assumed to have got it because of the action for Allah's cause (SaB 56:16). Filth in the SG is rendered negatively in all cases and it is even presented that one should shake off the dust from his feet when God's message

is not received (Mt 10:14). From this it could be seen that the SaB uses concepts related with purity a bit more relatively than the SG.

Both texts perceive purity issues contextually and in the framework of other ascetic actions. In the SaB a necessary correlation between bodily ablution, prayers (SaB 30:27) and right intentions (SaB 56:90) is presented and the SG put more emphasis on the inner purity, right stance and vigilance (Lk 14:10). Though the positions are related, the SaB clearly puts much more emphasis on bodily practices as even the prayers pertain to certain patterns of movement.

The SG do not emphasize so much religious difference of men and women, while the SaB does. But in the context of religious purity the SaB seems to make an exception and treat both genders similarly as they can perform ablution together (SaB 4:43; 5:2), except that the compulsory guidelines for ablution are directed primarily towards men (SaB 11:3). The only thing that cannot be the same is that women have to follow additional purification acts because they have menses (SaB 6:9).

Overall, purity is an every-day practice in both texts, but in the SaB it is more a way of employing it, while in the SG it is a barrier which should allow one to protect inner purity.

4.1.4. Clothing

There are multiple reasons why do people cover their bodies with clothes. The SaB and the SG present related but particular frameworks for the usage of materials to cover body.

The importance of clothes in the SaB seems to be much bigger as Muhammad named quite a few types of clothing and titled them with specific names, which distinguished them and emphasised their importance. For example, among the most beloved clothes of the Prophet was the *hibra* (a kind of Yemenese cloth, SaB 77:18), *ambijania* (a plain thick sheet, SaB 77:19) and *kisa* (a square black piece of woollen cloth, SaB 77:19). Jesus does not name particular types of material clothes though compares his most valued ones of faith and vigilance with the ones used for the wedding feast (Mt 22:11-12). From the above it seems that hardly comparable differences pertain to the use of appropriate clothes in the SaB and the SG. This is especially because in the SaB (dis)likes are allowed while in the latter there are the necessary clothes presented. It is also because material things are easier to collate with rules but might involve technical difficulties while the other ones presented in the SG are physically immeasurable.

The regulations in both texts relate to limitations of use. In the SaB specific limitations are endowed especially on those performing religious pilgrimage, i.e. a believer should not wear a shirt, a turban, trousers, a head cloak or cloth scented with saffron or other kinds of perfume, but he should wear slippers/sandals or *khuffs* (socks made of thick fabric or leather), which are cut short to make the ankles bare (SaB 3:53). Exceptions are made for those travelling with wives. In such situations they not only could wear ordinary clothes but use perfume on them (SaB 25:23). Differently treated are the situations for those who did not have an *izar* (a waist sheet for lower part of the body) as these were allowed to wear trousers (SaB 28:15). Moreover, some believers were encouraged (because of the skin disease causing itching) to wear silk, which others should shun, (SaB 77:29). The SG, in turn, do not present many details on limitations, except for the prohibition to store up things when one goes with the aim of spreading the message of Jesus (Mt 10:10) and certain ways of exposition before people (Mt 23:5). The types of clothing that are mentioned are shirts, coats and sandals (Mt 5:40) and they seem to be not limited both for ordinary and for festive days.

Muhammad set limitations not only on use but also on some types of clothes. In the SaB the patterned ones are forbidden as it is assumed that they might bring additional trials to a believer and distract them from the concentration on Allah's worship (SaB 8:14). But there are exceptions when other things are more important than prohibitions on clothes, e.g. one should always accept a gift even if it is made of silk, which should not be regularly worn by a Muslim and should usually be perceived with aversion (SaB 8:16). What Muhammad did in the case when he received such a gift was that he put the gift on for one time and then expressed his opinion towards it.

The SaB shows other particularities too. For Muhammad special was also the outfit for prayers, which was one garment worn by crossing its ends around shoulders (SaB 8:4) and a shirt, trousers, a tubban or qaba (with full length sleeves) (SaB 8:9). On ordinary days one could wear non-hairy shoes (SaB 4:30). The SG claim the opposite and tell the believers not to take time considering clothing for prayer as it should be accomplished in private (Mt 6:6) where the interactions are only between a person and God and other social dimensions during it are irrelevant. Nevertheless, prayer might be perceived as an expression of respect and following this line we might find other examples of the usages of clothes in the SG. One of these is when the disciples of Jesus covered the back of a mule on which Jesus had to sit with their garments (Mt 21:7). The other, when a crowd laid their clothes on the road Jesus crossed (Mt 21:8). Respect through clothes can be expressed and is important in the respective texts but in different ways: in the SaB it is the right

way of dressing while in the SG it is the withdrawal from the attachment to clothes and with it the prioritizing the religious needs before bodily.

Additional details of the outfit are not all approved, e.g. Muhammad forbade wearing golden rings (SaB 74:27) and various types of silk (SaB 23:2). Conscious usage of embroidery was allowed to the believers and this means that clothing and additional things are seen positively as means of moderate preening (SaB 77:25). One of the ways of other ways to accentuate smartness is the use of colours. Too vivid colours are disapproved, e.g. red (SaB 77:28) in some instances (not all, e.g. 77:35), while white is seen as divine one (SaB 77:24).

Speaking about the SG, Jesus positively used the word pearls and from this it might be assumed that limited adornment was approved though not promoted (Mt 7:6). In other places it is also claimed that more approved are the rough clothes as the smooth and splendid ones belong to earthly authorities (Mt 11:8). Colourful could be the clothes of both textures but, the same as in the SaB, the SG present white as divine colour (Mt 17:2) and red as authoritative or joyful and thus suitable not for all instances (cf. Mt 27:28: in the given case used denigrating) in clothing. The elements of the outfit that are not perceived positively in general are widened prayer belts and enlarged fringes of the garments (Mt 23:5). These limitations in the SG, together with the ones above from the SaB, guide the readers on the more general lines of thought. Hence, the emphasis in the texts on the criteria for shunned clothes is respectively distraction in the SaB and exposition in the SG. In accordance to this, the language of colours is employed in both but the SaB highlights possible variations in choices, while the SG seem to overlook the importance of day-to-day colours of clothes.

Presuming that to some group of believers riding was almost as important as walking, clothes for the saddle might also be considered as part of the outfit. This idea might be grounded taking the example of shared limitation on usage of silk: silken carpets placed on saddles were forbidden (SaB 74:28) just as silken clothes were. The SG see the value of additional things sometimes even more than the clothes themselves, especially when one has to prepare to confront something for the divine cause (e.g. selling the garment and buying a sword for it, Lk 22:36).

In addition to this, a specific thing for the SaB is the prohibitions on the ways of dressing: e.g. lifting the garment on the shoulders; and wrapped oneself only in one garment when one wants to draw legs up (SaB 34:62). Both of these examples imply on the exposition of nakedness, which is disapproved (SaB 77:20), especially performing *tawaf* around *Ka'ba* (SaB 8:10). Not such obvious but related example is when one covers only one shoulder and leaves the other bare (SaB

77:20). The other kind of disapproved putting on is when part of the garment is dragged behind a person as it is alleged that it is a sign of conceit (SaB 77:1). Moreover, the part of cloth which hangs below the ankles is in the Fire (SaB 77:4), which is related to the punishment in the Hereafter. What is more, important is and the sequence of putting on clothes:

If you want to put on your shoes, put on the right shoe first; and if you want to take them off, take the left one first. Let the right shoe be the first to be put on and the last to be taken off. (SaB 77:39)

Differently from that the SG disparage the attention the implied believers tend to spend on clothes and encourage them to look up to the other creations of God and how through them God's omnipotence and wisdom is visible (Mt 6:28-29). With this, the vulnerability of believers and their need for covering with clothes is expressed (Mt 25:36; 27:28) together with the caring protection of God. At the same time it implies on the disapproval of nakedness or at least its shamefulness, which is not only the concern of the person himself but also of the people close to him (Mt 25:37-40).

The SaB present gender related specifics. Additional warnings are ascribed to women who should not cover their faces and should not wear gloves (SaB 28:13). While men are not allowed to wear saffron (SaB 77:33), women were, thus there were also more flexible rules concerning clothing for women. Though the SG do not put much emphasis on different clothing practices for men and women, they note particular connotations of clothing itself: clothing in the SG is presented as wealth, which might have negative connotations with greed (Mt 27:35).

The SaB does not allow the odd way of using clothes; therefore no one should walk in one shoe: the options given are either to use two shoes or to use none (SaB 77:40). Similarly, the believers in the SG were expected to understand that old cloth cannot be patched with a piece of new one (Mt 9:16). Though the latter is used as a comparison, it pertains to every-day life choices, which are expected to follow certain logic correlated with the religious experience. Interpreting it, it could be seen that treating a small part of body with a random and taken out of context part of Jesus' teaching would not bear expected fruit. Situations as well as clothing should be treated as a part of a bigger perspective.

There are almost mystical meanings related to garments in both texts. In the SaB wrapping one's body in a particularly treated cloth implies the ability to remember religious stories/hadith (SaB 3:42). The other example correlates the wearing of silken clothes and the deprivation of the reward in the Hereafter (SaB 11:7). Moreover, the clothes are ascribed with moral characteristics because

of certain features like marks on them and could be treated with religious purification (SaB 63:37). In this instance, marks would be related to evil and would need transforming actions making them good. At the same time, there are instance when clothes themselves can become means of covering oneself with Allah's blessing and thus becoming better (SaB 97:13). Related to this is the story in the SG, when the garment gains the healing powers of the owner, as it happened when a faithful woman touched the cloth or mantle of Jesus (Mt 9:20). From this it might be deduced that clothes might attain additional powers and/or render them to others in both texts, but the SaB they can also reduce the reward in the Hereafter and might be transformed through their features to suit particular situations.

Interesting to note that Muhammad prayed with his shoes on (SaB 77:37), neither did Jesus; therefore, ascetic actions did not necessarily pertain to taking things off. Sometimes in both texts clothes are interpreted as the gifts from Allah/God (Mt 6:28-29; SaB 77:35) that are provided for men for beautifying them. The difference is that Muhammad wants a believer to take what he is given and use it in the earthly rational way, while Jesus warns not to store things for the future but to cover oneself in the faith of the one who takes care of his believers – God (Lk 9:3). At the same time Jesus did not want it to become a sacrifice rather an act of mercy (to whom and how it is a different question, cf. Mt 9:12) and this could be interpreted that implied believers in the SG should not torture themselves with clothes but should interpret specific treatment of garments as mercy to them and to others.

Overall, there are several main functions of clothes in both texts: covering (Mt 24:18; SaB 77:21), sharing (even if by given a valuable silken cloth for a pagan, SaB 13:1; Mt 9:12), shielding from (SaB 97:13; Lk 11:39), rendering social messages (cf. SaB 15:4, e.g. when in distress and pleading Allah; when supporting expressed emotions, Mt 26:65). Particular to the SaB are the functions of protecting from evil influences and helping to concentrate (SaB A bit more emphasis in the SaB is also put on clothing as additional linkage with the divine through his gifts (SaB 97:13). Quantitative method of analysis would not help much trying to understand such texts, thus number of instances when clothes in general are mentioned should not be compared but the appearing differences in the number of important function might mean that clothes in the SaB are more important in the respective system of asceticism than they are in the SG.

Looking a bit more deeply, the key word understanding how the implied believer should use garments in the SaB might be moderation (SaB 77:1) (though it concerns mainly men and women are allowed to use more ornaments, SaB 3:32). The SG encourage to stay mindful of the daily

bodily routines but do not get too much involved in them (Lk 17:26-30) and be able to use clothes indifferently (Lk 12:22) and readily give them away when asked (Mt 5:40); clothes are not as important as body itself as clothes render only certain shifting projection of a person and what really is at the gist is inner and not outer (Lk 12:23).

4.1.5. Beauty treatment

Additional beauty practices are detailed especially in the SaB. Both the SAB and the SG mention them and they pertain to ordinary day-to day actions with the body and on it, but they carry more emphasis of beautification in terms of making somebody more appealing for himself and the others in addition to the ascetic interpretation of these treatments. Both texts also mention possible threats related to such actions. They imply that such acts should stay additional and if overdosed pertain to excessive self-centred behaviour, which leads to degradation (SaB 77:5) until the day of Resurrection; and self-destruction if not treated in balance with the inner traits (Lk 11:40).

The main additional beauty treatment in the SG is anointing oneself with oil. Though superficially looking this might seem loosely related to the conscious self-controlling asceticism, actually it is very closely related. Jesus encouraged to do it and wash the face (Mt 6:17) for the believers to make positive impression of others, but looking deeper into the context of the line one sees that with this Jesus implies that anointing not only makes positive effect on others also has two other meanings. The first of them is to have it as an indicator or self-check point whether inner and outer stances correlate in the right way and the second one is to gain the reward from God doing things in a way that is appealing to him. There are other highlights of such action too. In one place Jesus even prioritized anointing of the head over good deeds in the form of charity (Mt 26:7-10). There are various sides to this line. Foremost, it is not the oil itself that is important but the “how?” and for “what reason?” Oil in the mentioned situation is clearly depicted as a very materially valuable thing, which should not be wasted, but what is commended by Jesus is that a woman gave the most valuable to glorify of one could even say worship God through self-restricting but willing sacrifice. The latter situation also implies the unexpectedness which comes with following Jesus: one has to be always prepared as if the most important guest or meeting is approaching (Mt 26:13). This means that the implied believers are indirectly encouraged to look their best as they do not know the time of meeting with God.

The Sahih al-Bukhari is much more meticulous concerning the issue. The most directly related to the examples in the SG is the use of perfume for the state of *Ihram* (SaB 77:73). This religiously

expected state in itself is Allah centred but the addition of perfume makes it look as a need for appearing before Allah in the best state possible.

Many of the other beauty practices in the SaB are related to hair. The most important thing is that cutting moustache short and keeping beard is a sign of faith (SaB 77:63; 77:64). Muhammad allegedly did not only that. He dyed his hair (SaB 77:37; 4:30) and hair on the beard (SaB 60:50). As these were approved by him and promoted as a sign of belonging to Allah, it seems that the Prophet implied that a believer might influence the result of Allah's creation and make changes to the image the man was created in. But it is not as easy as that. In general, practices that violate the revealed rules by changing features of men created by Allah like removing of facial hair, tattooing (SaB 76:36) or creating artificially space between teeth to look beautiful (77:84) is prohibited. If one does not read the SaB literally, this means that there are unwritten rules of what is too much. A believer in this case is left to rely on his own sound judgement and the general attitude like a framework.

What make the presentation in the SaB even more interesting are prohibitions as borders not to be crossed and maze of almost contradicting approved actions. Personal hygiene related to hair is presented together with other religious regulations: it is approved, promoted and should be abided as a religious obligation of being Muslim. Thus superfluous hair below the navel should be removed with the razor (SaB 77:63), leaving tufts of hair after shaving head (SaB 77:72) is prohibited and the one combing his hair should do it in the right Muslim way from the right side (SaB 77:77).

In addition to the above, combing one's hair might be disapproved in relation to other actions (SaB 77:5), but it might also be a source of pleasure, when somebody else combs it because of the love of Allah (SaB 6:2). Scratching one's head is a private affair - to see it the other has to ask for permission. In other case, he would receive punishment from Allah for seeing things unlawfully (SaB 77:75). All of these examples support the idea that Allah cares about beauty practices and believers should use them with Allah's will in mind.

Overall, beauty practices are supplementary to the other every day ascetic treatments of the body but not superfluous. Though Jesus presents it with one main example and Muhammad with quite a few and intricate, the general lines in the respective texts can be deduced. In the SaB it is to manoeuvre in the thicket of religious rules and please Allah by using the best presentation of body and in the SG Jesus wishes for unrestrained self-sacrifice in a pleasant form from the believers as glorification.

4.2. Ascetic behaviour pertaining to social relations

Self-restraining practices, which can be called ascetic acts, are commonly associated with withdrawal from social life. The images in the SaB and the SG are complex and relate to the community in various ways, among which seclusion is only one of the methods of being. All of the latter could be brought under the two main positions of their representation: the *approved stance towards other members* and the *forbidden* one; where the latter comes out from the discussion of the former.

4.2.1. Physical closeness

Certain unwritten distance has to be kept while staying in relation with the people. This means that the distance might be inner, not only outer: in the SaB Muhammad encourages to lower the gaze for not to be physically related to some people (SaB 46:22) and Jesus implies on the distance of one of the disciples, though he is having supper with him (Mk 14:18). The difference between the ideas in the respective texts is that in the Synoptic Gospels there is much more idealised emphasis on the measurable distance for seclusion: in Mk 10:29-30 Jesus says that believers should leave everything and walk away from it, but stay in relation to him; similarly in Mt 26:36 he asked the disciples to wait for him and withdrew. The SaB in turn does not diminish the value of seclusion but urges to weigh its expedience and result of such form of relation with the others: praised is the believer who stays in one of the mountain paths worshipping and leaving the people to secure them from his mischief (SaB 56:2), but cursed is the one whom others deserted (SaB 78:82).

In both texts various approaches to the other people are depicted positively: *physical closeness/withdrawal; good deeds; chastity; verbal communication and intercultural relations*.

Speaking about *physical closeness* and *withdrawal* one has to acknowledge that it pertains not only to the measurable distance between two subjects but also the stance towards all those, who are not me. Such factors as *gender, age and social position* are very important and vivid, and through them the implied in the respective textual presentations socio-cultural dynamics of the four main elements (representing certain social groups) might be deduced: *family; neighbours/the close-by people; community; the others*.

4.2.1.1. Family

Jesus and Muhammad were the exceptional examples in the respective texts and their way could not be literally implemented into the every-day life of the believers. Muhammad used to retreat into seclusion to the cave of Hira for many days before he would go back to his family (SaB 1:3).

Similarly, Jesus went to the desert for 40 days (Mk 1:13). Such prolongation would be too burdensome if not impossible for an ordinary believer, but, anyway, something similar should be aimed at, as that is what examples are for.

Both Jesus and Muhammad had close family members and they were important for them, but not to the same extent and with different nuances. The most important person who deserves exceptional attention in the SaB is mother (father is only after the mother):

A man came to the Messenger and said, "O Allah's Messenger! Whom should I treat with the most attention?" The Prophet replied, "Your mother." The man asked, "Who is the next one?" The Prophet said, "Your mother." The man once again asked, "Who is the one after that?" The Prophet repeated, "Your mother." The man asked for the fourth time, "Who is the one after that?" The Prophet replied, "Your father." (SaB 78:2)

Jesus advises to honour both father and mother (Lk 18:20) and does not elevate the role of a mother, though there are exceptions where father is not even mentioned (cf. Lk 8:21). This omission is not accidental and shows one more particularity. Jesus addresses God as father (Mt 11:26) and in such terms he even denounced his earthly mother and brethren (Mt 12:50) thus highlighting the foremost importance of God. Even more contrasting but pertaining to the same idea is in Lk 14:26:

If any man comes to me, and does not hate his father, mother, wife, children, brethren, and sisters, and his own life, he cannot be my disciple.

Despite such a paradoxical claim, the Synoptic Gospels as well as the SaB encourage the believers to show respect to one's family. Children have to be regarded not only with responsibility (Mk 5:21-24) but also with honour that they deserve as theirs is the kingdom of heaven (Mt 19:14). Brothers have to be forgiven for their sins innumerable number of times (Lk 17:4), because they are relatives and foremost because the believers themselves were forgiven by God (i.e., were treated with respect). With this the relativity of blood relationships is implied as brothers are those who are united by the same God. Where SaB differs is that in this text the believers are presented as the embodiment of the teaching of their parents and thus insulting other parents they would curse theirs (SaB 78:4), i.e. to show proper deference to parents one has to treat others respectfully and through this direct act indirectly retain honour of one's own parents.

Every believer comes from earthly parents but in his adult life he is encouraged to hold to his husband/wife. Both sources keep to this main line. SaB 30:57 claims that one's family (in the given context wife) has a right on a believer and verse Mt 19:5 describes it as natural that one

cleaves to the wife. With these husband-wife relationships comes the issue of chastity (SaB 78:8; Mt 5:2), but it is perceived a bit differently.

In the Gospel of Mark chastity is circumscribed by keeping the permanent and lawful relationship between man and wife (Mk 10:8-9) (including sexual relationship). This means that one has to fulfil the oath given to God during the marital service, stay in the relationship even when it becomes not useful (the problem was raised by the disciples of Jesus in Mt 19:10) and thus keep the chastity of the relationship with God.

The SaB warns that not all marital relations with a woman are possible (specific treatment is needed with matrons and virgins, SaB 67:42) and in some cases divorce is recommended, as it is when both husband and wife were suckled by the same woman (SaB 52:4). Specific reward is granted for those who educate their slave-girls, manumit and then marry them (49:14). In addition to this, SaB expresses specific attitude towards women in general:

Allah 's Apostle said, "Treat woman nicely as they were created from a rib. The most curved portion of the rib is its upper part, so if you tried to straighten it, it would break, but if you leave it as it is, it will remain crooked. So treat women nicely."(SaB 60:1)

The Prohet said, "A woman is married for four things, i.e. her wealth, her family status, her beauty and her religion. So you should marry a religious woman not to be a loser (SaB 67:16)

In the first verse we see that women are seen as having inherited and permanent deficiency, which cannot be altered. Having both of the above and the claim that wife is a part of her husband (SaB 67:110), it seems that women are voiceless in some of the marital situations. Especially this is when it concerns sexual relationship, which is regarded as the greatest stipulation of marriage (to enjoy women's private parts) and has to be fulfilled (SaB 54:6). One of the illustrations of this could also be this:

Allah's Messenger, "If a husband calls his wife to his bed and she refuses and that makes him go to sleep in anger, the angels will curse her till morning."(SaB 59:7)

The idea expressed above is also supported by some authors. For example, one of them even alleges that "women's sexual duties to their husbands are a matter of divine concern and divine approval is contingent on a husband's approval" (Ali K., 2008:11). This also means that wishes of the husband are so important that Allah interferes, while women have no right to disagree to her husband's decisions. Moreover, women are depicted as the most potential dwellers of Hell because of their frequent ungratefulness to their husbands and the dissent from their masculine

perceptions (cf. SaB 6:6). Such gender specific interpretation is not found in the SG, where Jesus does make any particular difference speaking about men or women.

Differences in the SaB and the Synoptic Gospels also lie in the perception of celibacy, either permanent or temporary. Perceived, as in the examples above, in the SaB as fulfilment of the necessary bodily need, sex is not a foremost act for procreation (SaB 69:10). (There is even presented an issue of temporary marriage, SaB Nevertheless, it has to be controlled as Muhammad is described as the one who could control his sexual desires the best (SaB 6:5). “Could” and “did control” are two very different things as Muhammad would go round all his wives in one night (SaB 67:4). The only period when every believer according to the example of Muhammad would restrain his sexuality is during Ramadan, when intercourse is not punished only during the night (SaB 30:15). Inevitable restraint on those who cannot marry is suggested being treated by fasting, which diminishes sexual power (SaB 30:10).

Certain celibacy or self-control in sexual relationships should start with imagination (SaB 67:119). But the most important is the result or what one does with the desires, as it is written that Paradise is granted for those who can guarantee the chastity between two jaw-bones and two legs (SaB 86:19).

The SG put more emphasis on the permanent celibacy but do not enforce it upon believers.

For there are some eunuchs, which were born such from their mother's womb; and there are some, which are made eunuchs of men; and there are others, which have made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's sake. (Mt 19:12)

This verse tells us that there is a choice of approved celibacy but there are other alternatives too. One of the most clearly depicted and possibly the most widely mentioned in the text is the natural step towards marriage (Lk 20:34) as part of God's plan. The latter does not approve of divorce and considers the second marriage (if not of a widow or widower) as adultery (Lk 16:18). Infidelity to one's wife is closely related to the purity of thought and thus lust in the form of illegal sexual intercourse should be avoided in order to follow God's plan. And differently from the SaB, to be official in the Synoptic Gospels marriage is not required to have a wedding banquet (without which Muslim marriage is treated invalid, SaB 78:67).

The Synoptic Gospels treat sexuality as a positive thing, which has to be kept within certain framework (Mt 5:28). Similarly, women in this text are mainly positive figures, whose needs have to be acknowledged (Lk 7:13; Lk 7:37).

Overall, family relationships are important in both texts but in the SG earthly family is devalued in relation to the divine one, while the SaB elevates the influence and significance of the mother. Speaking about the life in the smaller family of husband and wife, intercourse, primarily because of its given pleasure, is an important part of relations in the SaB (God gave it to people but with prohibitions, because He is the most self-respecting and bestows it upon his believers; SaB 16:2) while in the SG there is no place for bodily enjoyment and more emphasis is put on monogamy as a reflection of purity in man-God relation (Mk 10:8-9).

4.2.1.2. The close-by people/community

Apart from direct family, people are surrounded by the other close-by people, e.g. neighbours, subordinates and community members. The Gospel of Luke Jesus explains who should be considered a neighbour: the one who shows mercy to the other (Lk 10:37). This means that any person despite of his cultural background or social position might be considered as a close-by person, which should be treated according to God's law of attention: one should love his neighbour as he loves himself (Lk 10:27). In accordance to this, Jesus approached sinners (Lk 7:37) and others in need (Lk 7:13): he acknowledged their needs, looked at their present stance and eagerly expected their brighter future, when they will live in and with faith.

The SaB encourages the believers to see those the closest according to the shared faith: only Muslims should be treated with such respect (SaB 79:9) (the others are described as leaving nasty smell as in the SaB 34:38). If two Muslims have an argument it is forbidden to desert one another in terms of not talking for more than three days (SaB 78:57). It is also impelled to keep good relations continuously (SaB 78:10) and warned not to refuse the offered help, e.g. when the neighbour comes to fix a peg in one's house (SaB 74:24). Similarly, one has to let other community members know about one's needs:

The Prophet said, "The poor person is not the one who asks a morsel or two from the others, but the one who has nothing and is ashamed to beg from others." (SaB 24:53)

In both texts faith is important, but in the SaB past deeds and way of life are more important than in the SG, which emphasize present stance. At the same time, SaB is specific with the negative attention towards those, who do not allow others to know about their needs and thus be able to help and receive the reward from Allah. Continuous interaction between members is important in both texts but the SG rely more on mercy as basis while the SaB one the shared faith. Thus the message in the Synoptic Gospels is more universal and open towards those different from a believer, and the SaB is more precise and concerns people of the same faith the most. Though love

is a common message in both texts, the SaB encourages not to differ among the community of believers (SaB 56:164), while the SG induce division for God (Lk 14:26).

Muhammad claims:

"Every one of you is a guardian, and responsible for what is in his custody. The ruler is a guardian of his subjects and responsible for them; a husband is a guardian of his family and is responsible for them; a lady is a guardian of her husband's house and is responsible for it, and a servant is a guardian of his master's property and is responsible for it." (SaB 43:20)

Jesus, in turn, says:

The disciple is not above his master and every disciple will be perfect trying to be as his master (Lk 6:40).

Both of these excerpts speak about fulfilling individual tasks within the community, but the SG divert the attention towards the critical self-perception (Lk 6:42), while the SaB warns not to challenge the honour of the other (endowed as graded to them by God) (SaB 79:31). Additional warning not to look for the faults of the others is found in both texts (respectively SaB 78:57 and Lk 6:42), but the emphasis in the SaB is on the suspicion, which is the attitude that foremost should be shunned. From the above we see that SaB is more detailed in the marginal lines that should not be trespassed while the SG speak more about the changing presence, which would be more congruent with the divine plan of the future. This could also be illustrated by the example with servants. In the SaB slaves are presented as the brethren upon which Allah has bestowed the authority of the believers, but with this there are many “don’t” for the master (even in names one calls his slaves) (SaB 49:15; 49:17-18). The SG speak about the keeping of one’s social position but changing the attitude now towards it and seeing yourself in different light as it is the way which is expected from one by God (Lk 17:10).

Every community consists of individual men and women. The SG mentions that it was so from the beginning of the created world (Mk 10:6), but does not elaborate too much on the gender differences between men and women. SaB brings a stronger detailed image:

Allah's Messenger cursed those men who are in the similitude of women and those women who are in the similitude of men. (SaB 77:61)

With this we see that gender is one of the given qualities by God/Allah in both texts, it has to be kept in such a way, but the SG do not speak about the punishment related to alterations in the gender issues, while SaB present a concrete curse.

Both texts also present a number of examples why being in a community is substantial in the life of every believer. The main line in both is that the more voices the better is the result of the prayer. The nuance is that SaB speaks about the multiplication of the reward for a prayer in the congregation (i.e. in a special place for congregational prayer – a mosque) (SaB 10:30), while the SG tell the believers that the closer presence of God is achieved through praying together as God is there when two or three gather in God's name (Mt 18:20). These given examples convey a particularity of the SG to see the reward for the community prayer now in the form of God's presence while the SaB directs attention towards the reward in the Hereafter.

4.2.1.3. The “others”

Ascetic practices through social relations and especially certain way of physical being with the others might threaten societal norms and status quo of the community the believers reside in. Such type of actions within an implied dominant social environment is intended to inaugurate a new subjectivity, different social relations and an alternative symbolic universe (cf. Valantasis R., 1995:797). This might be done trying to see oneself as an integral part on the world one lives in being flexible and adapting or as countervailing, combating the prevailing situation. In both ways, it is the relation with those “others” that a believer does not identify oneself with.

Through different examples Muhammad and Jesus urge to transform prevailing forms of social stratification using *flexible dissidence*. Muhammad emphasises relations between the believers and those lower in social status (SaB 2:22), while Jesus is described as emphasizing the new position of the lowly and believers' stance towards them (Mk 2:16): the marginalized are now described as the gifted ones (Mt 5:3-11). In both texts it is not attempted to reject all the basis of the community but to put different focus. In the SaB the important thing in this context is being wise in terms of fulfilling the roles given to one by Allah (SaB 49:18): the one who is more gifted should share it with the ones in need; at the same time everyone has been given some responsibility from Allah and it should be employed.

In the SG, everyone has honour as he has possibility to believe and lead a life of faith. Because of this, believers should not blindly oppose earthly rule, but respectfully do the things they need in order not to outrage them where it is not necessary (Mt 17:27). Jesus clearly distinguishes between earthly and divine authority and where the former does not contravene the latter, one has to obey the political rulers (Mt 22:20). Similarly, Muhammad urges for the same (SaB 56:108).

Certain challenging of the traditional understanding of the family, which is a basis of all religious community, is found in both texts. But only the SG push it to the extent that the closest kindred in certain cases becomes that “other” (cf. Saldarini A., 1999:20) and is replaced by the new community of believers (Mk 3:35). With this the main functional unit of the society becomes questioned and the importance of present individual efforts is raised.

The SaB is less contrasting in the representation but also looks at the personal deeds, which should not blindly comply with the choices of the majority (SaB 56:147). This could be said about the issue of generous giving, which is taking from oneself and giving to the other. It does not seem to be congruent with natural human instincts, though religiously approved (SaB 66:7); it stands out in the general picture of the implied world of people (but does not directly challenge it). Similarly, help of the oppressed to the one subduing entails preventing the oppressor to subject others (SaB 60:53). It does not confirm to what majority would do but at the same time it does not directly oppose the situation.

The community as a unit has its own “others”, towards which the *combative stance* is kept. In the Synoptic Gospels, Mathew is the only one mentioning *ekklesia* (Mt 16:18; 18:17) with a particular mission to countervail evil powers. Thus the Synoptic Gospels are not monolithic on this issue. Nevertheless, what differs in the SG and the SaB in more general terms related to the issue above is the openness of the communities to the other members.

“People are not to be predetermined as insiders or outsiders by their sex, family heritage, financial position, location in the city or in rural environments, religious purity, and so on. The message of Jesus is that such status markers are no longer binding. Anyone may freely receive the grace of God. Anyone may join the community of Jesus’ followers.”
(Green J., 1995:82)

When “others” are no longer defined by the predetermined features of socio-cultural status, the SG require more attention towards common traits of enemies, whose features do not comply with the words of Jesus. With this, shift moves to the ways of Pharisees and Herod (Mk 8:15): the rules have to be followed and read in detail but only in relation to the main message of God, who is love (Lk 11:42). Thus, every believer together with the community has to anchor decisions in God’s word and only then delve into the details of the rules. Some scholars, like Myers Christopher, see in this even “civil disobedience” (cf. Burrige R., 2007:170), but it is too indirect to be such apart for few warning that direct actions might be needed to resist persecution (Mt 10:17-25).

In congruence with the particular following of rules in the SG, Muhammad in the SaB claims:

"It is obligatory for one to listen to and obey the orders of the ruler unless these orders involve the disobedience to Allah; but if an act of disobedience is imposed, he should not listen to or obey it."(SaB 56:108)

No servant can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or he will hold to the one, and despise the other. One cannot serve God and mammon. (Lk 16:13) <...> And he said unto them, Render to Caesar the things which are his, and to God the things which are God's. (Lk 20:25)

In both excerpts believers have to know the hierarchy of their religious world, on the top of which there is God/Allah. One strikes as a particularity is the contrasting representation in the SG of the earthly and divine power, while in the SaB they seem to be more possible to reconcile.

Though such moderate opposition is shared, the SaB text is one culture centred and thus opposed to a greater extent to the others. In these terms, martyrdom falls under the category of dissidence (SaB 82:15): open opposition directed mainly towards the Christian and Jewish culture (SaB 77:67), which are perceived as preceding the Muslim one (SaB 60:50). The issue is that only Allah decides who is worthy of understanding Islam and it is his gift when one does understand it (cf. SaB 57:7). At the same time it means that those "others" are not given the understanding of faith and when they are offered to accept Islam, they should do so because it is the highest good, lest Jihad is proclaimed against them (SaB 56:179). And those who are killed in the Jihad are considered as martyrs for Allah's cause. Thus dissidence requires total devotion, and even sacrificing one's life in encountering "others". (It should be acknowledged that there are quite a few exceptions for this, e.g. for married women the best *Jihad* is considered the performance of *Hajj* or religious pilgrimage; cf. SaB 56:62.)

Being the most politicized ascetic behaviour (Flood G., 2004:34), direct opposition or dissidence directly and extensively challenges the contemporary (to the contexts of the implied audiences) socio-political norms). The difference is that Jesus refers to martyrdom as necessary for all believers (Mk 8:35), but Muhammad declares it as purposive and not suited to every person (Cook D., 2007:34), just for the ones who were called (SaB 56:27) and only towards certain people as others are brother even staying under the status of "other". From this, not everyone and not all the time are expected to make sacrifices in the SaB (and they should not long for meeting the enemy, cf. SaB 94:8) while the SG are much more radical concerning this issue.

The Synoptic Gospels invite to be devoted without reservations and be prepared to sacrifice one's life for God. On this Mk 8:35 says:

For whosoever saves his life, shall lose it; but whosoever loses his life for my sake and the Gospel's, the same thing shall save it.

Differently from the message in the SaB, the SG do not invite the believers to employ violence (cf. SaB 56:6) against those who do not believe in Jesus, but be firm and brave in their promotion of God's word Mk 8:34) and strive with all their lives for the new righteousness (Mt 5:20). When others do not receive and hear the news of Jesus, one should leave and shake off the dust from the feet (Mt 10:14), but not impel the message of those others using any force. This suggested alternative reality is not something absolutely new, but is based on the Jewish law of the prophets. At the same time, when Jesus says that he came to fulfil the law (Mt 5:17), he openly assumes his higher status in the religious world and thus challenges Jewish tradition. With this he also says that not everyone will understand; even if people hear, only those will be able to employ the important aspects of Jesus' teaching who will be endowed with wisdom, i.e. the chosen ones or only some of them (Mt 13:9). In addition, Jesus in the Synoptic Gospels questions the traditional Jewish way of keeping religion (Mt 15:9) and it seems that he invites his disciples to do the same but leave them to their "blindness" (Mt 15:14). In contrast to this, Muslims were not supposed to question the validity of religious tradition ("*Do not believe the people of the Scripture or disbelieve them*", SaB 65:1), but had to promote theirs as the only true revelation.

Introduction of the visible alternative reality can be traced in both texts. Claiming that there is only one way to lead a real life (cf. SaB 64:29), Muslims have to present themselves also differently from pagans, Christians and Jews, i.e. when pagans cut their beards, Muslim believers have to keep them and cut the moustache short (SaB 77:64); when Jews and Christians do not dye their hair, believers should do the opposite (SaB 77:67).

4.2.2. Good deeds

The SaB and the Synoptic Gospels share an idea that even the smallest good thing – respectively of the weight of an atom in the SaB 42:12 and of the size of the mustard seed in Lk 17:6 – can have big influence in the divine account. But the texts differ following three main lines and the particularities of excepted deeds with them: acts related to *wealth and/or status* and the responsibilities accompanying them; issues with *gifts*; merits of *verbal communication*.

4.2.2.1. Wealth/status and responsibilities with them

Every believer has something which he can give or spend. The shared characteristic of the issue is that God gives and expects the believers to use the given wisely: a person has to spend the wealth Allah has given to him in the right way (SaB 24:5); the servant should make more use of what he has been given and not just keep the initial value (Mt 25:26).

One of the wise ways to use the wealth is charity (cf. Benthall J., 2012:359), which helps the wealthy to avoid becoming greedy (SaB 81:11). In the SaB the amount of it from the whole which has to be paid is defined:

"No Zakat is due on property mounting to less than five Uqiyas, and on less than five camels, and there is no Zakat on less than five Wasqs." (SaB 24:4) (Additional limitations in SaB 24:32)

If there are many rules in the SaB for counting the obligatory charity, the SG are more succinct and precise: give everything (Lk 12:33) and what one needs will be added by God (Lk 12:31). The absolute giving without any reservations is reiterated several times (e.g. Lk 14:33; Mt 19:29) in the SG and thus is clearly a message of high importance. It is even presented that charity of giving everything correlates with the state of being perfect. Such state implies the proximity to God and sprucing with the giving of the most precious things (Mt 26:7). This correlates with the assumptions on the metaphorical value of poverty in the SG (cf. Saldarini A., 1999:21)

There is hierarchy in the goodness of charity in the SaB: the giving is better than the taking (SaB 24:18) and the charity of the wealthy is better than that of the poor (SaB 55:7). And, though in the discussion (in the previous sub-chapter) on the social relations it was mentioned that the ones in need should allow other members of the community know about their situation, it does not coincide with begging or even asking. This is because it is said that the conscious abstention from asking for the financial help will provide with the grant from Allah, who will make such person self-sufficient (SaB 24:18). What is more, a believer should use all possibilities to earn money (e.g. collecting wood from the forest and selling it, SaB 42:13) just the same as he has to use all possibilities to give charity as SaB warns that time will come when nobody will need charity (SaB 24:16) and that would diminish possibilities to earn the reward in the Hereafter. Together with this, it would inflict upon people the issue of hoarding (SaB 24:21). In the instance when one cannot help those, who appeal for help, he should perform other good deeds and keep away from evil deeds. The combination of these would be accounted for him as charitable deeds (SaB 24:30).

The message in the SG on the hierarchy of charity is slightly different from that in the SaB. Foremost because the responsibility and importance of it is not directed to any particular social group of people, but is allegedly universal, applicable to all of the believers. Moreover, it should be addressed to the needy, namely the poor (Mt 19:21). These are not only impersonal receivers but the representations of Jesus as God (Mt 25:35) or his relations (Mt 25:40). It means that charity is not motivated through the reward in the hereafter as it is in the SaB but is promoted through the vulnerable image of God, whose needs have to be acknowledged foremost because of

faith. An important addition to the giving is a warning to give only from what one has (Lk 11:41): things that belong even to your closest family members are not yours and thus cannot be given in charity. At the same time, the same line speaks about loving intensions and the correlation between them and the limitations of actions, which could stain one (Lk 11:41): if one gives honestly and from his whole heart, he does not have to be afraid of trespassing any limitations of giving things to the others. This latter issue directly relates to the one in the SaB where part of money is considered inappropriate, i.e. money for a dog or blood, received from tattooing, usury, picture-making (SaB 34:25), fat of dead animals (SaB 34:112), prostitution and soothsaying (SaB 34:113).

The SaB presents many limitations and with them the exceptions of obtaining things and giving them in charity. There is an exception of *Luqata* (fallen things), when a public announcement is needed after which general rules of attitude towards things apply (SaB 34:28): take but do not get too proprietary. To the list of interesting exceptions one might add the one about keeping a dog as a pet and not as a herding animal. That would daily reduce the reward earned by good deeds (SaB 72:6). The same list could be expanded adding every step one takes to offer compulsory congregational prayer and guiding somebody on the road (SaB 56:72). It is interesting to note that the SG put more emphasis on the positive outcomes of good deeds and little on warnings. One of such is that the giver has to make sure he offers good deeds or charity to the most needy, who cannot recompense (Lk 14:14). With this comes the implication that refusing the reward on earth one is granted them in the Hereafter.

There are good deeds which might be not very enjoyable, as visiting the sick or following the funeral processions, but they are equally important (SaB 46:5; Lk 8:51-52). Some good deeds might be named differently, e.g. spending on one's family with intension to receive Allah's reward (SaB 64:12), but it is still considered as charity. The SG present a bit different version of what is considered good deeds, but foremost through the example of Jesus it could be deduced that it means acknowledgment of the needs of the close-by and compassion by particular actions (Lk 7:13).

Conscious in the SaB have to be and those taking the charity as it is forbidden to take the best property as zakat (SaB 24:41). This contrasts the message in the SG when joyfully is accepted the charity from a poor woman, who gives everything she owns (Lk 21:4). Similar examples also present differences in the importance of the receiver of the charity: in the SaB he is very prominent, such agent is active (SaB 24:41) while in the SG potential receiver can be an active

pleader (Lk 5:12), but a passive recipient (Lk 5:13). Moreover, believers are invited to ask for things they need (Lk 11:9). Similarly as Muhammad (SaB 24:30), Jesus said that every believer should give the one who asks things that he needs (Lk 6:30), but this should be based on the mutual understanding that I treat you as I expect you to treat me.

Nobody should take count of how much he had given in charity: left hand should not know what the right has given (SaB 24:16; Mt 6:3). Though the latter idea is shared, the SaB is different in the concept of semi-conscious giving: the reward might come without knowing, e.g. when a woman gives in charity from the food stored in her husband's house, her reward will bring the same to her husband and the servant who stored the food (SaB 34:12). There is no such chain reaction in the benefits of good deeds in the SG – more responsibility is put on every individual separately.

Specific type of good deed is the acknowledgement of the needs of others and securing them according to one's possibilities. SaB perceives charity in terms of considering possible threats to the others and removing harmful things from the roads (SaB 46:28). In congruence with it, robbery is forbidden (SaB 46:30) as it harms a person. One should also protect himself by paying charity lest Kanz (zakat which has not been paid) will appear as a poisonous snake on the Day of Resurrection (65:1). Congruent with the ideas of protecting oneself and the others is presented in the SG: one has to be moderate in his treatment of the others and not to burden them too much (Lk 11:46); in such a way one protects himself from possible negative outcome of the wrong deeds and shields the other from potential threats.

Overall, in the SaB the believers are encouraged to take with joy what is given to them without asking for it (SaB 93:17) and not to strive for what is not given to them (SaB 24:51). The receiver has to accept the given consciously, not to take some types of charity (SaB 24:41) and most importantly not to beg in the SaB, while the SG invite to ask God continuously and thus grant oneself the things needed (Lk 5:12).

Charity is congruent with the general stance of the believers towards monetary property: one should not be too attached to it (SaB 56:89; Mt 6:20). One of the signs of potentially threatening situation is procrastination in repaying debts when the resources are available (SaB 43:12) and the cure or opposite of it is lenience in monetary exchanges (SaB 34:16); in the SG the sign of unwanted situation is sorrow when one has to give everything up (Lk 18:23) and the attempts for bigger amounts of acquisition on earth (Lk 16:25). On this issue of having the Synoptic Gospels are much more radical than the SaB. Though according to Jesus resources are needed for doing

good deeds (Lk 19:13), an ideal believer should give everything he has to the others leaving to himself just the faith which was endowed to him by God (Lk 18:27). This is because one is assumed to have received everything for free from God and therefore he should give freely (Mt 10:8). The comparable parallel in the SaB to such argumentation is that Allah has endowed a believer with property as a gift and such gift has to be appreciated by using it moderately (SaB 69:2).

4.2.2.2. Gifts

Many types of good deeds are interrelated, but, nevertheless, gifts might be distinguished into a separate category as they pertain to the specific stance both from the giving believer and the receiver.

Just as it is mentioned above, SaB grounds the attitude towards gifts from the believer – Allah relation perspective. Every gift is intended for the particular person and thus should foremost reach him (SaB 51:7). This also marks a difference between the charity and gift giving: the former might be re-given to more needy while the latter has to be used by the receiver. This is applicable even if the gift is as meagre as the trotters of the sheep (SaB 67:74) and marks a warning especially for women not to look down on upon what was intended for them as in that case Allah will look down on you. Moreover, one should have a habit to give in return something for the gifts (SaB 51:1), but not the same things received. What is given should be accepted with joy and the giver should not try to buy or take back the gift, as in that case he would be similar to the one who swallows his own vomit (SaB 24:59).

The SG present gifts as an expression of homage and affection (Mt 2:11). At the same time gifts as a type of good deed are the embodiment of regard to God (Mt 4:16). Emotionally more intense or requiring more efforts is when one has to give the double of what others want from him (Mt 5:40). It seems that such gifts in the SG are reckless but rationality must prevail: sacred things should not be given to the unthankful as it is wasting, which might return as bad outcome for the giver (Mt 7:6). What is more, gifts carry the reward not only in themselves. The very act of giving should be congruent with the other good deeds and purity of intentions (Mt 5:23); otherwise, it is worthless or even punished (Mt 5:17).

The main difference on the gift giving is that in the SaB it is a strongly prescribed obligation (cf. to give presents to the neighbour, especially the one nearest to one, SaB 51:16), while in the SG it is an approved way of self-expression which should be received with gratitude (Lk 14:15).

4.2.2.3. Verbal communication

Majority of good deeds are directly related with usage of words but there are four main groups of actions, at the core of which there are words and without them these actions would lose the meaning: *sharing as words, teaching, and oaths*.

Words are ascribed with supernatural powers in both texts, especially through *sharing*. In the SaB it is assumed that some eloquent speech is as effective as magic (SaB 76:51): it can heal and it can hurt. Acknowledging this the Prophet would not use abusive or obscene words and when he wanted to admonish, he would say, “Something is wrong with him. His forehead is dusted” (SaB 78:38) and he would never reply with “no” to the requests (SaB 78:39). However, there are instances which can be regarded as insulting others, e.g. when a ruler’s is depreciated as a black slave whose head looks like a raisin (SaB 93:4). This shows that the SaB is not absolutely monolithic.

Jesus used to heal people (Mk 3:5) and conjure demons out of them (Mk 9:25) using only words. At the same time, he encouraged the believers not to be equivocal and use the words for their direct meanings:

Let your communication be “yes”, when it is “yes” and “no”, when it means “no”. Mt 5:37

But it is not that easy to comprehend the actual meaning of the words, when Jesus spoke through comparisons. His urge to use ears for listening implies perception within the framework of Jesus’ teaching and interpretation. It seems that only the trained ones as some of the disciples were able to do that. Nevertheless, even they had problems and did not know when the word power might be used. Therefore, they raised a problem about someone who used to heal people in the name of Jesus. Jesus approves of such behaviour and with it accepts the divine powers of his own name (Mk 9:39).

There are instances in life when a person does not have anything to give in charity. Bodily capabilities then are applicable in various ways of self-expression, which is framed to match the perception of God’s goodness in the respective tradition (cf. Benthall J., 2002:366). When one only has one date, he is encouraged to give half of it, but when even this is not available then an intentional, pleasant word has to be expressed to the other member of community (SaB 24:9). Jesus in the SG has a bit different approach and invites for compassion for others, expressed in words (Lk 7:13). It seems to be implied in the SG that just as everyone has something from which

he can give in alms, he can find good words for others. Such actions would also be accounted as good deeds.

The use of words in the SaB is approved when one brings others out of discomfort (SaB 46:3), even if this pertains to inventing good information (SaB 53:2). In such a case a believer would be not only unpunished but also rewarded for the good deed he made. But there is a tiny line between inventing good and bad information (SaB 78:117): if one exaggerates praising the other, it is considered malign (SaB 78:95) and causes negative outcome for both the one who invented things and for the one who was praised. In addition, it is possible to ask permission (in special cases) for things in order to do things lawfully (SaB 79:11). Just the question is whom the believers should ask when the Prophet is deceased.

The SG also present equivocal argumentations concerning the use of words. According to it, faith is enough to make words powerful (Lk 17:6), but as it is not possible to grasp faith, one might claim that it is not with almost equal validity. Nevertheless, when Jesus spoke about one approved and direct use of words, he must have assumed that lie is always a lie, even if for good cause. For this, he relied on the Jewish laws, which said not to lie even to yourself (Mt 6:25). Similarly as in the SaB, the SG disapprove public praise (Mt 6:2).

Verbal communication usually pertains to the bilateral relation. Coming to a house a believer has to salute it in the SG (Mt 10:12). This action is not one way directed as it is said that the salutation will stay in the house worthy of it but will return to the sender in the other case (Mt 10:13). There are limitations on openness when traveling with God's mission, i.e. not saluting people on the road (Lk 10:4). With this it is presumed that the ones on the road cannot accept the salutation (as one keeps in the house) and might even give soothing to carry in return (e.g. a sack, without which believers should travel). The SaB perceives salutation a bit differently but at the same time similarly in the stance of the believers: the one saluting those who he knows and who he does not know makes him more open to other people and requires positive attitude towards the passers-by (SaB 79:9).

The above also coincide with the warning in both SaB and the SG that words and deeds have to relate. Muhammad, therefore, presents quite a few warnings that are punished for: making false covenants in Allah's name, selling a free person, denying the agreed wage for the labourer (SaB 34:106), depriving a person of his property by the false oath (SaB 42:4), giving a pledge of allegiance for worldly benefits (SaB 81:10). In addition, an important warning concerns vain talks and talking much about the others (SaB 43:19). Most of these have a very rational grounding in

the psychological hygiene of the community. Similar things with different figuration in found in the SG, where Jesus urges not to announce publicly the faults on other community members but to present the issue between four eyes (Mt 18:15), a believer has to choose one that he obeys to (Mt 6:24) and is expected no to raise too many vain questions (Mt 6:31).

Promotion of the religious message by *teaching* is important in both texts. In the SaB a person endowed by Allah with religious wisdom and being able to teach it to others is considered as ideal (SaB 24:5) or the best among Muslims (SaB 66:21). But teaching pertains to interpretation and the recited passages sometimes can be interpreted in various ways. On this the SaB says that people who have different opinions about the passage should stop reciting it for some time (SaB 66:37). This seems to imply that problems cease to be with time and people can further work in cooperation and mutual understanding. All of the Muslims within a religious world have to obey each other and this means that the religious interpretation of one is not more valid than that of the other but they have to coincide (SaB 78:80). At the same time every person is encouraged to look for religious answers and undertake the role of the teacher to others (SaB 3:26).

Jesus in the Synoptic Gospels chooses certain people to be the preachers (Lk 5:10) but he highlights that there is only one teacher and that is He (Mt 23:8). Though some of the SG (like Mathew's) are more elaborate on the sermons of Jesus and others are not, the text in general presents a promoted idea of succinct talk, which is contrasted with that of pagans, who use too many words praying (Mt 6:7). From the above it appears that Muslims are permitted to have stronger voice in religious matters than the followers of Jesus and the latter ones have to use precise and short language promoting God's message. At the same time, in the SaB it is forbidden to ask too many questions in the religious matters just as it is asking others for something (SaB 24:53). These two are perceived as somewhat superfluous and things that are not necessary should be shunned. Thus, it can be deduced that the message in the SaB is more open to individual interpretations as ways to find solutions to the questionable matters.

One of the important issues concerning *oaths* in the SaB is the communication between the living and the dead. Muhammad says that the dead are influenced by the living but they also might be tortured because of their actions, e.g. wailing (SaB 23:33) done over them, not fulfilled (by the inheritors) promises they made when were alive (SaB 23:95). Even if a person deceased leaving someone resentful because of his actions, the living one is warned not to abuse the dead as he has already faced the fruit of his actions, while the living one will only exacerbate his (SaB 23:97). The SG keep to a bit different position. The dead are very close and might be brought to life (Mk

5:39), but the living ones should not worry too much about the dead and leave their oaths to them (Lk 9:60). From the lines of discussion in the respective texts we see that oaths are influenced by cultural norms of perceiving the relation with the dead and the SG are much less concerned with the issue than the SaB.

Relating to the unknown time of death, all Muslims who have something to will are obliged to have a written testament (SaB 55:1) and thus take care of the living potential inheritors. In the SaB this topic is not elaborated too much.

Particular presentation of the relation between sin and promises distinguishes the SaB from the SG. Being in debt in the SaB is put on the equal scale with being afflicted with sin (SaB 43:10). Thus not being able to pay the debt oneself a person should allow a rich one to cover it in order not to submerge into the situation of continuous debt, when one starts telling others lies and breaking promises (SaB 43:10). For such breaking of the given word a believer has to fulfil expiation, e.g. in the form of alms (SaB 65:1).

One more particularity of the SaB is that the weight of word is gender related. The SaB renders:

The Prophet said, "Isn't the witness of a woman equal to half of that of a man?" The woman said, "Yes." The Prophet replied to that, "This is because of the deficiency of a woman's mind." (SaB 52:12)

What also differs in the texts is that in the SaB Muslims have to help others to fulfil oaths (SaB 83:9) while in the SG deeds have to be fulfilled by the ones who promised to do them and with the help from God (Mt 6:30). Such help to fulfil oaths is put in line with uttering a specific phrase for the person who sneezed and worshiped Allah, returning greetings and accepting invitations – all of these earn divine reward. Differently from that, the SG do not relate divine reward with oaths and almost do the opposite: on the oaths themselves Jesus says that believers should not swear by anything and just shortly and plainly agree or disagree on something (Mt 5:34). In the other place he adds that when one promises something there are no exceptions for the word not to be kept (Mt 5:32) and thus oath is worthless.

All in all, believers have to use words as carefully as deeds, because harming with tongue might be just as painful as physical abuse (SaB 81:26) and because sometimes there is a slim line between positive and negative use of words. The difference is that the SaB ascribes good words to charity and the SG do not, and that weight of words in the SaB is socially predetermined while in the SG their meanings are allegedly universal and the same in all situations (though social factors do have influence, cf. Mt 15:24-28). At the same time, it can be noticed that the SaB allows more

exceptions and elaborates more on oaths, while the SG are much more succinct, encourage to use precise wording and require radical commitment.

4.2.3. Body in the ascetic social relations

Attitude towards body in the SG is as the reflection of the humble inner stance towards others: when a believer is hit on one cheek, he should turn and the other (Mt 5:39). In addition, already the lustful look on a woman means the committed adultery (Mt 5:28) and this shows that inner and outer positions are very closely related. A married couple (of husband and wife) is even perceived as one body (Mt 19:5). Similarly, the SaB reflects stance of the believers. It sees body as means to be the literal follower of the religious tradition: when imam bows, one should bow, when he raises hands, a believer should do the same (SaB 75:12). Seeing the same from a bit different perspective, religion in the SaB pertains to every part of the body of the believer:

There is charity to be given for every joint of the human body (SaB 53:11).

In the SaB face, private parts and hands are the most important in the relation to the others (SaB 81:26; 86:19). In the SG it is also face, private parts, hands and, differently from the SaB, eyes (Mk 7:21-23). Described as a light of the body eyes do not only help to perceive others but also render who a believer is. The SaB diverts attention to a different part of the face. Forehead is the most frontal and open part of the body faced towards the people one meets. It renders thoughts with additional messages which can either support the words or deny them. And in such a context, Muhamad's expression for a person who did something wrong as a man with the dusted forehead (SaB 78:38) implies that he is not possible to understand.

Even in the shared parts there are differences in the elaborated message. In the SaB private parts can be a cause of shame because of hardly controllable natural needs, e.g. passing of the wind (SaB 78:43), having menses (SaB 6:4), and an obstacle to fully fulfil religious actions. Because of the menstrual periods women have, their relation to the other members of the community becomes restrained and they are described as having permanent religious deficiency through it (SaB 6:6).

In congruence with the above, face is employed differently. When the SG encourage believers to turn the other cheek for hitting (Mt 5:39), the SaB warns both the fighter and the fought person to avoid face (SaB 49:20) as an important part of who a person is and, hence, related to his honour.

Using hands as expressions of emotions have to be limited to the ones in accordance to Jesus' message of love and consideration of possible reverse situation. Thus a believer in the SG should

not beat anyone because he would not want other to do that to him, while in the SaB force may be used (SaB 40:13), but reasonably (SaB 78:43). If a person beats his wife, he would not be able to go to bed with her and as sexual needs are emphasized being of foremost importance, husband should not become physical in his expressions of negative emotions with his wife in order not to encumber his sexual activity.

The body of the believers in the SaB and the Synoptic Gospels is more than physical anatomy. It becomes a system of signs that function in a self-referential way and as referents for others by means of their ability to acquire meaning (cf. Olson C., 2008:4). This means that religiously perceived body creates meanings important for religious self-restraint (e.g., the SaB measures the divine reward in body parts: the one who freed a slave's body from oppression will be granted the reward equal to the saved parts of the slave, cf. SaB 49:1; age stages have certain characteristics on the bodies of the believers but some are more valued by Jesus than others; cf. Lk 18:16) and renders messages to the other members of the community, especially when the "uncontrollable" (e.g., emotions through emotional expressions) is controlled and functional efficacy is increased through them. What strikes as the biggest difference between the SaB and the SG is the reasoning why the believers should take control over their bodies: in the SG it is for achieving total submission to God, while in the SaB it is the threat for potentially negative outcome already in the life on earth and moving towards its positive alternative in the Hereafter. The SaB accentuates more the innate, negative self-referential qualities of bodies that have to be acknowledged fulfilling religious duties, while the SG put more attention to ascribed meanings to particular body parts and whole human body in general.

Overall, considering ascetic stance in social relations there are quite a few differences in the SaB and the SG. Jesus and Muhammad impart distancing with the observation of social needs (Mk 6:31; SaB 4:53), but at some instances Jesus requires to subdue social body radically (Mk 13:36; 14:41), while Muhammad specifies the acts that have to be suppressed (SaB 78:125). In the Sahih al-Bukhari social withdrawal is depicted as a vice, which should not spoil kin-relationship (SaB 81:34), whilst Jesus describes seclusion as a merit, granting one a hundred times bigger reward (Mk 10:30).

One more radical thing demanded by Jesus is the purposeful, self-restraining charity (Mk 10:21). In the Gospel of Mark this conscious, radical act is presented as an idealised situation (Mk 10:29-30), while in the Sahih al-Bukhari acknowledgement of one's capacities is clear (SaB 2:32; 24:10). A believer is expected to keep his living (SaB 24:4) and in some instances invoke good

words and deeds for charity (SaB 24:9). By giving *zakat* believers in the Sahih al-Bukhari purify what is left for the benefactor (SaB 78:6); purify benefactors from being indifferent to the others (SaB 55:2); free the recipients from the craving of what belongs to the prosperous (SaB 24:51). Therefore, differently from the SG, the one accepting the charity is almost as important in the implied community of Islam as the giver (SaB 24:9).

Although both Muhammad and Jesus acknowledged the social sensitivity of human beings, Muhammad approved attempts to gain more social comfort (SaB 30:15), while Jesus believed in radical self-control with the other based on the unreserved faith (Mt 19:6).

5. Conditions for pursuing ascetic behaviour

The SaB and the SG present set of practices, which employed congruently imply spiritual well-being of the believers. Additional conditions play an important part in the employment of those. Looking at the general pictures of asceticism in the respective texts it appears that the underlying cultural engineering for the intimate being with the divine is also framed by two conditional categories of *time(s)/amount* and *space*.

5.1. Time(s)/amount

There are quite a few things that are counted in both texts and as the measures reiterate it might be deduced that counting time, amounts, length and so on are important in the employment of the perspective of the ascetic vision in the respective texts.

Both texts use phrases related to the abstract measures of time. Muhammad mentions these “oblique” times, defining them as suitable (SaB 3:11) or due to (SaB 3:23). In the SG Jesus relies on the notion that high time is very close (Lk 21:31) and that at the same time it is the time around now (Lk 17:21). The difference is that in the SaB a believer selects the appropriate time while in the SG it is God.

A bit different track of time is kept by taking certain bodily actions as frame of reference. To the latter in the SaB one might ascribe periods from one ablution to the other (SaB 4:2; 4:24). Though they do not coincide in length, the idea is the same that after one ablution a believer gradually becomes more impure until he cleans himself by certain rituals again. The SG tell the implied believers about the story of the prodigal son (Lk 15:11-32). In it the reiterated idea (as in the other instances, cf. Mt 17:14-18) appears that the closest to God is the person who humbles himself and bodily in order to receive God’s mercy. As after such act and when the need is satisfied, believers tend to gradually distance themselves from God (Lk 17:17-18) until they again have to return pleading, stooping. From these examples it seems that the SaB puts more emphasis on the rituals one has to pursue while the SG pay more attention to the need of acknowledgement of the vulnerability of every person.

According to some scholars, the gospels cover different scope of festal cycles: Mathew and Luke present the full, and Mark renders only half (Bradshaw P., 2002:48), but there are no comments on the re-occurring religious times or celebrations so it would be hard to call the presented religious world annular. If the SG perceive time as mostly linear, when everything moves from the birth of Jesus (Lk 2:11) to the day of Resurrection (Mk 16:6), the SaB is more circular, where the religious

calendar has to be observed with all of the reoccurring periods. The most important, specific period of time is Ramadan. It has clearly marked beginning and the end (SaB 9:27; 30:5) and pertains to the intense relation between the believers and the divine (SaB 2:28) as it is believed that the gates of Paradise open (SaB 30:5) during it. Within this period even more emphasis is put on the last 10 nights (SaB 2:36). The interpretation of such different perspectives might be linked to the perspectives: line directs to the future in the SG, while circular joins more closely reality now and the same time in the future in the SaB. Thus, the asceticism in the SG is more visionary motivated while in the SaB it is based on the ritual patterns, which are conceived anew with each cycle that adds up to the merits of the previous.

Devotion of time to God/Allah is presented in both texts, but the intensity differs. All the time (morning, day and night) should be more or less used to gain strength by worship of Allah (SaB 2:29) in the SaB. But it should not be elongated in the extremist way of overly indulgence in religious practices every minute (cf. SaB 2:29), in contrast it should follow daily prayer patterns (SaB 65:1). In case one fails to do that and forgets, the expiation is prayer when remembered (SaB 20:14). Paradox is that Muhammad himself showed the example of uninterrupted religious state (SaB 4:5), which could not be repeated because of the idiosyncratic status of the Prophet. Instead, when a person feels bodily illness, he should interrupt his prayer and rest and continue later, in order to be conscious during the prayer times (SaB 4:53). In congruence with this, leaders of prayers should shorten the length of prayers in order to suit the needs of the weaker believers (SaB 10:61). Therefore, in the SaB religious time is influence by biological needs but if the volition allows one he can prolong individual prayer for as long as he wants (SaB 10:62) just allowing oneself to rest when tiresomeness comes (SaB 19:18). The reiterated occurrences of discussed situations concerning weariness bring up with them the importance of rest, which is compulsory and necessary in the pattern of time planning (SaB 19:20; 30:20).

The image in the SG is quite different. Foremost, it is because Jesus is depicted as continuous tool of God's worship through his deeds (e.g. Mk 1:21-34). Taking this together with the call for continuous vigilance subduing weariness (Mt 25:1-13) into consideration it appears that there is no place for biological weakness or rest. Moreover, night sleep which is necessary for all human beings is perceived almost as a time of trial when one has to be especially alert (Lk 22:46), unless the danger is only outer and with no effect on the inner stance (Mt 8:24). Thus the SG invite the believers to subdue biological factors in order to become those implied ideal followers of Jesus, who also are able to discern between threats for spiritual stability and physical dangers that should be tackled with the faith in God.

Age is also perceived differently in the respective texts. Biological time is also counted and decisive during the prayer times as the oldest is expected to lead a prayer (SaB 10:49) in the SaB but the SG seem to promote the culture of youth (Mt 18:3) or at least the blurred factor of age (Mt 20:23). With this the text implies that older age does not play a decisive role in the allocating religious positions. On the contrary, the younger a person in his stance is the better.

Special for the SaB are particular measures to count periods. During the prayers a specific measure is rak'a, which consists of particular verses from the Quran. It also implies bodily language: where one rak'a consists of one standing, one bowing, and two prostrations (SaB 9:28). During rak'a Muhammad urged to use only seven parts of the body: forehead, both hands, both knees, and both feet (SaB 10:133). Hence, indirectly time in the SaB is measured and by patterns of bodily movements.

Numbers in themselves are not of the biggest importance in the SG. Though quite a few things are counted, e.g. loaves of bread, fish (Lk 9:13), temptations (Mt 4:1-11), and many of them are presented in uneven numbers, hardly any general conclusions could be drawn from that. On the other hand, the SaB take numbers seriously. Along with taking the gauge of time, other things for Allah or in the name of Allah are also measured. One of the examples of these is amount of charity (SaB 2:42), which is defined to the smallest amounts as morsels or other types of scales. The other is the amount of water used for ablution, which is counted in Mudds. As the prophet used to take a bath with up to five Mudds, ordinary believers would be expected to do the same (SaB 4:47). The shared characteristic in all of this measuring is the preference of odd numbers (SaB 80:68). Hence, the SaB is precise to the smallest details, though sometimes they are culturally specific, and in this text quality and quantity seem to be almost equally important. The SG put more attention to quality.

Efficient and inefficient usage of time is related to the pace. In the SaB there are convoluted regulations concerning it. For instance, one should not hurry and finish meal even if a prayer has already started (SaB 10:42), hastening is even contrasted with righteousness (SaB 25:94). But there are situation when a believer has to move faster. One of them is returning from religious travelling as the latter is compared with torture which limits possibilities for normal eating, drinking and sleeping (SaB 56:136). The attitude of Muhammad was that the offspring of Adam abuse time (dahr) and god is time, thus believers should employ time carefully and respectfully (SaB 78:101), taking into the consideration that Allah has ordained certain time limit on everything (SaB 82:4). The SG seem to be moved in faster pace because of the backward counting of the set day of the

Resurrection (Lk 24:49; Mt 25:34). It means that time was given to the believers by God and they have to use it wisely in order to achieve positive result in the end (Lk 12:40). The wise one then is the one who understands the signs of the time (Lk 12:56). Therefore, in the SG the accent is on “now” and “urgently”, while the SaB presents the recommendation of the balance between haste and taking one’s time.

Grants in the Paradise are also related to time and the overall pace of the implied life of the believers, but only in the SaB. This is because children who die before puberty gain Allah’s mercy not only for themselves but also for their parents. The important thing is the time as it only works when they pass away very young, when they have spent very little time on earth (SaB 23:6). The SG reject the pre-imposition of the high places in the Hereafter (Mt 20:21-23) and thus the attention is re-directed from grants in advance to the will of God and quality of life (Mt 19:27-28). Therefore, the SaB provide certain types of “insurance” grants, which could be gained without active deeds, while the SG refuse such an idea and stay with the axial personal choices every day.

The last but not the least in the SaB and the SG is the place of time in self-identification. Muhammad says that Muslims were the last to come among the nations which received revelation, but they will be the first on the day of Resurrection. In addition, celebration of Friday was given by Allah to Muslims and in this respect they left others behind as Jews and Christians have their days respectively one and two days later (SaB 11:12). It is even claimed that on that day angels even keep accounting the people performing rituals (SaB 11:31). The SG highlight the self-identification of the believers through belonging to God’s time, which then puts them above the earthly time of others (Mt 25:46). And though the latter position is less visually noticeable than that of the Muslims in the SaB, it implies inner, spiritual relations between people through common denominator and with it is more inter-culturally open.

5.2. Space

Every believer is always in some space but some of the spaces are more religious than others or at least pertain to less interpretation.

The perception of space closely correlates with the community identity issues and the image of the respective religious world. The importance of self-orientation in space in the SaB is seen through the regulations to face *ka’ba* direction when praying (SaB 2:30). Similarly, quiblah should not be faced when answering the call of nature, unless one is screened by a wall, a building or something like that (SaB 4:11). From these and other examples one can see that Muslim ascetic self-

orientation is horizontal, where the faced area is potentially showed more respect than the one where the back is turned. At the same time, the orientation is geographically the same always: arriving at a new place a person has to find out the direction of the quiblah, which is kept and during community prayers. It is worthy to note that prayer time is considered to be private time with Allah and thus a person at that time cannot spit or do similar things in order not to violate Allah's space (SaB 21:12). This appropriate self-orientation pertains to prostration, which is to be done in certain way to appeal to Allah. Failure to do that would not grant the reward and could be linked with a negatively perceived stance of a dog (SaB 9:8).

The SG, in turn, show much more vertical orientation. Many example of this could be found in the actions of Jesus, e.g. ascending to Heaven (Lk 24:51), communication with angels that came from Heaven (Lk 22:43), and testing of Jesus by putting him above the ordinary people (Lk 4:9-10). Thus the implied believers were the ones below and in relation to God, who is above. What is also important in relation to the SaB is that the SG do not identify any outstandingly sacral space for the believers. This means that the key issue is communication of personal messages from below to the above and not being in a particular area or directing oneself towards it.

Home as a frequent place of habitation is an important space in both texts. In the SaB this is primarily because it relates to individual prayer (SaB 8:52) and family relations. But there are specific requirements for it too. What marks an important trait of the SaB is the requirement to remove all pictures from the house so that they do not distract the one praying (SaB 8:15) and do not prevent angels from entering (SaB 34:40). The implied believers could not keep a pet dog (SaB 59:7) too for not to draw to themselves evil influence. Nevertheless, prayers at home, as well as absence of art should not dissociate it from joyfulness (SaB 19:37). Cheeriness and its relation to the habitation of the believers are expressed in the SG too. But Jesus does not present home as a personal shelter. It is more like a temporary place of residence, which should not be appropriated (Mt 8:20), but taken as a sign of care from God. At the same time, a person should choose to designate his habitation place for private worship and self-restraint, which should not be shown publicly (Mt 6:6; 6:18). From this, the vision in the SG present home space as given from God to a person and used by a person to appeal to God. Moreover, Jesus says that listening and employing his words is related to the building of a house on a rock (Mt 7:24), which grants stability and shows wisdom of the believer.

Sometimes spaces for religious activities and related to them are less regular than homes and pertain to the necessary day work or bodily treatment. In the SaB these are sheep folds (SaB 8:49),

mountain paths (SaB 56:2) and screened space for ablution (SaB 5:21). The overall position is that all of the earth is a place of worship for a believer when prayer times come (SaB 60:40). Similarly in the SG Jesus prayed where he was, not looking for specific areas or building, just aiming for their isolation from other people or higher geographical position (cf. Mt 14:23; Mt 17:1; Mt 26:36). Deducing the general position it could be said that many places on the earth can become meeting points of the believers and God, but their potentials have to be employed wisely.

Though usage of the spaces religiously in the SaB is described as universal, there are several ways of employing it in particular. One of these options for signifying personal prayer space for Muslims is the prayer mat *Khumra*, which creates a needed space in irregular places one appears and at home (SaB 8:21).

Muhammad promoted regulation for organisation of people in common prayer spaces. One of the things concerning it is to align behind the one leading the prayer (SaB 8:46) and be in straight rows (SaB 10:71). Failure to comply to these rules means when one somebody tries to pass in front of the praying one should evoke repulsion and force to the invader as at that moment he is a *Shaitan* (SaB 8:100). Therefore, when Imam prays, congregation has to imitate him and his bodily actions (SaB 10:52). In addition, every specific situation has its own pattern of bodily organisation within a space, e.g. during a funeral prayer standing in rows (SaB 63:38). Jesus also used to organise people within spaces but the most common one was being on the same level with everyone (Lk 11:37; 22:14). This is a potential implication of religious equality of people and their alike dignity before God. At the same time, there are instances of bodily humbling in the SG by sitting by the legs of Jesus by those who want to express their respect (such behaviour done willingly is approved, cf. Lk 10:39-41). As self-restraint in the form of bodily stoop is perceived positively but not required, the expected stance of the believer would be orientation in space of people not giving any conscious religious primacy to particular members of the community but allowing the possibility of shown humbleness. Moreover, Jesus shows other ways of self-orientation before God, but they do not seem to follow strict patterns and are only private, e.g. Jesus is described both kneeling (Lk 22:41) and just falling to the ground during the prayer (Mk 14:35) even at the similar situation. Overall, the lack of examples for the community organisation in space in a religious way implies that religiosity is foremost left as a private matter.

The last but not the least issue concerning spaces is the transgressing their border lines. Both texts identify features of expected behaviour when one enters any space. In the SaB one has to utter certain key words when entering and leaving (SaB 56:132), but entering should be a really

conscious acts as there are additional rules not to be broken, e.g. one cannot enter a house of those who were unjust to themselves (SaB 60:6). Violations of religious space might happen and because of more simple earthly reasons, e.g. eating of garlic, which is considered inappropriate in the mosque (SaB 10:160). Jesus, just as Muhammad, tells his disciples what to do and say entering a house (Lk 10:5), but leaving gains more attention and depends on the welcome. Thus it should be done appropriately (Lk 10:11). What is particular to the SG is that hardships of entering a place are linked with divine benefits (Mt 7 13-14) and there are no requirements for personal bodily features for entering religious spaces or in a religious way as it is in the SaB.

6. CONCLUSION

While life-long asceticism for some is the subject of religious quest, the asceticism graspable from the Sahih al-Bukhari and the Synoptic Gospels is my quest of this thesis. Peruse of these sources brings forward sometimes unexpected ideas that challenge prevailing stereotypes of the differences of the ascetic behaviour in Muslim and Christian traditions, to which the texts themselves belong and are of the utmost importance.

I have read both texts in order to grasp comparable lines and find the differences, which are the keys for underlying particular logic of the respective texts that pertains to the large scale ideas of religious cultures. Respective programmes of asceticism present what should be valued by the implied believers and what is not important through the embodied religious ideals of Muhammad and Jesus. One of the most universal ideas joining both texts is that religious liberation supersedes bodily experience and pertains to ability of gaining control of self (withstanding biological determinism) in congruence with soteriological interpretations.

The first hints on the particularities of the ascetic behaviour in the SaB and the Synoptic Gospels can be found already skimming the texts for *specific textual issues, concepts*. These present the accents of Muhammad on legal issues and regulations on rituals, while in the SG more attention is paid to the exemplar story of Jesus which should be individualised by the implied believers. Not of the least importance is also the quantity of the terms for particular religious bodily acts in the SaB. The SG do not have anything similar. The deduction which is drawn from that shows that body is much closely integrated into the overall ascetic framework in the SaB than in the SG.

Both sources present multiple materializations of potentially rewarded virtues in *every-day treatment of the body*. The difference lies in the intensity of self-giving. Muhammad notes that bodily needs have to be always acknowledged and ascetic actions have to be employed in congruence with them (that is the way Allah has made it work). Jesus, in turn, emphasizes the primacy of the total self-subjugation for God, who gratifies the keeping of unquestionable, strong correlation between bodily needs and faith. From this appears that both Muhammad and Jesus did not invite for simple defiance of corporeal needs. Jesus presented generating potential of good in the actions taken and complete self-humbling (acknowledging personal vulnerability) as expected conditions of conduct, and Muhammad emphasized employment of meanings integrally, i.e. following initial plan of Allah according to which the bodily needs of the people and religious duties are in complete balance.

Very important differences between the sources could be found through categories of dietary asceticism and additional (not essential) treatments of the body. Food threatens human attempts to gain mastery over the body but full mastery is not even presented as an option in any of the texts. What Jesus does show is that joyfulness should be the sign of those involved in the conscious self-restriction on food and Muhammad interprets the failures of the implied believers in this respect as approved by Allah. Thus, the SG require more intense self-control, pertaining even to the subjugation of the emotions, while the SaB approves bodily weakness and shows the primacy of the satisfaction of corporeal needs before the obligations to God.

Potential judgement and possibility of salvation are important factors implicitly directing the *social relations* of the believers towards the keeping of the ascetic framework. The difference is that in the SG divine judgement is now or quickly approaching and in the SaB it is the Hereafter. With this in the SG more emphasis is on concrete punishments on the earth. Because of this possibility to be punished/rewarded, the believers in the SG have to concentrate on transfiguration of self and in the SaB the believers have to focus on the employment of potential gifts. All of this has to be done staying in the relationship with other people and quite often using worldly goods, but Jesus warns that in general possession of worldly goods is to be shunned when Muhammad admonished to use what was given to one in material form as a gift in a righteous way.

Time and space are also very important categories in the comparison of the ascetic behaviour in the chosen sources. Such changing factors require specific solutions. Thus, inherent fluidity and temporality of the reality is to be tackled by the implied believers in different ways. In the SaB one has to follow the re-iterating ritual patterns and framework of revealed and ascribed rules. The SG present the life on earth as a potential time for self-transformation motivated by the soon upcoming end.

Physical self-orientation in the given space in the respective texts also differs. In the SaB believers have to concentrate on the horizontal communication, keeping to *qiblah* and assuming that front is to be turned towards places related to the sacral and the presence of the divine (though vertical one, when divine messages descend from heaven is also acknowledged, cf SaB 1:3). In the SG Jesus shows the believers that they have to concentrate on the above-below communication, where the approved stance for the followers is the lower, humble one.

The SaB and the SG are not the check lists of prohibitions and orders/imperatives, but the approved *treatment of body* and actions are very important aspect within the provided framework of thinking, which is not directed towards momentary practical result. Both sources share the idea

that ascetic bodies are vessels of self and means of self-expression, which are needed not only in communication with other people but also with the divine. The particular thing in the SaB is that bodily actions are inseparable from the employment of asceticism (especially in various rituals), while the SG put much more emphasis on the inner self and in them body becomes of the secondary value to the stance of faith.

Overall, if in the Sahih al-Bukhari Muhammad urges to adopt a middle, moderate course (SaB 81:18), Jesus in the SG implies on extremities in several areas (Mk 10:21) but not all (e.g. marriage and life as eunuch are both positively perceived). Following the localised patterns of the ascetic behaviour in the texts there emerges the idea that ascetic behaviour in the Synoptic Gospels is a way to transform oneself in a way appealing to God and employ God's kingdom on the earth, while in the Sahih al-Bukhari it is a way to sustain the appropriate functioning of the society and approaching Allah receive the rewards in the Hereafter.

The thesis *contributes to the previous scholarship* in various ways. The input could be started to discuss from G. Flood (2004:34), who speaks about how wide is the scope of diverse information on asceticism in the recorded discourses. This is also applicable to the SaB and the SG and respectively main characters Muhammad and Jesus. The employed comparative analysis of this thesis shows that the status of these people within the respective religious worlds has an important influence on the prescriptive/descriptive parts. Muhammad was an exemplar link with the divine and thus he is essential in building cultural memory through rituals that brought him closer to Allah. Jesus, in turn, was divine himself and the information presented is much more descriptive, proposing a direction for personal stance of every believer.

The definition of ascetic behaviour at the beginning of the thesis was an attempt to find the golden balance point between the very wide perspectives of G. Harpham (1993:xii) and J. Bronkhorst (2001:374), and too narrow ones named by P. Olivelle (2001:30). This also associates with A. Saldarini's (1999:11) notions of too universal and too meticulous wording, which was overcome by concentrating on the differences of the respective texts. To the way the definition was formulated, one might add "religious" asceticism (it was suited for the description in the SG of Jesus' movement and Islamic hadith tradition) as other cultural forms were not included.

Findings of this master's thesis challenge some of the definitions of asceticism, showing that some aspects of the definitions are very Christian/shaped by Christian assumptions instead of being universal and that it is worthwhile putting several expressions of self-control for divine merits in comparison to describe what it is. For example, when Valantasis describes asceticism as foremost

a performance within a dominant social environment (Kloppenborg J., 1999:150; Valantasis R., 2008:107), the vision in the SaB presented by Muhammad seems to be much more intended for binding various members of communities in particular ways and not as an opposition to the prevailing system.

Olson C. (2008:4) speaks about self-restraining functioning of bodies, when bodies become signs of conceptualisation. This study not only provides additional examples of these but through comparison grasp the means of how cultures frame religious self-control. The particularities worthwhile noting in the respective sources are these: the contribution to the day-to-day functioning of the society in the SaB and the eschatological consciousness of imminence of the soon upcoming judgement in the SG.

Putting emphasis on the restricting nature, many of the articles on asceticism evade the aspect of devotion in ascetic behaviour. Findings of the analysis show that devotion could be interpreted as worship and should be included into the definition of asceticism too. For instance, when a person devotes all of his life to God as eunuch, it does not mean that he punishes himself. It can equally mean that he joyfully gives to God the best of what he controls – his body. Moreover, the SaB makes the task of possibly valid definitions even harder with additional beauty practices, intended for Allah's approval.

Important discoveries in the thesis relate to the presumption of R. Valantasis (2008:28) that results of the employment of asceticism imply multi-layering of values. This is also coherent with multiple meanings appearing from various combinations of ascetic behaviour. Following various thematic dissections of identified types and subtypes of ascetic behaviour, the findings provide more examples to the M. Tolbert's study (1999:43-45) on the Gospel of Mark by expanding the scope of studied elements and thus noting more interrelated examples. The tightness of interdependence of various ascetic actions on one another is especially noticeable in the SaB, which is rich with material on rituals. In addition, much of this information (differently from the SG) is presented as legal and binding (cf. Brown J. 2009:9). The contribution of this thesis is conscious attention to bodily usage through coherent parts of the sources. From the findings, the deduction could be made that bodily usage as a sign is so important in the ascetic programme of the SaB that even theoretical existence of such acts excluding body in the SaB is impossible while in the SG it is plausible. This is because of much prescriptive material in the SaB concerns rituals and in the SG the stance of faith is at the gist of the vision.

My study shows quite a few lines for potential interreligious dialogue as this topic renders common denominators for mutual understanding between contemporary Muslims and Christians. Hence, it is also a particular example of some of the general ideas like “correlative theological formulations”, “familiar patterns of behaviour” (Valantasis R., Wimbush L., 1995: xxxii) that could be developed further including more details. Moreover, the issue raised by Melchert Ch. (2010: 408) that the SaB brings Early Islamic renunciation traits into the contemporary Islamic society could be applied to the study of the SG. Expanded through these lines the comparison could bring forward interesting ideas on how flexible and shifting the traditions are.

Finally, this essay was more than textual analysis. As Ernesto Sabato said: “One sets off for distant lands, or seeks the knowledge of man, or investigates nature, or searches for G-d; only afterwards does he realize that the phantom he was chasing was Himself” (Skorka A., 2013:viii). Thus, looking at the ascetic visions in the Sahih al-Bukhari and the Synoptic Gospels I was also indirectly trying to understand where the borders of my personal position concerning asceticism are and built a framework for others to do likewise.

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