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**RELIGIOUS TRENDS  
IN  
PRE-ISLAMIC ARABIC POETRY**



**HAFIZ GHULAM MUSTAFA**

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**HAFIZ GHULAM MUSTAFA**



**THE FACULTY OF ARTS  
ALIGARH MUSLIM UNIVERSITY**

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*To*  
*My Daughter, Safiyah Jariyah*





## FOREWORD

The study of the social, cultural and religious aspects of the pre-Islamic period of Arab history has not received adequate attention. The interest of the scholar and the layman alike has been focussed mainly on the Islamic period. The study of the Arabic language and literature, Islam and the political history of Islam were the favourite topics chosen by the Orientalists in Europe as well as in the East; for these are closely related to the existing Islamic society and indeed, from the point of view of the Western Powers, had immense political significance. In recent years, however, scholars like Sir Hamilton Gibb, Montgomery Watt and others have studied the socio-economic history of Islam and have thus shifted the emphasis from linguistic and political to social and cultural aspects of Arab history. It is in this context that the present work of Dr. Hafiz Ghulam Mustafa assumes importance. It is devoted to an analysis of Arab religious concepts and practices in the period immediately preceding Islam. He has utilized the extant pre-Islamic Arabian poetry as the main source of information which, coupled with the Qur'an, forms the only contemporary source available to modern scholars.

Dr. Ghulam Mustafa has, in his excellent study, revealed many new aspects of the religious life and thought of the pre-Islamic Arabs. His work is a significant contribution to our knowledge of Arab history and is of pioneering importance. It is hoped that it will be welcomed as an outstanding piece of research and will stimulate further researches in this field.

ALIGARH  
30th March 1968

ABDUL ALEEM  
Vice-Chancellor  
Aligarh Muslim University.



## P R E F A C E

The present work is an attempt at a thorough study of the Pre-Islamic Arabic poetry with a view to determine as to how far it reflects the religious beliefs and rituals prevalent in Arabia before the rise of Islam. So far as I am aware, no systematic and comprehensive work has been produced in this field. No doubt, several historians while dealing with the history of the ancient peoples of Arabia have attempted to give an account of their religious beliefs etc.; but their main object has been, obviously enough, to sketch a general history of the religions followed by the Arabs before the advent of Islam and they have employed for their purpose different sources on different occasions. Of these the pre-Islamic Arabic poetry is one, but they have not made full use of the material contained therein, for in view of their objective, such a use of material was hardly called for.

The scope of the present study is confined to the poetical literature produced by the Arabs in pre-Islamic days, because my direct aim has been not to give a general sketch of the religions of the ancient Arabs, but, instead, to study their poetry from the religious point of view and to trace the religious sentiments and ideas expressed by the pre-Islamic poets. This is why I have dealt generally with only such religious matters as are contained in the pre-Islamic poetry. No doubt, I have also utilized some other sources, particularly books containing account of the pre-Islamic religions, but they have been used only incidentally either to supply a background in the beginning of the chapters or to explain the references and allusions contained in certain verses in so far as it was found necessary to remove their ambiguity or vagueness. In general, I have carefully concentrated my mind on the poetical literature and avoided all irrelevant interests.

Starting on my work, I made a close investigation of the pre-Islamic Arabic poetry and extracted from its bulk a large number of verses bearing religious character in one way or the other. Then I arranged them according to topics and classified them all under different chapters and sub-chapters. A clear outline was then drawn up for my further progress and I began to give it a systematic shape. I analysed the verses under different headings and explained the relevant points which they contained. At this stage, it may also be noted that since it was not intended to pile up all the

available verses relating to religion, I have discarded a number of verses and quoted only a few for the purpose of illustration, specially in case an idea was found to have been repeatedly referred to by the pre-Islamic poets. Thus, after having completed my work, I think I may be allowed to lay claim to its being an original contribution in its present form.

As regards the source-material used in the preparation of the work, I may point out that I have gone through almost all the available collections of the pre-Islamic Arabic poetry found either in the form of 'Diwāns' or anthologies of selections. Moreover, I have studied a number of historical, biographical and philological works and certain commentaries on the Holy Qur'an, because they also contain a considerable number of pre-Islamic verses, scattered in their foldings as quotations and still ungathered in any ordinary form of collection of the poetic compositions. In addition, I have also studied the books which refer, in some way or the other, to the pre-Islamic dogmas, rites, manners, customs and superstitions. A comprehensive bibliography has been attached in the end.

I think the present endeavour would help the reader not only to form a vivid picture of the religious trends and feelings expressed by the pre-Islamic poets but also to make a correct appraisal of their literary merits. It may also provide a precedent for the devoted scholar who may be interested in this branch of Arabic literature to study the same from other points of view. At the same time, it may serve as a preparatory ground for a deeper study of the religion of Islam as well.

Lastly, I have great pleasure in expressing my deep sense of gratitude to my learned guide and supervisor, professor Abdul Aleem, Vice-Chancellor of the Aligarh Muslim University, who was kind enough in not only introducing me to the present topic but also in providing me with a clear picture by indicating the course of action and helping me at different stages by his valuable suggestions and enlightening instructions, without which the present work would not have materialised.

*March 25, 1968*

DEPARTMENT OF ARABIC AND ISLAMIC STUDIES,  
MUSLIM UNIVERSITY, ALIGARH.

H. G. Mustafa

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## INTRODUCTION

The poetry studied in the present work belongs to Arabian poets living in a period confined nearly to one and a quarter of century immediately preceding the rise of Islam, and it is the oldest treasure of Arabic poetry handed down to us. It should not, however, be supposed that it is the earliest remnant of Arabic compositions, because it bears quite clear features of a well-developed and perfectly refined poetry and hence its supremacy has ever been acknowledged. It is, therefore, essential to concede that quite a long and continuous process had already elapsed in the course of the development of Arabic poetry since its origin, before its existing pre-Islamic pattern came to be developed. But it is really a piece of misfortune that we possess today no record of all these early stages and even the present stock of pre-Islamic Arabic poetry is obviously not the whole of what was actually produced during the relevant period. As a matter of fact, quite a large portion of that has been irretrievably lost,<sup>1</sup> for the art of writing was not in common use in the pre-Islamic days and hence all the poetic productions were preserved and propagated by a class of reciters or Rāwis as they were called by means of oral tradition alone; and it was after about two centuries that they were committed to writing for the first time. It is, therefore, quite possible that some textual alterations have taken place in the course of this long verbal transmission from man to man. Similarly, it is also not impossible that some verses have been fabricated by the Rāwis under certain circumstances, as some early scholars of Arabic literature have already pointed to this fact<sup>2</sup> and some modern critics<sup>3</sup> are also making investigations in this connection. The general view in this regard, however, still persists that the major part of the extant pre-Islamic Arabic poetry is quite genuine.

It may also be noted here that almost all the poets to whom the surviving pre-Islamic poetry is ascribed, belong to Northern Arabia, comprising Najd, Ḥijāz, Bahrain and the neighbouring lands. Some of them undoubtedly claim their descent from the south Arabian stock, but they are still found to have been living in the north during the period

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1. See *Ṭabaqāt al-Shu'arā'* by al-Jumahī, p. 10.

2. *Ibid.*, pp. 3-15.

3. Such as Dr. Tāhā Husain, Mohd. Farid Wajdī and Mohd. Ahmad al-Ghanrāwī etc.



concerned, because their forefathers are said to have migrated from the south to this part of the country in very early times. Consequently, we possess no record of any poetical composition belonging to Southern Arabia. We are, therefore, concerned only with Northern Arabia in the course of our study and hence the word, 'Arabs, used in it represents only those living in this part of the peninsula.

Nevertheless, the existing pre-Islamic Arabic poetry is quite valuable and significant. It exhaustively describes various aspects of the life and temperaments of the pre-Islamic peoples of Arabia and it is this fact that gave rise to the proverb, الشعر ديوان العرب, "Poetry is the public register of the Arabs." It is, therefore, natural to expect that it reflects their religious feelings as well; and as the present study bears out, it does contain considerable religious element. At this place, I would like to point out that while dealing with the subject, I have taken up only the faiths which have been distinctly represented in the poetry concerned; and those which have not been clearly represented such as Šābi'iyah, Majūsiyah and Zandaqah have been purposely ignored, although their existence in pre-Islamic Arabia is ascertained by other sources.<sup>1</sup>

As for Idolatry, it was quite common among the Arabs before Islam, but idolatrous ideas and practices are found to have been referred to in their poetry very seldom. In this regard, different explanations have been given by different scholars. Some of them hold the view that the Muslim reciters and traditionists have deliberately ignored verses bearing idolatrous stamps,<sup>2</sup> because of the fact that Islam had condemned idolatry so severely that they did not like even to make mention of it or that they felt ashamed of their forefathers being called idolaters. I think the view is not quite correct, because if it were so, no such verses would have ever come down to us. The existing pre-Islamic Arabic poetry which also contains idolatrous ideas, though sparsely, has after all been preserved by no others but the Muslim traditionists. They have recorded poems in which even the companions of the Prophet had been satirized by their opponents as also verses in which the Islamic dogmas had been ridiculed. How could they, therefore, ignore their valuable ancestral heritage on any pretext? However, supposing the oft-repeated view to be correct, verses bearing description of certain pre-Islamic religious

1. See the Holy Qur'ān, Sūrah 'al-Ḥajj', Āyah, 17; and Kitāb al-Ma'ārif, p. 299,

2. See Al-Hayāt al-'Arabīyah by al-Haufī. p. 290;

Tārīkh Ādāb al-Lughat al-'Arabīyah by Jurji Zaidan, vol. I, p. 61; and Lectures on the Religion of the Semites, by W. R. Smith, p. 49

practices which were also adopted, later on, by Islam, such as those pertaining to pilgrimage to the Ka'bah, should have existed today in considerable numbers, because if they ever existed, they should not have necessarily been ignored by the Muslim traditionists; but the fact is that such verses too appear very rarely.

The other view held in this respect is that the pagan Arabs were little interested in religious affairs.<sup>1</sup> It may be true to some extent, but I think that if a person hopes to find out from the pre-Islamic Poetry the mode of prostration of the heathen Arabs before their idols and the kind of hymns they sang while paying homage to them, or tries to trace other manners of idol-worship current among some idolatrous peoples of our days, then he is almost certain to be disappointed, because such practices, as far as my studies lead me, never existed in pre-Islamic Arabia. The main features of their idol-worship were circumambulation of the idols and offering of sacrifices to them; and references to these practices are undoubtedly found in pre-Islamic poetry. It is, however, true that complete poems on these subjects do not exist and only scattered verses appear in the midst of long poems. The obvious reason seems to be that during the period to which the existing pre-Islamic poetry belongs, a typical style of versification was firmly established, which every poet had to follow in order to achieve fame, and even the subject-matter of the poem was usually of a determined nature. The poems generally contained boastful descriptions of warlike manners, valorous achievements and glorious deeds of the tribes and individuals and accounts of travels through the barren deserts, seeking blood-revenge, displaying courage and forbearance in the face of dangers, praising hospitality and the like. Only poems of this type gained popularity and currency in the contemporary society and hence they were generally recited by the Rāwīs in public assemblies and private gatherings. It is, however, quite probable that sometimes complete religious poems might also have been composed under some temporary urge or feeling, but in such a situation, these poems could not survive for a long time, even though the heathen Arabs might not have been indifferent towards their religions in practical life.

Another fact to be noticed is that monotheistic ideas resembling those of Islam are found in pre-Islamic Arabic poetry in large numbers and side by side with idolatrous ones. It appears rather strange that, on the one hand, certain verses of heathen poets contain ideas relating to

1. See *A Literary History of the Arabs* by R. A. Nicholson, p. 135; *History of the Arabs* by P. K. Hitti, p. 96; and *Tārīkh al-Adab al-'Arabī* by Hannā al-Fākhūrī, p. 16.

monotheism, whereas, on the other hand, some other verses of the same poets refer to idolatrous practices, which is paradoxical. It is probably for this reason that verses containing ideas akin to Islam are sometimes considered as interpolations committed by the Muslim traditionists.<sup>1</sup> It may be that a few of such verses might have been forged under certain conditions, but all of them cannot be termed as interpolations. I think that without sufficient and reliable grounds and positive evidence, their genuineness should not be challenged simply in an effort to resolve a logical complexity.

As a matter of fact, certain religious beliefs and practices akin to those of Islam did exist in Arabia even before its appearance. Islam adopted them either in their existing form or with minor changes. It is, therefore, but natural for pre-Islamic Arabic poetry to contain references to them and there is nothing strange about it. Some European scholars have also admitted the genuineness of such verses,<sup>2</sup> although they wish to link them with the influence of Christianity and Judaism on pre-Islamic Arabia. In my opinion such verses have their origin, for the most part, in the remnants of the religion of Arbaham.

The point would become more clear, if we cast a glance at the religious history of pre-Islamic Arabia. Renan's view that the Ancient Arabs, like other semitic nations, were monotheists by nature may be challenged as it has already been done by some scholars.<sup>3</sup> But it is quite reasonable to hold that the Arabs living in Hijāz after the well-known enterprise of Abraham and the settlement of Ismael in Mecca, were well-acquainted with monotheistic ideas, because Abraham and Ismael themselves were strong monotheists. They built the Ka'bah and invited the people to worship One God. It is also a known fact that the later Arabs who flourished and widely spread all around Northern Arabia, excluding those who having migrated from the south settled there, mostly sought their descent from Ismael.<sup>4</sup>

It is, therefore, generally held by Muslim historians and traditionists that the people of Hijāz had been following the religion of Abraham for a very long period; but during the course of time, as a result of their coming into contact with peoples of different religions and for a number of other reasons as well, it became corrupt and lost

1. See *Mohammad and The Rise of Islam*, by D. S. Margoliouth, p. 60.

2. See *Ancient Arabian Poetry* by C. J. Lyall, p. 92 and 119; and *A Literary History of the Arabs* by R. A. Nicholson, pp. 139-140.

3. See *Tārīkh al-'Arab* by Jawād 'Alī, vol. V., p. 20.

4. See *Tārīkh al-Ya'qūbī*, vol. I, pp. 254 seq.

its pristine purity and thus polytheistic conceptions and practices crept into this religious system.<sup>1</sup> However, in spite of this deviation from the teachings of Abraham, they continued to follow some remnants of his religion in certain respects, such as faith in One Supreme God, pilgrimage to Mecca and making sacrifices beside the Holy Ka'bah.<sup>2</sup>

Thus, strictly speaking, the Arabs of the pre-Islamic times were actually neither pure monotheists nor pure idolaters. In practice, they followed a form of religion which was a curious amalgam of heterogeneous beliefs and rites both local and imported; and though the idolatrous practices were prevalent among them, they still cherished an underlying idea of the One Supreme God. Their idolatry did not mean that they had no faith in the existence of the One Supreme Being or that they had elevated their gods and goddesses to the rank of the Supreme One. It only meant that they thought of them as deities subordinate to the Supreme Being, Whose Will could be resisted by no-one.

Nevertheless, the Arabs were polytheists on the whole and their polytheism was based on the analogy between the nature of spiritual and temporal sovereignty. As a matter of fact, they thought that just as a monarch assigns different parts of his kingdom to some of his loyal servants giving them certain powers to settle trivial matters of the people in their respective territories and also consults them and accepts their intercessions in respect of the affairs of his subjects, similarly the Almighty God also has granted some powers of administering the universe to His faithful servants whose souls have attained high positions by virtue of their pious devotion. Hence, they considered it necessary to propitiate them in order to gain their favours; and for this purpose they made sacrifices to them, swore by their names, presented offering to them and practised other rites. In the course of time, they raised their images, which they believed to be their abodes. This aptitude of raising images and worshipping them became so common that any object that was considered by them as possible abode of any kind of spirit received tributes of their reverence; and religious ceremonies in whatever form or shape they liked were performed beside it.<sup>3</sup>

Accordingly, they cherished different views in respect of their idols and images. A few of the ignorant Bedouins might have come to believe

1. See Kitāb al-Asnām by Ibn al-Kalbī, pp. 6-8.

2. Ibid.

3. For full details of the above statement, see Al-Fawz al-Kabīr, pp. 4-6.

them to be real gods, but the great majority of the heathen Arabs took them only to be the symbols of powerful spirits. There were some who thought that their deities would intercede for them as mediators between themselves and God, for they thought that they could not approach God independently. Again, there was a sect among them which believed that God had appointed some spirits for the idols who were delegated with certain powers and hence they could prove menacing at times.<sup>1</sup>

From the above discussions it would be evident that although the heathen Arabs worshipped numerous idols, the conception of the One Supreme God was always present in their minds in some form or the other. In this connection, the testimony of the Qur'anic verses, which are quite numerous, will prove to be of great importance. Some of them are as follows :—

قل من يرزقكم من السماء و الأرض أمن يملك السمع و الأبصار و من يخرج الحي من الميت و يخرج الميت من الحي و من يدبر الأمر ، فسيقولون الله ، فقل أفلا تتقون -

Say : “who is it that sustains you ( in life ) from the sky and from the earth ? Or who is it that has power over hearing and sight ? And who is it that brings out the living from the dead and the dead from the living ? And who is it that rules and regulates all affairs” ? They will soon say, “God”. Say, “will ye not then show piety ( to Him )?”<sup>2</sup>.

قل لمن الأرض و من فيها إن كنتم تعلمون - سيقولون الله ، قل أفلا تذكرون -  
 قل من رب السموات السبع و رب العرش العظيم - سيقولون الله ، قل أفلا تتقون -  
 قل من بيده ملكوت كل شيء ، وهو يجير و لا يجار عليه إن كنتم تعلمون -  
 سيقولون الله ، قل فأنى تسحرون -

Say : “To whom belong the earth and all beings therein ? ( say ) if you know.” They will say, “To God.” Say : “Yet will ye not receive admonition ?” Say : “who is the Lord of the seven heavens, and the Lord of the Throne ( of Glory ) Supreme ?” They will say, “(They belong) to God.” Say : “Will ye not then be filled with Awe ?” Say : “Who is it in whose hands is the governance of all things,—who protects (all), but is not protected ( of any ) ? (Say) if ye know.”

1. For different views held by the idolaters of Arabia about their idols see *Bulūgh al-Arab*, vol. II, pp. 197-198.

2. Commentary on the Qur'ān by A. Yūsuf 'Alī, *Sūrah*, X, (Yūnus), *Āyah*, 31.

They will say, "It belongs to God," Say : "Then how are ye deluded?" 1.

ويعبدون من دون الله ما لا يضرهم ولا ينفعهم ويقولون هؤلاء شفعاؤنا عند الله .

They serve, besides God, things that hurt them not nor profit them, and they say, "These are our intercessors with God." 2.

والذين اتخذوا من دونه أولياء ، ما نعبدهم إلا ليقربونا إلى الله زلفى ،

But those who take for protectors others than God (say) : "we only serve them in order that they may bring us nearer to God." 3.

At this stage, I think it would not be out of place to point out the fact that the Holy Qur'an does not address itself invariably to one class of people having identical creed, as some of the European scholars seem to have understood, and as a result of this misconception they have charged the Qur'an with making contradictory statements.<sup>4</sup> As a matter of fact, the Qur'an addresses peoples of different creeds through different verses. Just before Islam, there were some people in Arabia who actually denied the existence of God while there were others who believed in Him, but denied life after death. There was yet another sect which had faith both in the existence of God and the life hereafter but denied the institution of apostleship and bodily resurrection. Again, there was another group of individuals who believed not only in God and the resurrection but in apostleship as well; and to this latter group belong the persons usually addressed as the 'Hanifs'.<sup>5</sup>

From the above evidence it is quite apparent that idolatrous and polytheistic practices and belief in One Supreme God co-existed among the heathen Arabs. God to them was the creator of heavens and earth, sustainer of the universe, giver of life and death, bestower of all bounties, regulator of all affairs, knower of all things hidden or otherwise and so on. But this leads us to an important question. Why did the people of Mecca then oppose the Prophet of Islam, challenged his mission and finally went to war with him, if they already entertained belief in One God? Indeed, their resistance did not emerge merely from this fact, but it was a reaction of the subsequent stages of his mission. The Prophet did

1. Commentary on the Qur'an by A. Yūsuf 'Alī, Sūrah XXIII, (Mu'minūn). Āyāt, 84-89.

2. Ibid., Sūrah X, (Yūnus), Āyah, 18.

3. Ibid., Sūrah XXXIX (Zumar), Āyah 3.

4. See Dā'irat al-Ma'ārif al-Islāmīyah, vol. II under the title 'Allāh' p. 585.

5. For further details of the above statements, see Dā'irat al-Ma'ārif al-Islāmīyah, vol. II, under the title 'Allāh', pp. 585-586

not content himself with inviting the people to believe in One God, but he further called upon them to do away with all kinds of idolatrous and polytheistic observances. He denounced their deities and idols as being mere creations of their own and having absolutely no authority over men and their affairs.<sup>1</sup> Thereupon, the people of Mecca, who were quite haughty and arrogant, felt humiliated. They could endure every thing but humiliation, for it was quite repugnant to their nature. They, therefore, stood up against his mission. Their resistance in the early stages took the form of verbal arguments in favour of their traditional cult, which they argued they had inherited from their illustrious ancestors.<sup>2</sup> Now, when the Prophet spoke of their ancestors as having deviated from the correct path and having been misguided, they were highly irritated and their anger knew no bounds; for they were a class of people too full of pride in their forefathers and they highly honoured their ancestral traditions to which their poetry bears clear testimony. Thus, their antagonism and hostility towards the Prophet and his mission gradually increased and acquired serious proportions.

Besides religion, some other factors—social, economic, political and moral—were also at work in this respect. The people of Mecca, by virtue of their being guardians of the Holy Ka'bah, were held in high esteem throughout the country and they were also quite wealthy because of their stable and profitable trading occupation. The Prophet, on the other hand, was not a rich man, so they considered below their dignity to obey the command of such a person and felt slighted in accepting his leadership irrespective of its nature, religious or otherwise. The Holy Qur'an has made manifest their objection in this respect as follows :—

وقالوا لولا نزل هذا القرآن على رجل من القريتين عظيم -

Also, they say : "Why is not this Qur'an sent down to some leading man in either of the two ( chief ) cities ?"<sup>3</sup>

Moreover, their tribal or feudal social structure conceived of various discriminations between the members of society on the basis of several factors mainly birth and blood. The Prophet, on the other hand, would not accept these discriminations, for he desired to build a society based on complete equality and fraternity and without any distinction between poor and rich, or between black and white. Again, the prophet also

1. See the Holy Qur'an, Sūrah 'Najm', Āyah, 23.

2. See the Holy Qur'an, Sūrah 'Baqarah', Āyah, 170 and Sūrah 'Mā'idah' Āyah, 107.

3. Commentary on the Qur'an by A. Yūsuf 'Alī, Sūrah XLIII (Zukhruf), Āyah 31.

condemned some of their activities of morality based on their traditional conception of honour, called 'Muru'ah; for example they considered vengeance as absolutely obligatory, but the Prophet preached to the contrary and advocated forgiveness; likewise, they thought it incumbent upon every member of the tribe to assist the tribe in all cases, whereas the Prophet appealed to them to stand by truth and justice alone; similarly, they were very proud of their ancestral achievements, while the Prophet forbade the following of this tradition and invited them to add to their personal qualities.

In fact, all these factors, and not exclusively the idea of the One God preached by the Prophet, were the causes which led the Meccans gradually to open opposition against the Prophet. They thought that if they remained silent, their aristocratic leadership would go and their whole established system—social, political and economic rather than religious—would be completely disrupted. Hence they decried Islam with all their strength and by every means, fair or foul. If the Prophet had confined himself only to oral preaching of certain dogmas and to accepting only lip-confessions from his followers and had not sought to interfere with their day to day life, as some preceding reformers and Hanifs had done or as some of the poets through their poems full of moral virtues had done, there would have been no conflict in Mecca, but at the same time no good results would have accrued either.





## CHAPTER I

### POLYTHEISM

The great majority of the Arabs before the advent of Islam were polytheists. They acknowledged One Supreme God; but, at the same time, they associated with Him various subordinate deities. They worshipped idols, stones, trees, wells, rocks, caves, graves and spirits. They believed that the deities were His partners in exercising divine power.

#### 1. IDOLATRY

##### Origin of Idolatry

The most distinctive form of their polytheistic practices was idolatry, which developed among them through different sources. They were originally monotheists and followed the religion of Abraham.<sup>1</sup> When the descendants of Ismael, the son of Abraham, multiplied in Mecca and their number increased to a considerable degree, their territory proved insufficient to accommodate them all. They began to quarrel with one another and some of them tried to expel the others from Mecca. Thus, under different conditions, some of the families were forced to migrate one after the other. Whenever a family left Mecca, it also took a stone with it as a memento from the sacred land of the *Ka'bah* out of their deep devotion to it and planted it wherever they settled down.<sup>2</sup> Later on, they began to treat the stone as a substitute for the *Ka'bah* and eventually started observing beside it almost all the religious rites and ceremonies originally associated with the *Ka'bah*.

Nevertheless, they also went to Mecca to perform the *Hajj*-ceremony during the sacred months prescribed for the purpose and Mecca was, at first, quite free from idol-worship; but when 'Amr b. Luḥayy, the head of the tribe of *Khuzā'ah*, achieved complete authority over Mecca after having expelled from it the people of *Jurhum*, who had so far been custodians of the *Ka'bah*, he set up certain idols and stones in Mecca as well.

In this connection, it is said that once he fell seriously ill and people said to him. "There is a hot spring at *Balqā'* in Syria. If you bathe in it, you will be cured." Thereupon he went there, took bath in

it and actually got cured. He also saw there that the inhabitants of that place worshipped some idols; so he inquired of them about those idols and they said to him, "We ask them for rain and they bring the same to us; we beg of them for help and they help us." Then he asked for an idol for himself and they gave him one called *Hubal*. Then 'Amr b. Luḥayy brought the idol with him to Mecca, set it up before the *Ka'bah* and invited the people of Mecca to worship it.<sup>3</sup>

This was the first idol to be installed within the sacred precincts of the *Ka'bah*; and later on some others such as *Isāf* and *Nā'ilah* were also installed in Mecca. When the Bedouin Arabs came to perform the ceremony of Ḥajj, they inquired from the people of Mecca about these idols. Thereupon the Meccans said, "We worship them so that they may bring us nearer to God and intercede with Him on our behalf."<sup>4</sup>

### Spread of Idolatry

Thus, idolatry came to be introduced in Mecca and then it quickly spread among the different tribes of Arabia. Every tribe wanted to establish some idols of its own, because the tribal feuds and racial pride did not allow them to worship idols set up by some one else. Such an attitude was quite common among the pagan Arabs, and the following verses, ascribed to 'Abd al-Dār, bear testimony to it:—

ليست بحوب أو تطيف بمأثم	ولقد أردت بأن تقام بنية
راغوا ولاذوا في جوانب قودم	فأبى الدين إذا دُعوا لعزيمة
ولأوا وأعرض بعضهم كالأبكم	يلحون أن لا يؤمروا فإذا دعوا

"I had wished that a house be raised,  
Free of iniquity and removed from sin.  
But those who, when called upon to face a crisis,  
Steel away and hide in the outskirts of Qawdam, have  
demurred and refused my request.  
They clamour and cry, and insist that no one should give  
them orders.  
And when entreated they turn away—some withdraw like  
the mute and the dumb."<sup>5</sup>

The poet had asked his people to build a house similar to the *Ka'bah*; and though it is true that they did not accede to him in this respect and hence he subsequently reproached them in these lines, yet it is obvious that there were some persons who thought of having their own *Ka'bah*, because their sense of pride did not allow them to venerate the *Ka'bah*, which was controlled by the Quraysh, the people of Mecca. When this was their attitude towards the *Ka'bah*, the most popular sanctuary of Arabia, how could they consent to worship idols and stones installed by others.

Due to various reasons<sup>7</sup> idolatry spread over a wide area in Arabia. Almost all the tribes set up some idols or stones of their own either in Mecca or at some other place outside it, so much so that nearly every household installed an idol or stone of its own and worshipped it. Whenever a member of the house intended to set out on a journey, the last thing which he did was to touch the idol to seek its benedictions and did the same on return.<sup>8</sup>

### (a) Idolatrous Oaths

People in every society, at times, have to enter into mutual agreements; but the pagan Arabs stood in particular need in this respect, because tribal hostilities were always rampant among them and hence they had often to enter into alliances and compacts of different types with one another. On such occasions they took oaths in the name of their deities and for this purpose they sometimes went to the nearest shrine. They feared that if they broke the promise made before a deity, the divine wrath would descend upon them. However, oaths in the name of different objects, such as idols, altar-stones, victims and the like, were in common usage among them and hence their influence upon the vocabulary of their poetry was but natural. Accordingly, we find some pre-Islamic verses which contain idolatrous oaths; and since they also throw some light on the different aspects of their idol-worship, they are of much importance for us.

#### Oaths by Idols

A well-known pre-Islamic poet, al-Mutalammis, addressing 'Amr b. Hind, the king of Ḥīrah, says :—

أطردتنى حذر الهجاء ولا  
واللات و الأنصاب لاتل<sup>9</sup>

(You expelled me for fear of my satire? No, by the Lāt and by the altar-stones, you will not escape.)

In the above lines the poet has sworn by the Lāt, a very famous tribal goddess. Her image was set up in Ṭā'if, and *Banū-Thaqīf* were its guardians, as the following verse of Ḍirār b. al-Khaṭṭāb also suggests :—

وفرت ثقيف إلى لاتها  
بمنقلب الخائب الخاسر<sup>10</sup>

(The people of Thaqīf, disappointed and frustrated, fled to their Lāt).

However, almost all the Quraysh and other Arabs venerated it and certain names ascribed to it were common among them such as *Zayd al-Lāt* and *Taym al-Lāt*.<sup>11</sup>

The same goddess has been referred to by the poet, 'Amr b. al-Ju'ayd in the following verse :—

لأنى تركى وصل كأس لكالى  
تبرأ من لات وكان يدينها<sup>15</sup>

“In forswearing wine I am like him who hath abjured Allāt, although he had been at one time her devotee.”<sup>15</sup>

Shaddād b. al-‘Āriḍ al-Jushamī has also mentioned it in the following lines :—

لا تنصروا اللات إن الله مهلكها  
و كيف نصركم من ليس ينتصر  
إن التى حرقت بالنار فاشتعلت  
ولم تقا تل لى أحجارها هدر<sup>16</sup>

“Come not to Allāt, for God hath doomed her to destruction; How can you stand by one which doth no triumph? Verily that which, when set on fire, resisted not the flames. Nor saved her stones, is inglorious and worthless.”<sup>16</sup>

The poet composed the above verses after *Banū Thaḳīf* had embraced Islam and the image was put to fire at the behest of the Prophet of Islam. The poet has advised them in these lines not to resume its worship.

The Holy Qur'ān has also referred to this goddess along with two other ones. It says :—

أفرأيتم اللات و العزى و مناة الثالثة الأخرى<sup>16</sup>

However, these three goddesses were the principal deities of the pagan Arabs; and swearing in their names was popular among them.

Al-A'shā has sworn by both the goddesses, 'Uzzā and Lāt, along with some other objects in the following verse :—

حلفت بالملح و الرماد و بالعزى و باللات تسلم الحلقة<sup>17</sup>

Likewise, Aws b. Ḥajar takes oath in the name of both of them in the following line :

و باللات و العزى و من دان دينها  
و بالله إن الله منهن أكبر<sup>18</sup>

“By Allāt and al-‘Uzzā and those who in them believe, And by Allah, verily He is greater than both.”<sup>18</sup>

The greatest and most popular goddess of the Qurayyah was 'Uzzā. Her image was installed in a valley of *Nakhlāt-al-Shāmīyah* and the Arabs took their names after her.<sup>20</sup>

Zayd b. 'Amr b. Nufayl, who was a Ḥanīf and was opposed to idolatry, refers to these two goddesses, *al-Lāt* and *al-'Uzzā*, as well as to some others in the following lines :

أربا واحدا أم ألف رب      أدين إذا تقسمت الأمور  
عزلت اللات والعزى جميعا      كذلك يفعل الجلد الصبور  
فلا العزى أدين ولا ابنتيها      ولا صنمى بنى عمرو أزور  
ولا هبلأ أدين وكان ربا      لنافى الدهر إذ حلمى يسير<sup>22</sup>

"Am I to worship our Lord or a thousand ?  
If there are as many as you claim,  
I renounce *al-Lāt* and *al-Uzzā* both of them  
As any strong-minded person would.  
I will not worship *al-Uzzā* and her two daughters,  
Nor will I visit the two images of the *Banū 'Amr*,  
I will not worship *Hubal* though he was our lord  
In the days when I had little sense."<sup>22</sup>

The following verse, composed either by 'Abd al-'Uzzā b. Wadi'ah or some one else, contains the oath of *Manāt* :

إنى حلفت يمين صدق برة      بمناة عند محل آل الخزرج<sup>23</sup>

"An oath, truthful and just, I swore  
By *Manāh*, at the sacred place of the *khazraj*."<sup>24</sup>

*Manāt* was one of the oldest idols adopted by the Arabs. It was set up on the sea-shore beside the mount, *Mushallal*, and was worshipped by almost all the pagan Arabs; but the tribes of *Aws* and *Khazraj* were much more devoted to it as reflected in the above-quoted verse. It is said that the people of *Aws* and *Khazraj*, on their pilgrimage to Mecca, did not shave their heads there, which was considered as the last rite of the Ḥajj; but after having performed all other rituals, they rushed to *Manāt* and shaved their heads there. They, in fact, thought that their Ḥajj would not be deemed to be complete, unless they went to *Manāt*.<sup>25</sup> Arabs were named after this idol also such as 'Abd *Manāt* and Zayd *Manāt*.

#### Oaths by other idolatrous objects

Apart from the idols, the pagan Arabs would also swear in the name of some other objects related to idolatry. For instance, they took oath by the stones upon which victims were slaughtered and which were called *Anṣūb*<sup>26</sup>, as the following verses bear testimony.

'Amr b. Jābir al-Ḥārithī says :

حلفت غطيف لآتنه سربها      و حلفت بالأنصاب أن لا يرعدوا<sup>27</sup>

"The *Ghuṭayf* vowed not to frighten their flock,  
And I vowed by the baetyls not to scare them."<sup>28</sup>

Muhalhil says :

كلا و أنصاب لنا عادية معبودة قد قطعت تقطيعاً<sup>89</sup>

This verse of Muhalhil also shows that these stones were regarded as objects of worship.

Similarly, Ṭarafah says :

فأقسمت عند النصب إني لها لك بملائفة ليست بغبط ولا خفض<sup>80</sup>

In the following verse, Qays b. al-Ḥudādiyāh al-Khuzā'ī takes the oath of the house of God as well as of the *Anṣāb* of *Ghabghab*, the altar of 'Uzzā :

تأيننا ببيت الله أول حلفة وإلا فأنصاب يسرن بغيب<sup>81</sup>

The Holy Qur'ān has also referred to these altar-stones while describing the forbidden food. It says :

وَمَا ذُبِحَ عَلَى النُّصَبِ

“and that which are sacrificed on the stones—altars”.<sup>82</sup>

In the following verse 'Āriq al-Ṭā'ī swears by the sacrifices made before certain idols :

فأقسم بالعتائر حيث فليس ومن نسك الأقيصر ملعباد<sup>83</sup>

There are some verses which contain oaths in the name of the blood of sacrifices made before the idols, as Rushayd b. Rumayd says :

حلفت بمائرات حول عوض وأنصاب تركن لدى السعير<sup>84</sup>

In this line the poet swears by the blood flowing around 'Awd', the idol of *Bakr b. Wā'il*, and also by the stones left near the *Su'ayr*, the idol of 'Anzah.

Likewise, Nābigah al-Dhubyānī swears in the following verse by the life of Him whose *Ka'bah* he touched and also by the blood which gushed forth on the altar-stones :

فلا لعمر الذي مسحت كعبته وما أريق على الأنصاب من جسد<sup>85</sup>

Similarly, 'Amr b. 'Abd al-Jinn has sworn by the blood smeared on the head of 'Uzzā and also on *Nasr*, which was the idol of *Ḥimyar* and was destroyed by *Dhū-Nuwās*. He says :

أما ودماء مائرات تخالها على قنة العزى و بالنسر عندما<sup>86</sup>

Pagan Arabs also swore by the garments of idols, as Shanfarā al-Azdī has sworn by the garments of 'Uqaysir, which was worshipped by the tribes of *Lakhm*, *Judhām*, 'Āmilah and *Ghatfān*<sup>87</sup> He says :

و إن امرأ أجار عمرا و رهطه على و أثواب الأقيصر يعنف<sup>39</sup>

Abū-Jundub al-Hudhalī says in the following verse that his beloved had sworn by the most binding of the oaths, viz. by the hair of goddess, 'Uzzā :

لقد حلفت جهدا يمينا غليظة بفرع التي أحمت فروع سقام<sup>40</sup>

(She swore a solemn oath by the hair of her who made the branches of the trees of *Suqām* to be protected and interdicted.)

The above verse also mentions *Suqām*, a portion of the valley, *Nakhlāt-al-Shāmiyah*, around her image, dedicated as the sacred territory to 'Uzzā. Abū Khirāsh al-Hudhali has referred to this in the following lines eulogising Dubayyah, the guardian of 'Uzzā, when Khālid b. al-Walīd destroyed it :

ما لدبية منذ اليوم لم أراه وسط الشروب ولم يللم ولم يطف  
أمسى سقام خلاء لا أنيس به إلا السباع ومر الريح بالعزف<sup>40</sup>

It is also mentioned that the goddess 'Uzzā was a she-devil who haunted three *Samurah* trees in the valley of *Nakhlah*.

« كانت العزى شيطانة تأتي ثلاث سمرة بيطن نخلة »<sup>41</sup>

The following verses, which were addressed by Nuḥaykat-al-Fazārī to 'Amir b. al-Ṭufayl, contain oaths by the camels walking to Minā to be Slaughtered and also by *Ghabghab*, the altar of 'Uzzā :

يا عام لو قدرت عليك رماحنا والراقصات إلى منى فالغيب  
لتقيت بالوجعاء طعنة فاتك مران أو لثويت غير محسب<sup>42</sup>

### (b) Rituals of Idolatry

It appears that some of the Arabs used to go on a pilgrimage to the sanctuaries of the idols in the same manner as they went to the *Ka'bah* and observed similar rites during such a pilgrimage. This will be evident from the verses discussed below.

### Sacrifices to Idols

The practice of sacrificing animals was quite common in almost all the shrines and it was a very important element of their religion. This has been frequently referred to in their poetry :

Zuhayr says :

فزّل عنها و وافى رأس مرقبة كمنصب العتر دمي رأسه النسك<sup>43</sup>



“He moved therefrom and reached a mountain top,  
Like a high altar sprinkled with the blood of sacrifice.”<sup>44</sup>

The poet has, in the above line, compared the hawk sitting on the top of a hill to the idol or stone whose head was besmeared with the blood of the sacrifices by the worshippers. This verse suggests that after the sacrifices had been made, the idol was smeared with blood.

The following verses of Abū Khirāsh al-Hudhalī are also noteworthy in this connection :

لقد أنكحت أسماء رأس بقيرة      من الأدم أهداها امرؤ من بني غنم  
رأى قذعا في عينها إذ يسوقها      إلى غنغب العزى فوضع في القسم<sup>45</sup>

“Asmā’ was given as a dowry the head of a little red cow  
Which a man of the *Banū Ghanm* had sacrificed.  
He saw a blemish in her eye when he led her away  
To al-‘Uzzā’s slaughter-place and divided her into goodly  
portions”<sup>46</sup>

In the above verses, while satirizing a man to whom *Asmā*, beautiful lady, was married; the poet has compared him to a victim to be sacrificed at the altar of ‘Uzzā. These verses also reveal the fact that the offerings were divided among the persons present on the occasion. They also suggest that when an animal lost its eye-sight, it was considered to be of no use other than its being sacrificed before some idols.

Likewise, the following verses of some poet bear out that the people of *Hudhayl* used to assemble around the idol, *Suwā’*, and a large number of victims were sacrificed to it :

تراهم حول قيلهم عكوفاً      كما عكفت هذيل على سواع  
يظل جنابه برهاط صرعى      عتائر من ذخائر كل راع<sup>47</sup>

“You see them swarming around their king,  
As the Hudhayl surround their *Suwā’*;  
And fill its courts with sacrifice.  
Picked from among the choicest flocks.”<sup>48</sup>

Ja‘far b. Abī Khallās says in the following verse that his dromedary was frightened by the victims slaughtered around the idol, *Su‘ayr* :

نفرت قلوصى من عتائر صرعت      حول السعير يزوره ابنا يقدم  
وجموع يذكر مهطعين جنابه      ما إن يحير إليهم بتكلم<sup>49</sup>

“My young camels were startled by the blood of sacrifice  
Offered around *Su‘ayr* whither *Yaqdum* and *Yadhkur* go  
On pilgrimage, and stand before it in fear and awe,  
Motionless and silent, awaiting its oracular voice.”<sup>50</sup>

The poet passed by the idol while the sacrifices were being made.

He then composed the above verse and referred to the event in it.

In the following verse some poet has sworn by the altar of the idol, 'Uqayṣir, and has also referred to the fact that blood was poured upon its shoulders:—

و أنصاب الأقبصر حين أضحت نسيل على مناكبها الدماء<sup>51</sup>

The following verse of Salāmah b. Jandal also deserves to be noted here:—

و العاديات أسابى الدماء بها كان أعناقها أنصاب ترجيب<sup>52</sup>

“And the galloping steeds came home with streaks of blood on their breasts, as though their necks were the stones where victims in Rajab are slain.”<sup>53</sup>

In this line the poet has compared the necks of the raiding horses to the altar-stones upon which sacrifices were made in the sacred month of *Rajab*; the altar-stones were red with the blood of the sacrifices, similarly the necks of the horses were also coloured with the blood of the enemies killed by their riders.

Khuzā'ī b. 'Abd Nuḥm, who was the guardian of the idol, *Nuḥm*, has mentioned his old practice of making sacrifices to the idol in the following verses, which he composed after having embraced Islam:—

ذهبت إلى نهم لأذبح عنده عتيرة نسك كالذي كنت أفعل

فقات لنفسي حين راجعت عقلها أهذا إله أبكم ليس يعقل<sup>54</sup>

The poet says in the above verses that he went to *Nuḥm* to slaughter the victim as he used to do before; but after having made up his mind he began to doubt the divinity of the god, who was dumb and lacked intelligence. So he rejected it and accepted Islam.

#### Practice regarding the firstling

Reference to a particular rite pertaining to sacrifice is found in the following verse, ascribed to 'Amr b. Qamī'ah:—

و إني أرى ديني يوافق دينهم إذا نسكوا أفرعها و ذبيحها

و منزلة بالحج أخرى عرفتها لها نعمة لا يستطاع بروحها<sup>55</sup>

“And that I see that my religion agrees with theirs when they bow in worship, both as to the offering of firstlings and the manner of sacrifice; and many other observance in the pilgrimage do I follow (with them) that brings its blessing, departure from which is not permitted.”<sup>56</sup>

The text of the above verses clearly reveals that the rite of sacrifice of the first-born issue of the animals was also observed in Arabia before Islam. It also shows that some religious rites were specific to certain tribes, as the poet has claimed in these verses that his religion agreed with theirs and this implies that there were some people whose religion did not always wholly agree with the poet's.

### Taking of vows

The pagan Arabs also took vows in different forms. Sometimes they vowed that if the number of their sheep reached one hundred, they would sacrifice one of them in the name of a certain deity. Accordingly they fulfilled their vows on the materialisation of their conditions. In this connection, it is interesting to note that sometimes they tried to escape from their obligations and hesitated in fulfilling their vows in the stipulated form. However, they feared that the deity might take revenge upon them, so they could not dare to disregard their vows altogether. They, therefore, sacrificed a wild deer in place of the sheep pledged by them. The following verse of Hārith b. Hillizā bears testimony to this practice:—

عنتاً باطلاً و ظالماً كما تـتـتر عن حجرة الربيع الضياء<sup>67</sup>

“False intervention! Injustice! It's just like antelopes slaughtered in the stead of folded sheep.”<sup>68</sup>

Ka'b b. Zuhayr has also referred to this in the following verse:—

فما عتر الضياء بحي كعب ولا الخمسون قصر طالبوها<sup>69</sup>

### Gifts to Idols

The practice of offering certain objects as gifts to the idols was also common. It appears that when the pagan Arabs went on pilgrimage to an idol, they took with them some gifts to offer in order to appease it or to gain its favour.

In this connection, the following verse of Shanfarā al-Azdi deserves to be noted:—

و إن امرأ أجار عمرا ورهطه على وأثواب الأقيصر! يعنف<sup>60</sup>

“By the (honoured) garment of al-Uqaysir!

One who hath come to the aid of 'Amr and his friends reproacheth me”.<sup>61</sup>

The significant point in the above verse is that the poet swore by the clothes of the idol, which shows that the idols were clothed with some kind of garment or covering.

Similarly, swords were also placed on the Idols, as it is related that Hārith b. Abī Shamir, the Ghassanid king, had presented his two swords, called *Mikhdham* and *Rasūb*, to the image of the goddess, *Manāt*.<sup>66</sup> These two swords have been referred to in the following verse of 'Alqamah b. 'Abdah:—

مظاهر سربالى حديد عليهما عقيلا سيوف : مخزم ورسوب<sup>66</sup>

“Two hauberks of steel enwrap thy body and from them hang two choicest of blades, well named ‘Keen cutter’, and ‘Sinker in’”<sup>66</sup>

It would be interesting to note that the famous sword of 'Alī, the fourth caliph, called *Dhu-al-Fiqār*, was one of these two swords. When 'Alī destroyed the idol in obedience to the command of the Prophet and brought the two swords before him, the Prophet bestowed one of them to him.<sup>66</sup>

Likewise, the following verse of Ka'b b. Mālik al-Anṣārī reveals that the Arabs of heathen days put necklaces and earrings on their idols:—

و نسي اللات والعزى و ودا و نسلها القلائد و الشنوف<sup>66</sup>

Probably the poet after having embraced Islam composed the above verse, in which he says :

“We forsook al-Lāt and al-'Uzzā and Wudd,  
We stripped off their necklaces and earrings”<sup>67</sup>

The following verse of some poet is also noteworthy at this place, for it points out to the superstitious practices relating to certain animals:—

حول الوصائل فى شريف حقة و الحاميات ظهورها و السيب<sup>68</sup>

Certain kinds of animals were dedicated to the gods and goddesses and they were called *Bahīrah Sā'ibah*, *Waṣīlah* and *Ḥāmī* according to their particular characteristics.<sup>68</sup> These animals were left free to go wherever they liked and no body inflicted any injury on them. The Holy Qur'ān has also referred to this custom in the following words:—

ما جعل الله من بحيرة ولا سائبة ولا وصيلة ولا حام<sup>70</sup>

### Circumambulation of Idols

References to the custom of circumambulation of idols are also found in heathen poetry. In this respect, the following verse of Imru'al-Qays, a famous pre-Islamic poet, is specially notable:—

فمن لنا سرب كان نعاجه عذاري دوار فى ملاء مذيل<sup>71</sup>

“A flock presented itself to us, the cows among them like Duwār virgins mantled in their long-trailing draperies.”<sup>73</sup>

This verse shows that virgin girls used to go around the idols in their loose garments.

The following verse of Al-Muthaqqib al-‘Abdī also points to the same custom :—

يطيف بنصبهم حجن صغار فقد كادت هواجبهم تشيب<sup>74</sup>

“Young lads circumambulate their baetyls, Until their hair becomes almost grey.”<sup>74</sup>

Likewise, ‘Āmir b. al-Ṭufayl has also referred to it in the following verse.—

ألا يا ليت أخوالى غنيا عليهم كلما أمسوا دوار<sup>75</sup>

(Would that my maternal uncles, the people of Ghanī, performed circumambulation, whenever they entered upon the evening.)

In the context of the above verse, it is said that one day the poet, ‘Āmir b. al-Ṭufayl, went to the people of Ghanī while they were going around their altar-stones. He saw their young girls performing the rite and was impressed by their beauty.<sup>76</sup> Thereupon he composed the above verse.

### The Shaving of Head

In connection with the pilgrimage to the shrines, shaving of the head was also a common rite, but probably different tribes observed it in different ways. It is said about the people of *Quḍā’āh*, *Lakhm* and *Judhām* that when they went on a pilgrimage to their idol, ‘*Uqaysir*, and shaved their heads, they poured forth a handful of flour upon the hair and gave it as alms to the poor who would cleanse the flour from the hair and lice and then consume it. Zuhayr b. abī-Sulmā has referred to this in the following verse :—

حلفت بأنصاب الأقيصر جاهدا وما سحقت فيه المقادم والقمل<sup>77</sup>

“I swore by the baetyls of al-Uqaysir a solemn oath, where the foreparts of the heads and the lice are shaven.”<sup>78</sup>

People of *Hawāzin* would also take this flour, which was, however, deemed to be a shameful act.<sup>79</sup> It is due to this fact that Mu‘āwiyah b. ‘Abd al-‘Uzzā al-Jarmī has reproached them in the following verses :—

المتر جرما أنجدت و أبو كم مع القمل في جفر الأقيصر شارع  
إذا قرّة جاءت يقول أصب بها سوي القمل إنني من هوازن ضارع<sup>80</sup>

'Have ye not seen that the *Jarm* have prevailed,  
While your father is squatting amid the lice in al-Uqaysir's  
vale?

And when a gift of wheat is offered he would say,  
'Give it unto me, without the lice, and be rewarded there-  
with;

For I am one of the poor men of the Hawāzin tribe'.<sup>81</sup>

Similarly, Surāqah b. Mālik has satirized them or some

others for taking that mean handful of flour. He says:—

ألم ينهكم عن شتمنا لا أبالكم جدام و لحم أعرضت و المواسم  
و كل قضاعي كان جفانه حياض برضوى و الأ نوف رواغم  
بما انتهكوا من قبضة الذل فيكم فلا المرء مستحي ولا المرء طاعم<sup>82</sup>

"Have not the Judhām and the Lakhm who show them-  
selves on (our) festivals, as well as every Quḍā'ite Present,  
with dishes as big as tanks, stand in Raḍwā, abject and  
abased; waiting for the food of shame, prevented you from  
cursing, ye bastards? The one hath no honor to feel the  
sting; the other hath no valor to give and feed."<sup>83</sup>

### Singing of Hymns

The following verse of Rabī' b. Ḍabu'al-Fazārī is specially note-  
worthy. It indicates that some kind of hymn was sung before the idols.

و إنسى و الذى نغم الأنام له حول الأ قيصر : تسبيح و تهليل!<sup>84</sup>

"By him to whom the melodies of mankind rise,  
And round al-Uqaysir men sing his praise and glory."<sup>85</sup>

It is true that the verse does not contain the words of the hymn,  
but it points out that it was probably some kind of glorification and  
praise to God and it might have also contained some reference to the  
idol before which it was sung. It is also possible that it might have  
been something like *Talbiyah*, pilgrim-cry, which was recited by the  
pilgrims to the *Ka'bah*. As we are aware, the pilgrim-cry of the people  
of *Quraysh* and *Kinānah* was as follows:—

بيك ، اللهم ابيك ، ابيك لا شريك لك ، إلا شريك هو لك ، تملكه وما ملك<sup>86</sup>

"At thy service, O God, at thy service!  
At thy service, Thou without an  
associate but the associate Thou hast.  
Thou ownest him and what he owns."<sup>87</sup>

### (c) Status of Idols

#### Idols were subordinate gods

It has already been pointed out in the beginning of the present  
chapter that the heathen Arabs believed in One Supreme God, and

hence they regarded their gods and goddesses as subordinate deities who shared with Him the divine power. They also believed that the minor deities would intercede with Him on their behalf, if He were pleased with them because of their devotion. However they never thought of them as possessing an independent power, as is clear from certain verses.

Aws b. Ḥajar says:—

وباللات والعزى و من دان دينها و بالله إن الله منهن أكبر<sup>88</sup>

In this verse, after swearing by the *Lāt*, 'Uzzā and her worshippers, the poet has also sworn by Allāh and at the same time has admitted the fact that Allāh is greater than these.

Similarly, the following verse of Dirham b. Zayd al-Awsī also represents the same view:—

إني ورب العزى السعيدة و - الله الذى دون بيته سرف<sup>89</sup>

“By the Lord of al-'Uzzā, the propitious,  
And by God betwixt whose House (and Suqām) Sarif stands.”

The poet has sworn by the Lord of 'Uzzā, which clearly shows that in his opinion 'Uzzā was not an independent goddess, but there was a Supreme God, who was also the Lord of Uzzā.

### Praying to Idols

Nevertheless, the pagan Arabs considered their idols as possessing some divine power and they believed that their pleasure and displeasure could respectively bring them prosperity and adversity. They, therefore, invoked them for help, as Ṣayfī, the custodian of the idol, *Fals*, does in the following verses.

يا رب إن مالك بن كثوم أخفرك اليوم بناب عليكوم  
و كنت قبل اليوم غير مغشوم<sup>91</sup>

(O my lord, Mālik b. Kulthūm has deprived you in regard to a strong and fully grown up dromedary, while you were never before treated so unjustly).

As regards the context of the above verse, it is related that once a dromedary belonging to a woman who was a neighbour of Mālik b. Kulthūm was driven off by the guardian of the idol, *Fals*, and was fastened within its sacred precincts. In those days, if an animal reached the precincts of the idol, the owner did not dare to take it back and it was abandoned in the name of the idol. But when Mālik b. Multhūm came to know of the fact, he went to the guardian of the idol and asked him to let out the dromedary. He refused to unfasten it.

said to him, "It belongs to your lord, *Fals*." Then Mālik himself cut the rope by his spear and drove the dromedary back with him". It was naturally considered a great sin committed against the idol, and hence in the above mentioned verse the guardian called upon the idol to avenge this blasphemy.

Similarly, when Khālid b. al-Walīd went to destroy the image of 'Uzzā in obedience to the command of the Prophet, its guardian invoked it to punish Khālid in this way:—

أعزای شدی شدة لا تكذبی علی خالد ألقى الخمار و شمري  
فإنك إلا تقتلی اليوم خالدا تبوئی بذل عاجلا و تنصری<sup>96</sup>

"O thou al-'Uzzā! Remove thy veil and tuck up thy sleeves; Summon up thy strength and deal Khālid an unmistakable blow.

For unless thou killest him this very day,  
Thou shalt be doomed to ignominy and shame"<sup>94</sup>

These verses indicate that the heathen Arabs prayed to their idols for help in time of troubles.

#### Participation of gods in war

The god of a tribe was, in fact, a sort of unifying link between its members; and no one was allowed to forsake the god of his tribe or change it for that of any other tribe at his own will. The god defended its worshippers against their enemies, for the enemies of the tribe were the enemies of the god as well<sup>95</sup>. Thus, the gods took active part in the tribal feuds and wars. The Arabs actually carried the images of their gods to the battle-field, e.g. a poet says:—

وسار بنا یغوث إلى مراد فنا جزناهم قبل الصباح<sup>96</sup>

(*Yaghūth* took us to the people of *Murād*, so we fought with them before the morning.)

This implies, however, that they had taken with them the image of their god, *Yaghūth*, to the battle-field.

The above verse also supports the tradition which says that Abū Sufyān had taken with him the images of *Lāt* and 'Uzzā in the battle of 'Uḥud to incite the infidels against the faithfuls.<sup>97</sup> We also know that when the battle ended, Abū Sufyān raised the slogan اعل هبل (Be high, Hubal!). Thereupon the Prophet commanded the believers to raise the slogan الله أعلى وأجل<sup>98</sup> (Allāh is the Sublimest and the Greatest).

A verse is ascribed to Abū Sufyān in which he has described the army of the infidels as the army of the goddess, *Lāt*. He says—

لمرک إني يوم أحمل رایة انتغلب خیل اللات خیل محمد<sup>99</sup>



Pagan Arabs also ascribed their victory and defeat to the strength and weakness of their idols respectively<sup>100</sup> and sometimes they changed them with other idols, as is evident from the following verse of 'Abīd b. al-Abras.

فتبدلوا اليعبوب بعد إلههم صنما فقروا يا جدیل وأعذبوا<sup>101</sup>

“They adopted al-ya‘būb in the place of their former god;  
Be still, therefore, O Jadīlah, and abstain from food and drink.”<sup>102</sup>

Regarding the context of this verse, it is said that when the people of *Asad* took away the idol of the people of *Jadīlah*, the latter adopted another idol called *Ya‘būb*.<sup>103</sup> Probably, when they experienced any signs of weakness in their old idol, they adopted, instead, a stronger one.

They generally started their journey from the shrine of their god 'Abd-Allāh b. al-Zibi'rā while referring to the battle of the Ditch says:—

و اذکر بلاء معاشر واشکرهم وصاروا بأجمعهم من الأنصاب  
أنصاب مكة عامدين ليشرب . في ذی غياطل جحفل جبجباب<sup>104</sup>

“And gratefully remember the gallantry of all  
Who marched from the sacred stones,  
The stones of Mecca, making for Yathrib,  
With a loud-throated mighty force.”<sup>105</sup>

The verses suggest that when the people of Mecca intended to attack Yathrib, they at first assembled around the *Anṣāb* of Mecca. Then, from there they set out on the expedition.

In the same way, on their return from their campaigns they generally went, first of all, to their gods probably to give thanks to them if they had succeeded or to pray for help if otherwise, as the following verse ascribed to Dirār b. al-Khaṭṭāb may suggest:—

و فرت ثقیف إلى لاتها بمنقلب الخائب الخاسر<sup>106</sup>

The poet says that when the people of *Thaqīf* were disappointed and frustrated, they ran away to their god, *Lāt*, to seek refuge with it and ask for help.

### Divining by Arrows

Heathen Arabs were also accustomed to consult the oracles and learn the wishes of their gods about certain actions by means of arrows which were kept in the shrines of some idols. These arrows had special symbols and generally three arrows called the commanding, the forbidding, and the waiting were used for this purpose. When

person intended to undertake some important business he went to the shrine to know whether the moment was propitious for the action or otherwise. So standing before the idol, he drew out an arrow. If it turned out to be 'the commanding', he deemed it to be an approval of the enterprise by the god; if it was 'the forbidding', he thought it otherwise; and if it was the third one, he abstained from the action for some time, or after mixing the arrows, he drew out again and again until he got a clear affirmative or negative by drawing out any one of the first two arrows.<sup>107</sup> This practice has been depicted in the following verses of Tarafah:—

فسعى الغلاق بينهم سعى خب كاذب شيمه  
أخذ الأزلام مقتسما فأتى أغواهما زلمه  
عند أنصاب لها زفر في صعيد جمه أدمه<sup>108</sup>

### Insolence to Idos

In regard to the above-noted practice, an interesting story is related about Imru'al-Qays. When he set out to avenge the murder of his father, he passed by the temple of the idol, *Dhu-al-Khalaṣah*, where the oracles were consulted. So he went in and drew the arrows before the idol. He drew them three times, but every time the arrow drawn out by him was the forbidding one. This irritated him so much that he broke the arrows and flung them upon the idol.<sup>109</sup> Then he recited:—

لو كنت يا ذا الخالص الموتورا مثلى وكان شيخك المقبورا  
لم تنه عن قتل العداة زورا<sup>110</sup>

(O *Dhu-al-Khalaṣah*, if you had suffered loss like me and your father had been buried, you would not have restrained me from killing the enemies).

The following verses of a bedouin Arab are also noteworthy in this connection:—

أتينا إلى سعد ليجمع شملنا فشتنا سعد، فلا نحن من سعد  
وهل سعد إلا صخرة بتنوفة من الأرض لا يدعى لغى ولا رشد<sup>111</sup>

“We came to Sa'd to improve our fortunes  
But Sa'd dissipated them. We have  
nothing to do with Sa'd.  
Sa'd is nothing but a rock on a bare  
height.  
It cannot put one right or send one wrong.”<sup>112</sup>

It is said that a man belonging to *Banū Milkān* took his camels to the idol, *Sa'd*, which was in the form of a huge rock, in order to seek its blessings for the camels. But when the camels looked at the idol upon which blood was smeared, they were terrified and fled. Thereupon the man was so enraged that he took up a stone and threw it upon the idol. Then he said, 'May God not bless you. You frightened my camels'. Later on, he collected the camels together and recited the above verses.<sup>113</sup>

The following verses of an unknown poet also deserve to be quoted here :—

أكلت حنيفة ربها      زمن التقحم والمجاعة  
لم يحذروا من ربهم      سوء العواقب والتباعد<sup>114</sup>

(The people of *Hanīfah* ate up their idol in the time of famine and hunger; they did not feel afraid of the illconsequences and retaliations by their idol).

People of *Hanīfah* had formed an idol out of flour, dates and oil etc. and they kept on worshipping it for some time. But once it happened that they were smitten by severe hunger, so they ate it up.<sup>115</sup> In the above verses, the same has been referred to by the poet.

A man belonging to *Banū Tamīm* has also reproached the people of *Hanīfah* for the same action in this way .—

أكلت ربها حنيفة من جو— — ع قديم بها و من إعواز<sup>116</sup>

The following verse may also be noted :—

إله يبول الثعلبان برأسه      لقد ذل من بالث عليه الثعالب<sup>117</sup>

(A god upon whose head the male-fox urinates!

One upon whom foxes urinate is surely humiliated.)

The above verse was composed by Ghāwī b. Zālim al-Sulamī or some one else,<sup>118</sup> when he saw a male-fox urinating over the idol *Suwā'*.

However, the above-quoted verses and the relevant traditions clearly show that there were some persons even among the worshippers of the idols, who did not harbour a sincere regard for their idols. It appears that they worshipped them only in order to benefit from them. Hence, when things turned out against their wishes, they felt no hesitation even in rebuking and insulting their gods.

### Respect to Idols

Nevertheless, there were persons who observed the formal sanctity of the shrines in different ways.

They regarded their idols as the sacred heritage of their noble progenitors, as the following verses of 'Abd Allāh b. al-Zibi'rā may suggest:—

و من عجب الأيام و الدهر كله      له عجب من سابقات و حادث  
لجيش أتنا ذو عرام يقوده      عبدة يدعى في الهياج ابن حارث  
لترك أصناما بمكة عكفا      مواريث موروث كريم لوارث<sup>119</sup>

“And one of the wonders of the days  
(For time is full of wonders, old and new)  
Is a strong army which came to us  
Led by 'Ubaydah, called Ibn Ḥārith in war,  
That we should abandon images venerated in Mecca,  
Passed on to his heirs by a noble ancestor.”<sup>120</sup>

On the occasions of war, the poets or the chiefs excited the religious sentiments of their tribes in the name of the idols and called them for their defence. The following verses ascribed to Ḥārith b. Hishām may serve as a good example:—

فيالوأي ذبوا عن حريمكم      و آلهة لا تركوها لذي فخر  
توارثها أبائكم و ورثتم      أواسيها و البيت ذالسقف والستر<sup>121</sup>

“Help, O Lu'ayy, protect your sanctuary and your gods;  
Give them not up to the evil man!  
Your fathers handed them down and you inherited their  
foundations,  
The temple with its roof and curtain.”<sup>122</sup>

Some of the heathen Arabs had emotional associations with their idols. As for example, it is narrated about Miqyas b. Ṣabābah that when in the battle of *al-Muṣṭaliq* his brother was killed by mistake by a muslim, he made up his mind to avenge the murder of his brother. He came to the Prophet in Medina and pretended to have accepted Islam. He stayed there for some days and one day he killed that Muslim and ran away to Mecca. While he was in his way to Mecca, he composed several verses boastfully expressing his satisfaction over the event. The following verse, which deserves to be noted here, is one of them:—

حالت به وترى و أدركت ثورتى      و كنت إلى الأوثان أول راجع<sup>123</sup>

(I took the revenge and became free from obligation and I am the first to return to idols).

A significant sign of their respect to idols was that women during their unclean periods, were not allowed to approach and touch the idols, but they stood aside, as Bal'ā' b. Qays referring to the idol *Manāf*, says :—

<sup>124</sup> و قرن قدتركت الطير منه كعمتت العوارك من مناف

(There are many rivals beside whom I left the birds as the menstruating women stand beside *manāf*.)

The poet means that he has killed several of his enemies and left their dead bodies at the place beside which vultures were waiting to eat them as the menstruating women remain standing far off from *Manāf*.

The same restriction was also applied in regard to the idol, *Isāf* as Bishr b. Abī Khāzim al-Asadī describes in the following verse :—

<sup>125</sup> عليه الطير ما يدنون منه مقامات العوارك من إساف

“Full of awe, they draw not nigh unto it,  
But stand afar off like the menstruating women before  
Isāf.”<sup>126</sup>

## 2. SUPERNATURALISM

Apart from their belief in numerous gods and goddesses, the pagan Arabs also believed in a number of supernatural beings, which were considered as possessing super-human power of bringing prosperity to mankind.<sup>127</sup> They, therefore, practised several devices to please the spirits in order to gain their favour and ward off any harm which might come from them.

### (a) The Jinn

The commonest term used by the pagan Arabs in this connection was *Jinn* which was used as a collective noun. The word basically means ‘invisible’ which indicates that they probably applied it to all the spiritual beings, though they applied other words for some particular spirits as well. About the *Jinn* a host of pre-Islamic legends and traditions are related which show that the *Jinn* had greater influence over the minds of the pagan Arabs than their idols had.<sup>128</sup> It was probably because of the fact that the *Jinn* were supposed to be omnipresent and hence capable of bringing good or evil at any time. The *Jinn* were, accordingly, nearer to them and therefore the pagan Arabs feared them more than their idols. They were always careful not to offend a *Jinn*, lest they may fall prey

retribution.<sup>130</sup> They, infact, elevated the *Jinn* to the position of the partners of God and almost worshipped them, as the following passages of the Holy Qur'an indicate :—

و جعلوا لله شركاء الجن و خلقهم

“Yet they make the Jinns equals with God though God did create the Jinns.”<sup>130</sup>

بل كانوا يعبدون الجن أكثرهم بهم مؤمنون

“But they worshipped the Jinns; most of them believed in them.”<sup>131</sup>

The same idea may be traced in the following verse, which occurs in a poem ascribed to Zayd b. 'Amr b. Nufayl, who was a *Hanīf* and did not believe in idols :—

حنانيك إن الجن كانت رجاءهم وأنت إلهي ربنا ورجائنا<sup>132</sup>

“Mercy I implore, others trust in Jinn,  
But thou, my God, art our Lord and our hope.”<sup>133</sup>

### Seeking Refuge with the Jinn

The practice of seeking refuge with the *Jinn* was common in pagan days, as the Holy Qur'an refers to it in the following verse :—

و أنه كان رجال من الإنس يعوذون برجال من الجن فزادوهم رهقاً

“True, there were persons among mankind who took shelter with persons among the Jinns, but they increased them in folly.”<sup>134</sup>

The pagan Arabs thought that if refuge with the *Jinn* was sought by any one, they protected him from all the injuries and harm. Therefore, when they happened to pass a night in a desert in the course of their journey and apprehended danger from the wild beast or some other mishap, they observed a certain practice for taking refuge with the *Jinn*. They approached a valley full of trees; and after drawing a line on the earth, they cried in a loud voice, «نعوذ بصاحب هذا الوادي» (we seek refuge with the lord of this valley.) They imagined that the chief of the *Jinn* would hear their call and take them under his protection, defending them against all danger.<sup>135</sup>

The following anonymous verses refer to the above custom :—

أعوذ من شر البلاد البعيد بسيد معظم مجيد

أصبح بأوى بلوى زرود ذي عزة وكاهل شديد<sup>136</sup>

Another poet has said :—

هيا صاحب الشجره هل أنت مانعى فإنى ضيف نازل بفنائكا  
و إنك للجان فى الأرض سيد و مثلك أوى فى الظلام الصعالك<sup>187</sup>

They, however, met with mishaps as the following verses suggest :—

قد استعدنا بعظيم الوادى من شر ما فيه من الأعداى  
فلم يجرنا من هزبر عادى<sup>188</sup>

( We sought refuge with the lord of the valley against the enemies therein, but he could not protect us from the hostile lion.)

### Tanfīr and Tanjīs

The *Jinn* were generally considered to be mischievous and hostile to human beings; and in this respect, various fantastic notions were prevalent among the pagan Arabs. According to them, the *Jinn* killed men, overpowered them by means of entering into their bodies and carried off their children.<sup>139</sup> They, therefore, employed certain fantastic devices in order to defend themselves against their hostility. For this purpose, they used certain filthy objects, such as the teeth of foxes or cats, the bones of dead bodies and the rags of menstruation; for they imagined that the *Jinn* hated these objects and hence did not approach them. They tied some of these objects around the necks of their children, so that they might be safe from the evils of the *Jinn*. Similarly, they applied some of these things to the sick persons whom they considered to have been possessed by the *Jinn*.<sup>140</sup> This was done to make the *Jinn* hate and leave the sick. This act was called by them *Tanfīr* (to scare away) and *Tanjīs* (to render filthy) and these objects were called *Nafīrāt* and *Anjās* (hateful and filthy objects).

Al-Mumazziq al-‘Abdī refers to this superstitious practice in the following verses :—

فلو كان عندى حازيان وكاهن و علق أنجاسا على المنجس  
إذا لأتتى حيث كنت منيتى يخب بها هاد إلى معرس<sup>141</sup>

A Bedouin Arab also says :—

يقولون علق يا لك الخير رمة وهل ينفع التنجيس من كان عاشقا<sup>142</sup>

In the above line the poet says that the people advised him to hang filthy objects, but he said to them, ‘How they can prove to be useful for a person who is suffering from the pangs of love and not from a disease.’

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The following verse is ascribed to a woman who employed the device of *Tanjās* for her sick child, but it effected no relief:—

نجسته لا ينفع التجيس و الموت لا تفوته النفوس<sup>145</sup>

( I applied the *Anjās* to him, but it does not help and the souls can not escape death. )

### Suspending of ankle-bones of hares

The ankle-bone of a hare was also used by the pagan Arabs as precautionary measure against the diseases and damages caused by the *Jinn*. For this purpose, they tied it with their legs and imagined that the *Jinn* would not approach them. It was said that the *Jinn* hated hares and remained aloof from them, because she-hares did not take bath after their monthly course.<sup>144</sup> Imru'al-Qays refers to this in the following verse:—

أيا هند لاتنكحى بومه عليه عقيقته أحسبا  
مرسفة بين أرساغه به عسم يبتقى أرنباً  
ليجعل في رجلاه كعبها حذار المنية أن يعطبا<sup>146</sup>

In these lines the poet advises a lady named Hind not to marry a fool whose hair is reddish, whose pastern-joints are weak and dry, and who seeks a hare so that he may put its ankle-bone in his leg in order to be saved from being destroyed by death.

The text of the above verses also implies the fact that such superstitious beliefs were cherished generally by the common people of Arabia and that they were considered to be foolish by enlightened and refined persons.

### Ta'shīr

Another fantastic practice regarding the *Jinn* was that when any one wanted to enter a town and was afraid of the diseases and the *Jinn* of the place, he halted at the entrance and brayed like a donkey ten times and then entered the town.<sup>148</sup> The pagan Arabs called this practice *Ta'shīr* (to cry ten times) and fancied that by means of this they rendered themselves immune to the evils of the place. The following verses which are ascribed to 'Urwah b. al-Ward refer to the same:—

وقالوا احب وانهق لاتضيرك خبير  
لعمرى لئن عشت من خشية الردى  
و ذلك من دين اليهود و اوع  
نهاب الحمير انسى لجزوع  
فلا و آلت تلك النفوس و لا آتى  
على روضة الأجداد و هى جميع<sup>147</sup>



( And they advised me to bray so that Khaybar might not harm me and that was wrong, only a belief of the Jews. By my life, if I cried like the braying of donkeys due to the fear of destruction, it would prove that I lacked fortitude. Those people were not saved and all of them did not return to their houses. )

It is related that once 'Urwah set out for Khaybar, the famous Jewish colony, along with some of his companions; and when the party reached near the town, they all observed *Ta'shūr* except 'Urwah who did not like to do so. Later on, it so happened that almost all of them fell ill and some of them even died, but 'Urwah remained immune.<sup>148</sup> This has been described by him in the above verses.

The following verses of some unknown poets also refer to this practice as well as to the one mentioned before:—

<sup>149</sup> ولا ينفع التعشير إن حم واقع ولا زعزع يغنى ولا كعب أرنب

( If a mishap is pre-destined, neither *Ta'shūr* would prove to be useful nor impatience nor the ankle-bone of a hare. )

<sup>150</sup> لا ينجيك من حمام واقع كعب تعلقه ولا تعشير

( Neither ankle-bone which you suspend nor *Ta'shūr* can save you from the death which is to come )

### Abodes of the Jinn

Although the *Jinn* could live anywhere they liked, their permanent abodes were imagined to be solitary places, such as barren deserts, waste lands, grave yards and valleys.<sup>151</sup> They also uttered sounds and talked together and the word used to denote their voice was 'Azīf. When the poets wanted to explain the frightfulness of any place, they described it as the haunt of the *Jinn*, because the *Jinn* were considered to be very terrible and dangerous beings.

For example al-A'shā says:—

<sup>152</sup> وبهائم تعزف جناها مناهاها آجنات سدم

He says again:—

<sup>153</sup> وبلدة مثل ظهر الترس موحشة للجن بالليل في حافات زجل

Tarafah says:—

<sup>154</sup> وركوب تعزف الجن به قبل هذا الجيل من عهد أبد

The *Jinn* were also supposed to be very strong and powerful. Hence the poets, while praising brave warriors, compared them with the *Jinn* as the following verses bear testimony:—

Nābighah al-Dhubyānē says:—

<sup>155</sup> و ضمير كالفداح مسومات عليها معشر أشباه جن

Al-A'shā comparing some women with *Sa'ālī* says :—

و شیوخ حربی بشطی اریک و نساء کانهن السعالی<sup>180</sup>

Similarly, Labīd says :—

لیبک علی النعمان شرب وقینة و مختبطات کالسعالی ارامل<sup>180</sup>

Abū 'Ā'idh al-Hudhalī, referring to a poor hunter and his wife and daughters, says :—

و یاوی الی نساء عطل و شعث مرضیع مثل السعالی<sup>181</sup>

(He takes shelter with unadorned women and dishevelled and nursing women like the *Sa'ālī*.)

Hārith b. 'Abbād also compares his mares with *Sa'ālī* in this way :—

قربا مربط النعامه منی إن بیع الکریم بالشسع عالی  
قرباها فی مقربات عجال عابسات یثن مثل السعالی<sup>182</sup>

*Ghīlān* and *Sa'ālī* were supposed to be very harmful and dangerous and hence the poet Jirān al-'Awd compares the crow and the eagle with *Sa'ālī* in the following verses :—

جرت یوم جئنا بالرکاب نرفها عقاب و شجاج من الطیر متیح  
فأما العقاب فهی منها عقوبة و أما الغراب فالغریب المطرح  
هما الغول و السعلاة حلقى منهما مکدح مابین التراقی مجرح<sup>183</sup>

Pagan Arabs, in general, feared the *Chīlān* and *Sa'ālī* because of their malignant nature, but the brave and courageous persons claimed to face them boldly and even to kill them. A number of stories to this effect are related<sup>184</sup> and Pre-Islamic poetry also contains references to this. The famous poet, Ta'abbāṭa Sharra, who was a wanderer in the desert and a hero of the Pre-Islamic Arabia, frequently refers to the *Chīlān* and *Sa'ālī* and he proudly describes the details of his association with them in the desert. A few verses from him would serve to illustrate the point. He says :—

ألا من مبلغ فتيات جهم بمالا قیت عند رجا بطان  
بأنی قد لقی الغول تلوی بمرت کالصحیفة صحصحان  
فصدت فانتحیت لها بعضب حمام غیر مؤتشب یمانی

فقد سراتها و البرک منها فخرت للیدین و للجران  
 فقالت ن قلت لها رویدا مکانک إتنی ثبت الجنان  
 ولم أنفک مضطجعا لیدیها لأنظر مصبها ماذا دهانی  
 إذا عینک فی رأس دقیق کرأس الهر مشقوق اللسان  
 و ساق مخدج ولسان کلب و ثوب من عباء أو شان<sup>186</sup>

In the above verses the poet says that he met a *Ghūl* in a plain and barren desert; and when she declined, he killed her. He further refers to the superstition prevalent in the heathen days that a *Ghūl* can be killed if she is inflicted on with only one stroke; and if she were struck for the second time she does not die, but remains alive; as another poet has also referred to this in the following verse:—

فثبت و المقدار یحرس أهله فلیت یمینی قبل ذلك مثلت<sup>186</sup>

(I repeated while Fate protects its people; I wish that my hand had been dried up before it.)

Then in the last two verses, the poet Ta'abbata Sharra proceeds to give the details of her form and says that her head was small like that of a cat; her tongue was split; she had short legs and the tongue of a dog; and was dressed in a piece of long garment or old skin.

Pre-Islamic poetry also contains references to the belief that a marriage could occur between a man and a *Si'lāh*. There were certain clans who were considered as the offspring of some *Ghūlān*, for their forefathers were supposed to have married them.<sup>187</sup> For example, the tribe of 'Amr b. Yarbū' was considered to have sprung from such a marriage, as 'Ibā' b. Arqam satirizing them says:—

یا قبح الله بنی السعلاة عمرو بن یربوع شرار النات  
 لیسوا بأبطال ولا أکیات<sup>188</sup>

“O, may God remove far from good, the children of the female goblin; 'Amr b. Yarbū'—the most wicked of men; they are neither chaste nor prudent.”<sup>189</sup>

In this connection a story<sup>190</sup> is told that once 'Amr b. Yarbū' married a *Ghūl*. She stayed with him for a long time and also gave birth to some children. The *Ghūl* used to say to 'Amr, “whenever a lightning flashes in the direction of my homeland, conceal it from me; otherwise I shall fly to the land of my people leaving your children with you”. She also pointed out towards the direction of her land

'Amr b. Yarbū', therefore, used to conceal her face with her cloak whenever such lightning flashed. But one night it so happened that the lightning flashed in the same direction at a time when 'Amr b. Yarbū' was not quite alert and hence the Ghūl fled away saying:—

أمسك بنيك عمرو إني أبق برق على أرض السعالي ألق<sup>191</sup>

(O 'Amr, take your children; I am gone, for a lightning is flashing over the land of the Sa'ālī.)

It would not be out of place to mention here that Aḥmad al-'Alī' al-Ma'arrī (973-1057 A.D.), a well-known poet of the Abbasid period has referred to the above-mentioned legend in the following verses:—

إذا لاح إيماض سترت وجوهها كاني عمرو و المطى سعالي  
وكم هم نضوان يطير مع الصبا إلى الشام لولا حبسه بعقال<sup>192</sup>

The she-camel of al-Ma'arrī was going back to the homeland, Syria; and whenever a lightning flashed in that direction, the passion of her love for home so aroused that if the poet had not restrained her with the shackle, she would have flown with the winds to Syria. Under such circumstances, the poet compares himself and his she-camel in the above verses to 'Amr b. Yarbū' and his Ghūl respectively.

### (c) Shayṭān

Legendary tales are also found in regard to *Shayṭān*<sup>193</sup> (Satan) and although it is not fully clear from them as to what idea the pagan Arabs had about the nature of *shayṭān*, it, however, appears that they probably conceived them to be a particular kind of spirit possessing supernatural powers and belonging to the class of the *Jinn*. As regards pre-Islamic poetry, we seldom meet with the expression, *shayṭān*;<sup>194</sup> but it was widely belived among the pagan Arabs that every poet had a *shayṭān* of his own who inspired him in composing the poems. Sometimes, a poet even imagined that he had seen his *shayṭān* and conversed with him. Certain words were also current as being the names of the *shayṭān* (satans) connected with particular poets.<sup>195</sup> For example, the *shayṭān* of 'Abīd was called *Habūd* and that of Imru'al-Qays was called *Lāfiz*. Similarly, some casual verses and even long poems ascribed to certain poets were supposed to be the works of their *shayṭān*. In this respect, a number of fanciful stories are related. For the purpose of illustration, I would like to give here only one of them pertaining to the famous poet, al-A'shā and his *shayṭān*, *Mishāl*.<sup>196</sup>

It is related that once al-A'shā, while he was on his way to Haḡramūt to visit Qays b. Ma'dīkarīb, lost his way; and in the

meantime it began to rain. He proceeded to a tent which appeared before him. There he found an old man who gave him shelter in the tent and inquired of him about the purpose of his journey. Then he said to al-A'shā, "I suppose you have composed a poem in praise of Qays b. Ma'dīkarib". So he asked him to recite the poem and al-A'shā, thereupon, began to recite :—

رحلت سمية غدوة أجمالها غضبي عليك فماتقول بدا لها<sup>197</sup>

But no sooner had he recited the opening line than the old man interrupted him and said, "That is sufficient. Is this poem composed by you?" Al-A'shā replied in the affirmative. He then said, "who is Sumayyah whom you have referred to in this line?" "I do not know her," Al-A'shā said, "but it is a name which was infused into my mind." Thereupon the man cried out, "O Sumayyah" and a girl of five years of age came out. Then he said to her, "Recite the poem which I have composed in praise of Qays b. Ma'dīkarib" and the girl actually recited the whole poem. Just after this, on the same occasion a similar episode took place regarding another poem of al-A'shā the opening line of which runs as follows :—

ودع هريرة إن الركب مرتحل وهل تطيق وداعا أيها الرجل<sup>198</sup>

Al-A'shā was, consequently, much ashamed and frightened. Thereupon the old man said to him, "O al-'Ashā, I am Mishal b. Athāthah and it is I who inspires you and brings the verses to your tongue. Then he showed the right path to al-A'shā and he proceeded on his journey.

It is this Mishal that al-A'shā refers to in the following verses :—

وما كنت شاحردا و لكن حسبتي إذا مسجل سدى لي القول أنطق  
شريكان في ما بيننا من هوادة صفيان جنى و إنس موفق<sup>199</sup>

This superstition seems to have been current even in the early Islamic period, because references to it are found in the verses composed by the poets of the time. As for example, Jarīr says :—

رأيت رقى الشيطان لا تستفزه وقد كان شيطاني من الجن راقيا<sup>200</sup>

Similarly Abū al-Najm says :—

إني وكل شاعر من البشر شيطانه أنسى و شيطاني ذكر<sup>201</sup>

The following anonymous verses also deserve to be noted in this connection :—

إني و إن كنت صغير السن وكان في العين نبو عنى  
فإن شيطاني أمير الجن يذهب بي في الشعر كل فن<sup>202</sup>

Zuhayr says:—

إنس إذا أمنوا جن إذا فزعوا مرزؤون بهاليل إذا جهدوا<sup>160</sup>

Ḥātim al-Ṭā'ī says:—

عليهن فتیان كجنة عبقرأ بهزون بالأیدی الوشیج المقوما<sup>161</sup>

Labīd says:—

غلب تشذر بالذحول كأنها جن البدی رواسیا أقدامها<sup>162</sup>

“thick-necked men, ranting together of blood revenge  
like very devils of El-Badi, feet planted firm.”<sup>169</sup>

### Their association with human beings

Although, by their very nature, the *Jinn* were believed to be invisible, they were capable of assuming human or animal shape. There are numerous pre-Islamic legends in which human beings meet and converse with the *Jinn*.<sup>160</sup> Similarly, there are several verses in which the poets refer to their association and conversation with them. As for example, the following verses of a poem which is ascribed to ‘Abd b. Sinān, a pre-Islamic poet, may be quoted:—

أتوا نارى فقلت : منون أتم؟ فقالوا : الجن ، قلت : عموا صباحا  
نزلت بشعب وادى الجن لما رأيت الليل قد نشر الجناحا  
أتيتهم و الأقدار حتم تلاقى المرء صباحا أو رواحا  
أتيتهم غريبا مستضيفا رأوا قتلى إذا فعلوا الجناحا  
أتونى سافرين فقلت أهلا رأيت وجوههم وسما صباحا  
نحرت لهم و قلت ألا هلموا كلوا بماطهيت لكم سماحا<sup>161</sup>

The *Jinn* were also supposed to have close relation with certain animals such as snake, gazelle, ostrich, hedge-hog, jerboa, and lizard. Pagan Arabs thought that the *Jinn* rode on these animals or entered into their bodies and sometimes they considered these animals to be actually the *Jinn*, who had assumed their shapes. They were, therefore, afraid of killing these animals and desired, instead, to treat them kindly.<sup>162</sup> In this respect a number of stories are related in which we see how a man who performs a kind service to some of these animals receives, in return, good reward from the *Jinn* and how one who injures them suffers in consequence at their hands. Such stories also contain verses recited by the *Jinn*.

We would like to give here only one story<sup>163</sup> of this type which is connected with the famous pre-Islamic poet ‘Abīd b. al-Abraṣ. It is

related that once 'Abīd went out along with a party of travellers who were going to Syria on some business. On their way, they suddenly saw a snake which seemed to be scorched with severe heat and thirst. 'Abīd alighted from his camel and poured some water on it. The snake consequently, began to glide and then moved off. Later on, the party went to Syria; and after accomplishing their business there, they set out for home. On their way back, when they approached the spot where they had seen the snake, it so happened that 'Abīd's camel ran away and he set out in search of it. In the meantime, the party proceeded on and 'Abīd was left behind. He also went astray and got lost. All of a sudden, he heard a voice saying:—

يا صاحب المضلّ مركبه دونك هذا البكر فاركه  
حتى إذا الليل تراهي غيهبه و أقبل الصبح ولاح كوكبه  
فحط عنه رحله وسقيه<sup>١٥٤</sup>

( O the man of camel, who has lost his riding animal, take this camel and ride on it; and when the darkness of night is gone and the morning comes, remove the saddle away from it and set it free. )

At the same time, 'Abīd actually saw a camel before him. He rode on it and reached his home the next morning. Then he set the camel free and recited some verses in which he thanked the speaker of the voice and wished that the person had appeared so that he could recognize him. Thereupon the same voice again recited certain verses in which it told him that he was the same snake to whom he had given water to drink. The verses are as follows:—

أنا الشجاع الذي أرويتني ظمأ  
وجدت بالماء لما عزم عليه  
في صحصح حسب عن أهله صادي  
نصف النهار على الرمضاء في الوادي  
لك الجميل علينا إنك البادي  
هذا جزاؤك منا لا يمن به  
والشر أقبح ما أوعيت من زاد<sup>١٥٥</sup>  
الحير يبقى وإن طال الزمان به

It is now clear that in the above story the snake was actually a *Jinn* and the verses were uttered by him and also that 'Abīd received good reward from him in return for the kindness which he had shown towards the snake by giving it water to drink.

Likewise, misfortune was sometimes regarded as retaliation by some of the *Jinn* for some kind of wrong done to them. Accordingly, when any body sustained a serious injury or got afflicted with some

chronic disease, the pagan Arabs considered it to be the influence of a *Jinn*. They explained that he must have offended the *Jinn* by killing a snake or some other reptile and in consequence he was suffering from such affliction. In particular, madness was usually ascribed to the *Jinn*. They imagined that the afflicted man was possessed by a *Jinn* who rendered him mad.<sup>166</sup> This idea is expressly suggested in the following verse of al-A'shā:—

و تصبح عن غب السرى و كأنما ألم بها من طائف الجن أولق<sup>167</sup>

Referring to his she-camel, the poet says in this verse that after the long night journey, she looks in the morning as if madness has befallen her because of some wandering *Jinn*.

Hence, in order to cure the diseased, they devised ways to please the offending *Jinn*; and for this purpose, they performed a peculiar ritual. They made some camels of clay and loaded them with bags full of wheat, barley and dates. Then at the time of sun-set, they took these clay-models in the direction of the west and placed them at the mouth of some cave. Next morning, if they found that the bags had fallen from the backs of the camels, they concluded that the ransom was accepted by the *Jinn* and that the diseased would now be cured; but, if they saw that the bags were not overthrown, they concluded otherwise and increased the quantity of the ransom more and more until the bags were overthrown from the backs of the camels, which was considered as a mark of satisfaction of the *Jinn*.<sup>168</sup>

The following anonymous verses refer to the above-mentioned practice:—

قالوا و قد طال عنائي و السقم  
أحمل إلى الجن جمالات و ضم  
فقد فعلت و السقام لم يرم  
فبالذي يملك برئى أعتصم<sup>169</sup>

( People said, when my trouble lasted long,  
take the camels of food to the *Jinn*,  
I did so and the disease still persists.  
I have, therefore, made recourse to One  
Who has power to cure me.)

Another poet has referred to the same in the following verses:—

فياليت أن الجن جازوا حمالتي  
و زخرج عنى ما عنانى من السقم  
و ياليتهم قالوا انطناكل ما حوت  
يمينك فى حرب غماس و فى سلم  
أعلل قلبى بالذى يزعمونه  
فياليتنى عوفيت فى ذلك الزعم<sup>170</sup>

( Would that the *Jinn* had rewarded me for my paying the ransom and removed from me the disease torturing me; and



would that they had said, 'Give us all of what your hand gathered in severe war and in peace'. I amuse my heart with what they think; would that I had got cured with that fancy.)

The following verses may also be quoted in this connection :—

ألا إن جنان النويرة أصبحوا      و هم بين غضبان على و أسف  
حملت ولم أقبل إليهم حمالة      تسكن عن قلب من السقم تالف  
ولو أنصفوا لم يطلبوا غير حقهم      و من لي من أمثالهم بالتناصف  
تغطوا بثوب الأرض عنى ولوبدوا      لأصبت منهم آمنة غير خائف<sup>171</sup>

### (b) Ghilān and Sa'ālī

The Jinn were considered to be divided into various classes and the most common of them were the *Ghilān* and the *Sa'ālī*, who are found very frequently referred to in pre-Islamic legends.<sup>172</sup> *Sa'ālī*, the plural of *Si'lāh*, were the female *shayṭāns* and *Ghilān*, whose singular is *Ghāl*, were the sorceresses from amongst the *Jinn*. But according to some scholars, both of them were identical and *Ghilān* were nothing but some of the *Sa'ālī*.<sup>173</sup> They were called *Ghilān* because they assumed different forms and destroyed human beings; the root-meaning of the word is also to destroy and to appear in different forms, as Ka'b b. Zuhayr says :—

فماتدوم على حال تكون بها      كما تلون في أثوابها الغول<sup>174</sup>

"She is not stable in her affection—even as ghouls change the hue of their garments."<sup>175</sup>

They were a very dangerous kind of evil spirits and both were considered as female beings. They enticed men through different means in the desert, led them astray and ultimately annihilated them.<sup>176</sup>

*Sa'ālī* were also conceived of as having a frowning and stern countenance and dishevelled hair. The following verses may be quoted as examples.

'Amr b. Qamī'ah says :—

أليسوا الفوارس يوم الفراء . . . ت و الخيل بالقوم مثل السعالى<sup>177</sup>

"Are not they the knights who bore themselves valiantly on the Day of the Euphrates, when the horses that carried the tribesmen were like demons."<sup>178</sup>

(d) *Malā'ikah*

From the Holy Qur'an it appears that the pagan Arabs were quite familiar with the notion of the angels (*Malā'ikah*). It also reveals that they considered them as female beings and called them daughters of Allah. The Holy Qur'an says to this effect :-

وجعلوا الملائكة الذين هم عباد الرحمن إناثا -

“And they make into females Angels who themselves serve God.”<sup>203</sup>

أفأصفاكم ربكم بالبنين واتخذ من الملائكة إناثا  
إنكم لتقولون قولا عظيما -

“Has then your Lord, (O pagans!) preferred for you sons, and taken for himself daughters among the angels? Truly ye utter a most dreadful saying.”<sup>204</sup>

It also seems that the pagan Arabs worshipped them as the Qur'an again says :-

و يوم يحشرهم جميعا ثم يقول للملائكة أهؤلاء إياكم كانوا يعبدون -

“One day He will gather them all together, and say to the angels, ‘Was it you that these men used to worship’.”<sup>205</sup>

They also imagined that God married with the daughters of the chief *Jinn*, from which the angels came into being.<sup>206</sup>

But so far as pre-Islamic poetry is concerned, it contains almost no reference to the above-noted heathen beliefs referred to in the Holy Qur'an. Not only this, but any other kind of description of the angels also very rarely appears in heathen poetry except in the verses of Umayyah b. Abī al-Ṣalt, whom we shall, later, study in some detail. At present, we would, however, like to say that even the poetry of Umayyah b. Abī al-Ṣalt, which contains numerous descriptions of the angels, speaks nothing in regard to the above-mentioned heathen ideas referred to in the Holy Qur'an.

In this respect, reference should be made to a verse ascribed to al-A'shā, which shows that the poet believed the angels to be from amongst the *Jinn*. The verse runs as follows :-

<sup>207</sup> و سخر من جن الملائك سبعة قياما لديه يعملون بلا أجر

But there is another verse ascribed to 'Alqamah b. 'Abdah, which gives a different picture. 'Alqamah says :-

<sup>208</sup> فلست بجنى ولكن ملاكا تنزل من جو السماء يصب

The absence of references to angels in heathen poetry may be explained in the way that they were probably regarded as being good-

natured, submissive and harmless beings; and hence they were neglected by the pagan Arabs, who were interested only in malignant and vicious beings such as *Ghīlān*, *Sa'ālī* and *Shayāṭīn*. They were, in fact, afraid of them and wanted to escape their displeasure by appeasing them through different means.

### 3. GRAVE-WORSHIP

There are certain traces which point to the existence of grave-worship in Arabia before Islam. In this respect, the traditions connected with graves are considerably suggestive. The Prophet of Islam commanded that the graves should be demolished and levelled with the earth, as he did in the case of the idols. He prohibited the raising up of graves and placed the elevated graves on equal footing with idols.<sup>210</sup> He also forbade the people from saying prayers facing the graves and from rendering his grave a feast-place after him. He cursed those who built mosques and kindled lamps at the graves and said, 'God is severely offended with those who turn the graves of their prophets into places of worship.'<sup>210</sup>

The above-noted traditions clearly admit of the fact that the heathen Arabs sanctified the graves and worshipped them in different ways; and this is the reason why the Prophet was so very careful about the attitude towards graves and gave such instructions in this respect. It is, however, possible and even probable that all the Arabs did not worship the graves and also that all the graves were not treated as such; but it is almost certain that there were some persons who worshipped some of the graves, otherwise the above-mentioned traditions will bear no relevance.

It is no wonder, however, that the Arabs worshipped the graves for grave-worship is an outcome of ancestor-worship and it existed in almost all the primitive peoples in one way or the other.<sup>212</sup> It is, in fact, some thing natural with man to love his forefathers and this gradually leads him to venerate their graves after their death and ultimately to worship them in different ways. People conceived that as their departed heroes possessed commanding power in this world, similarly they wielded great influence in the world hereafter and they could still help or injure them by means of their spiritual power; and hence they wanted to benefit from them by showing regard for them in various ways.<sup>213</sup>

The bulk of pre-Islamic anecdotes related by the traditionists contains clear references to various practices performed at the graves. It may be gathered from them that the pagan Arabs went on pilgrimages to certain graves where they pitched tents, made feasts, shaved heads

frightened animals and besmeared the graves with their blood just as they used to do in the case of their idols. They drank beside the graves and poured a little wine on it as if it was a share for the buried one. They also entreated the dead to remove their troubles and defend them against their enemies.<sup>214</sup>

### Slaughtering at graves

Pre-Islamic poetry occasionally refers to the custom of slaughtering animals at certain graves. In this connection, the grave of Rabi'ah b. Mukaddam is specially notable. He was a generous person and a great warrior and belonged to the tribe of Banū Firās b. Ghanm, who were considered the most powerful and courageous men in Arabia.<sup>215</sup> After the death of Rabi'ah, the practice of slaughtering was performed at his grave. Ḥafṣ b. al-Akhyaf al-Kinānī refers to the same in the following verses :—

لا يبعدن ربيعة بن مكرم      وسقى الغواذى قبره بذنوب  
نفرت قلاوصى من حجارة حرة      بنيت على طلق اليدىن وهوب  
لا تنفرى يا ناق منه فإنه      شريب خمر مسعر لحروب  
لولا السفار و طول قفر مهمه      لتركها تحبو على العرقوب<sup>216</sup>

(May Rabi'ah b. Mukaddam be not far away and may the morning clouds refresh his grave with heavy rains; My dromedary was frightened by the grave built over a person who was liberal and bountiful. O She-camel, do not fear him, for he was a drinker of wine and a wager of wars. If I did not have along journey to face and barren desert to cover, I would have slaughtered her at his grave.)

The text of the above verses shows that when the pagan Arabs passed by the grave of a well-known generous person, they slaughtered their camels as a mark of respect for him. Accordingly, the slaughtering of animals at graves was prohibited in Islam by the tradition, 'No slaughtering at graves in Islam.'

« لا عقر فى الإسلام »<sup>217</sup>

Nevertheless, we meet with occasional references to this custom even in the early Islamic poetry. In this respect, the following verses, which occur in a long elegy composed by Ziyād al-A'jam (d. 100 A. H.) on the death of Mughīrah b. al-Muhallab deserve to be noted :—

إن السماحة و المروعة ضمنا      قبرا بمر و على الطريق الواضح  
فإذا مررت بقبره فاعقره      كوم الهجان و كل طرف سابح  
وانضح جوانب قبره بد مائها      فلقد يكون أخوا دم و ذبائح<sup>218</sup>

(Generosity and manliness were laid into the grave beside the prominent road in *Marw*. When you pass by his grave, slaughter large-humped camels and noble horses over it, and also sprinkle the blood on the sides of his grave, because he was a man of blood and victims i. e. he slaughtered animals for the poor and the guest, when he was alive.)

From the above verses it may not be inferred that the custom of slaughtering was actually performed over the grave of Mughīrah b. al-Muhallab, but the fact is that the poet, in order to show his respect for the deceased, has referred to the practice which was performed in pre-Islamic days on such occasions over the graves of generous persons. It is, accordingly, interesting to note that when the poet recited the verses to Qabiṣah b. al-Muhallab, he said to the poet, "Did you slaughter, O Abā Umāmah?" He replied, "I was on an ignoble horse."<sup>219</sup>

### Custom regarding Baliyah

It is said that when a great person died, his she-camel was tied beside his grave. Her neck was turned behind and she was left without food and water till she died.<sup>220</sup> She was called *Baliyah*. Labid compares a poor woman with *Baliyah* in the following verse :—

تأوى إلى الأطناب كل رذية مثل البلية قالص أهدامها<sup>221</sup>

"To the shelter of my tent-ropes comes every forwearyed woman  
Starved as a tomb-tethered camel, her garments tattered  
and shrunk."<sup>222</sup>

Similarly, Abū Zubayd al-Ṭā'ī also says :—

كالبلايا رؤوسها في الولايا مانحات السموم حر الحدود<sup>223</sup>

In this regard, they believed that the man at whose grave the *Baliyah* was tied would ride upon it on the Day of Resurrection and others would have to go on foot.<sup>224</sup> Juraybah b. al-Ashyam al-Faq'asī advises his son in the following verses to place the *Baliyah* beside his grave after his death :

يا سعد إما أهلكن فإننى أو صيك إن أخا الوصاة الأقرب  
لا أعرفن أباك يحشر خلفكم تعباً يخر على اليدين و ينكب  
واحمل أباك على بعير صالح وتق الخطيئة إنه هو أصوب  
ولعل لي مما جمعت مطية في الحشر أركبها إذا قيل أركبوا<sup>225</sup>

(O S'ad, if I die, I advise you—the man advising you is one who is nearest to you. I do not like to think that your father should be raised up exhausted, falling down on his

hands and distressed; so make your father ride on a noble camel and guard yourself against the sin; that is the best. I hope that I shall find a riding beast out of what I have gathered, upon which I will ride on the day of resurrection, when people will be asked to ride.)

Likewise, 'Uwaymir al-Nabhānī says :—

أبْنِي لَا تَنْسَ الْبَالِيَةَ إِنَّهَا لِأَبِيكَ يَوْمَ نَشُورِهِ مَرْكُوبٌ<sup>226</sup>

(O my son, do not forget the *Baliyah*; she will certainly be ridden by your father on the day of resurrection.)

The following verses of 'Amr b. Zayd al-Kalbī also bear out the same idea :—

أَبْنِي زَوِّدْنِي إِذَا فَارَقْتَنِي فِي الْقَبْرِ رَاحِلَةً بِرَحْلِ فَاتِرٍ  
لَلْبَعَثِ أَرْكَبُهَا إِذَا قِيلَ أَطْعَمُوا مَسْتَوْسِقِينَ مَعَ لِحْشِ الْحَاشِرِ<sup>227</sup>

(O my son, provide me, when you leave me in the grave, with a riding beast with a comfortable saddle; I shall ride it on the day of resurrection when there will be a proclamation, "Proceed on carefully to be gathered in obedience to One Who wills to collect you together".)

Sometimes references to this custom are also found in early Islamic poetry. Ṭirimmāh (d. 100 A.H.) says :—

مَنَازِلَ لَا تَرَى الْأَنْصَابَ فِيهَا وَلَا حَفْرَ الْمَبَلِيِّ لِلْمَنُونِ<sup>228</sup>

(These are the places where you will see neither the altars nor the graves where the *Baliyah* was placed.)

### Conception of 'Hāmah'

The conception of *Hāmah* which is related with the dead and their graves, may also be mentioned at this place. The pagan Arabs believed that the souls of the dead persons lived about their graves in the form of owls, which they called *Hām* the plural of *Hāmah* and also *Aṣḍā'* the plural of *Sadā'*.<sup>229</sup> They considered that the soul of a man was a bird, and after he died or was slain, it remained bewildered and flew about his grave. They also imagined that the bird, *Hāmah*, lived with the son of the dead person and his other relations left behind him, so that it might see their condition and report it to him.<sup>230</sup> According to other traditions, it was the blood or some other ingredients of the brain of the dead person that got collected together and turned into the form of *Hāmah* (owl).<sup>231</sup>

References to the above notion are frequently found in pre-Islamic poetry. Let us quote here a few of them as examples.

Abū Dāwūd al-Iyādī says :—

<sup>283</sup> سَلَطَ الْمَوْتُ وَالْمَنُونُ عَلَيْهِمْ فَلَهُمْ فِي صَدَى الْمَقَابِرِ هَامٌ  
(Death overcame them and they have *Hām* (owls) in the graves.)

A man of Banū Asad says :—

<sup>283</sup> أَقِيمُ عَلَى قَبْرِي كَمَا لَسْتُ بِأَرْحَا طَوَالَ اللَّيَالِي أَوْ يَجِيبُ صَدَاكُمَا  
(I shall constantly stay at your graves during the long nights and I shall not leave the place until your owls respond to me.)

'Abīd b. al-Abras also says :—

فِي كُلِّ وَادٍ بَيْنَ يَثْرِبَ——رَبِّ الْقُصُورِ إِلَى الْيَمَامَةِ  
<sup>284</sup> تَطْرِبُ عَانُ أَوْ صِيَا . . . . حِمْرٌ مَحْرَقٌ وَزَقَاءُ هَامَةٍ

(In every valley between Yathrib and al-Yamāmah there is the moaning of a captive or the screaming of a burnt person or the crying out of an owl.)

The poet means that some persons were captured and were moaning; some were burnt and were wailing; and some were killed who having turned into the forms of owls were crying out.

Labīd also says :—

<sup>285</sup> فَلَيْسَ النَّاسُ بَعْدَكَ فِي نَقِيرٍ وَلَيْسُوا غَيْرَ أَصْدَاءِ وَهَامٍ

Some traditions say that only the soul of a man who after being slain remains unavenged is transformed into a *Hāmah* and that this bird continuously cries out, 'give me to drink' seeking vengeance for the murder of its master; and when vengeance has been taken, it flies away.<sup>286</sup> In this connection, it should be borne in mind that in the opinion of the pagan Arabs, blood could not be expiated except by blood. Hence the soul of a murdered man was naturally supposed to be thirsty for the blood of the murderer; and perhaps due to the same notion, they smeared the graves with the blood of the sacrifices made upon them and probably because of this they also called the bird *Sadā*, which literally means 'severe thirst'.

This notion has also been referred to in pre-Islamic poetry. For example, Dhu-al-Iṣba' al-'Adwānī says :—

<sup>287</sup> يَا عَمْرُو إِنْ لَانَدَعُ شَتْمِي وَمَنْقَصْتِي أَضْرِبُكَ حَيْثُ تَقُولُ الْهَامَةُ اسْقُونِي

(O 'Amr, if you do not stop vilifying me and humiliating me, I shall strike you so as the *Hāmah* will say, 'give me to drink'.)

The poet means, 'I shall kill you and then no body will be able to avenge you, hence your *Hāmah* will remain crying out for a drink.'

'Urwah b. al-Ward also says :—

أحاديث تبقى والفتى غير خالد      إذا هو أمسى هامة تحت صير  
تجاوب أحجار الكناس و تشتكى      إلى كل معروف تراه و منكر<sup>239</sup>

(Tales remain and the youth does not live for ever, when he becomes *Hāmah* under the grave; it converses with the stones of the dens and complains to every one it sees, whether he is familiar to it or unfamiliar.)

The text of the above verses also indicates that the *Hāmah* complains to every one whom it sees, which probably means that it requests him to avenge the murder of its master.

A poet exhorts his son to avenge him, if he is murdered, in this way :—

ولا تزقون لي هامة فوق مرقب      فإن زقاء الهام للمرء عائب  
تنادى ألا اسقوني و كل صدى به      و تلك التي تبيض منها الذوائب<sup>239</sup>

(Do not let my *Hāmah* cry out on a hill, for the crying out of *Hāmah* is a thing degrading for the man; it will cry out, 'Give me to drink' while a severe thirst will be torturing him; and that is a difficult task which turns the locks white.)

Al-Mughallis al-Faq'asī also refers to the same in the following verses :—

وإن أخاكم قد علمت مكانه      بسفح قبا تسفى عليه الأعاصر  
له هامة تدعو إذا الليل جنها      بنى عامر هل للهلالى نائر<sup>240</sup>

(I recognized the place of your brother at the foot of the mount, *Qubā*, upon which the furious winds throw dust; he has a *Hāmah*, which cries out when the night is dark, "O the sons of 'Āmir, is there a person who might avenge al-Hilālī?")

References to this are also found in the poetry of the early Islamic period, as Tawbah b. al-Ḥumayyir says :—

ولو أن ليلى الأخيلىة سلمت      على و دونى جندل و صفائح  
لسلمت تسليم البشاشة أو زقا      إليها صدى من جانب القبر صائح<sup>241</sup>

"Ah, if but Laila once would send me a greeting down of grace, though between us lay the dust and the flags of stone, My greeting of joy should spring in answer, or there should cry toward her an owl, ill bird that shrieks in the gloom of graves."<sup>242</sup>



## CHAPTER II

### HANIFISM

#### The Hanifs in Arabia

Among the heathen Arabs of pre-Islamic times, there were some who had a positive aversion to idolatry and polytheism. They never participated in idolatrous practices and polytheistic rites which were quite popular in their days; rather some of them openly condemned idolatry and heathen practices and preached abstinence from them. According to some traditionists, many religious thinkers and philosophers of pre-Islamic Arabia did not subscribe to the heresies introduced into the old religious systems by 'Amr b. Luḥayy, who is supposed to be the founder of the cult of idolatry in Arabia; on the other hand, they continued to adhere strictly to the remnants of the precepts of Abraham.<sup>1</sup> They were neither Jews nor Christians; they were called *Hanīfs*, because *Hanīf* was a surname of Abraham and they claimed to be the true followers of the religion of Abraham, which was based on pure monotheism.

The word *Hanīf*<sup>2</sup> in its religious connotation did exist before Islam as appears from certain pre-Islamic verses.

Jirān al-'Awd says :—

وَأَدْرِكُنْ أَعْجَازًا مِنَ اللَّيْلِ بَعْدَ مَا  
أَقَامَ الصَّلَاةَ الْعَابِدِ الْمُتَحَنِّفِ<sup>3</sup>

The following verse of Abū Dhu'ayb al-Hudhalī also bears testimony to the same fact :—

أَقَامَتْ بِهِ كَمَقَامِ الْحَنِيفِ—فِ شَهْرِ جَمَادِي وَ شَهْرِ صَفَرِ<sup>4</sup>

In the same connection the following verse of Umayyah b. Abi-al-Salt may also be quoted :—

كُلِّ دِينٍ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ عِنْدَ . . . اللَّهِ إِلَّا دِينَ الْحَنِيفَةِ زُورِ<sup>5</sup>

Similarly, the following verse, ascribed to 'Adī b. Ḥātim, may be noted :—

وَلَكِنَّا خَلَقْنَا إِذْ خَلَقْنَا حَنِيفًا دِينًا عَنْ كُلِّ دِينِ<sup>6</sup>

Moreover, the word *Hanīf* occurs in the Holy Qur'ān in several passages and nearly on all occasions it has been used as an antonym to the word *Mushrik*, which means polytheist. Here are a few verses from the Holy Qur'ān as well.

فاتبعوا ملة إبراهيم حنيفاً وما كان من المشركين<sup>9</sup>  
 ولكن كان حنيفاً مسلماً وما كان من المشركين<sup>9</sup>  
 و أن أقم وجهك للدين حنيفاً ولا تكونن من المشركين<sup>9</sup>  
 حنفاء لله غير مشركين به<sup>10</sup>

The above facts provide sufficient grounds for the belief that the word in question was in use before Islam and was applied to persons of a certain character, who were opposed to idolatry and polytheism and were inclined to pure monotheism.

We must, however, bear in mind that these Ḥanīfs did not constitute an organised body like the Jews and the Christians. They were only isolated individuals belonging to different tribes.<sup>11</sup>

Although some of these Ḥanīfs ultimately embraced Christianity, they were, in fact, only seekers of pure Ḥanīfism i. e. the religion of Abraham. Some of them undertook long journeys to different countries in search of the pure creed, as we shall see subsequently.

### **Ḥanīfite Poetry**

Probably some of the Ḥanīfs possessed a real capacity for versification and accordingly a considerable number of verses is ascribed to them. These verses largely, if not wholly, bear clear evidence of religious feelings and hence they may justly be regarded as religious poetry. We would discuss this poetry in greater detail in order to see how far it reflects the religious character; but before doing so, it would be useful if we study those verses which though ascribed to heathen poets contain religious ideas opposed to idolatry and polytheism and resembling those of Ḥanīfism. Such verses are found either scattered in the form of fragments or concealed in the midst of long poems.

### **1. MONOTHEISM**

#### **The word 'Allah'**

The word which the heathen Arabs used, in general, to signify the Supreme Being was 'Allah'; and the same word was later adopted by Islam also for almost an identical connotation. The word appears quite frequently in the verses of pre-Islamic poets which indicates that it was quite popular even before the emergence of Islam;<sup>12</sup> and in view of the facts enunciated in the preceding pages,<sup>13</sup> there is no reason to doubt that even before Islam the word conveyed almost the same sense as it does in Islam today. In the succeeding lines we shall see, in detail, the significance which this word carried in pre-Islamic Arabic poetry composed by heathen poets.

**Oaths by 'Allah'**

Heathen poetry contains a host of verses in which solemn oaths have been taken by 'Allah'; and, in fact, it is for this purpose that the word has been mostly used therein. The necessity and importance of oaths in pre-Islamic pagan society has already been pointed out in the first chapter under 'Idolatrous Oaths'. Here I would only like to study the nature of the oaths by Allah, for it would help us in appraising the monotheistic tendencies of heathen Arabs; and although such verses are quite numerous, I shall quote only a few composed by renowned poets.

Imru'al-Qays says on different occasions :—

فقلت يمين الله مالک حيلة      وما إن أرى عنك الغواية تنجلي<sup>14</sup>  
 فقلت يمين الله أبرح قاعدا      ولو قطعوا رأسي لديك وأوصالي<sup>15</sup>  
 حلفت لها بالله حلقة فاجر      لنا وما إن من حديث ولا صالي<sup>16</sup>  
 والله لا يذهب شيخي باطلا      حتى أير مالكا و كاهلا<sup>17</sup>

Similarly, Zuhayr says in different poems :—

تالله قد علمت قيس إذا قذفت      ريح الشتاء بيوت الحى بالعنن<sup>18</sup>  
 فوالله إنا والأحاليف هؤلاء      لفي حقة أظفارها لم تقلم<sup>19</sup>  
 تعلمأها لعمر الله ذا قسما      فاقصد بذرعك وانظر أين تسلك<sup>20</sup>

The following verses of Dhu-al-Iṣba' al-'Adwānī may also be noted :—

والله لو كرهت كفى مصاحبتي      لقلت إذ كرهت قربي لها بيني<sup>21</sup>

From the above verses it would be evident that for the purpose of taking oaths there were some combinations of words, which were current in pre-Islamic pagan society, such as 'By Allah', 'By the life of Allah' and 'Oath of Allah'; and the poets used them in their verses only to reinforce and emphasize their statements.

There are, however, certain verses which indicate that on some occasions the oath by Allah was taken with a real intention of making Him a witness and a guardian of their mutual pacts; for they believed that Allah, Who is present everywhere and sees every thing, would punish one who flouted the agreement confirmed by them with His oath. As for example, the following verses of Nābighah al-Dhubaynī may be quoted :—

فلما وقاها الله ضربة فأسه      وللبير عين لا تمنص ناظره

فقال تعالى نجعل الله بيننا      على مالنا أو تنجزى لي آخره  
فقلت يمين الله أفعل إننى      رأيتك مسحورا يمينك فاجره<sup>25</sup>

### Use of 'Allah' for invocation

The other field in which the word, Allah, has been frequently used by the heathen poets is that of invocation; and this seems to be the only word used in pre-Islamic Arabic poetry for this purpose. As for oaths, the names of other idols and deities are also found to have been used, as has already been observed in the first chapter; but in the field of invocation these idols and deities do not seem to exist. Here are a few examples.

Imru'al-Qays says:—

ألا قبح الله البراجم كلها      و جدع يربوعا و عفر دارما<sup>26</sup>  
فقلت سبأك الله إنك فاضحى      ألت ترى السمار والناس أحوالى<sup>26</sup>

'Urwah b. al-Ward says:—

لحى الله صلوكا إذا جن ليله      مصافى المشاش ألفا كل مجزر<sup>26</sup>  
جزى الله خيرا كلما ذكر اسمه      أبا مالك ان ذلك الحى أصدوا<sup>26</sup>

Al-Muraqqish al-Akbar says:—

لا يبعد الله التلبب وال... . غارات إذ قال الخميس نعم<sup>27</sup>

Nābighah al-Dhubyanī says:—

جزى الله عبسا والجزاء بكفه      جزاء الكلاب العاديات وقد فعل<sup>28</sup>

Al-A'shā says:—

عليه صلوة الله ما هبت الصبا      وما ناح طير فوق فخن وغردا<sup>29</sup>

Ward al-Ja'dī says:—

خليلى عوجا بارك الله فيكما      وإن لم تكن هند لأرضكما قصدا<sup>30</sup>

Burj b. Mushir al-Tā'ī says:—

فسائل هداك الله أى بنى أب      من الناس يسعى سعينا ويقارض<sup>31</sup>

Hātim al-Tā'ī says:—

سقى الله رب الناس سحبا وديمة      جنوب السراة من مآب إلى زعر<sup>32</sup>

It seems that, in order to wish good luck and otherwise, there were some definite terms, which were used by the poets generally in

utter disregard of their literal meaning. At the same time, there also appear some verses in which the poets have used the word, Allah, for actually praying to Him for the achievement of some purpose, as for example, Nābighah al-Dhubyānī invokes Allah to grant long life to Nu'mān, the king of Ḥīrah :—

و نحن لديه نسأل الله خلده يرد لنا ملكا والأرض عامرا<sup>88</sup>

### Allah is the Greatest Being

Now let us see as to what powers and attributes the pagan Arabs ascribed to Allah and how far their ideas about Him are reflected in their poetry. In this connection our attention is, at first, drawn toward the verses which express their belief in Allah as the Greatest Being.

Nābighah al-Dhubyānī says :—

حلفت فلم أترك لنفسك ريبة وليس وراء الله للمرء مذهب<sup>84</sup>

“Now (lest thou cherish in thy mind a doubt)  
Invoking over last refuge, God, I swear.”<sup>85</sup>

In this line Nābighah invites the attention of his patron and says, “I took an oath, so I left no room for you to doubt; and there is no recourse for man beyond Allah.” The poet wishes to emphasise that since he has sworn by Allah, his patron should rely upon him; because after an oath by Allah, Who is the greatest of all, no other course can be adopted in this respect.

At this place the following verses of Labīd also deserve to be quoted, for the poet has actually used a word in the superlative form qualifying Allah, which means ‘the greatest’.

واكذب النفس إذا حدثها إن صدق النفس يزرى بالأمل  
غير أن لا تكذبها في التقى واخزها بالبر لله الأجل<sup>86</sup>

In the following verse, Aws b. Ḥajar, after swearing by some idols and their worshippers, also swears by Allah and at the same time admits that Allah is the greatest of all of them :—

و باللات والعزى و من دان دينها و بالله إن الله منهم أكبر<sup>87</sup>

### Allah is One

The following are some of the very important religious verses ascribed to Labīd :—

فوا عجباً كيف يعصى الإله أم كيف يججده الجاحد

و في كلّ شئ له آية تدلّ على أنه واحد  
و لله في كلّ تحريكة و تسكينة أبدا شاهد<sup>99</sup>

In these lines the poet expresses his profound astonishment while saying, "How can Allah be disobeyed or how can one deny Him, when every thing bears testimony that He is One, and in every movement and every pause there is proof of Him?"

### People are the slaves of Allah

Even before Islam, there were persons who bore names which literally mean "slaves of Allah". This would shed some light on their views about their relationship with Allah. The same expression has also been used in some of the verses; as for example, 'Abd Yaghūth addresses people as 'the slaves of Allah' in the following verse:—

أحقا عباد الله أن لست سامعا نشيد الرعاء المعزين المتاليا<sup>99</sup>

Likewise, al-A'shā, while swearing by Allah, acknowledges himself to be His slave in the following line:—

فأقسم بالله الذي أنا عبده لتصطفقن يوما عليك المآتم<sup>99</sup>

### Allah is eternal and immortal

The pagan Arabs believed that Allah was eternal and immortal and here are some verses which clearly bear out this fact.

Labīd says:—

ألا كل شئ ما خلا الله باطل وكلّ نعيم لاحالة زائل<sup>100</sup>

(Every thing except Allah is faulty and worthless and every fortune must necessarily decline and perish.)

Similarly, 'Abīd b. al-Abras after describing several things in the preceding verses says in the following verse that this and that and every thing shall perish except Allah, Who is worshipped:—

و ليفين هذا و ذاك كلاهما إلا الإله و وجهه المعبودا<sup>100</sup>

In this connection the following line of al-A'shā is also noteworthy:—

فلو كان شئ خالدا غير ربنا لكان لها من سائر الناس واليا<sup>100</sup>

The poet, while mentioning some great personalities of the past, refers to Solomon and his exalted position and then he says in the above-quoted line that if any thing, besides our Lord, could attain eternity, Solomon would have deserved it most of all. The verse implies that nothing is immortal except God.

**Allah is Omniscient**

There are several verses which speak of the belief that Allah alone knows every thing whether open or hidden. In this respect the following verse, which occurs in the celebrated poem of Zuhayr, is quite clear :

فلا تكتمن الله ما في صدوركم ليخفى و مهما يكتم الله يعلم<sup>45</sup>

“Do not conceal from Allah whatever is in your breasts hoping it may be hidden. Allah knows whatever is concealed.”<sup>45</sup>

Similarly al-A'shā says :—

و جارة جنب البيت لا تنع سترها فانك لا تحفى على الله خافيا<sup>46</sup>

(Do not disclose the secret of your neighbours, living beside your house; for you cannot keep any thing concealed from Allah).

The following verse of Ḥārith b. Ḥillizah also deals with the same subject :—

و فعلنا بهم كما علم الله و ما إن للخائنين دماء<sup>47</sup>

“and we dealt with them as Allah alone knows—their doom being sealed, their blood unavenged streamed.”<sup>48</sup>

The heathen poets have expressed this belief in different ways. Sometimes, they have referred to Allah as their witness against a blame laid upon them. For example, Ḥārith b. ‘Abbād says in the following verse that Allah knew that he was not among the guilty persons, but he had to bear the brunt :—

لم أكن من جناتها علم الله و إني بجرها اليوم صالى<sup>49</sup>

Likewise, Ḥātim al-Ṭā’i says :—

الله يعلم إني ذو محافظة ما لم يخنى خائلي يبتغى بدلا<sup>50</sup>

(Allah knows that I preserve the bond of friendship so long as my friend does not betray me seeking my substitute.)

The following verse of Dhu-al-Iṣba‘ al-‘Adwānī may also be quoted here as an example :—

الله يعلمنى و الله يعلمكم و الله يجزيكم عنى و يجزىنى<sup>51</sup>

There are verses which deny full knowledge to any one except Allah. Ḥātim al-Ṭā’i has sworn in the following line by the One except Whom no-one knows the secret :

أما والذي لا يعلم السر غيره و يحيى العظام البيض وهى رميم<sup>52</sup>

Labid says in the following line that even the soothsayers, who were supposed to possess knowledge of future events by means of various devices, certainly did not know what Allah was likely to do :

لعمرك ماتدرى الطوارق بالحصى ولا زاجرات الطير ما الله صانع<sup>65</sup>

There is another verse of Labid in which he has referred to a book of Allah in this connection. He says ;—

كل شئ أحصى كتابا وعلما ولديه تجلت الأسرار<sup>66</sup>

“All that is in His Book of knowledge is reckoned, and before Him revealed lies all that is hidden.”<sup>66</sup>.

### Allah is the Creator

A number of verses reveal that the pagan Arabs believed in Allah as the Creator of the entire universe. In the following verse, ‘Urwah b. al-Ward calls the earth the land of Allah :—

فسر في بلاد الله والتمس الغنى تعش ذابصار أو تموت فتعنرا<sup>66</sup>

Al-A’shā has expressed this idea in greater detail :—

والأرض حمالة لما حمل . . . الله وما إن ترد ما فعلا  
يوما تراها كشبه أردية . . . الخمس و يوما أديمها نغلا  
أنشى لها الخف والبرائن و . . . الحافر شتى و الأعصم الوعلا<sup>67</sup>

The poet says that the earth shall have to bear whatever Allah has burdened it with and that it cannot resist what Allah does. Then having mentioned some animals, he says that Allah had created them on the earth.

Likewise, in the following lines Imru’al-Qays ascribes the creation of clouds to the Merciful and also calls Him the Lord of creation :—

تلك السحاب إذا الرحمن أنشأها روى بها من محول الأرض أيباسا  
تلك الموازين و الرحمن أرسلها رب البرية بين الناس مقياسا<sup>68</sup>

In this context the following lines of Labid are of great significance. While praising Allah, he has mentioned several things—heavens, earth, water and fire—as having been created by Him and bearing testimony to Him.

لله نافلة الأجل الأفضل وله العلي و أثيث كل مؤئل



سوى فأغلق دون غرة عرشه سبعا طباقا فوق فرع المنقل  
و الأرض تحتهم مهادا راسيا ثبتت خوالقها بصرم الجندل  
و الماء و النيران من آياته فيهن موعظة لمن لم يجهل<sup>59</sup>

Since Allah is the Creator, it is quite natural for every thing to return to Him as it came out from Him. This idea has been expressed by Labīd in the following lines :—

إنما يحفظ التقى الأبرار و إلى الله يستقر القرار  
و إلى الله ترجعون وعند الله ورد الأمور و الإصدار<sup>60</sup>

“Yea, the righteous shall keep the way of the righteous, and to God turn the steps of all that abideth; And to God ye return, ye too; with him only rest the issues of things and all that they gather.”<sup>61</sup>

### Allah is the Giver of all virtues

Some verses point out that it is Allah, Who moulds the character of man. He makes one either brave and generous or coward and miser. Labīd, in his celebrated Mu‘allaqah, after displaying his pride in certain good qualities of his people, advises his opponent to remain contented and not to try to wrangle with them; because One Who knows well has distributed the qualities equitably among the people, i. e. Allah grants every one what he deserves. The relevant line runs as follows :—

فائق بما قسم المليك فإنما قسم الخلائق بيننا علامها<sup>62</sup>

“So be satisfied with what the Sovereign has allotted; He has divided the qualities among us, knowing them well.”<sup>63</sup>

The following verses of al-A‘shā may also be mentioned here :—

توم إياسا إن ربي أبي له يد الدهر إلا عزة و تكرما  
نماه الإله فوق كل قبيلة أبي فأبى يابى الدنيا أينما  
ولو أن عز الناس في رأس صخرة مملمة تعى الأرح المخدمما  
لأعطاك رب الناس مفتاح بابها ولولم يكن باب لأعطاك سلما<sup>64</sup>

In these verses the poet has sung of the merits of Iyās b. Qabīshah but while praising his dignity, nobility and superiority, he has traced the source of all these qualities to the grace of Allah.

Nābighah al-Dhubyanī while praising Nu'mān, the king of Ḥīrah, has expressed himself similarly in the following verse :—

ألم تر أن الله أعطاك سورة تری کل ماک دونها يتذبذب<sup>66</sup>

“Seest thou not God hath given thee eminence  
Before which monarchs tremble and despair.”<sup>66</sup>

There is an expression, **الله درک**, commonly used in classical Arabic

in order to praise a person who shows a particular skill. It signifies that real credit for all virtues belongs to Allah. It is also found to have been used by several heathen poets. As for example, the following verse of Muraqqish al-Akbar may be cited here :—

الله درکما و در آیکما إن أفلت الغفلی حتی یقتلا<sup>67</sup>

Poverty and opulence were also believed to be granted by Allah, as the following verse of Salāmah b. Jandal implies :—

کم من فقیر بإذن الله قد جبرت و ذی غنی بوأته دار محروب<sup>68</sup>

“To howmany wretches have they by God’s will brought  
wealth and ease!

howmany rich have they spoiled & stript of all luxury !”<sup>68</sup>

A similar idea has been expressed by Labīd in the following verse, in which he says that Allah grants a man a full share of fortune or misfortune whichever He wills for him :—

من یبسط الله علیه إصبعا بالخیر و الشر بأی أولعا

یملا له منه ذنوبا مترعا و لقد أباد إرما و تبعأ<sup>70</sup>

Pagan Arabs, Probably, believed that Allah is the source of every thing. They, accordingly, attributed future happenings too to His will and several verses reflect this idea. In the following verse al-Muthaqqib al-‘Abdī has clearly expressed his belief that his success depends upon the will of Allah :—

و أیقنت إن شاء الإله بأنه سبیلغی أجلاهما و قصیدها<sup>71</sup>

Likewise, Shanfarā al-Azdi says :—

و أبغی بنی صعب بن مر بلادهم و سوف ألقیهم إن الله یسرا<sup>72</sup>

In this connection the following verses of Ṭarafah may also be quoted :—

فلو شاء ربی کنت قیس بن خالد ولو شاء ربی کنت عمرو بن مرثد

فأصبحت ذا مال کثیر و زارنی بنون کرام سادة مسود<sup>73</sup>

“Had my Lord willed, I'd have been another Kais bin Khalid, and had my Lord willed, I'd have been another Amr bin Marthad; then I'd have been a man of such substance, visited by all the sprigs of the nobility, chiefs and sons of chiefs.”<sup>74</sup>

The following verse of 'Antarah is quite clear in this respect :—

فلا تكفر النعمى و أئن بفضلها و لاتأمنن ما يحدث الله في غد<sup>76</sup>

(Do not be ungrateful for the benefit but praise its merit and do not be unmindful to what Allah will create tomorrow.)

Moreover, there are a number of verses in which heathen poets have attributed certain actions to Allah which clearly shows that they believed Allah to be the first cause of every thing. Let us cite a few of them as examples.

Dhu-al-Iṣba' al-'Adwānī says in the following line that Allah helps him against all evils :—

ولا يرى في غير الصبر منقصة و ماسواه فإن الله يكفيني<sup>76</sup>

Qays b. al-'Ayzārah says that Allah defends him :—

وقالوا لنا البلهاء أول سؤلة و أعراسها و الله عنى يدافع<sup>77</sup>

Ḥātim al-Ṭā'ī attributes the sustenance to the Merciful :—

يقولون لى أهلك مالك فاقصد و ما كنت لولا ما تقولون سيدا  
كلوا الآن من رزق الإله وأيسروا فإن على الرحمن رزقكم غدا<sup>78</sup>

Aws b. Ḥajar says that Allah has purified his wealth and food :—

تركت الخبيث لم أشارك ولم أذق ولكن أعف الله مالى و مطعمى<sup>79</sup>

Al-A'shā says in the following line, “We are like a corrupt thing which becomes good and pure when Allah reforms it.”

إنما نحن كشيء فاسد فإذا أصلحه الله صالح<sup>80</sup>

Burj b. Mushir al-Ṭā'ī having the same idea in his mind complains of his friend to Allah in this way :—

إلى الله أشكو من خليل أوده ثلاث خلال كلها لى غائض<sup>81</sup>

### Allah is the Omnipotent

Heathen poetry also contains verses which bear out the belief that Allah is the all-powerful and none can share His sovereignty

score. Zuhayr, accordingly, says in the following line that no body can dignify one whom Allah has disgraced :—

و ليس لمن لم يركب الهول بغية و ليس لرحل حطه الله حامل<sup>85</sup>

In the same way, Hārith b. Ḥillizah says in the following line that the Divine decree can never be resisted and it must invariably predominate :—

فهداهم بالأسودين و أمر . . . الله بلغ تشقى به الأشقيا<sup>86</sup>

“and he led them, provisioned with dates and water Allah’s command prevails, bringing the wretched to to wretchedness.”<sup>86</sup>

The idea that everything is under the command of Allah is evident from the following verse of al-Muthaqqib al-‘Abdī in which he says that if the mountains disobeyed his patron, Allah would bring them catching hold of their ropes :—

و لو علم الله الجبال عصيته لجاء بأمراس الجبال يقودها<sup>87</sup>

The same idea has been expressed in the following lines of Labīd :—

أحمد الله فلا ندد له بيديه الخير ما شاء فعل  
من هداه سبيل الخير اهتدى ناعم البال ومن شاء أضل<sup>88</sup>

The poet, while praising Allah, says that virtue is in the hands of Allah and He does whatever He wills; he whom He guides to the path of virtue becomes virtuous and prosperous and others, if He so desires, take to the path of wrong.

In this connection the following verses of Salāmah b. Jandal also deserve to be quoted :—

عجلتم علينا حجتين عليكم وما يشأ الرحمن يعقد و يطلق  
هو الجابر العظم الكسير وما يشأ من الأمر يجمع بينه و يفرق  
هو المدخل النعمان بيتا سماؤه صدور الفيول بعد بيت مسردق<sup>89</sup>

### Showing gratitude to Allah

Since the heathen poets believed that Allah is the giver of all things, they also offered thanks to Him on their success. Let us study this stage some verses of this type as well.

Ma'qil b. Khuwaylid expressed his gratitude to Allah, when his opponent was knocked down in humiliation. He says :—

حمدت الله أن أمسى ربيع بدار الهون ملحيا مقاما<sup>88</sup>

The following verse of Ḥātim al-Ṭā'ī also speaks of the same feeling of the poet :—

إذا كان بعض المال ربا لأهله فإني بحمد الله مالي معبد<sup>89</sup>

He says, "There are some riches which dominate their possessors but, thanks be to Allah, my wealth is my slave."

Likewise, Salāmah b. Khurshub has expressed in the following verse his gratefulness to Allah for a certain quality which he possessed :—

فإن تقبل بما علمت فإني بحمد الله وصال حزوم<sup>90</sup>

### Relation of moral virtues with Allah

There are also several verses which contain clear references to piety and good deed, as Zuhayr says :—

عودت قومك إن كل مبرز مهما يعود شيمة يتعود  
حزما و برا للإله و شيمة تعفو على خلق المسيء المفسد<sup>91</sup>

These verses clearly show that a favour shown to any one without any hope or fear was considered as an act of benevolence in the name of Allah.

In the following verses Labīd advises man to adorn his soul with the same virtue :—

و اكذب النفس إذا حدثتها إن صدق النفس يزرى بالأمل  
غير أن لا تكذبها في التقى و اخزها بالبر لله الأجل<sup>92</sup>

The same virtue has been called by Imru'al-Qays the best provision for man. He says :—

والله أنجح ما طلبت به و البر خير حقيبة الرجل<sup>93</sup>

Ḥātim al-Ṭā'ī says in the following verses that it is only the pleasure of Allah that is sought by a generous man in return for his generosity.

فلو كان ما يعطى رياء لأمسكت به جنبات اللوم يجذبته جذبا  
ولكنما يبغى به الله وحده فأعط وقد أربحت في البيعة الكسبا<sup>94</sup>

Heathen poets believed that Allah was displeased with evil-doers. The following verse of 'Urwah b. al-Ward bears a good testimony to it, for he has named certain persons as the enemies of Allah because of their falsehood and forgery :—

سقوني النسء ثم تكنفوني عداة الله من كذب و زور<sup>96</sup>

It is probably because of the same belief that Hātim al-Tā'ī seeks protection of Allah against certain evils in the following verse :—

أفضح جارتى وأخون جارى معاذ الله أفعل ما حيت<sup>97</sup>

### Disobedience of Allah

The conception of sin, whatever shape or form it might have had, was also current among the heathen Arabs. The following verses of Imru'al-Qays provide a striking proof of this :—

حلت لى الخمر و كنت امرأ عن شربها فى شغل شاغل  
فاليوم أسقى غير مستحقب إنما من الله ولا واغل<sup>97</sup>

The poet had previously resolved that he would not drink wine until he had avenged the murder of his father; and when he achieved his object, he drank wine. In these verses he says that the wine has now become legitimate for him and hence he now drinks it without committing any sin before Allah. This clearly suggests that the poet, before the accomplishment of his pledge, considered drinking as a grave sin.

There are a number of traditions which show that in order to attain certain goals, the pagan Arabs would often impose upon themselves such restrictions as for example abstinence from the drinking of wine, eating of meat and washing of the head; and the above verses of Imru'al-Qays clearly speak of the fact that they considered this voluntary imposition as a solemn vow to Allah and hence they would take its breach to be a serious sin and disobedience of Allah.

The following verses of Nābighah al-Dhubyanī also indicate that some kind of conception of disobedience was familiar to the Arabs before Islam :—

تعصى الإله و أنت تظهر حبه هذا لعمر ك فى المقال بديع  
لو كنت تصدق حبه لأطعته إن المحب لمن يحب مطيع<sup>98</sup>

At this place the following verses of Ṭarafah may also be quoted :—

و الإثم داء ليس يرجى برؤه والبر برؤ ليس فيه معطب  
و الصدق يالفه اللبيب المرتجى والكذب يالفه الدنى الأخب<sup>99</sup>

These verses imply that in the opinion of the poet truth is a virtue while falsehood is a sin.

### Fear of Allah

Since the heathen Arabs believed that evils displeased Allah, several verses are found bearing notable references to fear of Allah and piety in different ways. In order to restrain a person from committing evil deeds, they often reminded him of the fear of Allah, as Musayyab b. 'Alas says :—

<sup>100</sup> ألا تتقون الله يا آل عامر و هل يتقى الله الأبل المصمم

Likewise, the following verses of 'Abd Qays b. Khufāf contain exhortations for fearing Allah and several other virtues such as fulfilment of His vow, abstinence from evil and devotion to good deeds :

الله فاتقه و أوف بنذره و اذا حلفت عماريا فتحلل  
و اذا هممت بأمر شر فاتد و اذا هممت بأمر خير فافعل  
و استغن ما أغناك ربك بالغنى و اذا تصبك خصاصة فتجمل<sup>101</sup>

The poem, in which the above verses occur, is full of the descriptions of many good actions and moral virtues.

In this connection the following verses of Dhu-al-Iṣba' al-'Adwānī are significant.

لولا أياصر قربي لست تحفظها و رهبة الله فيمن لا يعاديني  
إذا بريتك بريا لا انجبار له إنى رأيتك لا تنفك تبريني<sup>102</sup>

In these lines he declares that he would have given a fatal blow to his opponent, if he had not taken into consideration the fear of Allah and the ties of relationship.

A similar idea has been expressed by 'Amr b. Shā's in this way :—

ولولا اتقاء الله والعهد قد رأى منيته منى أبوك اللياليا<sup>103</sup>

'Amr b. Shā's may be reckoned as a Mukhaḍramite poet, for Islam appeared on the scene in his old age and he actually embraced it; but the context of the above verse reveals the fact that it was composed by him prior to his conversion on an occasion when he met with a certain incident.

Zuhayr has referred to this virtue i. e. the fear of Allah, in different way. He says :—

بدا لي أن الله حق فزادني إلى الحق تقوى الله ما قد بدا ليا<sup>104</sup>

There are a number of verses in which the heathen poets have referred to this quality in highly appreciative terms. Al-Mutalammis says in the following verse that the fear of Allah is the best provision—

وأعلم علم حق غير ظن و تقوى الله من خير العتاد<sup>106</sup>

Likewise, Labīd calls it in the following verse the best bounty :—

إن تقوى ربنا خير نفل و ياذن الله ريشى و هجل<sup>108</sup>

On another occasion Labīd says that everything except piety is worthless :—

بل كل سعيك باطل إلا التقى فإذا انقضى شيء كان لم يفعل<sup>107</sup>

In the following verses while praising Allah Labīd again says that the fear of Allah is a virtue which only the fortunate ones can obtain :—

حمدت الله والله الحميد و لله المؤئل و العديد  
فإن الله نافلة تقاه و لا يقاتلها إلا سعيد<sup>108</sup>

According to al-A'shā, no virtue can equal the fear of the Merciful. He says :—

وإن تقى الرحمن لا شيء مثله فصبراً إذا تلقى السحاق الغرائيا<sup>109</sup>

There are other verses which express the idea that this quality will prove to be the best provision for man after his death and that he will receive its full reward there.

'Amr b. al-Hārith says :—

عليك بتقوى الله فى كل إمرة تجد عيها يوم الحساب المطول  
ألا إن تقوى الله خير مغبة و أفضل زاد الظاعن المتحمل  
ولا خير فى طول الحياة و عيشها إذا أنت منها بالتقى لم ترحل<sup>110</sup>

The same idea has been expressed more profoundly by al-A'shā in the following manner :—

إذا أنت لم ترحل بزاد من التقى ولاقيت بعد الموت من قد تزودا  
ندمت على أن لا تكون كمثلها و أنك لم ترصد لما كان أرصدا<sup>111</sup>

### Worship of the One God

Certain verses of al-A'shā contain good sermons relating to the worship of the One God and abstinence from polytheism. The following lines occur in a poem, composed by him in praise of 'Urwah b.



Mas'ūd at a time when he had, on his way back from Yemen, stayed with 'Urwah in Ṭā'if and received great honour from him.

و ربك لا تشرك به إن شرکه  
يحط من الخيرات تلك البواقيا  
بل الله فاعبد لا شريك لوجهه  
يكن لك فيما تكدح اليوم راعيا  
و إياك و الميتات لاتقربنها  
كفى بكلام الله عن ذاك ناھيا<sup>119</sup>

In these lines the poet has clearly advised people to worship the One God and not to associate partners with Him.

One might be inclined to consider these verses as pure fabrication, but I think there is no positive ground to doubt their genuinness. Similar ideas are generally found in the verses of those poets who have been reckoned as Ḥanīfs by the historians, as will be seen later on. Moreover, we have already seen in the preceding lines the ideas and beliefs of the heathen Arabs in regard to Allah and monotheism and we also know that al-A'shā was a poet who used to wander about throughout Arabia praising every one who would honour him. He was, therefore, aware of almost all kinds of religious ideas prevalent among the different sects of the peoples of those days.

Accordingly, the same idea has been well-portrayed by him in some lines of another long poem which he composed in order to present to the Prophet of Islam, when he had desired to visit the latter, though he could not then visit him, because he was refrained from doing so by the Meccan opponents of the Prophet. Here are the lines :

و ذا النصب المنسوب لاتسكته  
ولاتعبد الأوثان والله فاعبدا  
وصل على حين العشيات والضحي  
ولا تحمد الشيطان والله فاحمدا<sup>118</sup>

In these lines al-A'shā has openly advised people to pray to the One God only and not to worship the idols and the *shayṭān*.

## 2. APOSTLESHIP

Most of the historians hold the view that the heathen Arabs had no faith in apostleship. They derive this conclusion from certain verses of the Holy Qur'an, which contain the objections levelled against the apostleship of the Prophet of Islam by his opponents.<sup>114</sup> In my opinion the idea of apostleship was not totally unknown to the people of Arabia. It is, however, true that in the beginning they were hostile to the Prophet, but it cannot stand a sufficient proof for their being opposed to the very idea of apostleship. Even the verses of the Holy Qur'an do not bear out the total rejection of the essence of apostleship by them; on the other hand, these verses indicate that they entertained

some ideas about the matter, though its precise form or shape might not have been determined. Here are some verses of the Holy Qur'an relating to the subject :

وقالوا لولا أنزل عليه ملكٌ ولو أنزلنا ملكاً لقضى الأمر ثم لا ينظرون -

(They say : "Why is not an angel sent down to him?" If we did send down an angel, the matter would be settled at once, and no respite would be granted them.)<sup>116</sup>

وقالوا لولا أنزل عليه آية من ربه قل إن الله قادرٌ على أن ينزل آية و لكن أكثرهم لا يعلمون .

(They say : "Why is not a sign sent down to him from his Lord?" Say : "God hath certainly power to send down a sign : but most of them understand not.")<sup>116</sup>

وإذا جاءتهم آيةٌ قالوا ان تؤمن حتى تُتوتى مثل ما أوتى رسل الله الله أعلم حيث يجعل رسالته

(When there comes to them a sign (from God), they say : "We shall not believe until we receive one (exactly) like those received by God's apostles." God knoweth best where (and how) to carry out His mission.)<sup>117</sup>

وما منع الناس أن يؤمنوا إذ جاءهم الهدى إلا أن قالوا أبعث الله بشراً رسولا

(What kept men back from belief when guidance came to them, was nothing but this : they said : "Has God sent a man to be apostle?")<sup>118</sup>

وقالوا مال هذا الرسول يأكل الطعام و يمشى فى الأسواق لولا أنزل إليه ملكٌ فيكون معه نذيراً أو يلقى إليه كنزاً أو تكون له جنةٌ يأكل منها

(And they say : "What sort of an apostle is this, who eats food, and walks through the streets? Why has not an angel been sent down to him to give admonition with him? Or (why) has not a treasure been bestowed on him, or why has he (not) a garden for enjoyment.")<sup>119</sup>

وقالوا لولا أنزل هذا القرآن على رجل من القريتين عظيم .

(Also, they say : "Why is not this Qur'an sent down to some leading men in either of the two (chief) cities?")<sup>120</sup>

From the above, it is quite evident that the opponents of the Prophet did not object to the very office or institution of apostleship; but their objections were, in fact, directed against the person of the Prophet, as to why he of all people and no one else should have attained

that exalted position. It appears that they held the view that an apostle should be an angel; or if not an angel, he should at least have an angel beside him to assist him; or that he should possess some supernatural powers in the manner of the earlier apostles as they conceived of them; or at least he should be a great man possessing immense wealth and enjoying great name and fame.

### References to certain apostles in heathen poetry

We find occasional references to certain apostles in the verses of some of the heathen poets and this fact also lends proof to the fact that the concept of apostleship was not entirely unknown to them.

A verse of al-A'shā runs as follows :—

فذاك سليمان الذي سخرت له مع الإنس و الجن الرياح المراهيا<sup>121</sup>

Referring to Solomon, the poet says in the above verse that he exercised suzerainty over the winds as well as the *Jinn* and the men.

The following verses of al A'shā are also noteworthy, in which he refers to the apostle, Noah, and also mentions the celebrated Ark, which he had constructed under the command of God.

جزى الإله إياسا خير نعمته كما جزى المرء نوحا بعد ما شابا  
في فلكه إذ تبداها ليصنعها وظل يجمع ألواحا وأبوابا<sup>122</sup>

Heathen poets generally refer to the apostle, David, in different ways. They often praise their coats of mail by comparing them with those made by David. In this regard, the following verses will suffice for illustration:—

Zuhayr says :—

وآخرين ترى الماذى عدتهم من نسج داوود ما قد أورثت إرم<sup>123</sup>

Aswad b. Ya'fur says :—

و دعا بمحكمة أمين سكها من نسج داوود أبي سلام<sup>124</sup>

Likewise, after describing the fact that none can escape death, al-A'shā says in the following line that even David was a victim of the calamities of time and he perished while he was enjoying quite a prosperous and happy life :

وردن على داوود حتى أبدنه وكان يغادى العيش أخضر صافيا<sup>125</sup>

The following verses of Labīd express the same idea in similar way :—

و نزعن من داوود أحسن صنعه و لقد يكون بقوة و نعيم  
صنع الحديد لحفظه أسراده لينال طول العيش غير مردم<sup>126</sup>

There are also verses which reveal a particular association of the apostles with God. As for example, al-A'shā says :—

و لو كان شيء خالدا و معمرا  
 لكان سليمان البريء من الدهر  
 براه إلهي فاصطفاه عبادة  
 و ملكه ما بين ثريا إلى مصر  
 و سخر من جن الملائك تسعة  
 قياما لديه يعملون بلا أجر<sup>187</sup>

In these verses, the poet has, besides other things, mentioned that God selected Solomon for His worship, which clearly indicates the latter's particular affinity with God.

The following verses of Nābighah al-Dhubyanī is also of great significance in this respect :—

إلا سليمان إذ قال الإله له  
 قم في البرية فاحدها عن الفند<sup>188</sup>

While praising Nu'mān, the king of Ḥīrah, the poet has referred to Solomon and said that God directed Solomon to stay in the world and to save it from falsehood. In this way, the verse actually contains the description of a message of God to Solomon regarding the removal of evil from the world or in other words reformation of the world and that, of course, is the mission of an apostle.

### 3. PREDESTINATION

Heathen poetry frequently refers to ideas relating to predestination which shows that the pagan Arabs were mostly fatalists. They believed that every thing—good or bad—was preordained and every man's fate had already been determined which he could, by no means, avert or change. In this context they would, generally, use the word, *Qadar*, or its derivatives, which basically means 'to measure' and 'to estimate.' It clearly shows that they deemed every thing to have been already measured out and estimated much in advance of its actual occurrence. As for example, Durayd b. al-Ṣimmah says :—

أبي القتل إلا آل صمة إنهم  
 أبوا غيره و القدر يجرى إلى القدر<sup>189</sup>

“Slaughter chose from all men born the race of Ṣimmah  
 for her own :

they chose her, and would none other : so fate goes to fated  
 end.”<sup>180</sup>

The poet says that murder refused to have any one except the sons of Ṣimmah and they also refused to have any thing except murder and *Qadar* goes to *Qadar*, i. e. things occur according to fate. He means to say that they were killed because it was predestinated for them.

Likewise, 'Āmir b. al-Ḥārith b. Muḍāḍ of Jurhum has ascribed to *Maqādir* the expulsion of the people of Jurhum from Mecca in the following lines :—

فكنا ولاة البيت من بعد نابت نمشى بهذا البيت و الخير ظاهر  
فأخرجنا منها المليك بقدره كذلك بالناس تجرى المقادر<sup>181</sup>

'Alqamah b. 'Abdah has used the word, *Maqādīr*, in this way :—

و شامت بي لا تخفى عداوته إذا حماني ساقته المقادير<sup>182</sup>

The following verse composed by Labīd is also noteworthy in this regard :—

ولا أقول إذا ما أزمة أزمتم يا ويح نفسي مما أحدث القدر<sup>183</sup>

The poet says that out of what *Qadar* brings forth he does not lament any calamity when it occurs. He means to say that since everything comes from the store of fate and man has no power to avert it lamenting is of no avail.

### Predestination of Provision

Heathen poetry also reveals the view that for every person a fixed quantity of provision is preordained which he must receive by one means or another and that it can, by no effort from any quarter, be either increased or decreased. As for example, al-Muraqqish al-Aṣghar says in the following line that man's portion of sustenance has necessarily to reach him and none can withhold even a single particle of what has been pre-assigned to him.

أجمل العيش إن رزقك أت لا يرد الترقيح شروى فتيل<sup>184</sup>

Similarly, the following verse of 'Alqamah b. 'Abdah contains the idea that one who has been allotted a share will indispensably receive it wheresoever he may be and one who has been deprived of a certain share will always remain deprived :—

و مطعم الغنم يوم الغنم مطعمه أنى توجه و المحروم محروم<sup>185</sup>

“And he who is destined to be fed with booty wins it on the day of plundering whithersoever he goes : and he who is withheld from it (by Fate) gets nothing.”<sup>186</sup>

Tarafah advises in the following verses that you should go ahead for your task without being deterred by any sign of bad omen, because what you have to meet has already been written in the plates of Fate :

إذا ما أردت الأمر فامض لوجهه و خلّ الهوينا جانباً متائباً  
و لم يمنعك الطير بما أردته فقد خط في الألواح ما كنت لاقياً<sup>187</sup>

**Fate cannot be known**

Since every thing comes into being in accordance with its predestination which cannot be foreseen by man, one can never ascertain the results of his efforts howsoever clear the signs may be. It is certainly an irony of fate that man makes his best efforts to attain happiness, but he does not know whether he will succeed in it or meet, instead, some distress and misery. This idea has been expressed by al-Muthaqqib al-'Abdī in this way:—

فما أدري إذا يمت أرضا أريد الخير أيهما يليني  
الخير الذي أنا أبتغيه أم الشر الذي هو يبتغيني<sup>188</sup>

The following verses of Ḥārith b. Ḥillizah also suggests the same idea:—

لأنكسع الشول بأغبارها إنك لاتدري من الناتج  
واحلب لأضيافك ألبانها فإن شر اللبن الوالج<sup>189</sup>

In these lines, the poet advises his milkman to draw out all the milk of his she-camel for the guests and not to try to make her fat by raising some milk up into her body by means of throwing cold water on her udders, because he does not know as to who will be her owner at the time of her bringing forth.

In the following verses a woman has expressed her helplessness against an inexorable fate:—

ما لأبي حمزة لاياتينا يظل في البيت الذي يلينا  
غضبان أن لاند البينا تالله ما ذلك في أيدينا  
وإنما نأخذ ما أعطينا حكمة ربي ذى الجلال فينا<sup>140</sup>

The context of these lines is that when the poetess gave birth to a female child instead of a male one as expected by her husband, Abū Ḥamzah al-Ḍabbī, he left the house in sorrow and anger and did not visit her even though he lived in a neighbouring quarter. On this occasion, she composed the above lines in which she says: 'What has happened to Abū Ḥamzah that he does [not come to us though he lives in the house adjacent to ours; he is angry because we did not give birth to sons; by God, it is not in our hand, we have only what we are given and this is the wisdom of our Lord about us.]'

**God is the Predestinator**

The idea of predestination has not been expressed in heathen poetry only in a poetical way or in the sense of mere chance, but the

fact is that the pagan Arabs considered it as a well-thought-out system and they had firm belief in God as the predestinator. The verses, which have already been quoted to illustrate their belief in regard to Allah also bear testimony to the same effect, but here we would like to quote some other verses which are more explicit on this point. A pre-Islamic verse runs as follows :-

أتونى بأنجاس لهم و منجس فقلت لهم ما قدر الله كائن<sup>141</sup>

In the first chapter, it has already been mentioned that in pre-Islamic days, certain filthy things were applied to a sick person in order to remove the evil spirit which they considered to be responsible for the disease. Referring to the same practice, the poet has said in the above line that the people brought filthy objects to him and offered to cure him, but he said to them that what God had predestined for him would unavoidably happen. In this way the poet acknowledges God as the predestinating authority and also expresses the view that His decree must prevail against any device whatsoever.

Similarly, Tha'labāh b. 'Amr has ascribed the power of predestining to God in the following verse saying that there is none to avert what God destines :-

عتاد امرئى فى الحرب لا واهن القوى ولا هو عما يقدر الله صارف<sup>142</sup>

The same idea has been expressed by Khabbāb b. Ghuzayy in this way :-

و أرمى بنفسى فى فروج كثيرة وليس لأمر حمه الله صارف<sup>143</sup>

In the following verse, Bal'ā' b. Qays al-Kinānī has ascribed predestination to the Merciful :-

قدر الرحمن أن ألقاكم عارضا رعى على متن الأغر<sup>144</sup>

The following verses of Zuhayr is also noteworthy in this connection :-

و المال ما حول الإله فلا بد له أن يحوزه قدر<sup>145</sup>

He says that wealth is bestowed by God, hence it is quite inevitable for it to follow His decree.

Likewise, while praising God in the following verses, Labīd says that the decree of God cannot be altered :-

الله نافلة الأجل الأفضل وله العلى و أثيث كل مؤثل  
لا يستطيع الناس محو كتابه أنى وليس قضاؤه بمبدل<sup>146</sup>

It is to be noted that ideas relating to fate and destiny are quite common in the poetry of Labīd. He has been called a staunch fatalist<sup>147</sup> in the light of his verse which runs as follows :—

إِنَّ تَقْوَى رَبِّنَا خَيْرٌ نَفْلٍ وَيَأْذَنُ اللَّهُ رَيْثِي وَ عَجَلٍ<sup>148</sup>

On the other hand, al-A'shā has been reckoned as believing in free will on the basis of his verse which is as under :—

استأثر الله بالوفاء و بالعد—ل و ولي الملامة الرجل<sup>149</sup>

### Inevitability of death

Pre-Islamic poetry, in general, contains such ideas relating to fate and destiny which clearly imply that the life-span is predetermined and a definite portion of happiness and misery, prosperity and adversity and all sorts of good and evil is preordained for every man, as the above-mentioned verses clearly represent. But fatalistic trends are more distinctively and abundantly seen on the occasions where a poet refers to the doom of death and mentions its inevitability and human impotence and ineffectiveness in the face of it. Death is really a terrible phenomenon which makes even the bravest man tremble in fear and ultimately submit to it in utter helplessness. It is true that even a non fatalist may speak of human helplessness against death, but the way in which the heathen poets have dealt with the subject, clearly shows their belief that death is predetermined and none can, by any device, escape from it when the appointed hour comes. Accordingly, the words, *Manīyah* and *Ḥummah*, which are generally used for death, have been derived from the roots meaning predetermining<sup>150</sup>

Here are a few more verses to illustrate the above-noted facts.

'Amr b. Kulthūm says :—

و إنا سوف تدركننا المنايا مقدره لنا و مقدرينا<sup>151</sup>

“and of a surety the fates will overtake us predestined for us, as we for them are predestined.”<sup>152</sup>

Labīd says :—

صاد فن منها غرة فأصبنا إن المنايا لاتطيش سهامها<sup>153</sup>

“they encountered her unawares, and seized her little one from her, and of a truth the arrows of Fate miss not their mark.”<sup>154</sup>

Zuhayr says :—

و من هاب أسباب المنايا ينلنه و إن يرق أسباب السماء بسلم<sup>155</sup>



“Whoever is in terror of the ways Death may come, Death shall yet slay him,

Though he aspire to mount to heaven on the rungs of a ladder.<sup>156</sup>

‘Antarah has expressed the idea of inevitability of death in a very beautiful way in the following lines :—

بكرت تخوفنى الختوف كأننى أصبحت عن غرض الختوف بمعزل  
فأجبتها إن المنية منهل لا بد أن أسقى بكأس المنهل  
فأقنى حياءك لأبالك و اعلمى إنى امرؤ ساموث إن لم أقتل<sup>157</sup>

The same idea has been expressed by Tha‘labah b. ‘Amr al-‘Abdi in another way. He says :—

ولو كنت فى غمدان يحرس بابہ أراجيل أحبوش و أسود ألف  
إذا لأتتى حيث كنت منيتى يخب بها هاد لإثرى قائف<sup>158</sup>

Likewise, Shanfara al-Azdi has said :—

ولو لم أرم فى أهل بيتى قاعدا إذا جاءنى بين العمودين حمتى<sup>159</sup>

Aswad b. Ya‘fur says in the following lines that escape from death cannot be achieved even by paying a ransom :—

إن المنية و الختوف كلاهما يوفى المخارم يرقبان سوادى  
لن يرضيا منى و فاء رهينة من دون نفسى طارفى و تلادى<sup>160</sup>

The following line of Ḥātim al-Ṭā’ī expresses that death comes from an unknown direction :—

توط لنا حب الحياة نفوسنا شقاء وياتى الموت من حيث لا ندرى<sup>161</sup>

In this connection one cannot help recalling a few verses composed by ‘Ufnān al-Taghlibī on a certain occasion which requires some elucidation. It is said that a soothsayer had foretold him that his death would occur at a place called Ilāhah. After some time, it so happened that in the course of a journey, ‘Ufnān actually reached the said place with a travelling party of his tribe. His other companions halted there but ‘Ufnān did not get down from his she-camel and remained sitting on her back. In the meantime, while his she-camel was grazing, a snake stung her on the lip and she rubbed her lip against the foot of ‘Ufnān while the snake was still clinging to it. In this way, he was also bitten by the snake and was then assured of death. Before he died he composed some verses in which he openly admitted the power

Here we quote only one verse out of them, which runs as follows :—

لعمرك ما يدري امرؤ كيف يتقى إذا هو لم يجعل له الله واقياً<sup>162</sup>

In this line 'Ufnūn has clearly acknowledged God as having sole power over fate saying that nobody knew how to escape from fate when God Himself had not destined an escape.

The following verses of 'Antarah throw a clear light on the same point :—

إذا كان أمر الله أمراً يقدر فكيف يفر المرء منه ويحذر  
ومن ذا يرد الموت أو يدفع القضا وضربته محتومة ليس تعثر<sup>163</sup>

### Time of death is predetermined

There are some other verses which reveal the view that every man is granted a fixed span of life and a definite time is fixed for his death. When the term of life expires, death unavoidably comes under one pretext or the other. As for example, Sulakah, the mother of Sulayk, says :—

و المنايا رصد للفتى حيث سلك  
كل شيء قاتل حين تلقى أجلك<sup>164</sup>

(Death is always on the look out for man wherever he goes, and every thing becomes fatal when your end comes.)

The following lines of Sa'd b. Mālik are noteworthy in this respect :—

إن الموائل خوفها يعتاقه الأجل المتاح  
هيئات حال الموت دو . . . ن الفوت وانتضى السلاح<sup>165</sup>

He says that predestined death hinders one who intends to run away from the battle-field and stands in the way of his escape.

Likewise, 'Urwah b. al-Ward says in the following line that there can be no respite when the time of death comes :—

فإن فاز سهم للمنية لم أكن جزوعاً و هل عن ذاك من متأخر<sup>166</sup>

The following verses of Suwayd b. 'Āmir al-Muṣṭaliqī may also be noted here :—

لاتأمن الموت في حل ولا حرم إن المنايا توافي كل إنسان  
واساك طريقك فيها غير محتشم حتى تلاقى ما يمتنى لك الماني<sup>167</sup>

**Use of 'Time' for Fate**

Another aspect which may be noted at this place is that the heathen poets have often expressed the idea of predestination through the word, *al-Dahr* (Time) and its other substitutes as *al-Ayyām* (Days), *al-Layālī* (Nights) and the like. We often come across verses in which certain actions have been ascribed to Time, describing it as the harbinger of misery and misfortune to human beings. Now let us study some verses of this type as well.

'Antarah says in the following line that Time does not let any one escape from death :—

تعالوا إلى ما تعلمون فإنني أرى الدهر لا ينجي من الموت ناجيا<sup>168</sup>

Tarafah says :—

أرى العيش كنزا ناقصا كل ليلة و ما تنقص الأيام و الدهر ينفد<sup>169</sup>

"I see Life is a treasure diminishing every night, and all that the days and Time diminish ceases at last."<sup>170</sup>

He says again :—

ستبدي لك الأيام ما كنت جاهلا و يأتيك بالأخبار من لم تزود<sup>171</sup>

"The days shall disclose to you things you were ignorant of, and he whom you never provisioned will bring you back tidings;"<sup>172</sup>

The following verses of 'Amr b. Qamī'ah should also be included in the same category :—

رمتني بنات الدهر من حيث لا أرى فكيف لمن يرمى وليس برام  
فلو أنها نبل إذا لا تقيتها و لكنني أرمى بغير سهام<sup>173</sup>

"The Daughters of Time have shot at me from a place which I could not see; and how should he fare who is shot at, while he can not shoot in reply? Yea, if it were an arrow that shot me, I could have defended myself against it; but I am shot with that which is not a Shaft."<sup>174</sup>

Mutammim b. Nuwayrah says in the following line that he did not visit his kinsmen to be humiliated when Time brought any distress to him :—

ولست إذا ما الدهر أحدث نكبة بألوث زوار القرائب أخضعا<sup>175</sup>

The following lines of Zuhayr also describe Time in the same manner :—

يا دهر قد أكثرت فجعتنا بسراتنا و قرعت في العظم  
و سلبتنا ما لست معقبه يا دهر ما أنصفت في الحكم<sup>176</sup>

From the above verses it should not be inferred that the heathen poets were all materialists, believing that Time was the sole creator of all things or at least of all miseries. It may, however, be true that at the time of the advent of Islam there were some people who cherished this idea, and the following verse in the Holy Qur'an may be quoted as proof :—

و قالوا ما هي إلا حياتنا الدنيا نموت ونحيا وما يهلكنا إلا الدهر<sup>178</sup>

(And they say : "What is there but our life in this world ? We shall die and we live, and nothing but Time can destroy us".)<sup>177</sup>

But as far as the attribution of certain actions to Time in heathen poetry is concerned, it was generally figurative or metaphorical. They attributed certain actions to Time just as they did so to Fate, Destiny and Decree etc. In the following line of 'Urwah b. al-Ward, bringing of misfortune has been ascribed to war as well as to Time :—

فلا أنا مما جرت الحرب مشتك ولا أنا مما أحدث الدهر جازع<sup>179</sup>

He says : 'I express neither complaint of what war brings nor impatience with what time creates'.

Probably they did not conceive Time as an independent agent of human destiny; on the other hand, there are certain verses which reveal the view that Time is itself dependent on Destiny. 'Alqamah b. 'Abdah, for instance, says in the following line that the changes of Time happen according to Destiny :—

غير أن البأس منه شيمة و صروف الدهر تجري بالأجل

Moreover, there are poets whose works clearly bear out their belief in God as the Creator and Supreme Being, but, at the same time, they have composed verses in which certain actions are ascribed to Time. As for example, Labīd, whose poetry, no doubt, contains numerous verses bearing fatalistic and monotheistic ideas (some of them have already been quoted above) has also composed certain verses in which he has ascribed some actions to Time as the following line shows :—

و كذاك الزمان يذهب بالناس —س— و تبقى الرسوم و الآثار<sup>180</sup>

Besides, there are also certain verses in which both the words, Time and God, appear in such a way that it clearly suggests the fact that Time does not possess any independent power, but it is always under the command of God. Labīd for instance says :—

لحي الله هذا الدهر إني رأيتَه بصيرا بما ساء ابن آدم مولعا<sup>181</sup>

(My God curse the Time which is quite greedy of bringing what displeases man).

The following verses of al-A'shā are also noteworthy in this respect :—

ولكن أرى الدهر الذي هو خاتر إذا أصاحك كفاى عاد فأفسدا  
شباب و شيب و افتقار و ثروة فله هذا الدهر كيف ترددا<sup>182</sup>

It is, therefore, clear that the word, Time, used in heathen poetry, generally, signifies fate and destiny and it has not been used quite literally and in the real sense of the word, as Professor Noldeke also says :—

“But it must be admitted that the Arabs themselves do not always clearly distinguish the power of time from that of destiny pure and simple. Occasionally, we come across such passages as the following : ‘Time has brought woe upon him, for the days and the (allotted) measure (Qadar) have caused him to perish’. Or again : ‘I submit not to the injustice of Time, and I believe as though unaware that the measure (allotted to me) hindered me from attaining aught’. Various other expressions are used by poets in speaking of the ‘portion’ allotted to them or of the ‘goal’ that is set before them.”<sup>183</sup>

There is another point to be noted in this regard. When we study heathen poetry carefully, we come to the conclusion that time has generally been represented as bringing misery, misfortune, distress and the like and we seldom come across such verses in which any kind of felicity has been ascribed to it. Quite contrary to this, there are numerous verses in which several sources of good fortune and prosperity have been attributed to God and probably we would not find even a single line in which any evil has been ascribed to Him, although they believed God to be the creator of all things—good and evil. From this fact, it may safely be deduced that due to their respect for God, they felt a sort of hesitation in attributing their misery to Him, but their passions of grief could not be suppressed in this way. Hence they gave vent to it by other means and ascribed their misery to Time, Days, Nights, Fate, Destiny and the like.

In this connection, the following verse of Labid may be quoted :—

<sup>184</sup> فما رزقت فإن الله جاليه وما حرمت فما يجرى به القدر

(What I have been given is out of what God bestows and what I have been deprived of is due to what Destiny brings.)

This feature, however, is not exclusively peculiar to heathen poetry. It is quite a popular style of not only Arabic poetry but

poetry of some other languages also. This trend may be traced not only in early Islamic poetry but in modern poetry as well.

#### 4. LIFE AFTER DEATH

From the verses of the Holy Qur'an it is quite clear that the people of Mecca were strongly opposed to the notion of resurrection and they severely contested the Prophet in this regard. The Holy Qur'an has, therefore, laid much emphasis upon the belief in a future life and has explained it in different ways. The holy verses mentioning the rejection of this belief by the Arabs are quite numerous. A few of them are given below :—

وقالوا إن هي إلا حياتنا الدنيا وما نحن بمبعوثين

(And they (some times) say : "There is nothing except our life on this earth and never shall we be raised up again".)<sup>185</sup>

و أقسموا بالله جهد أيمانهم لا يبعث الله من يموت

"They swear their strongest oaths by God, that God will not raise up those who die."<sup>186</sup>

وقالوا إذا كنا عظاماً و رفاتاً إنا لمبعوثون خلقاً جديداً

(They say : "What ! when we are reduced to bones and dust, should we really be raised up (to be) a new creation?"<sup>187</sup>

إذا متنا و كنا تُراباً و عظاماً إنا لمبعوثون أو أبائنا الأولون

"What ! when we die and become dust and bones, shall we (then) be raised up (again) and also our fathers of old?"<sup>188</sup>

Besides this, some poets who were among the antagonists of the Prophet, have also expressed their disbelief in resurrection in their verses, as is indicated by the following verse ascribed to 'Abd Allāh b. al-Zibi'rā :—

حياة ثم موت ثم نشر حديث خرافة يا أم عمرو<sup>189</sup>

He says : 'Life, then death, then resurrection—it is, O mother of 'Amr, useless talk.'

A similar verse occurs in the elegy composed by Shaddād b. Al-Aswad on the death of the pagan Arabs in the battle of *Badr*. He says :—

يحدثنا الرسول بأن سنحيا و كيف حياة أصداء و هام<sup>190</sup>

In this line the poet has expressed his surprise at the idea of resurrection as explained by the Prophet, though his description itself contains his acceptance of some sort of life after death in the form of *Hām* (owls).

#### **Acquaintance of the Arabs with the notion of resurrection**

However, from the above-mentioned facts it cannot be deduced that the pagan Arabs were totally ignorant of the idea of resurrection before the appearance of Islam and that certain verses which reveal the existence of this idea before Islam are, therefore, only interpolations and fabrications. In this respect, the first thing that should be noted at this stage is that no particular notion can be claimed to have been prevalent among all the tribes of Arabia. As a matter of fact, different tribes cherished different creeds. Arabia did not have a single and homogeneous set-up—neither political nor social nor religious. Every tribe was independent in almost every respect. It is, therefore, quite likely that some people believed firmly in certain ideas while others were opposed to them.

The fact that the idea of resurrection was not totally strange to the pagan Arabs is evident from the Holy Qur'an itself. There are certain holy verses which describe the disbelievers' skeptical attitude to and their unacquiescing familiarity with the belief. The Holy Qur'an says:—

وقال الذين كفروا إذا كنا تراباً و آباؤنا أئنا لمخرجون ۝  
لقد وعدنا هذا نحن و آباؤنا من قبل إن هذا إلا أساطير الأولين ۝

“(The unbelievers say : What ! when we become dust,— we and our fathers —shall we really be raised (from the dead) ? It is true we were promised this—we and our fathers before (us)! These are nothing but tales of the ancients.”<sup>191</sup>

“The above holy verses afford a striking proof that the idea of resurrection was known to the pagan Arabs even before Islam, though some antagonists of the Prophet declared their disbelief at the time of the appearance of Islam, calling it a mere yarn spun by the ancient people.

However, it cannot be denied that there were some people who did not believe in resurrection, but at the same time it is also a patent fact that there were some others who did subscribe to it.<sup>192</sup> The details of their ideas regarding this matter are not known,<sup>5</sup> but the traces found in pre-Islamic poetry reveal that they had different views in regard to the form of life after death.

**Superstitions relating to this notion**

In this connection, our attention is, at first, drawn to the superstition regarding the transformation of the human soul into *Hūmah* (owl) after death, which was quite popular in pre-Islamic days. This fact has already been discussed in full at the end of the preceding chapter under 'Grave-Worship' and a number of verses containing this idea have also been quoted there. Here it may be pointed out that this superstition reveals their belief in some form of life after death. It proves that they did not believe in the total annihilation of human soul after death.

The superstitious rite of *Balīyah* which was practised on the graves by the heathen Arabs also calls for some attention. A reference to this has already been made in the preceding Chapter under the title of 'Grave-worship' and numerous relevant verses have been quoted there. This practice also implies their belief in some sort of resurrection, because they believed that the person upon whose grave the ceremony was performed would be spared the ordeal of going on foot to the gathering place, and that he would find his *Balīyah* as a ready riding-beast, when he would be resurrected. This practice was abolished by Islam, but the notion implied in it was probably retained and applied to the animals sacrificed in the name of Allāh as the following tradition shows :—

استفروها ضحاياكم فإنها مطاياكم على الصراط<sup>193</sup>

(Make your sacrifices fat, because they are your riding-animals on the path to paradise.)

Now let us study the verses which contain some clear ideas regarding resurrection.

**Guardian angels**

Al-A'sbā while praising Nu'mān, the king of Ḥīrah, said :—

فلا تحسبني كافرا لك نعمة عليّ شهيد شاهد الله فاشهد<sup>194</sup>

(Do not take me to be ungrateful to your favours; there is a guard on me, O Guard of Allāh, give evidence).

It is clear that the poet refers to the guardian angel appointed, in his opinion, to watch over him on behalf of Allāh. It implies the notion that there are some guardian angels who are appointed by Allāh to witness and record all the actions of man in this world, so that they may give first-hand evidence on the day of Reckoning. The same idea has been more clearly expressed by Zuhayr in this way :—

و لكل عهد مخلف و أمانة في الناس من قبل الإله رعا<sup>195</sup>

(For every breach of promise and loyalty among the people there are guardians on behalf of Allāh).



**The Life Hereafter**

The following verse of Ḥātim al-Ṭā'ī, clearly states that God will revive the dead bodies :—

أما و الذي لا يعلم السر غيره و يحيى العظام البيض و هي رميم<sup>196</sup>

(By Him, except Whom no one knows the secret and Who will give life to the white bones which are decayed.)

The following verse, which occurs in the elegy composed by 'Antarah, may also be noted here :—

حرصت على طول البقاء و إنما مبدى النفوس أبادها ليعيدها<sup>197</sup>

(She coveted for length of life and the Creator of souls perished her in order to restore life to her.)

Likewise, the word, *Qiyāmah*, in the following verse of 'Abid b. al-Abras denotes the notion of resurrection :—

أنت المليك عليهم و هم العبيد إلى القيامة<sup>198</sup>

In this context, the following verses of al-A'shā also deserve to be noticed :—

إن محلا و إن مرتحلاً و إن في السفر إذ مضى مهلا  
استأثر الله بالوفاء و بالعد—ل و ولي الملامة الرجل<sup>199</sup>

Explaining the first line, Abū 'Amr b. al-'Alā', a great philologist, says : "There is a halt in this world and then a move to the other world and one who advanced for his end, got the success."<sup>200</sup> In the next line the poet says that God likes fair dealing and justice, and hence He has made man fully responsible for the consequences of his actions. Thus the lines contain a clear hint of the world hereafter and also point towards the requital of actions done in this world.

**Requital of actions on the Day of Reckoning**

Though full details of what the Arabs believed regarding the world hereafter are not known, yet here are certain verses which reveal their belief that man will be rewarded for his deeds on the day of reckoning. In this connection the following verses which occur in the *Mu'allaqah* of Zuhayr, are quite clear :—

فلا تكتمن الله ما في صدوركم ليخفى و مهما يكتنم الله يعلم  
يؤخر فيوضع في كتاب فيدخر ليوم الحساب أو يعجل فينقم<sup>201</sup>

"Do not conceal from Allah whatever is in your breasts hoping it may be hidden; Allah knows whatever is concealed,

and either it's postponed, and put in a book, and stored away for the Day of Reckoning, or it's hastened, and punished betimes."<sup>203</sup>

The following verses of Ḥātim al-Ṭā'ī also suggest that man will be rewarded for what he does and every man is responsible for his deeds :—

و إني و إن طال الثواء لميت و يعظمني ماوى بيت مسقف  
وإني لهجزى بما أنا كاسب و كل امرئ رهن بما هو متاف<sup>203</sup>

Likewise, 'Alqamah dhū-Jadan al-Ḥimyarī, after referring to the death of Himyarite kings says :—

اليوم يجزون بأعمالهم كل امرئ يحصد ما قد زرع  
صاروا إلى الله بأعمالهم يجزي من خان و من ارتدع<sup>204</sup>

(Today they will be rewarded for their actions and every man reaps what he sows; they proceeded to Allāh with their deeds and He will reward one who betrayed and one who refrained.)

Akhnas b. Shihāb al-Tamīmī also refers to the reward of good actions on the Day of Reckoning in this way :—

و لقد شهدت الخصم يوم دفاعه فأخذت منه خطة المقتال  
و علمت أن الله جاز عبده يوم الحساب بأحسن الأعمال<sup>205</sup>

The following verses of al-A'shā also deserve to be noted :—

و ما أيبلى على هيكل بناء و صلب فيه و صارا  
يرأوح من صلوات الملائكة—كطورا سجودا و طورا جوارا  
بأعظم منه تقى في الحساب إذا النسمات نفضن الغبارا<sup>206</sup>

According to Shahrīstānī, Nābighah al Dhubyānī also believed in resurrection as the following verse from his poem composed in praise of 'Amr b. al-Ḥārith, the Ghassanid king, bears testimony :—

محلتهم ذات الإله و دينهم قويم فما يرجون غير العواقب<sup>207</sup>

"Their home is in God's own land, His chosen of old:  
their faith  
is steadfast : their hope is set on nought but the world  
to come."<sup>208</sup>

In regard to the above line, Shahrīstānī remarks that the poet referring to those whom he has praised says that they do not fear anything except the consequences of actions on the day of reckoning.<sup>209</sup>

The following verses, which occur in two different poems of Nābighah, may also be noted :—

جزى الله عبسا و الجزاء بكفه جزاء الكلاب العاديات و قد فعل  
ولكن لا تخان الدهر عندي و عند الله تجزية الرجال<sup>210</sup>

Though the above verses of Nābighah do not contain words clearly pointing to the resurrection, their substance implies the reward of deeds in the world hereafter.

### Provision for the life hereafter

The above-mentioned idea is also evident from some other verses which describe good deeds as the provision for the life after death. Let us, therefore, study a few verses of this type as well.

'Abīd b. al-Abraṣ after mentioning certain virtues commends in the following line that provision should be taken from this world :—

تزود من الدنيا متاعا فإنه على كل حال خير زاد المزود<sup>211</sup>

The context of the verse clearly indicates the poet's suggestion that good deeds in this world will prove a good provision for the life hereafter, as they will bring good reward there.

Likewise, Zuhayr says :—

تزود إلى يوم الممات فإنه و لو كرهته النفس آخر موعد<sup>212</sup>

(Take a provision for the day of death as it is certainly the final stage to be reached, though one may dislike it.)

The poet means that death is inevitable, so every one should provide himself with a store of good deeds for the life after death.

The following verse of al-Mutalammis implies that the fear of Allāh is the best provision :—

و أعلم علم حق غير ظن و تقوى الله من خير العتاد<sup>213</sup>

In the following verse Ṭarafah has advised that provision should be taken from the good deeds of this world :—

لعمرك ما الأيام إلا معارة فما أسطعت من معروفها فتزود<sup>214</sup>

A similar verse with a little alteration has been ascribed to Qays b. al-Khaṭīm :—

فما المال و الأخلاق إلا معارة فما أسطعت من معروفها فتزود<sup>215</sup>

The following verses of al-A'shā are quite clear:—

إذا أنت لم ترحل بزاد من التقى و لاقيت بعد الموت من قد تزوداً<sup>216</sup>  
ندمت على أن لا تكون كمشاه و أنك لم ترصد لما كان أرصداً<sup>218</sup>

(If you do not travel to the other world with the provision of right conduct and you meet there after your death with one who had provided himself with it, you will repent that you were not like him and that you had not provided yourself with what he had provided himself with.)

The above verses occur in the poem composed by al-'Ashā in praise of the Prophet even though he was not a Muslim. He composed the poem when he intended to visit the Prophet; he however, could not succeed in his intention.

A'shā of Bāhilah has also expressed the same idea in the following verses:—

عليك بتقوى الله في كل إمرة تجد عيها يوم الحساب المطول  
ألا إن تقوى الله خير مغية و أفضل زاد الظاعن المتحمل  
ولا خير في طول الحياة و عيها إذا أنت منها بالتقى لم ترحل<sup>217</sup>

Labīd sang in a similar strain:—

و كل امرئ يوماً سيعلم سعيه إذا كشفت عند الإله المحاصل<sup>218</sup>

(One day every person will see the consequences of his efforts when his earnings will be exposed before God.)

At this place it may be noted that Ibn Quṭaybah has remarked<sup>219</sup> on the above-quoted verse of Labīd that either it has been composed after the advent of Islam as it bears similitude to a certain verse of the Holy Qur'ān or Labīd believed in resurrection before Islam and that probably the verse is fabricated. But Ahmad Muhammad Shākir says<sup>220</sup> that there is no reason to doubt the authenticity of the verse and he has preferred the view held by Ibn Ḥajar that Labīd had belief in resurrection like other wise persons of the pre-Islamic period.<sup>221</sup>

The following verses of Labīd also deserve to be cited here as they refer to some details of the Day of Reckoning:—

يوم أرزاق من يفضل عم موسقات و حفل أبكار  
يوم لا يدخل المدارس في الرحمة إلا براءة و اعتذار  
و حسان أعدمن لأشهاد و غفر الذي هو الغفار  
و مقام أكرم به من مقام و هواد و سياتر<sup>222</sup>

## 5. KA'BAH—'THE HOUSE OF ALLĀH'

### Sanctity of the Ka'bah

The *Ka'bah* was held in very high esteem by almost all the pagan tribes throughout Arabia, and from every corner of the country they would gather in large numbers in its sacred precincts to perform the *Ḥajj* ceremony.<sup>225</sup> It is, therefore, the sanctity of the *Ka'bah* that can truly be claimed to be the only factor upon which almost all the Arabs were agreed and it might even be called a distinguishing national feature.

Now, it is also a fact that such a high regard for the *Ka'bah* was based on its association with Abraham. The Arabs believed that it had been built by Abraham and his son Ismael as a sanctuary by the command of Allāh and that the traditional *Ḥajj* ceremonies handed down to them had been initiated by Abraham himself. They would, therefore, call it the House of Allāh as it would appear from the verses to be cited later on. They also considered the observance of the *Ḥajj* ceremony as a sacred obligation enjoined upon them. They attached so much importance to the sanctity of the *Ka'bah* that by the mere fact of having an association with it the entire territory of Mecca and its inhabitants were held in great honour. Accordingly, the people of Mecca were called the custodians of the *Ka'bah*, and their trade caravans would move everywhere in Arabia in peace and safety at a time when the plundering of caravans was quite a common practice.

The high position of the *Ka'bah* has been reflected in heathen poetry in different ways. There are numerous verses in which the poets have sworn by the *Ka'bah* or by some other things related to it. Here are a few of them :—

Khidāsh b. Zuhayr says :—

كذبتم و بيت الله حتى تعالجوا قوادم حرب لاتلين ولا تمرى<sup>224</sup>

Rāshid b. Shihāb al-Yashkurī says :—

فلا تحسبنا كالعمور و جمعنا فنحن و بيت الله أدنى إلى عمرو<sup>225</sup>

Ḥātim al-Ṭā'ī says :—

وددت و بيت الله لو أن أنفه هواء فمامت المخاط عن العظم<sup>226</sup>

Harim says :—

كذبتم و بيت الله لاتأخذونها مراغمة مادام للسيف قائم<sup>227</sup>

In this connection it is to be noticed that even the Christians respected the *Ka'bah* as the following verse, in which 'Adī b. Zayd al-Ibādī, a Christian poet and bishop, has taken oath by the Lord of Mecca, bears testimony :—

سعى الأعداء لا يألون شراً عليك ورب مكة و الصليب<sup>228</sup>

Certain verses in which the poets have sworn by the *Ka'bah*, also contain some other descriptions of it. As for example, Zuhayr says :—

فأقسمت بالبيت الذي طاف حوله رجال بنوه من قريش و جرهم<sup>229</sup>

“So I swear, by the Holy House about which circumambulate men of Koraish and Jurhum, whose hands constructed it.”<sup>230</sup>

Al-A'shā also says :—

فإني و ثوبى راهب اللج و التي بناها قصى وحده و ابن جرهم<sup>231</sup>

In this connection the following verses of Nābighah al-Dhubyānī are also noteworthy in which while swearing by God he has also referred to certain features relating to the *Ka'bah* :—

فلا لعمر الذي مسحت كعبته وما هريق على الأنصاب من جسد  
و المؤمن العائذات الطير تمسحها ركبان مكة بين الغيل و السند<sup>232</sup>

The high esteem in which the *Ka'bah* was held is also evident from certain rules and regulations which were prescribed in regard to its sacred land and its pilgrims and were strictly followed by all. For instance, within its sacred precincts violence to persons was strictly forbidden and even a murder could not be avenged. Similarly, no pilgrim could kill any bird or any animal except some injurious pests; and even the trees, bushes and grass were not allowed to be cut. Traces of all these features are found in heathen poetry in different ways. Here I would like to give only certain verses of Subay'ah in which she has advised her son to respect the sanctity of the *Ka'bah*, not to commit any sort of desecration to it and not to do any injustice to any one in Mecca. The verses are as under :—

أ بنى لا تظلم به—مكة لا الصغير ولا الكبير  
و احفظ محارمها به—ي ولا يغرنك الغرور  
أ بنى من يظلم به—مكة يلق أطراف الشرور  
أ بنى يضرب وجهه و يلاح بخديه السعير

أ بنى قد جربتها فوجدت ظالمها يبور  
 الله أمنها وما بُنيت بعرضتها قصور  
 والله أمن طيرها والعصم تأمن في ثبير<sup>288</sup>

“O my son, oppress neither the mean nor the great in Mecca

Preserve its sanctity and be not led away.

He who does evil in Mecca will meet the worst misfortune  
 His face will be smitten and his cheeks will burn with fire

I know from certain knowledge that the evil doer there will perish.

God has made it inviolate though no castles are built in its court.

God has made its birds inviolate and the wild goats on Thabir are safe.”<sup>284</sup>

The above-noted verses occur in a long poem abounding in glorifying praises of the *Ka'bah*. In the same poem the poetess has mentioned the well-known story of the Himyarite king, Tubba' As'ad Abū Karib, who, it is said, wanted to destroy the *Ka'bah*, but on the advice of two Jewish rabbis refrained from it and, instead, performed the prescribed ceremonies with great reverence. Similarly, in the end of the poem she has referred to the well-known expedition of Abraha, the governor of Yemen, to demolish the *Ka'bah* and his failure in this campaign. By all these references, the poetess wanted to explain to her son that the *Ka'bah* was the house of Allāh and He would destroy the person who intended any harm or disrespect to it. In this way she advised her son to be always on his guard against showing any kind of irreverence to it lest he should suffer the consequences.

### Respect for Association with the *Ka'bah*

There are also numerous verses which show that any kind of association with the *Ka'bah* was regarded a great honour. Accordingly, those who held any office relating to it were highly esteemed. Not only this but even residence in Mecca or any relation with the people of Mecca was considered a high honour. As for example, while satirizing some one in the following lines, al-A'shā has said that he was not among the inhabitants of Mecca and had no right to do any service to pilgrims of the *Ka'bah* :-

فما أنت من أهل الحجون ولا الصفا  
 وما جعل الرحمن بيتك في العلى  
 ولا توعدني بالفخار فإنني  
 و لا لك حق الشرب في ماء زمزم  
 بأجساد غربي الصفا و المحرم  
 بنى الله بيتي في الدخيس العرمم<sup>285</sup>

People who had the privilege of performing any kind of service to the *Ka'bah*, were themselves very conscious of the honour and felt a sense of great pride. Hence they were disappointed if they were deprived of that service under any circumstance. Accordingly, when the people of *Jurhum*, who were guardians of the *Ka'bah* before the people of *Khuzā'ah*, were expelled from Mecca, they were greatly shocked on their being deprived of the service to the *Ka'bah*. In this connection a poem is supposed to have been composed by 'Āmir b. al-Ĥārith, who belonged to the tribe of *Jurhum*, in which he has shown his great pride in the fact that the people of his tribe held the position of guardianship of the *Ka'bah* and then has also expressed his feeling of deep regret on their being deprived of that later on. Here are a few verses of that poem :—

وكننا ولاة البيت من بعد نابت      بعز فما يحظى لدينا المكائر  
ملكنا فعرزنا فأعظم بملكنا      فليس لحى غيرنا ثم فاخر  
فأخرجنا منها المليك بقدره      كذلك يا للناس تجرى المقادر  
أقول إذا نام الخاى ولم أنم      إذا العرش لايبعد سهيل و عامر  
فسحت دموع العين تبكى لبلدة      بها حرم أمنٌ و فيها المشاعر  
و تبكى لبيت ليس يوذى حمامه      يظل بها أمنا و فيها العصافر  
و فيه وحوش لا تراب أنيسة      إذا خرجت منه فليست تغادر<sup>287</sup>

Likewise in the following verses Musāfir b. abī 'Amr has boasted of his people holding the office of providing water and food for the pilgrims to the *Ka'bah* :—

ورثنا المجد من أبائنا فمى بنا صعداً  
ألم نسق الحجيج و نـ — — — حر الدلافة الرفدا  
و نلقى عند تصريف الـ — — — منايا شددنا رفدا  
فإن نهلك فلم نملك و من ذا خالد أبدا  
وزمزم فى أرومتنا و نفقاً عين من حسدا<sup>287</sup>

“Glory came to us from our fathers  
We have carried to greater heights  
Do not we give the pilgrims water  
And sacrifice the fat milch camels?  
When death is at hand we are found  
Brave and generous



Though we perish (for none can live for ever)  
 A stranger shall not rule our kin  
 Zamzam belongs to our tribe  
 We will pluck out the eyes of those who  
 Look enviously at us."<sup>288</sup>.

Before the advent of Islam, the guardianship of the *Ka'bah* was held by the people of Quraysh, by virtue of which they enjoyed great honour not only in the whole of Arabia but in the neighbouring countries as well. They were regarded as religious leaders of the pagan Arabs and had a commanding influence over them. They were also living in Mecca quite peacefully in those days of general insecurity and internecine wars. Their caravans of trade and commerce would move freely throughout Arabia and no one dared harm them. The Holy Qur'ān has also referred to this position of Quraysh, which they enjoyed by the grace of the House of Allāh. It says :

لإيلاف قريش إيلافهم رحلة الشتاء و الصيف . فليعبدوا رب هذا  
 البيت الذي أطعمهم من جوع و آمنهم من خوف .

“For the covenants (of security and safeguard enjoyed) by the Quraish, their covenants (covering) journeys by winter and summer,—let them adore the Lord of this House, who provides them with food against hunger and with security against fear (of danger).”<sup>289</sup>

The poets, while praising Quraysh, have also mentioned their manifold associations with the *Ka'bah*. Hudhayfah b. Ghānim has composed the following verses in praise of the chieftains of Quraysh and mentioned their services relating to the *Ka'bah* :—

و ساقى الحجيج ثم للخبز هاشم و عبد مناف ذلك السيد الفهرى  
 طوى زمزما عند المقام فأصبحت سقايته فخرا على كل ذى فخر<sup>240</sup>

“(Weep for him) who watered the pilgrims, son of him who broke bread,

And 'Abdu Manāf that Fihri lord.

He laid bare Zamzam by the Maqām,

His control of the water was a prouder boast than any man's.”<sup>241</sup>

The following verses ascribed to Zibriqān b. Badr also deserve to be noted in this connection :—

أتدرى من هجوت أبا حبيب سليل خضارم سكنوا البطاحا  
 أزاد الركب تذكر أم هشاما وبيت الله و البلد اللقاحا<sup>242</sup>

In the above verses the poet has rebuked a person who had laid some blame upon Quraysh and satirized their chief.

The same trend has been reflected in the following verses in which the poet, Ḥarb b. Umayyah, while praising the *Ka'bah*, has advised a man to stay within the sacred territory of Mecca and told him that the companionship of Quraysh was quite sufficient for him:—

أبا مطر هلم إلى صلاح      فيكفيك الندامى من قريش  
و تنزل بلدة عزت قديما      وتأمن أن يزورك رب جيش  
فتأمن وسطهم و تعيش فيهم      أبا مطر هديت بخير عيش<sup>246</sup>

### 'Hums'

The people of Quraysh were proudly conscious of the great honour enjoyed by them as the custodians of the *Ka'bah*. They had, therefore, assumed to themselves a distinguishing role in regard to the Ḥajj ceremonies. One of the main privileges, enjoyed by them, was that they did not perform *wuqūf*<sup>244</sup>—the halt in the plain of 'Arafāt—though it was included in the prescribed ceremonies of the Ḥajj. As a matter of fact, 'Arafāt is outside the consecrated zone of the *Ka'bah*, called the Ḥaram. The Quraysh were regarded as the people of the Ḥaram, hence their sense of pride was injured in going outside the Ḥaram to show respect to some object not belonging to the Ḥaram. Moreover, they did not like to do so because they feared that the pilgrims' devotion might be diverted to an object other than the Ḥaram and its appurtenances, which would affect their religious dignity adversely.<sup>246</sup>

Due to such distinctions the people of Quraysh were called *Hums*, that is, orthodox followers of the religion. References to it are found in heathen poetry .

For example 'Amr b. Ma'dikarib says:—

أعباس لو كانت شيارا جيانا      بثليث ما ناصيت بعدى الأحامسا<sup>246</sup>

Similarly, Laqīṭ b. Zurārah al-Dārimī says:—

أجزم إليك أنها بنو عيس      المعشر الجنة فى القوم الحمس<sup>247</sup>

Al-Mu'aṭṭal al-Hudhalī also refers to it in the following line:—

إخالكم من أسرة قعمية      إذا نسكوا لا يشهدون المعرفا<sup>248</sup>

In this respect another distinctive character of the Quraysh referred to in pre-Islamic poetry is that they were entitled to use tents of red leather—a privilege that no other tribe was allowed. Hence

they were called the people of the red tents and they were very proud of this. Al-A'shā has referred to it in the following lines :—

بأكرتها حولي ذوو—الأكال من بكر بن وائل  
أهل القباب الحمر و—النعم المؤبل والقنابل<sup>249</sup>

Similarly, 'Abīd b. al-Abras says :—

أهل القباب الحمر و—النعم المؤبل والمدامه<sup>250</sup>

### Dedication of children to the Ka'bah

Though the different services relating to the *Ka'bah* and its pilgrims were assigned to different houses of Quraysh and each of them would perform its assignment with great interest,<sup>251</sup> yet sometimes people would specially dedicate their children to serve the *Ka'bah*.<sup>252</sup> The following verses of 'Umm Ghawth bear testimony to this practice :—

إني جعلت رب من بنيه ربيطة بمكة العلية  
فباركن لي بها إليه واجعله لي من صالح البريه<sup>253</sup>

(I offered, O my Lord, one of my sons to be devoted to the service of the Lofty Mecca, so bless me, in lieu thereof, with your bounty and accord him a place among the righteous beings.)

### Institution of the prohibited months

For the performance of the *Hajj*, certain months were fixed during which all forms of incursion, fighting and plundering were forbidden. These months were *Dhu-al-Qa'dah*, *Dhu-al-Hijjah*, *Muharram* and *Rajab* and they were called *al-Ashhur-al-Hurum* (prohibited months) and the rest were called *al-Ashhur-al-Hill* (lawful months).<sup>254</sup> They were observed as sacred and peaceful months during which people would set aside all their enmity, grudge and vengeance. During these months the Arabs cultivated friendship, negotiated treaties and lived in amity. As a matter of fact, in the existing environment of tribal feuds, the observance of these sacred months was quite necessary to enable the pilgrims to perform the *Hajj* peacefully. It was, therefore, a very important institution observed by the pagan Arabs and references to it are frequently found in heathen poetry. Here are a few verses :—

Labīd says :—

دمن تجرم بعد عهد أنيسها حجج خلون حلالها و حرامها<sup>256</sup>

Zuhayr says :—

جعلن القنان عن يمين و حزنه و كم بالقنان من محل و محرم<sup>258</sup>

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Al-Mu'attal al-Hudhali also says :—

وقد دخل الشهر الحرام وخليت تهامة تهوى باديها لهواتها<sup>257</sup>

The heathen poets have also referred to it in the form of oath as the following verses show :—

Hārith b. 'Abbād says :—

كلا ورب الراقصات إلى منى كلا ورب الحل والإحرام<sup>258</sup>

Muhalhil says :—

قتلوا كليباً ثم قالوا أربعوا كذبوا ورب الحل والإحرام<sup>259</sup>

Muhalhil again says :—

قتلوا ربهم كليباً سفاهاً ثم قالوا ما إن نخاف عويلاً

كذبوا والحرام و الحل حتى يسلب الخدر بيضه المحجولاً<sup>260</sup>

### Nasf'

In regard to the observance of these sacred months, there was a peculiar practice called *Nasf'* (the transposing of sacred months), Pagan Arabs would, sometimes, declare that one of the sacred months would be observed just like an ordinary month in which war would be lawful, and then in order to adjust the reckoning of the months of the year and to complete the full number of four sacred months, they would replace it by anyone of the lawful months and observe it as a sacred month<sup>261</sup>. Generally, they would do so when they wanted to gain an undue advantage by waging war against their enemies. The pronouncers of *Nasf'* were naturally the great chiefs of powerful tribes and this was considered an act of pride for them. This has been reflected in pre-Islamic poetry. As for example, 'Umayr b. Qays has referred to it in the following verses in which while praising the people of his tribe he has very proudly mentioned that they had the power to render the lawful months as prohibited ones :—

لقد علمت معد أن قومي كرام الناس إن لهم كراماً  
فأى الناس فاتونا بوتر وأى الناس لم نعلك لجاماً  
ألسنا الناسين على معد شهور الحل نجعلها حراماً<sup>262</sup>

“Ma'add knows that my people are the most honourable of men and have noble ancestors.

Who has escaped us when we seek vengeance and whom have we not made to change the bit?

Are we not Ma'add's calendar-makers, making profane months sacred?”<sup>263</sup>

**Some sacred places**

There were also certain places within the consecrated zone as well as outside it, which were regarded as quite sacred and the pilgrims would halt there to perform certain ceremonies. Some of these places such as *Minā*, *Muzdalifah*, *'Arafāt*, *Safā* and *Marwah*<sup>264</sup> were very famous and to halt there to perform the prescribed ceremonies was quite obligatory for the pilgrims. These places have also been referred to in heathen poetry :

For example, al-A'shā says:—

<sup>265</sup> حلفت برب الراقصات إلى منى إذا مخرم جاوزته بعد مخرم

In the following line, Ghanīyah al-A'rābiyah has sworn by *Ṣafā* and *Marwah* :

<sup>266</sup> أحلف بالمروة حقا والصفاء أنك خير من تفاريق العصا

The following line of 'Amr b. Qamī'ah suggests that the different tribes had chosen different places for halting and performing ceremonies:—

<sup>267</sup> ومنزلة بالحج أخرى عرفتها لها نفعة لا يستطيع بروحها

The following verse ascribed to Abū Ṭālib is also noteworthy in this regard:—

<sup>268</sup> وأشواط بين المروتين إلى الصفاء وما فيهما من صورة و تخايل

The above verse refers to the ceremony of running between the two hills, *'Safā* and *Marwah*, which was observed seven times and was one of the main features of the Ḥajj.

The following verses, which contain a number of sacred places, are also noteworthy:—

يا لقصي مظلوم بضاعته  
بين المقام و بين الركن والحجر  
أقائم من بنى سهم بدمتهم  
أم ذاهب في ضلال مال معتمر<sup>269</sup>  
بيطن مكة نائي الدار و النفر

In the context of these verses, it is interesting to note that some one of the tribe of *Banū-Sahm* purchased some articles in Mecca from a man of Yemen who had gone there to perform the Ḥajj. The man was not paid the full price, so he composed the above verses protesting against the misbehaviour he received in the sacred place of Mecca to the people of Quraysh, the custodians of the *Ka'bah*. It may also be noted that the same incident ultimately resulted in bringing about the well-known alliance called *Ḥilf al-Fudūl*.<sup>270</sup>

### Circumambulation

The other particular feature of the rites pertaining to the *Hajj* was *Tawāf* (the circumambulation), which was performed seven times around the *Ka'bah*. References to it are also found in heathen poetry. As for example, Zuhayr says:—

<sup>271</sup> فأقسمت بالبيت الذي طاف حواه رجال بنوه من قريش وجرهم

The following line, which occurs in the *Mu'allaqah* of Imru' al-Qays, also deserves to be mentioned in this connection:—

<sup>272</sup> فمن لنا سرب كأن نعاجه عذاري دوار في لاه مذيل

In the above line the poet has compared wild cows with virgin girls performing circumambulation in their long trailing robes around *Duwār*. Incidentally, it also suggests that this practice was not exclusively peculiar to the *Ka'bah*.

The following verse composed by Waraqah or some other pre-Islamic poet may be cited in this context:—

<sup>273</sup> كفى حزنا كرتى عليه كأنه لقى بين أيدي الطائفين حريم

This verse refers to the custom of performing the circumambulation in a state of nudity. It is said that in pre-Islamic days some people would perform this ceremony quite naked.<sup>274</sup> Several explanations have been given in regard to this practice. One of them is that the people of Mecca who were called *Hums* (the orthodox) had enjoined upon the pilgrims of other places that they should not perform circumambulation in their own clothes. Hence they would purchase or borrow the clothes of the *Hums* for this purpose and those who could not afford had to perform this rite in a state of nakedness. The other version says that some people would do so by themselves, because they did not consider the clothes in which they had committed sins befitting the observance of such a sacred ritual.<sup>275</sup> The clothes which were taken off were not put on again and were called *Laqā* (thrown) as the above-mentioned verse indicates.

### Sacrifices

The custom of sacrificing animals was also one of the main features of the *Hajj*. Though it was not confined to the *Ka'bah* as similar sacrifices were made at other places of worship also, yet it was a very important part of the rite of *Hajj*. Pilgrims would, generally, bring their victims with them. In this respect, it was a common practice that such animals were marked with certain distinctive signs to show that they were intended to be sacrificed in Mecca, so that they might

not be stolen on their way to Mecca. For this purpose, they were collared with special hands and this was known as *Taqlūd*. A mild wound was also inflicted on their humps from which blood would flow and this act was called *Ish'ār*. Mention of these customs is found in heathen poetry. As for example Sha's, the brother of 'Alqamah, says :—

<sup>276</sup> حلفت بما ضم الحجيج إلى منى وما ثج من نحر الهدى المقاد

Likewise, 'Āriq al-Ṭā'ī says :—

<sup>277</sup> حلفت بهدى مشعر بكراته تخب بصحراء الغبيط درادقه

The following verses of 'Ikramah b. 'Āmir may also be mentioned here :—

<sup>278</sup> لاهم أخز الأسود بن مقصود الأخذ الهجمة فيها التقليد

### Throwing of stones

Stone-throwing was also one of the rites performed by the pilgrims at Mecca. Every one was required to throw seven small stones or pebbles at three places. This ceremony was observed in imitation of the action of Abraham, about whom it is said that while he was taking his son to sacrifice him in the name of Allāh, he was interrupted at these three places by Satan and every time he drove him off by throwing stones at him. Allusions to this custom are also found in pre-Islamic poetry. A verse containing reference to it is as follows :

<sup>279</sup> فأقسم بالذى قد كان ربي وأنصاب لدى الجمرات مفر

The following verse of Ḥudhayfah b. Anas also contains a reference to it :—

<sup>280</sup> لأدركم شعث النواصي كأنهم سوابق حجاج توافى المجرأ

Similarly, the following verse of Shanfarā is noteworthy in this respect :—

<sup>281</sup> قتلنا قتيلا مهديا بملبد جمار منى وسط الحجيج المصوت

### Pilgrim-cry

The above verse of Shanfarā also refers to the calling of *Talbiyah*—a kind of pilgrim-cry—which comprised prayer to God. It contained certain words which were pronounced loudly by the pilgrims at intervals. The following verse of Nābighah al-Dhubyanī also indicates the same :—

<sup>282</sup> فلا عمر الذي أثنى عليه وقد رفع الحجيج من الإلال

### Covering of the Ka'bah

Certain verses are ascribed to Tubba' As'ad Abū Karib, the Himyarite king of Yemen, who performed the Ḥajj while he passed by Mecca on his way back to Yemen from his great expedition. These verses contain a description of several ceremonies relating to the Ḥajj. Moreover, they refer to the covering of the Ka'bah. Accordingly, some historians say that the first covering was laid upon the Ka'bah by Tubba'.<sup>283</sup> However, it is evident that the Ka'bah was dressed with some covering in pre-Islamic days as well. Here are the verses:—

وكسونا البيت الذي حرم الله — ملاء معضدا و برودا  
و نحرنا بالشعب ستة ألف فترى الناس نحوهم وورودا  
و أمرنا أن لا تقرب للكعبة — ميثا و لا دما مصفودا  
ثم طفنا بالبيت سبعا و سبعا و سجدنا عند المقام سجودا  
و أقمنا فيه من الشهر سبعا وجعلنا إياه إقليدا<sup>284</sup>

The following verse, ascribed to Abū Ṭālib, also contains a reference to it:—

وأحضرت عند البيت رهطى وإخوتى و أمسكت من أثوابه بالوصائل<sup>285</sup>

“Unto the House (of God) I brought my men and my kin,  
And held fast to the veils of its curtains.”<sup>285</sup>

### Objects of the Hajj.

The following verses of Nābighah al-Dhubyānī throw some light on the objects of the pilgrimage to the Ka'bah:—

حياك ربي فإنا لا يحل لنا لهو النساء و إن الدين قد عزما  
مشمريين على خوص مزئمة نرجو الإله و نرجو البر و الطعام<sup>287</sup>

In these lines the poet has replied to his mistress, who having seen him preparing for the journey had tried to dissuade him by mentioning its hardships. Wishing her long life he says to her that it was not lawful for them to amuse themselves with women after they had resolved to perform the Ḥajj at Mecca riding upon the bridled she-camels with sunken eyes. He adds that by it they expected to gain the pleasure of God and hoped for favours and provisions from Him.

### The Event of the Elephant

At this stage we should take note of the verses composed in regard to the famous ‘Event of the Elephant’<sup>288</sup> which occurred about the year



570 A.D., i.e. some forty years before the advent of Islam. The Holy Qur'an<sup>280</sup> has described this event very briefly. It was but natural for the poets also to refer to this extraordinary event. Accordingly, we find a number of verses dealing with it in different ways.

The following verses are ascribed to 'Abd al-Muṭṭalib in which he prayed to God to protect the Ka'bah and its guardians against the enemies:—

لاهم إن المرء يمنع حله فامنع حلالك  
لا يغلبن صليبهم و محالهم أبدا محالك  
فلئن فعلت فإنه أمر يتيم به فعالك<sup>290</sup>

“O God, defend thy neighbouring folk even  
as a man his gear defendeth !  
Let not their Cross and guileful plans  
defeat the plans thyself intendeth !  
But if thou make it so, 'tis well ;  
according to thy will it endeth.”<sup>291</sup>

Likewise, the following verses of 'Ikramah b. 'Āmir also contain a prayer to God to humiliate the enemies:—

لاهم أخز الأسود بن مقصود الأخذ الهجمة فيها التقليد  
بين حراء و ثبير فالبيد يحبسها وهي أولات التطريد  
فضمها إلى طماطم سود أخفره يارب و أنت محمود<sup>292</sup>

Nufayl b. Ḥabīb has referred to this event as a favour of God thanking and glorifying Him over it in the following lines:—

الأحييت عنا يا ردينا نعمنا كم مع الإصباح عينا  
ردينة لورأيت فلاتريه لدى جنب المحصب مارأينا  
إذا لعذرتنى و حمدت أمرى و لم تأسى على ما فات بينا  
حمدت الله إذ أبصرت طيرا و خفت حجارة تلقى علينا  
و كل القوم يسأل عن نفيل كأن على للحبشان دينا<sup>293</sup>

“Our greetings, Rudayna !  
You rejoice our eyes this morning !  
If you had seen, but you will not see, Rudayna,  
What we saw on al-Muhassab's side  
You would have forgiven me and praised my action  
And not have been vexed at what has passed and gone,  
I praised God, when I saw the birds,  
And I feared the stones that might fall upon us.  
Every one was asking for Nufail  
As though I owed the Abyssinians a debt.”<sup>294</sup>

It is said that Nufayl, the author of the above verses, had resisted Abraha on his way to Mecca, but having been defeated he was a captive in the hand of Abraha. So he saw the destruction of the Abyssinians with his own eyes and it has been described by him in the above verses.

‘Abdullah b. al-Zibi‘rā has mentioned this event praising the dignity of the *Ka‘bah* in the following lines:—

تنكوا عن بطن مكة إنها كانت قديما لايرام حريمها  
لم تخلق الشعري ليالى حرمت إذ لاعزيز من الأنام يرومها  
سائل أمير الحبش عنها مارأت واسوف ينبي الجاهلين عليهما  
ستون ألفا لم يؤوبوا أرضهم بل لم يعيش بعد الإياب سقيمها  
كانت بها عاد وجرهم قبلهم والله من فوق العباد يقيمها<sup>295</sup>

“Withdraw from the vale of Mecca for  
From of old its sanctuary has not been violated.  
When it was sanctified, Sirius had not been created,  
No mighty man has ever attacked it.  
Ask the commander of the Abyssinians what he saw.  
He who knows what happened will tell the ignorant.  
Sixty thousand men returned not home,  
Nor did their sick recover after their return.  
‘Ād and Jurhum were (in Mecca) before them.  
God has set it above all creatures.”<sup>296</sup>

Labīd has also mentioned it in this way:—

والفيل يوم عرفات كعكما إذ أزمع العجم به ما أزمعا  
نادى مناد ربه فأسمعا فذب عن بلاد و ورعا  
و حابس الحاسر و المقنعا و أفلت الحبش بخزي موجعا<sup>297</sup>

The following verses of Abū Qays b. al-Aslat are also noteworthy in this connection:—

فقوموا فصلوا ربكم و تمسحوا بأركان هذا البيت بين الأخاب  
فعدكم منه بلاء مصدق غداة أبي يكسوم هادي الكتائب  
كتيبته بالسهل تمسى ورجله على القاذفات في رؤوس المناقب  
فلما أتاكم نصر ذى العرش ردهم جنود المايك بين ساف و حاصب  
فولوا سراعا هارين ولم يؤب إلى أهله ملجيش غير عصائب<sup>298</sup>

"Rise and pray to your Lord and stroke  
 The corners of this temple between the mountains.  
 He gave you a convincing test  
 On the day of Abu Yaksum leader of the squadrons.  
 His cavalry was in the plain, his infantry  
 Upon the passes of the distant hills.  
 When the help of the Lord of the throne reached you,  
 His armies repulsed them pelting them and covering  
 them with dust  
 Quickly they turned tail in flight, and none  
 But a few returned to his people from the army."<sup>299</sup>

In the above lines, the poet calls upon the Quraysh to worship God, recalling to their memory His favours on them on the occasion of the event of the Elephant.

Similarly, Umayyah b. Abi-al-Salt has also referred to it in the following lines calling it a sign of God :—

إن آيات ربنا ثاقبات لا يمارى فيهن إلا الكفور  
 خلق الليل و النهار فكلّ مستبين حسابيه مقذور  
 ثم يجلو النهار رب رحيم بمهابة شعاعها منشور  
 حبس الفيل بالمغمس حتى ظلّ يحبو كأنه معقور  
 لازما حلقة الجران كما قـطر من صخر ككبك محذور  
 حوله من ملوك كندة أبطا—ل ملاويث في الحروب صقور  
 خلفوه ثم ابدعوا جميعا كلهم عظم ساقه مكسور  
 كلّ دين يوم القيامة عند—الله إلا دين الحنيفة بور<sup>800</sup>

"The signs of our Lord are illuminating.  
 None but infidels doubt them.  
 Night and Day were created and all is  
 abundantly plain, its reckoning is fixed.

Then the merciful Lord revealed the day  
 By the sun whose rays are seen everywhere.  
 He held the elephant fast in al-Mughammas until  
 It sank to the ground as though it were hamstrung  
 Its trunk curled ring-wise ; it lay motionless as ;  
 A boulder flung down from Kabkab's rocks.  
 Round it Kinda's kings, warriors,  
 Mighty hawks in war.

They abandoned it and departed headlong  
 All of them ; the shank of each one of them was broken.  
 In God's sight at the resurrection every religion  
 But that of the Hanif is doomed to perdition."<sup>301</sup>

## 6. HANIFITE POETS

So far we have traced the trends of Hanifism as embodied in Hanifite poetry in general. Let us now study the Hanifite poetry in particular. It has already been stated in the beginning of the present chapter that some of those called Hanifs were also good poets. A considerable number of verses is found ascribed to them and almost all of it bears a clear stamp of religious sentiment. These Hanifs formed an organized body, all the same their religious ideas were similar to a great extent. The basic thought cherished by them was faith in the Unity of God and resurrection, and their common activity was abstinance from idolatry and polytheistic practices prevalent in those days.

### (a) Zayd b. 'Amr b. Nufayl

Among the Hanifs, Zayd b. 'Amr b. Nufayl<sup>302</sup> was a very distinguished person. He was essentially a monotheist and hated idolatry. Accordingly, he was quite aloof from the religion of the heathen Arabs and even prevented people from taking part in idolatrous practices. He said, "O Quraysh, None of you is follower of the religion of Abraham except myself." These words of his also suggest that the Quraysh claimed to be the followers of the religion of Abraham probably in order to justify their position as the custodians of the *Ka'bah*, built by Abraham.

The verses ascribed to Zayd b. 'Amr fully reveal his religious thoughts. A few lines of one of his poems are as follows:—

أرباً واحداً أم ألف رب      أدين إذا تقسمت الأمور  
عزلت اللات والعزى جميعاً      كذلك يفعل الجلد الصبور  
فلا العزى أدين ولا ابتئها      ولا صنمى بنى عمرو أزور  
ولا هبلأ أدين و كان رباً      لنا فى الدهر إذ حلمى يسير<sup>308</sup>

The above verses clearly bear out his belief in monotheism and hatred of idolatry. Besides, they also point out that idolatry was quite common in those days. Accordingly, in his early days Zayd had himself accepted the great idol, Hubal, as his Lord; but when he reached maturity, his inner insight led him to realize the evils of idolatry. He gave up the worship of all the idols and turned towards the worship of the One God. But it is evident that it was not an easy task to go against the traditional cult or religion of the nation, as he himself has described that only a courageous person could take such a step.

In the same poem, Zayd further says that God destroyed many people whose actions were bad and saved others on account of their good deeds. Then he invites his people to adopt right conduct so that they might not perish. In the end he refers to the idea of resurrection and mentions Paradise as an abode for pious men and the fire of Hell for the infidels.

The last few verses of the poem are as follows :—

فتقوى الله ربكم احفظوها متى ما تحفظوها لا تبور  
تري الأبرار دارهم جنان و للكفار جامية سكير  
و خزي في الحياة وإن يموتوا يلا قوا ما تضيق به الصدور<sup>304</sup>

“So keep to the fear of God your Lord;  
While you hold to that you will not perish.  
You will see the pious living in gardens,  
While for the infidels hell fire is burning.  
Shamed in life, when they die  
Their breasts will contract in anguish.”<sup>305</sup>

The following verse of Zayd, which reveals his belief in the Day of Reckoning, may also be taken into consideration :—

فلن تكون لنفس منك واقية يوم الحساب إذا ما يجمع البشر<sup>306</sup>

Zayd did not only refrain from the religion of his people, but he publicly condemned it and preached to the people to abandon it. This bold step of his displeased many persons and they began to annoy him in different ways. His uncle, Khaṭṭāb, also got angry with him and persecuted him because of his abstinence from the ancestral practices. But Zayd was not deterred by these persecutions and persisted in his way of thinking and his actions. Thereupon, Khaṭṭāb expelled him from Mecca. If Zayd, sometime, entered the town secretly, people informed Khaṭṭāb and he at once turned him out even by force. In fact, they feared lest other persons should join hands with him and thus corrupt the ancestral system. His wife, Ṣafīyah bint al-Ḥaḍramawī was also opposed to him and she informed Khaṭṭāb of his activities. Zayd makes mention of the illtreatment which he received at the hands of his uncle and wife in a poem the opening line of which runs as follows :—

لا تجبسنى في الهوا . . . ن صفي مادابي و دابه<sup>307</sup>

Although Zayd discarded the common religion of the time, he also claimed to worship the Lord of Abraham, he did not really know how to worship God. He, therefore, said, “O God, had I known

way in which thou liketh most to be worshipped, I would have worshipped thee so, but I do not know that " After saying this, he bowed his head upon the palms of his hands. He had a great urge to seek the religion of Abraham and he actually undertook long journeys for this purpose. During these journeys he met a number of monks and Rabbis and inquired of them about Hanifism, the true religion of Abraham, but they could not satisfy him. He, therefore, accepted neither Christianity nor Judaism, as some other Hanifs did. He continued searching for the true religion of Abraham and preaching to people to abstain from idolatry. His whole life, thus, appears to be full of religious activities. It is, therefore, quite natural for his poetry to contain deep religious feeling. Here are a few verses :—

وأسلمت وجهي لمن أسلمت له الأرض تحمل صخرا ثقالا  
دحاها فلما رآها استوت على الماء أرسى عليها الجبالا  
وأسلمت وجهي لمن أسلمت له المزن تحمل عذبا زلالا  
إذا هي سيقت إلى بلدة أطاعت فصبت عليها سجالا<sup>308</sup>

"I submit myself to Him to whom  
The earth which bears mighty rocks is subject.  
He spread it out and when He saw it was settled  
Upon the waters, He fixed the mountains on it.  
I submit myself to Him to whom clouds which bear  
Sweet water are subject.  
When they are borne along to a land  
They obediently pour copious rain upon it."<sup>309</sup>

Likewise, there is another poem ascribed to Zayd and it also contains conspicuously religious elements. Some of the opening verses of it are as follows :—

إلى الله أهدى مدحتي وثنائيا وقولا رصينا لا ينسى الدهر باقيا  
إلى الملك الأعلى الذي ليس فوقه إله ولا رب يكون مدانيا  
ألا أيها الإنسان إياك والردى فإنك لا تخفى من الله خافيا  
وإياك لا تجعل مع الله غيره فإن سبيل الرشد أصبح باديا<sup>310</sup>

"To God I give my praise and thanksgiving,  
A sure word that will not fail as long as time lasts,  
To the heavenly king—there is no God beyond Him  
And no lord can draw near to Him.  
Beware, O men, of what follows death !  
You can hide nothing from God.  
Beware of putting another beside God,  
For the upright way has become clear."<sup>311</sup>

The poem in which the above verses occur is quite long and the whole of it is full of religious feeling. It should, however, be noted at this place that the same poem has been ascribed to 'Umayyah b. Abi-al-Salt and it appears in his *Dīwān*.<sup>312</sup> Probably, both of them had composed poems in the same rhyme and metre and the verses, later, got intermixed. The last verses of the poem, which contain the description of several apostles seem to be the composition of 'Umayyah as they bear a marked resemblance to his poetry; but as for the preliminary verses, they may be the work of Zayd.

### (b) Waraqah b. Nawfal

The other notable figure among the Hanifs is Waraqah b. Nawfal.<sup>313</sup> He also disagreed with the Quraysh as regards worshipping idols and practising polytheistic rites. He realized through his inner vision that the religion of Abraham was deformed and got lost in the course of time, and hence he also travelled seeking it. He met several religious men and studied various scriptures. At last, he embraced Christianity, but he was not quite satisfied with it and kept on searching for the true Hanifism.

Waraqah also composed several poems which bear clear marks of religious character. One of them is as follows :—

لقد نصحت لأقوام و قلت لهم	أنا النذير فلا يغركم أحد
لا تعبدن إلهاً غير خالقكم	فإن دعيتم فقولوا دونه جدد
سبحان ذي العرش لأشياء يعادله	رب البرية فرد واحد صمد
سبحانه ثم سبحانا نعوذ به	و قبلنا سبح الجودي والجمد
مسخر كل من تحت السماء له	لا ينبغي أن يناوى ملكه أحد
لم تغن عن هرمز يوماً خزائنه	والخلد قد حاولت عادفما خلدوا
ولا سليمان إذ دان الشعوب له	والجن والإنس تجرى بينها البرد
لأشياء مما ترى تبقى بشاشته	يبقى الإله ويودي المال والولد <sup>314</sup>

In this poem Waraqah invites the people to worship only the One God, Who is the Creator and Sustainer of the universe and to Whom nothing is equal. Then praising God, he refers to death and says that nobody can escape it; even powerful kings like Solomon and Hurmuz could not survive it. He further says that every thing will perish and only God will remain for ever.

There are several other poems<sup>316</sup> ascribed to Waraqah, which point out that he was earnestly waiting for the appearance of a new apostle. They also reveal that after he had been told by his cousin, Khadijah, who was the wife of Mohammad, the Prophet of Islam, of some peculiar features of his pre-prophetic life, he was almost certain that Mohammad would be the new apostle. A number of verses in these poems contain praise of God, description of resurrection, Paradise and Hell, predestination and the Decree of God and the like. A few verses of this type are as follows :—

و إن يك حقا يا خديجة فاعلمى      حديثك إياها فأحمد مرسل  
و جبريل يأتيه و ميكال فاعلمى      من الله وحى يشرح الصدر منزل  
يفوز به من فاز فيها بتوبة      ويشقى به العانى الغرير المضلل  
فريقان منهم فرقة فى جناه      وأخرى بأجواز الجحيم تغلل  
فسبحان من تهوى الرياح بأمره      ومن هو فى الأيام ماشاء يفعل  
و من عرشه فوق السموات كلها      وأقضاؤه فى خلقه لا تبدل<sup>316</sup>

The authenticity of these poems may be doubted by some people; but in view of the character and activities of Waraqah, it is not improbable that they may, wholly or at least partly, be genuine.

Some reports<sup>317</sup> mention that Waraqah was alive when the Prophet had made known his Divine Mission and that he expressed his great joy and satisfaction over it and had desired that he might be allowed to live for some time more to help the Prophet in his struggle for the reformation of religion and society.

An elegy ascribed to Waraqah also deserves special attention. It was composed at the death of Zayd b. 'Amr b. Nufayl. It is said that, on one occasion, when the people of Quraysh were celebrating a feast around an idol, the two persons, Zayd and Waraqah and two others namely 'Uthmān b. al-Ḥuwayrith and 'Ubaydullāh b. Jaḥsh assembled in secret to have a talk regarding the religious condition of the people.<sup>318</sup> The way in which they assembled and talked with one another clearly suggests that there were several isolated individuals who disliked the religious practices observed by the Quraysh, but none of whom had the courage to open his lips against it. However, in the said assembly, every one of the four opened out his heart to the others and declared that the religion of Abraham had been corrupted and the people had gone astray. In the same sitting they also resolved to make a search for the true religion. In later days, no such meeting of the four was



heard of, but it seems that Zayd and Waraqah continued to meet one another at intervals and it was probably due to this association that after the death of Zayd, Waraqah composed a threnody, because by his death he had lost a kindred spirit.

In this elegy, Waraqah while praising Zayd, says that by forsaking idols and adopting monotheism he escaped from the fire of Hell and reached an honourable place where he would meet Abraham, the friend of Allāh. This poem fully reflects his religious feelings. It runs as follows :—

رشدت وأنعمت ابن عمرو وإنما	تجنبت تنورا من النار حاميا
بدينك ربا ليس رب كمثلها	وتركك أوثان الطواغى كما هيأ
وإدراكك الدين الذي قد طلبته	ولم تك عن توحيد ربك ساهيا
فأصبحت في دار كريم مقامها	تعلى فيها بالكرامة لاهيا
تلاقى خليل الله فيها ولم تكن	من الناس جبارا إلى النار هاويا
وقد تدرك الإنسان رحمة ربه	ولو كان تحت الأرض سبعين واديا <sup>319</sup>

(c) **Abū-Qays Širmah b. abī-Anas**

Abū-Qays Širmah b. abī-Anas is also reckoned among the Ḥanifs and several verses of religious character are ascribed to him. He is said to have abandoned idols. He also intended to embrace Christianity, but later on he gave up the idea. Even then, he lived like monks and wore sack-cloth. He said that he worshipped the Lord of Abraham. He performed his prayers in a house which he treated as a sacred place of worship and did not allow any unclean person to enter it. He witnessed the advent of Islam in his old age and became a Muslim.<sup>320</sup>

In his pre-Islamic days, he composed several poems which reflect his religious ideas. A few verses of a poem are as follows :—

سبحوا الله شرق كل صباح	طلعت شمسه و كل هلال
عالم السر و البيان لدينا	ليس ما قال ربنا بضلال
وله الطير تستريد و تأوى	في وكور من آمنات الجبال
وله الوحش بالفلاة تراها	في حقاف وفي ظلال الرمال
وله هودت يهود و دانت	كل دين إذا ذكرت عضال
وله شمس النصرارى وقاموا	كل عيد لربهم و احتفال
وله الراهب الحبيس تراه	رهن بؤس و كان ناعم بال <sup>321</sup>

“Praise God at every dawn

When His sun rises and at the new moon.

He knows what is clear and not clear to us.

What our Lord says is without error.

His are the birds which fly to and fro and shelter

In nests in their mountain retreats.

His are the wild creatures of the desert

Which you see on the dunes and in the shade of sand hills.

Him the Jews worship and follow

Every dreary custom you can think of.

Him the Christians worship and keep

Every feast and festival to their Lord.

His is the self-denying monk you see,

A prisoner of misery though once right happy.”<sup>322</sup>

In the same poem there are some verses in which he preaches to the people to lead a virtuous life to abstain from evils, to help orphans and to follow the right conduct.

#### (d) Umayyah b. abi-al-Şalt

Umayyah b. abi-al-Şalt<sup>323</sup> was the greatest religious poet of the pre-Islamic period. Several long poems composed by him deal exclusively with religious topics. The poetry of Umayyah, in fact, contains more religious elements than that of any other pre-Islamic poet and it would be quite appropriate to regard it as religious poetry. It should, therefore, be studied in some greater detail.

Umayyah is the only poet among the Hanifs, whose verses are extant today in considerable number. It is, probably, due to the fact that he remained alive after the advent of Islam for a considerable period of time and that his poetry was in conformity with the doctrines of Islam. Accordingly, it was recited even by the Muslims. This is borne out by the tradition narrated by Sharīd b. Suwayd. On one occasion, Sharīd recited to the Prophet a hundred lines of Umayyah on the request of the Prophet.<sup>324</sup> The remarks made by the prophet, after having listened to the verses, are also noteworthy. The Prophet said about Umayyah that he would soon become a Muslim. According to another version, the Prophet remarked that Umayyah was a Muslim in his poetry.

Like other Hanifs, Umayyah also forsook idols. He lived an ascetic life and wore coarse clothes like monks. He also travelled in search of the true religion and visited various monasteries where he met several monks and religious leaders and conversed with them on religious matters. He is said to have studied religious books, as he could read and write. In this way, he acquired considerable knowledge regarding the teachings and doctrines of the prevalent religions and also developed religious ideas of his own.

We may also take into account the report<sup>326</sup> which says that certain monks, after listening to his religious ideas, told him that the signs of apostleship were found in him, and hence he cherished a great desire to become an apostle and a religious leader of his people. Therefore when the Prophet of Islam announced his apostleship, he became jealous and opposed him. This desire of Umayyah is also reflected in his poetry as for example the following verse, in which he has clearly expressed his wish for the appearance of an Arab Prophet who would inform the people about the particulars of the life after death :—

ألا نبى لنا منا فيخبرنا ما بعد غايتنا من رأس مجرانا<sup>326</sup>

We shall now mention certain basic religious topics which have been dealt with by him in his poems and quote a few relevant verses.

### Power of God

First of all, our attention is drawn towards repeated description of the majesty and power of God. While praising Him, he often refers to the subject of creation and mentions numerous natural phenomena such as heavens, earth, sun, moon, trees, mountains and certain animals as having been created by Him. This subject is a recurrent one in his poetry. In this connection, the following verses will serve as illustrations :—

إله العالمين و كل أرض و رب الراسيات من الجبال  
بناها و ابتى سبعا شادا بلا عمد يرين ولا رجال  
وسواها و زينها بنور من الشمس المضيئة والهلل  
و من شهب تلالا في دجاها مراميهها أشد من النصال<sup>327</sup>

In these lines he says that God is the Lord of all the worlds, earth and mountains; He made the heavens stand without pillars and decorated them with shining sun, moon and stars.

In the same poem he further says that God, after splitting the earth, brought forth fountains and made the rivers of sweet water flow and in this way He supplied the means of cultivation. In the last line of the poem he mentions that the world with all these things would perish and none would remain alive for ever except the Majesty of God. A few verses from another poem run as follows :—

مجدوا الله و هو للمجد أهل ربا في السماء أمسى كبيرا  
ذلك المنشى الحجارة والمو...تى وأحياهم و كان جديرا  
بالبناء الأعلى الذي سبق النا...س وسوى فوق السماء سريرا<sup>328</sup>

In these lines the poet advises the people to exalt and magnify God, as He is the Greatest and deserves exaltation. Then, in order to show His greatness, he describes that He created mountains and the sky and He brings the dead to life. In the same poem he further mentions the names of several animals as having been created by God such as bee, crocodile, deer, ox, lion, elephant, wolf, pig and crow. By such descriptions he obviously means to say that the creation of all of them reveals the greatness of God, and hence He must be praised and glorified.

### Attributes of God

While praising God, Umayyah often mentions several attributes of God which deserve to be taken into consideration. A few lines of a poem are as follows :—

لك الحمد والنعماء والملك ربنا      فلا شيء أعلى منك مجدا و أمجد  
ملك على عرش السماء مهيمن      لعزته تعنو الوجوه و تسجد  
عليه حجاب النور والنور حوله      وأنهار نور حوله تتوقد  
فلا بصر يسمو إليه بطرفه      و دون حجاب النور خلق مؤيد<sup>329</sup>

In the above verses, he says that praise, grace and dominion all belong to God and nothing is greater than He; He is the most powerful and all heads are prostrated before Him; there is a curtain of light over Him and He is surrounded by lights from every side, hence no eye can see Him. In the same way, the poet praises God throughout the poem, which is quite long. Some more lines of this poem may be quoted here :—

فسيهان من لا يعرف الخلق قدره      و من هو فوق العرش فرد موحد  
ملك السموات الشداد و أرضها      وليس بشيء عن قضاء تأود  
هو الله باري الخلق والخلق كلهم      إماء له طوعا جميعا و أعبد  
و أنى يكون الخلق كالخالق الذي      يدوم و يبقى والخلية تنفذ<sup>330</sup>

In these lines, while praising God he says that He is glorified and none can estimate His power; He is One and is exclusively established on the throne of authority; He is the master of the mighty heavens and earth and none can defy His decree; He is Allah, evolver of the Universe and all the creatures are His servants; how can the created be equal to the Creator, as the Creator will remain for ever and the created will perish ?

In the same way expressing high praise and glory of God, he last turns towards the description of the end of the world and decay the earthly pleasures and reminds himself of death so that he may not sit idle and neglectful.

The above verses clearly show that Umayyah was very fond of praising God and singing hymns to Him and he was never tired of it.

### Praying to God

Besides, several good pieces of prayer are also found in his poems for while praising God, he sometimes begins to pray to Him and goes on composing numerous verses in this strain. As for example, in certain poem after glorifying God he mentions death and then begins to pray to Him in this way :—

يارب لا تجعلني كافرا أبدا واجعل سريرة قلبي الدهر إيمانا  
واخلط به بنيتي واخلط به بشري واللحم والدم ما عمرت إنسانا<sup>331</sup>

(O my Lord, do not make me an infidel and fill the inside of my heart with faith; and also mingle it with my body, my skin, flesh and blood so long as I live as a man.)

In another poem he prays in the following way :—

رب إن تعف فالمعافاة ظني أو تعاقب فلم تعاقب برياً  
إن أواخذ بما اجترمت فأني سوف ألقى من العذاب فرياً  
رب لا تحرمني جنة الخلد وكن رب بي رؤوفاً حفيماً<sup>332</sup>

(O my Lord, if you forgive me, this is what I hope of you and if you punish, you will not punish one who is innocent if I am punished for what I have committed, I shall receive a severe torture; O my Lord, do not deprive me of paradise and be kind and merciful to me.)

### Life after Death

Another religious topic which has been freely dealt with by Umayyah is 'the life hereafter'. This trend appears to dominate all his feelings and it is always alive in his mind. Accordingly, we hardly find among his compositions a poem in which the mention of resurrection has not been made in one way or the other. In some of the poems he gives only a hint of this while in others he refers to it very clearly and sometimes he gives details of reward and punishment, paradise and hell and the pleasure of the pious and distress of the wicked. For example, he says in a poem :—

فكل معمر لا بد يوماً و ذى دنيا يصير إلى زوال  
و يفنى بعد جدته و يبلى سوى الباقي المقدس ذى الجلال

وسيق المجرمون و هم عراة الى ذات المقامع والنكال  
فنادوا ويلنا و يلا طويلا و عجوا في سلاسلها الطوال  
فليسوا ميتين فيستريحوا و كلهم ببحر النار صالى  
و حل المتقون بدار صدق و عيش ناعم تحت الظلال  
لهم ما يشتهون و ما تمنوا من الأفراح فيها والكمال<sup>333</sup>

The above verses show clearly that Umayyah had a firm belief in resurrection and the reckoning of the Day of Judgement and was fully conscious of the world hereafter. Such verses are found abundantly in his works.<sup>334</sup>

The religious subjects mentioned above are not, however, peculiar to the poetry of Umayyah alone, because they are generally found in the verses of almost all the Hanifite poets and of some heathen poets as well, as we have already discussed. The only difference is that these topics have been dealt with by Umayyah quite liberally and frequently while the others have referred to them occasionally and incidentally. Indeed the fact which distinguishes the compositions of Umayyah from those of others is that the former contain a plentiful description of angels and apostles.

### Description of angels

In regard to the angels, the ideas put forth by Umayyah in his poems are as follows :

Angels are disciples of God. They are always busy in carrying out the commands of God, Who brings His decrees in force through their agency. They can never disobey Him nor can they ever delay the implementation of His orders. They tremble in fear of Him. They have two wings on their shoulders by which they soar up to the heavens. They also walk on the earth and move under it. Some of the angels are stationed at the doors of the heavens as sentinels and some of them are always engaged in worshipping God in different positions, while some others function as messengers between God and His apostles. In this way they are employed in different occupations which they perform according to the will of God.

The following verses may be cited in order to clarify the ideas expressed by Umayyah regarding the angels :—

ملانكة أقدامهم تحت عرشه بكفيه لولا الله كلوا و أبلدوا  
قيام على الأقدام عانين تحته فرائصهم من شدة الخوف ترعد

وسبط صفوف ينظرون قضاءه  
 أمين لوحى القدس جبريل فيهم  
 وحراس أبواب السموات دونهم  
 فعم العباد المصطفون لأمره  
 ملائكة لا يفترون عبادة  
 فساجدهم لا يرفع الدهر رأسه  
 وراكعهم يعنوا له الدهر خاشعا  
 و منهم ملف في الجناحين رأسه  
 من الخوف لا ذو سامة بعبادة  
 ودون كثيف الماء في غامض الهوا  
 وبين طباق الأرض تحت بطونها

يصيخون بالأسماع للوحى ركد  
 وميكال ذوالروح القوى المسدد  
 قيام عليها بالمقاليد رصد  
 ومن دونهم جند كثيف مجند  
 كروبية منهم ركوع و سجد  
 يعظم ربا فوقه و يمجد  
 يردد آلاء . الإله و يحمد  
 يكاد لذكرى ربه يتفصد  
 ولا هو من طول التعبد يجهد  
 ملائكة تنحط فيه و تصعد  
 ملائكة بالأمر فيها تردد<sup>335</sup>

### Description of Apostles

References to various apostles are also found quite frequently in the poetry of Umayyah. The story of Noah has been repeatedly mentioned. Different parts of the story have been described on different occasions.<sup>336</sup> In some of the poems he has mentioned the Flood and its waves and in some others he has described the construction of the Ark and its floating and staying on the mount of *Judi*. A few verses of a poem are as follows :—

جزى الله الأجل المرء نوحا  
 بما حملت سفينته و أنجت  
 و فيها من أرومته عيال  
 عشية أرسل الطوفان تجرى  
 على أمواج أخضر ذى حبيك

جزاء البر ليس له كذاب  
 غداة أتاهم الموت القلاب  
 لديه لا الظماء ولا السغاب  
 وفاض الماء ليس له جراب  
 كأن سعار زاخره الهضاب<sup>337</sup>

On one occasion he refers to the dedication of Abraham to sacrifice his son, Ismael, to God and gives full details of the story. Some of the verses related to it are as under :—

ولإبراهيم الموفى بنذر  
 احتسابا و حامل الأجزاء  
 بكره لم يكن ليصبر عنه  
 أو يراه في معشر أقتال  
 يا بنى إني نذرتك لله... شحيطا فاصبر فدا لك خالى

فأجاب الغلام أن قال فيه كل شئ لله غير انتحال  
 أبى إننى جزيتك بالله... تقيا به على كل حال  
 فاقض ما قد نذرت لله واكف عن دمي أن يمسه سربالى<sup>338</sup>

Likewise, on another occasion, while praising God he refers to the message of Moses and Aaron to Pharaoh and gives details regarding it. In this connection he also mentions various great signs of God. He says :—

وأنت الذى من فضل من ورحمة بعثت إلى موسى رسولا مناديا  
 فقلت له يا اذهب و هارون فادعوا إلى الله فرعون الذى كان طاغيا  
 وقولا له أأنت سويت هذه بلا وتد حتى اطمأنت كما هيا  
 وقولا له أأنت رفعت هذه بلا عمد أرفق إذا بك ما ييا  
 وقولا له أأنت سويت وسطها منيرا إذا ما جنه الليل هاديا<sup>339</sup>

In the same way, he describes several well-known stories regarding various apostles, which he probably learnt from the old scriptures. In one poem he refers to the people of *Lūṭ* and after mentioning their misconduct, he describes how God at first sent angels to them and then destroyed them.<sup>340</sup> Similarly, in another poem he describes how the people of *Thamūd* disobeyed their apostle, *Ṣāliḥ* and hamstrung his she-camel and then how they had to suffer, in return, from the wrath of God.<sup>341</sup> Likewise, he mentions in a poem the miraculous birth of Jesus Christ and describes it in full.<sup>342</sup>

The subjects discussed above are those upon which complete poems have been composed by Umayyah. Besides these poems, numerous fragments and stray verses depicting religious feelings are ascribed to him. Moreover, the poems composed by him on other topics such as panegyrics and elegies also contain words and phrases closely related to religious matters. All these facts clearly indicate that his life was deeply influenced by religion.



## CHAPTER III

### CHRISTIANITY

Christianity had at a very early stage established itself in Syria, which then formed the northern border of Arabia, and from here it gradually expanded in various directions. At first, the Arab tribes who had settled in Syria and the adjacent lands came under its influence. Accordingly, Christianity spread widely among the tribes of *Salīh*, *Bahrā*, *Judhām* and *Āmilah* and almost all the sons of *Ghassān* were converted to Christianity.<sup>1</sup>

Christianity also reached the borders of Iraq quite early and the tribes of *Taghlib*,<sup>2</sup> *Lakhm* and *Tanūkh*, who inhabited this region, comprised a large number of Christian converts. *Hīrah*, the capital of Lakhmite princes, opened its portals to Christianity very early. In *Hīrah*, Christianity was professed by a considerable number of Arabs who were called *ʿIbād* and belonged to different tribes<sup>3</sup> and here a monastery was also built as early as A.D. 410.<sup>4</sup> The Arab rulers of *Hīrah*, though they had not openly accepted Christianity, were largely influenced by it. They had married Christian women, who built several churches and monasteries in which a large number of monks lived. From here Christianity penetrated into *Bahrayn* and *ʿUmān*,<sup>5</sup> where flourishing Christian settlements were to be found just before Islam.

In southern Arabia, the main centre of Christianity was *Najrān*, where it had come earlier than A.D. 400.<sup>6</sup> But here it was always in active rivalry with Judaism, which had attained preponderance throughout Yemen. Hence Christianity could not make much headway in southern Arabia and when the Himyarite king *Dhū-Nuwās* embraced Judaism, a wholesale massacre of the Christians of *Najrān* took place at his hands in A.D. 523.<sup>7</sup> In this way Christianity suffered a heavy set-back. But soon after this, probably in A.D. 525, a powerful army led by *Aryāt* came from Abyssinia to avenge the massacre. The Jewish community of Yemen was badly defeated and *Dhū-Nuwās* fled toward the sea, after which he was heard of no more.<sup>8</sup> Consequently, the Abyssinians, who were Christians, occupied Yemen and then ruled over it for about fifty years.<sup>9</sup>

In Central Arabia, Judaism enjoyed complete dominance and there were no significant colonies of the Christians. However, this part of the country was not completely devoid of the followers of Christianity.

The tribe of *Ṭayy*, most of whom were Christians, dwelt near the northern border of *Najd*.<sup>10</sup> In Medina, some members of the tribes of *Aws* and *Khazraj* had become Christians, and even among the *Quraysh*, some members of the family of *Banū-Asad* had been converted to Christianity.<sup>11</sup> In this way, though Christianity could not stand as a rival to Judaism in central Arabia its influence was increasing and the Arabs had become familiar with Christian ideas.<sup>12</sup>

The Arabs came in contact with the Christians of Syria on the one hand and those of Yemen on the other through commercial activities. Arab traders travelled to Syria and Yemen, where they had often to deal with Christians. Similarly, Christian merchants came to participate in the annual fairs and religious gatherings that were held in the interior of Arabia.<sup>13</sup> Apart from this, Christian preachers, missionaries and monks were always moving in different places.<sup>14</sup> Moreover, a number of Arab poets such as al-A'shā, Nābighah al-Dhubyānī, Ṭarafah, al-Mutalammis and 'Abīd b. al-Abraṣ frequently visited the Lakhmite court in Ḥīrah. In particular, Nābighah al-Dhubyānī enjoyed great honour and popularity with the royal family of Ḥīrah and had virtually settled down there.

In this way, Christian ideas and beliefs spread among the Arabs through different sources and they consequently became well-acquainted with certain Christian views. According to a tradition,<sup>15</sup> A'shā borrowed from the Christians of Ḥīrah the doctrine of free will expressed by him in the following verse :—

استأثر الله بالوفاء و بالعذل و ولي الملامة الرجال

In the light of the same verse, al-A'shā is said to have been a believer in the *Qadariyah* doctrine while Labīd, on the other hand, is considered to have been a devotee of the *Jabariyah* philosophy on the basis of the following verse, ascribed to him :—

من هداه سبل الخير اهتدى ناعم الببال و من شاء أضل

## 1. TRACES OF CHRISTIANITY IN HEATHEN POETRY

Traces of religious sentiments, pertaining to Christianity, are very rare in pre-Islamic Arabic poetry. References to monotheistic ideas certainly occur in some verses of some of the heathen poets, which may be traced to the influence of Christianity,<sup>16</sup> but we have dealt with them in the preceding chapter under the heading of Hanifism, because in our opinion their monotheistic ideas were, for the most, related to the remnants of the religion of Abraham. Here we intend to study the poetry ascribed to Christian poets of pre-Islamic days. But before

doing so, we would like to take into consideration verses ascribed to non-Christian poets containing leads pertaining to Christianity.

As a matter of fact, the pagan Arabs were more friendly towards the Christians than the Jews, because the Christian monks were humble and kind<sup>17</sup> to them while the Jews, being haughty and proud of their knowledge and religion, humiliated them. The cells of monks would often give shelter to them during the course of their journey and the Christian merchants supplied them with good wine. Moreover, the Jews, being strict monotheists, hated the polytheistic observances of the Arabs while the Christians had themselves made images of Jesus, Mary and other pious men which appeared to the Arabs much similar to the images of the deities worshipped by them. According to certain traditions, pictures of Jesus, Mary, the Cross and the like were painted even on the walls of the *Ka'bah*.<sup>18</sup> In such a situation it was quite natural for the Arabs to feel a kind of affinity with the Christians.

It is due to the above-mentioned facts that we come across occasional references to Jesus, Mary, the monks, the church and the like in the verses of a number of heathen poets. For example, let us take the following verses of 'Amr b. 'Abd al-Jinn :—

أما و دماء مائرات تخالها      على قنة العزى و بالنسر عندما  
و ما سبج الرهبان في كل بيعة      أيل الأيلين المسيح بن مريما<sup>19</sup>

In these lines, the poet swears by the blood flowing over the images of 'Uzzā and *Nasr* after the sacrifices have been made and in the same breath he also swears by what the monks say in every church glorifying Christ, the son of Mary.

In the same connection, we may cite the following verse of al-A'shā in which he has sworn by the clothes of the monk of Syria as well as by the *Ka'bah* :—

حلفت بثوبى راهب الشام والذى      بناه قصى جده و ابن جرهم<sup>20</sup>

From the above verse, it appears that the clothes of a monk were considered to be sacred as the following verse of Imru'al-Qays also indicates :—

فأدركته يأخذن بالساق والنسا      كما شبرق الولدان ثوب المقدس<sup>21</sup>

Likewise, we find that certain pagan ideas occur in verses ascribed to Christian poets, as for example the following line in which the well-known Christian poet, 'Adi b. Zayd al-'Ibādī, has sworn by the Lord of Mecca along with the Cross :—

سعى الأعداء لآبالون شرا      عليك و رب مكة والصاب<sup>22</sup>

**Lamp of the monk**

To the wandering bards of Arabia, one of the most attractive things was the lamp which was lit by a monk in his hermitage so that stray travellers overtaken by darkness in the desert might go and take shelter there. It is undoubtedly very fascinating to look through the darkness of night at a lamp twinkling like a star at a long distance in the wide expanse of a desert and certainly the hearts of the travellers are greatly moved on such occasions. Accordingly, the heathen poets have made mention of it in their verses in different ways. Here is a verse contained in the celebrated ode of Imru'al-Qays, in which he has compared the bright figure of his beloved with the lamp of a monk.

<sup>23</sup> تضىء الظلام بالعشى كأنها منارة عسى راهب مبتل

“At eventide she lightens the black shadows, as if she were the lamp kindled in the night of a monk at his devotions.”<sup>24</sup>

In the same ode he says again :—

أصاح ترى برقاً أريك وميضه كلمع اليدين في حبي مكل  
يضىء سناه أو مصاييح راهب أمال السليط بالذبال المقتل<sup>25</sup>

“Friend, do you see yonder lightning? Look, there goes its glitter flashing like two hands now in the heaped up, crowned stormcloud.

Brilliantly it shines—so flames the lamp of an anchorite as he slops the oil over the twisted wick.”<sup>26</sup>

Similarly, Muzarrid b. Dirār has compared the rays of the sun with the lamps of the monks in the following verse : -

كأن شعاع الشمس في حجراتها مصاييح رهبان زهتها القنادل<sup>27</sup>

**Self-mortification of monks**

Some other aspects relating to the monks and their austere life are also occasionally mentioned in the verses of the heathen poets. In particular, they were much impressed by the way of life which the monks led, practising different forms of asceticism in the desert, cut-off from the rest of the world. The heathen poets have referred to this aspect in their own way. Nābighah al-Dhubyāni while praising the beauty of the wife of Nu'mān, the king of Hīrah, says that if she had been brought before a white haired monk praying to God in his seclusion, he would have been attracted by her beautiful complexion and sweet words and would have considered it a guidance though he had been misguided.

The lines are as follows :—

لو أنها عرضت لأشمط راهب يدعو الإله ضرورة متعبدا  
لصبا لبهجتها و طيب حديثها و لخاله رشدا و إن لم يرشد<sup>28</sup>

Similar expressions occur in the following verses of Rabr'ah b. Maqrūm al-Ḍabbī :—

لو أنها عرضت لأشمط راهب في رأس مشرفة الذرى يتقبل  
لرنا لبهجتها و حسن حديثها و لهم من ناموسه يتنزل<sup>29</sup>

According to Jurjī Zaydān, Rabr'ah has borrowed his idea from the above-quoted verses of Nābighah.<sup>30</sup>

In this connection the following verses of al-A'shā may also be noted :—

و ما أبلى على ميكل بناء و صلب فيه وصارا  
يرواح من صلوات المليك — طورا سجودا و طورا جوارا  
بأعظم منه تقى في الحساب إذا التسمات نفضن الغبارا<sup>31</sup>

#### Sound of Nāqūs.

Another thing which greatly attracted the Arabs was the sound of Nāqūs (gong), which was sounded in the Christian monasteries to call the community to prayer. No sensitive heart could remain untouched by its sound particularly in an environment where the spell of complete stillness held sway over the long belt of the desert. Allusions to it are found in the pre-Islamic heathen poetry. In this respect the verses of 'Antarah, Labīd, al-A'shā and al-Mutalammis are specially noteworthy.<sup>32</sup> Al-Muraqqish Al-Akbar comparing the voice of an owl with the sound of the gong says :—

و تسمع تزقاء من البوم حولنا  
كما ضربت بعد الهدوء النواقيس<sup>33</sup>

“There mightst thou hear about us the cries of the owls like the sound of wooden clappers beaten in the stillness of night.”<sup>34</sup>

Similarly, in the following verse al-Mutalammis says that the sound of the gongs excited his she-camel, after she had halted at a time when the night had spread its wings :—

حلت قلوصى بها والليل مطرق  
بعد الهدوء فشاقتها النواقيس<sup>35</sup>

#### Godliness and fear of the hereafter

In poems composed in praise of some Christian ruler, the Arab poets generally expressed Christian ideas. Accordingly, when Nābighah

al-Dhubyāni escaped from the court of Nu'mān, the Lakhmite king of Iraq, and went to the Ghassanid ruler, 'Amr b. al-Ḥārith, he recited a poem in praise of the latter in which the following lines occur :—

رفاق النعال طيب حجاتهم يحيون بالريحان يوم السباسب  
فحلتهم ذات الإله و دينهم قويم فما يرجون غير العواقب<sup>36</sup>

In these lines the poet has praised the piety of his patrons and appreciated their godliness. In this connection he has mentioned their least day on which people were greeted with aromatic leaves. He has expressed that they did not fear anything except the consequences of actions in the world hereafter. Perhaps, it would not be out of place to mention here that from these lines of Nābighah, Shahrastāni has derived the conclusion that the poet believed in the Day of Reckoning.<sup>37</sup>

## 2. CHRISTIAN POETS

The Christians of Arabia had probably a number of poets among them, but all of them cannot be distinctly identified. Hence a number of heathen poets have been reckoned as Christians by some scholars. For example, Jurjī Zaydān claimed al-A'shā to be a Christian<sup>38</sup> and Louis Cheikho has included a large number of pre-Islamic poets in his *Shu'arā' al-Naṣrāniyah* treating all of them as Christians. Carlo Nallino has criticised Louis Cheikho in this connection. According to him, the latter had exaggeratedly considered as Christian every pre-Islamic poet who expressed in his poetry some monotheistic ideas and was not known as a Jew; while it was abundantly clear to every just person that the greater number of these poets were only heathens<sup>39</sup>

We also agree with Nallino on this point that a large number of the poets included in *Shu'arā' al-Naṣrāniyah* were not actually Christians. Most probably they professed no established religion. They were only opportunists. By virtue of their frequent visit to Iraq and Syria and also from other sources, they had become well-acquainted with certain Christian ideas. So whenever they composed panegyrics for the Lakhmite princes or the Ghassanid rulers, who were either formally Christianized or inclined to Christianity, they mentioned some Christian ideas in their verses only to please their patrons and gain favours from them. There is no justification, therefore, for inferring from such verses that they were actually Christians. However, it is almost certain that there existed some Christian poets in Arabia in the pre-Islamic period, such as 'Adī b. Zayd al-'Ibādī and Abū-Dāwūd al-'Iyādī, who possessed remarkable talent for poetry,

## (a) 'Adi b. Zayd al-'Ibādi

The greatest Christian poet of the pre-Islamic time is 'Adi b. Zayd al-'Ibādi. His verses have survived in a considerable number and contain comparatively more religious feelings than those of his other co-religionists. Therefore, we would like to study 'Adi b. Zayd in some detail.

He was, no doubt, a Christian as he himself has disclosed in the following verse:—

إنتى والله فاقبل حلقى لأبيل كما صلى جار<sup>40</sup>

In this verse, after swearing by God, he says that he was a monk who beseeched the Lord whenever prayed. 'Adi passed the greater part of his life in Hīrah with Nu'mān, the last king of the Lakhmite dynasty.<sup>41</sup>

Louis Cheikho has collected almost all the historical and biographical accounts as well as the verses of 'Adi b. Zayd which were scattered in books containing pre-Islamic anecdotes and traditions. In view of the present collection of his verse, one can easily gather that 'Adi possessed immense capacity for versification and it is quite possible that a large number of his poems have not been preserved. According to al-Aṣma'ī, a great critic of the Abbasid period, the reciters were not in the habit of reciting the verses of 'Adi b. Zayd and Abū-Dāwūd, because their ideas and modes of expression were different from those of other pre-Islamic poets<sup>42</sup>, or because, as mentioned by Ibn Qutaybah, their words were not Najdite.<sup>43</sup> It is true that the poetry of 'Adi distinctly differs in character from that of the pagan Arabs. It bears the marks of simplicity and fluency of diction and also shows clear influence of Persian culture, in the midst of which there are some indications of Christian ideas as well. Although no poem of 'Adi can be marked as strictly religious, it is a fact that some of his verses bear clear evidence of religious feelings. Let us now observe them in greater detail.

**God is immortal**

'Adi believed in the immortality of God, as he has expressed in the following verse:—

ليس شيء على المنون بياق غير وجه المسيح الخلاق<sup>44</sup>

He says that nothing can escape death except God, the glorified the Creator.

**Submission to the will of God**

The above line occurs in the beginning of one of the poems which he composed during the days of his imprisonment. In the same poem occur the following lines, which show that he was quite resigned to the will of God :—

واذهبى يا أميم إن يشأ الله . . . ينفس من أزم هذا الخناق  
أو تكن وجهة فتلك سبيل . . . الناس لاتمنع الختوف الرواقى<sup>46</sup>

In these lines, addressing his mother, who had come to visit him in prison, he says that if God wills, He will relieve him from the suffocating dungeon; otherwise there was the path which all human beings had to follow and no sorceress could prevent death.

**Grace of God**

While praising Nu'mān and members of his family in the following verse, he has attributed their pre-eminence to the grace of God :—

أجل إن الله قد فضلكم فوق من أحكأ صلبا يازار<sup>46</sup>

The same idea has been expressed by him more clearly in the following verse :—

ماذا ترجون إن أودى ربيكم بعدالإله و من أذكى لكم ناراً<sup>47</sup>

**God, the Omniscient**

'Adī also believed that God knew all secrets and he has expressed this belief in a verse the context of which needs some elucidation. It is, certainly, an irony of human fate that sometimes all external indications go to prove a man guilty, while actually he is quite innocent. In such a critical and tragic circumstance, a godly person turns only to God. In a similar situation, 'Adī says :—

ما حملت الغل من أعدائكم ولدى الله من العام المسر<sup>48</sup>

His enemies had falsely accused him thus arousing the suspicions of Nu'mān, the king of Ḥīrah, who cast him into prison. In fact, 'Adī was quite blameless, but his enemies had hatched the treacherous conspiracy against him in such a well-thought-out fashion that he could find no evidence to disprove the charge and his friends also could not dare say a word in his favour due to the fear of the king. Now, in the above line he seeks pardon from Nu'mān and claims his innocence only in the name of God. He says that he did not intrigue with the enemies of the king. Then showing his helplessness in producing evidence to prove his claim, he again says that the knowledge of all



secrets lay only with God. He means to say that only God knows that he was not guilty and apart from Him, he had no evidence in his favour.

### Book of God

At one place, 'Adī has referred to the book of God by which he probably meant the holy Gospel or he might have intended the heavenly register in which all actions are recorded for the day of judgement. The verse is as under :—

نا شدتنا بكتاب الله حرمتنا و لم تكن بكتاب الله ترتفع<sup>49</sup>

### Doctrine of Fate.

'Adī b. Zayd was a strong predestinarian as would be evident from a thorough study of his poetry. Fatalistic ideas are found profusely scattered throughout his verses. Some of the above-quoted verses also bear out the same faith; and apart from them, there are several other verses in which he has openly given expression to his firm belief in predestination. He says :—

أعاذل ما أدنى الرشد من الفتى و أبعد منه إذا لم يسدد<sup>50</sup>

He means to say that deviation or steadfastness of man depends only upon his fate as predestined by God. He has to meet his fate whatsoever it might be and by no means can he escape from it.

The same idea has been more clearly expressed by him in the following line :—

أعاذل من يكتب له الموت يلقه كفاحا و من يكتب له الفوز يسعد<sup>51</sup>

### Pre-eminence of religion

'Adī was of the view that religious considerations should always be given priority over worldly interest, as is obvious from the following verse :—

نزع دنيا نا بتمزيق ديننا فلا ديننا يبقى ولا ما نرقع<sup>52</sup>

According to the poet, those who try to make their fortunes in this world at the cost of their religion lose both.

### Asceticism

The other distinctive indication of Christian influence on 'Adī b. Zayd is the trend of asceticism which is very much in evidence in his poetry. He has often referred to death, destruction, calamities of life, vicissitudes of time, instability of the world and the like. Sometimes he rejoices in the description of drinking-bouts and beautiful singing girls but suddenly he turns towards ghastly accounts of death and destruction.

his religious association seems to have filled his heart with thoughts of hereafter and meditation over death in such a way that he found himself urged repeatedly to resort to such descriptions, and he never seemed to be tired of it.

Such examples are quite numerous in his poetry. Let us note some of them at this place to elucidate the subject under discussion. Once 'Adī went out for hunting along with Nu'mān al-Akbar, the king of Hīrah. When the party halted under the shade of a tree, 'Adī said, "O king, do you know what this tree says?" Nu'mān said, "What does it say?" Then 'Adī recited the following verses :—

من رانا فليحدث نفسه أنه موف على قرن زوال  
فصروف الدهر لا تبقى لها ولما تأتي به صم الجبال  
رب ركب قد أناخوا حولنا يشربون الخمر بالماء الزلال  
و الأباريق عليها قدم و جيات الخيل تجرى في الجلال  
عمروا الدهر بعيش حسن قطعوا دهرهم غير عجال  
عصف الدهر بهم فانقرضوا و كذاك الدهر حالا بعد حال<sup>58</sup>

"Thou who seest us unto thyself shalt say,  
'Soon upon me comes the season of decay,  
Can the solid mountains evermore sustain  
Time's vicissitudes and all they bring in train?  
Many a traveller lighted near us and abode,  
Quaffing wine wherein the purest water flowed—  
Strainers on each flagon's mouth to clear the wine,  
Noble steeds that paw the earth in trappings fine!  
For a while they lived in lap of luxury,  
Fearing no misfortune, dallying lazily.  
Then, behold, Time swept them all, like chaff, away;  
Thus it is men fall to whirling Time a prey."<sup>54</sup>

According to some other traditions, the above verses were recited by the side of some graves.<sup>55</sup> In view of the contents, this seems more plausible.

It is further narrated that in the course of the same outing when the party moved on and passed by the side of a cemetery, after similar exchange of words 'Adī recited to Nu'mān the following verses :—

أيها الركب المخبونا على الأرض المجدونا  
كما أنتم كذا كنا كما نحن تكونونا<sup>56</sup>

(Ye, riders trotting gaily on the earth, bedecked in new clothes;  
As you are we were so and as we are so will you be.)

It is said that these verses impressed Nu'mān so much that he gave up idolatry and embraced Christianity; and after a number of similar happenings in the company of 'Adī, he was ultimately so much moved that he renounced the throne and adopted a monastical life<sup>57</sup>.

In his poems 'Adī has often given a detailed account of the ancient kings, their castles, fortunes and pleasures and immediately after that, he has mentioned their death and decay. Through this contrast he tries to impress his audience with the futility of wordly goods. The following verses may be noted in this connection :—

و تفكر رب الخورنق إذ أشرف يوما و للهدى تفكير  
سره حاله و كثرة مايملك و البحر معرضا و السدير  
فارعوى قلبه و قال فما غبـطة حتى إلى الممات يصير  
ثم بعد الفلاح و الملك والنعمـة و ارتهم هناك القبور  
ثم صاروا كأنهم ورق جـفـف فآلوت به الصبا و الدبور<sup>58</sup>

“Consider thou Khawarnaq’s lord—and oft  
Of heavenly guidance cometh vision clear—  
Who once, rejoicing in his ample realm,  
Surveyed the broad Euphrates, and Sadir;  
Then sudden terror struck his heart; he cried,  
‘Shall man, who deathward goes, find pleasure here?’  
They reigned, they prospered; yet, their glory past,  
In yonder tombs they lie this many a year.  
At last they were like unto withered leaves  
Whirled by the winds away in wild career.”<sup>59</sup>

According to Carlo Nallino, it is just possible that these verses of 'Adī might have served as models for Islamic poets like Abu-al-'Atāhiyah who have often dealt with subjects relating to death and decay of the worldly pleasures.<sup>60</sup>

### Description of Religious Traditions

Sometimes, 'Adī refers in his poems to certain religious traditions. He has given in a certain poem a detailed account of the Creation probably from Torah. According to him there was nothing in the beginning save the winds, water and darkness. God cleared away the darkness, spread the earth, built the heaven and brought forth the sun thus creating the day and night. All these He accomplished in six days and then fashioned the man. He further describes the story of Adam and Eve. A few of the beginning verses are as follows :—

اسمع حديثا لكى يوما تجاوبه عن ظهر غيب إذا ما سائل سالا  
أن كيف أبدى إله الخلق نعمته فينا و عرفنا آياته الأولا

كانت رياحا وماء ذا عرانية      و ظلمة لم يدع فتقا ولا خلا  
فأمر الظلمة السوداء فانكشفت      و عزل الماء عما كان قد شغلا  
و بسط الأرض بسطا ثم قدرها      تحت السماء سواء مثل ما فعلا<sup>61</sup>

In another poem 'Adī has given the details of habitation of Adam & Eve in the Garden and their expulsion from it by the seduction of Satan. Some of the beginning lines run as follows :—

سعى الرجيم إلى حوا بوسوسة      غوت بها و غوى معها أبو البشر  
خلقان من مارج أنشأ خليفته      و آخر من تراب الأرض والمدر  
أنشأهما ليطيعاه فخالقه      إبليس عن أمره للحين والقدر  
فأبلس الله إبليسا و أسكنه      دارا من الخلد بين الروض والشجر  
فاغتاظ إبليس من بغى ومن حسد      فاحتال للحية الرقطاء والطيور<sup>62</sup>

#### (b) Quss b. Sā'idah al-Iyādī

Apart from 'Adī b. Zayd al-'Ibādī, only Quss b. Sā'idah al-Iyādī is noteworthy amongst the pre-Islamic Christian poets. But the traditions relating to him are very confusing and historians and biographers have come to different conclusions in respect of his religion.<sup>63</sup> Some of them have reckoned him among the companions of the Prophet of Islam while the author of *Bulūgh al-Arab* refuted this view and included him in the group of Hanifites.<sup>64</sup> But some other scholars like Louis Cheikho and Shakīb Arislān<sup>65</sup> have described him as Christian. Most probably he professed Christianity and died before the rise of Islam. He is also said to have held the post of bishop in Najrān for some time.<sup>66</sup>

Quss b. Sā'idah possessed an immense capacity for versification.<sup>67</sup> But we have today very few poems ascribed to him and these too are found in fragments. He was also quite famous as a great orator and nearly all his speeches contain religious ideas. By describing death, decay and destruction, he reminds his audience of the day of judgement and then enjoins upon them to fear God and perform good deeds.

#### Ascetic Ideas

Though his poetry does not comprise as ample and forceful expressions of religious feelings as his sermons do, yet descriptions of death, graves, convulsions of time and the like are frequently found which may be said to be the effect of the monastic aspect of Christianity. The following verses deserve to be quoted here :—

في الداهيين الأولي—من من القرون لنا بصائر  
لما رأيت موارد للموت ليس لها مصادر

و رأيت قومي نحوها تمضى الأصاغر والأكابر  
لا يرجع الماضى ولا يبقى من الباقيين غابر  
أيقنت أنى لا محالة حيث صار القوم صائر<sup>68</sup>

### Description of the life hereafter

Some of his verses indicate his belief in life after death e. g., the following :—

الحمد لله الذى لم يخلق الخلق عبث<sup>69</sup>

There are also certain verses in which he has not only made mention of life hereafter directly, but has also given some details of resurrection and the day of reckoning. They are as follows :—

يا ناعى الموت والملحود فى جدث	عليهم من بقايا خزهم خرق
دعهم فإن لهم يوما يصاح بهم	فلم إذا انتبهوا من نومهم فرق
حتى يعودوا بحال غير حالهم	خلقا جديدا كما من قبلها خلقوا
منهم عراة و منهم فى ثيابهم	منها الجديد ومنها المنهج الخلق <sup>70</sup>

## CHAPTER IV

### JUDAISM

#### (1) JEWISH COMMUNITY IN ARABIA

Before the rise of Islam, a considerable number of Jews lived in different parts of the Arabian peninsula and Judaism was firmly established there. Though the exact date of their immigration is not reliably known, it is, however, certain that their colonies existed in Hijāz as early as the beginning of the Christian era.<sup>1</sup>

#### Judaism in Yemen

It is from this territory that towards the end of the fourth century A. D. Judaism was introduced by the great Tubba' As'ad Abū Karib into Yemen, the south-west Arabian province, where in a very short time it got rooted and spread among the local inhabitants so widely that practically all the tribes of Himyar embraced it. It was not only the case with the common people, but Judaism also penetrated into the royal family. The last Himyarite king, namely *Dhū-Nuwās*, embraced Judaism. As a result of this, Judaism flourished there to a very high degree. It is this king to whom the famous general massacre of the Christians of Najrān which occurred in A. D. 523 is ascribed, a fact already mentioned in the preceding chapter. But this domination of Judaism lasted only for a very short period, because to avenge the massacre of Najran an Abyssinian army under the leadership of *Aryāt* entered Yemen and a great battle took place, which brought the very existence of the Himyarite kingdom to an end.<sup>2</sup>

#### Judaism in Northern Arabia

In Northern Arabia Jewish settlements were established more firmly and permanently than in the South. A certain tradition says that some of the Jewish families settled in *Yathrib* soon after the death of Moses; but according to another tradition they settled there at a later stage when they were forced by the Byzantines to quit Palestine.<sup>3</sup> However, in the century just before Islam, a number of Jewish colonies are seen firmly established along the ancient trade-route at such places as *Wādi-al-Qurā*, *Taymā'*, *Madyan*, *Tabūk*, *Fidak* and *Khaybar*.<sup>4</sup> In *Yathrib* three powerful Jewish tribes namely *Banū-Naḍīr*, *Banū-Qurayzah* and *Banū-Qaynuqā'* enjoyed a considerable hold over the heathen tribes of *Aws* and *Khazraj*. It would now appear that most of the oases stretch-

ing from *Yathrib* right upto the border of Syria were actually in the hands of the Jewish community which lived there in full liberty and prosperity.

### **Their Economic Conditions**

Economically these people of Jewish community enjoyed a very strong position. They possessed huge wealth and large property. They were land-owners and cultivators and owned vast oases and palm-groves. Trade, commerce, exchange-dealings, money-lending and goldsmith's art were their main professions. Consequently, they lived very happily and prosperously, and in order to defend themselves and protect their commodities and properties they had turned their trading centres and godowns into some sort of fortresses, where large stores of arms and ammunitions were kept and a considerable number of soldiers were also engaged. In this way their political superiority was also recognized by the pagan Arabs, who lived in constant terror of their military organization.<sup>5</sup>

### **Their Association with Religion**

Along with economic and political dominance, the Jews of *Hijāz* considered themselves spiritually superior to the Arabs. They were very particular about their religion and followed it faithfully. Their settlements served as centres of religious propaganda. Even in *Yathrib* they maintained a religious institution namely *Bayt al-Midrās*,<sup>6</sup> where Rabbis preached their religion by translating their religious books into the Arabic language.

The Arabs were also greatly impressed by the Jewish faith. A considerable number of the people of the tribes, *Banū-Kinānah* and *Banū-al-Ḥārith* had virtually embraced Judaism.<sup>7</sup> In *Yathrib* the people of *Aws* and *Khazraj* would vow to God that if their babies were granted long life by Him, they would dedicate them to Judaism.<sup>8</sup>

### **Jewish Influence over the Arabs**

In view of the above historical facts, it is quite probable that by virtue of their living side by side with Jews for so long a period the Arabs would have been well acquainted with certain Jewish dogmas and ideas. It may, however, be said that the Jewish influence did not reach the Bedouin areas, but the settled areas of *Hijāz* could not escape it. Therefore, to some extent it might be the outcome of this Jewish influence that ideas of monotheism, the life hereafter and the like are occasionally found in the pre-Islamic poetry of the heathen Arabs. We have already observed them in the second chapter under the title of Hanifism. At this place, we shall, therefore, study only those poets who were Jews by religion.

### Jewish Poetry

Despite the fact that quite a considerable number of Jews had been living in Arabia for a long time, the Jewish poetry handed down to us is virtually negligible. In this connection, some of the scholars have expressed the possibility of the fact that the poetry composed by Jews was ignored by the Muslim transmitters, probably because it contained their religious ideas.<sup>9</sup> I think this view is not quite sound. It were the Muslim transmitters because of whose careful transmission we have today in our hand whatever we have of the Jewish poetry. In my opinion they had no bias against any group, whether they were idolaters, monotheists, Christians or Jews. Muslim transmitters recited the poetry of all of them even in their mosques and indicated the names of their composers.<sup>10</sup> They also recited the verses containing ideas against Islam and satires on Muslims. They did not hesitate even to recite the verses in which a Jewish chieftain, Ka'b b. al-Ashraf had satirized the Prophet of Islam. There was no reason for them to dislike Jewish poetry on account of religious ideas, because many of the ideas which could have been expressed by Jewish poets would have been very similar to Islamic ideas.

I think that among the Jews of Arabia there were actually very few poets. The Jewish community was wholly pre-occupied with maintaining its business and professions already mentioned. Let us quote here a line of a renowned poet of pre-Islamic time, namely al-Muraqqish al-Aḡghar :—

<sup>11</sup> سبأها رجال من يهود تبا عدوا جيلان يدينها من السوق مريح

“Imprisoned by Jews who brought it from Golan in lands afar,  
and offered for sale by a vintner who knew well to follow gain”.<sup>12</sup>

This line suggests that the Jews were whole-heartedly engaged in every kind of profitable transaction. They were always in search of new markets in order to gain more and more profits. They had, therefore, no particular aptitude for the art of versification. Perhaps they would have considered it as waste of time and energy. However, a few of them composed verses, and it is quite possible that some of these might have been lost; but this occurred not because of the apathy of Muslim transmitters. It was lost under certain natural conditions just as a large portion of the poetry of other peoples was also lost.

As for the number of Jewish poets in pre-Islamic Arabia, Jurjī ḡayḡān says that it was “not more than that of the fingers on one



hand."<sup>13</sup> In this regard he has mentioned only four names, viz. al-Samaw'al b. 'Ādiyā, Aws b. Danī, al-Rabī' b. Abi al-Ḥuqayq and Ka'b b. al-Ashraf. In addition to them, the following have been mentioned by al-Jumahī<sup>14</sup> as Jewish poets : Shurayh b. 'Imrān, Shu'bab b. Gharīd, Abū Qays b. Rifā'ah, Abu-al-Dhyyāl and Dirham b. Zayd. Now, having taken into account all the statements regarding the number of Jewish poets, it may safely be said that their number was not probably more than a dozen. The poetry of most of them comprises only a few fragments and some scattered verses. Comparatively, the number of the verses of al-Samaw'al is greater, although actually that too is not very considerable. His *Dīwān* was published in A. D. 1909 by Louis Cheikho at Beirut.

## (2) RELIGIOUS IDEAS IN JEWISH POETRY

The stock of Jewish poetry, which has survived, very rarely reflects the religious feelings of its authors. It is due to this fact that while classifying pre-Islamic Arabic poetry, Carlo Nallino has placed the poetry of the Jews and that of the heathen Arabs in the same category. According to him, the verses of these two groups are by no means distinct from one another, as if the religion of the Jews had no effect on their poetry.<sup>15</sup>

### (a) Al-Samaw'al b. 'Ādiyā<sup>16</sup>

As for the religion of al-Samaw'al, almost all the historians and biographers agree that he was a follower of Judaism. Even Louis Cheikho, the editor of "Dīwān al-Samaw'al", had to concede that he was a Jew.<sup>17</sup> In response to his habitual urge, Louis Cheikho tried to convert al-Samaw'al to Christianity; but after having failed in his attempt to substantiate this fully, he adopted a middle course and said that al-Samaw'al might have belonged to that group of people in pre-Islamic Arabia who cherished ideas and beliefs common to both Judaism and Christianity.<sup>18</sup>

Al-Samaw'al lived in *Taymā'*, where he possessed a big castle, *al-Ablaq*. It was situated in a fertile and green land. The Arab tribes halted there during the course of their journeys. Al-Samaw'al entertained them as his guests. Hence his castle was quite famous in pre-Islamic days and al-Samaw'al was called the man of *Taymā'*. Poets would, generally, mention the names of *Taymā'*, al-Samaw'al and his castle. Al-A'shā, one of the distinguished poets of the pre-Islamic time, says :—

ولا عاديا لم يمنع الموت حاله و ورد بتيما اليهودى أبلق<sup>19</sup>

It is his castle where the great poet Imru'-al-Qays stayed while going to seek aid from the Byzantine Emperor to avenge the murder of his father. He deposited with al-Samaw'al some of his coats of mail as a consequence of which the well-known incident took place in which al-Samaw'al lost his son, but he did not betray his trust.<sup>20</sup> Hence the proverb 'أوفى من السموتل' (more loyal than al-Samaw'al) came into being.<sup>21</sup> While describing moral virtues in his poems, al-Samaw'al has often mentioned his glorious deed of his own. The following verses may suffice here as a good example :—

وفيت بأدرع الكندي إني إذا ما ذم أقوام وفيت  
وقالوا إنه كنز رغب فلا والله أغدر ما مشيت<sup>22</sup>

The most famous of the poems ascribed to al-Samaw'al is one which begins as follows :—

إذا المرء لم يدنس من اللوم عرضه فكل رداء يرتديه جميل<sup>23</sup>

This poem of al-Samaw'al gained so great a popularity in the literary field that a number of later poets inserted its verses into their own compositions.<sup>24</sup> The whole poem smacks of pride and bears no clear mark of religiousness. The poet has referred to his ancestral nobility, hospitality, manliness, truthfulness and other virtues. The last verse of the poem is as follows :—

وما أخذت نار لنا دون طارق وما ذمنا في النازلين نزيل<sup>25</sup>

It may not be out of place to mention here that this poem has been ascribed to some poets of the Islamic period as well.<sup>26</sup>

The other poem of al-Samaw'al, which deserves mention at this stage, is one that opens with the following line :—

ألا أيها الضيف الذي عاب سادتي ألا اسمع جوابي لست عنك بغافل<sup>27</sup>

This poem also expresses sentiments of haughtiness and the poet proudly mentions his ancestors and their good deeds as is obvious from the opening line. Nevertheless, a distinctive religious tone dominates the whole poem, because while mentioning his ancestors and their achievements, the poet has included among them some apostles, such as Abraham, Ismael and Moses. He has also described a number of favours and miracles granted to them by God such as the successful escape of Abraham from the fire, the drowning of Pharaoh into the Nile, the shadow of clouds upon the followers of Moses and coming down of

Manna and Quail to them. In this way, the poem bears a religious tinge. Let us quote a few lines here :—

ألسنا بنى الطور المقدس والذى      تدخدخ للجبار يوم الزلازل  
و من هية الرحمن دك تذلا      فشرفه البارى على كل طائل  
و ناجى عليه عبده و كليمه      فقدسنا للرب يوم التباهل

There is another poem of al-Samaw'al which deserves fuller consideration here, because it expresses clearly the religious feelings of the poet. The poem begins as follows :—

نطفة ما منيت يوم منيت      أمرت أمرها و فيها بريت<sup>28</sup>

### Man is created by God

In the beginning of this poem, the poet has related how God, out of a drop of water, created man and then gradually fostered him. Then he proceeds to describe both life and death as a pledge which means that life is given to man by God for a fixed period and it is taken back from him on the expiry of that period, that is man has no hold over his own life and death.

### The Day of Reckoning

Then, after describing his forbearance and honesty, he gives some details about the life hereafter, the day of Judgement and the reward and punishment for the actions of man in this world. He says :—

ليت شعرى وأشعرن إذا ما      قربوها منشورة و دعيت  
ألى الفضل أم على إذا حو—سبت إنى على الحساب مقيت  
و أتانى اليقين أنى إذا مت—و إن رم أعظمى مبعوت<sup>29</sup>

### Certain prophets and sacred relics

In the succeeding lines of the same poem, the poet has referred to certain prophets such as David, Solomon, Yahyā (the Baptist) Jacob and Moses and also made mention of Holy Torah, Tābūt and other sacred relics. This description has clearly accorded the poem a distinctive character of religiousness. Here are some of the lines :—

و أتتى الأنباء عن ملك داو—د فقرت عينى به و رضيت  
و سليمان والحوارى يحيى و متى يوسف كانى وليت  
و بقايا الأسباط يعقوب—ب دارس التوراة والتابوت<sup>30</sup>

**Predetermination of fortunes**

The following verses of the same poem indicate that al-Samaw'al believed in predestination :—

ليس يعطى القوى فضلا من الرزق — ق ولا يحرم الضعيف الشخيت  
بل لكل من رزقه ما قضى الله — وإن حز أنفه المستميت<sup>81</sup>

**Moral virtues**

In the poetry of al-Samaw'al, there exists a considerable number of verses which contain a beautiful description of moral virtues, such as honesty, loyalty, hospitality, truthfulness, assistance to the poor, protection of the neighbour and the like. Sometimes he extols these virtues in general and sometimes he expresses pride over his having been endowed with these characteristics. The context suggests that it is his religious sentiment that inspires him to refer to these subjects so often, for he believed that man will be rewarded hereafter for all his deeds performed in this life. In such a situation, it would not, perhaps, be considered improper to take all the verses of this type to be religious poetry.

**Ascetic sentiments**

We may include in the same category, the verses in which al-Samaw'al has mentioned death and destruction. He repeatedly expresses the same idea in different ways, and elaborates on the fact that there is no escape from death and everybody has to face death one day as even the greatest men of the past died. This attitude of the poet clearly speaks of his inclination towards asceticism. As for example, the following verses :—

اسلم سلمت و لا سليم على البلى  
كيف السلامة إن أردت سلامة  
وأقيل حيث أرى فلا أخفى له  
ميتا خلقت ولم أكن من قبلها  
و أموت أخرى بعدها ولا علماً  
فنى الرجال ذوو القوى فقنيت  
و الموت يطلبنى و لست أموت  
ويرى فلا يعيا بحيث أبيت  
شيئا يموت فمت ثم حيينت<sup>82</sup>  
إن كان ينفع أننى ساموت<sup>82</sup>

The last line also shows that by repeatedly describing death, the poet only wants to acquire some benefit. He recalls to himself the idea of the day of reckoning, so that he might always remain vigilant against sins and evils and also get some inspiration for virtuous deeds,

**b. Other Jewish poets**

Leaving al-Samaw'al aside, when we study the rest of the Jewish poets, whose verses are very few in quantity and are scattered in the

shape of fragments, we gain nothing noteworthy in respect of the topic under discussion. However, sometimes, a couple of stray verses containing some religious feelings are found here and there, such as the following line which occurs in a poem ascribed to Rabī' b. Abi-al-Huqayq :—

يحب المرء أن يلقى نعيما      و يأبى الله إلا ما يشاء<sup>33</sup>

He says that man loves to secure fortune, but God declines except what He wills.

The above verse clearly speaks of the poet's belief in predestination. Similarly the following verses of Rabī' indicate his love for truth and justice :—

إنا إذا نحكم في ديننا      نرضى بحكم العادل الفاصل  
لا نجعل الباطل حقا ولا      نلظ دون الحق بالباطل<sup>34</sup>

Finally, I would like to quote the following verses of Abu-al-Dhayyāl which bear out an ascetic trend :—

إني لمستيقن لئن لم أمت      يومى إنى إذا رهين غد  
هل نحن إلا كمن تقدمنا      و كل من تم ظمؤه يرد<sup>35</sup>

He says, "I am sure that if I do not die today, I shall most certainly die tomorrow ; we are like those who preceded us and every one whose term expires, ultimately reaches the fountain of death."

## NOTES AND REFERENCES



## NOTES AND REFERENCES

### CHAPTER I

1. See *Bulūgh al-Arab*, vol. II, pp. 194 seq.; *Tārīkh al-‘Arab* by *Jawād ‘Alī*, vol. V, pp. 59 seq.; and *al-Milal w-al-Nihāl* by *Shahristānī*, p. 1222.
2. *Kitāb al-Aṣṅām*, p. 6; *Akhtār Makkah*, pp. 71-72.
3. See for full details *al-Sīrat-al-Nabawīyah*, vol. I, p. 77; *Tārīkh al-Ya‘qūbī*, vol. I, p. 295; and *Kitāb al-Aṣṅām*, p. 8.
4. *Tārīkh al-Ya‘qūbī*, vol. I, p. 295.
5. *Kitāb al-Aṣṅām*, pp. 45-6.
6. *The Book of Idols*, pp. 39-40.
7. *Ighāthat-al-Lahfān*, vol. II, p. 222 seq.
8. *Kitāb al-Aṣṅām*, p. 32.
9. *Jamharah Ash‘ār al-‘Arab*, p. 44; and *Kitāb al-Aghānī*, vol. XXI, p. 313.
10. *Al-Sīrat-al-Nabawīyah*, vol. I, p. 47.
11. *Kitāb al-Aṣṅām*, p. 16; and *al-Sīrat-al-Nabawīyah*, vol. I, p. 85.
12. *Kitāb al-Aṣṅām*, p. 16.
13. *The Book of Idols*, p. 14. (The author has translated *Ka’s* into wine, but I think it to be the name of a girl as *Kalḥabah al-yarbū‘ī* says :—  
فقات لكس أجمعها وإنما حلت الكيب من زرود لأفزعا  
See *al-Kāmil* by *al-Mubarrad*, vol. I, p. 3.)
14. *Kitāb al-Aṣṅām*, p. 17.
15. *The Book of Idols*, p. 15.
16. *Sūrah. LIII (Najm)*, *Āyāt*, 19 and 20; For the details of each, see *al-Kashshāf*, vol. IV, p. 336.
17. *Al-Ṣubḥ al-Munīr*, p. 251.
18. *Kitāb al-Aṣṅām*, p. 17.
19. *The Book of Idols*, p. 15.
20. *Al-Sīrat-al-Nabawīyah*, vol. I, pp. 83-4; *Kitāb al-Aṣṅām*, p. 18.
21. *Al-Sīrat-al-Nabawīyah*, vol. I, p. 226; *Bulūgh al-Arab*, vol. II, p. 249.



22. The Life of Muhammad, p. 100.
23. Kitāb al-Aṣṇām, p. 14.
24. The Book of Idols, p. 13.
25. Kitāb al-Aṣṇām, p. 14.
26. Ighāthat-al-Lahfān, vol. I, pp, 207 seq,
27. Kitāb al-Aṣṇām, p. 42; al-Ḥayāt al-‘Arabīyah, p. 214.
28. The Book of Idols, p. 36.
29. Shu‘arā’ al-Naṣrānīyah, vol. I p. 172.
30. Al-‘Iqd al-Thamīn, p. 186; al-Ḥayāt al-‘Arabīyah, p. 307.
31. Kitāb al-Aṣṇām, p. 21.
32. Commentary on the Qur’ān, by A. Yūsuf ‘Alī, Surah V, (Mā’idah), Āyah 4.
33. Bulūgh al-Arab, vol. III, p. 302; Tārīkh al-Adab al-‘Arabī by al-Sitā‘ī, vol. I, p. 72.
34. Kitāb al-Aṣṇām, p. 110; Al-Ṣubḥ al-Munīr, p. 244; al-Ḥayāt al-‘Arabīyah, p. 214; Lisān al-‘Arab, vol. IV, p. 366.
35. Dīwān al-Nābighah, p. 30; Shu‘arā’ al-Naṣrānīyah, vol. I, p. 119; Al-Kashshāf, vol. III, p. 481.
36. Kitāb al-Aṣṇām, p. 11; Lisān al-‘Arab, vol. XI, p. 6, (أبل)
37. Tārīkh al-‘Arab by Jawād ‘Alī, vol. V, p. 110.
38. Kitāb al-Aṣṇām, p. 39; Mu‘jam al-Buldān, vol. I, p 238. (أبصر)
39. Kitāb al Aṣṇām, p. 19.
40. Ibid, p. 24; Mu‘jam al-Buldān, vol. III, p. 226. (سقام)
41. Kitāb al-Aṣṇām, p. 25.
42. Ibid, p. 21; Al-Kashshāf, vol. II, p. 217.
43. Dīwān Zuhayr, p. 178.
44. The Book of Idols, p. 29.
45. Al-Sīrat-al-Nabawīyah, vol. I, p. 84.
46. The Life of Muhammad, p. 38.
47. Kitāb al-Aṣṇām, p. 57.
48. The Book of Idols, p. 49.
49. Kitāb al-Aṣṇām, p. 41.
50. The Book of Idols, p. 35,

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## CHAPTER II

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58. Al-Mufaddaliyāt, vol. II, p. 83.
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66. Diwān 'Urwah, p. 14.
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302. For further details about Zayd, see al-Sīrat-al-Nabawīyah, vol. I, pp. 224-232 and Bulūgh al-Arab, vol. II, pp. 247-252.
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304. Al-Sīrat-al-Nabawīyah, vol. I, p. 227; al-Bidāyah-w-al-Nihāyah, vol. II, p. 242.
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323. For full details about Umayyah, see Shu'arā' al-Naḡrānīyah, vol. I, pp. 219 seq; Kitāb al-Aghānī, vol. III, pp. 357-367.
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340. Dīwān Umayyah, p. 36.  
341. See Dīwān Umayyah, p. 44.  
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21. For full details of the life of 'Adī, see Shu'arā' al-Naṣrāniyah, vol. I, pp. 439 seq.; A Literary History of the Arabs by Nicholson, pp. 45-48; Kitāb al-Aghānī, vol. II, pp. 34-76.
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61. Za'āmat-al-Shi'r al-Jāhili, p. 106.
62. Ibid., p. 107.
63. See Bulūgh al-Arab, vol. II, pp. 244-246.
64. See Bulūgh al-Arab, vol. II, pp. 244-246 and also vol. III, p. 155.
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67. See Bulūgh al-Arab, vol. III, p. 122.
68. Shu'arā' al-Naṣrānīyah, vol. I, p. 213.
69. Ibid., p. 216.
70. Shu'arā' al-Naṣrānīyah, vol. I, pp. 213-214.

## CHAPTER IV

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11. Al-Mufaddaliyāt, vol. II, p. 42.
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24. See Tārīkh Ādāb al-Lughat-al-'Arabīyah by Jurjī Zaydān, vol. I, p. 165.
25. Diwān al-Samaw'al, p. 10



26. See Kitāb al-Aghānī, vol. VIII, p. 306; Diwān al-Ḥamāsah with commentary by al-Tibrizī, vol. I, p. 56; and Ancient Arabian Poetry, by C. J. Lyall, p. 124.
27. Diwān al-Samaw'al, pp. 30-32.
28. Diwān al-Samaw'al, p. 11.
29. Diwān al-Samaw'al, p. 12; Al-Kashshāf, vol. I, p. 421.
30. Diwān al-Samaw'al, p. 12.
31. Diwān al-Samaw'al, pp. 12-13; Al-Kashshāf, vol. II, p. 303.
32. Diwān al-Samaw'al, p. 15.
33. Tārīkh al-Kāmil, vol. I, p. 246.
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