

DEGREE : Ph. D.

DATE : 29th AUGUST 1962

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RELIGIOUS FOLKLORE
OF THE BETHLEHEM DISTRICT
IN JORDAN

INTRODUCTION

The amount of material ever written on the subject of religious folklore of the Holy Places in general, and that of Bethlehem in particular, is surprisingly small. The researcher in this unexplored field is thus bound to depend largely on first-hand information from local sources, and on close observation by long residence in the District, rather than on scattered writings.

Cultural contacts and assimilation of western values in the area have naturally restricted folkloric tendencies. Besides, the doyens of folklore are rapidly passing away. Perhaps there is no other science which faces this dilemma of rapid decline, and in which rescue work which is not attempted at once will never be again practically possible. Much of the material collected here, characterised by its simplicity and vigour, has been recorded for the first time and virtually saved from extinction.

In agreement with the general Oriental outlook, women are unfavourably viewed. An anti-clerical influence is

detected. Temporal chiefs are condemned probably because of corruption and tyranny.

Fundamentally, religious folklore of the Bethlehem District, a main basis of the religious convictions of the unenlightened, indicates the inherently Semitic nature of its inhabitants, their proneness to exaggeration and use of flowery language, and their persistence - in spite of adverse factors - of Biblical modes of speech and behaviour. The overall picture obtained is Christian, with a preponderance of the Eastern Church lore. The deeply religious nature of the local inhabitant, though within narrow limits, and excluding deep subtleties, is emphasized in his utter dependence on God and emotional imagination. The great influence exerted by religion on a community which has been predominantly agricultural emerges clearly. Here the District concurs with the rest of Jordan, and the other countries generally, except that its spiritual attitude appears to be more emphasized.

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FOREWORD

It was in 1953 that Professor A. Guillaume, then Professor of Arabic in the University of London and Head of the Near and Middle East Department at the School of Oriental and African Studies, first suggested to me the undertaking of research work on the folklore of the Holy Places. Professor R.B. Serjeant, Professor of Modern Arabic in the University of London warmly welcomed the idea. The reasons for suggesting the subject were that almost nothing had been written about it, its importance, and the fact that I was a Bethlehemite.

Undeniably, there has been a general lack of interest in the Arab World, to which the Bethlehem District is no exception, in a scientific and ~~systematic~~ systematised study of the various fields of folklore. The reason is not very far to seek. Though the Arabs have recorded, unintentionally, some folklore in their books of proverbs, yet their aim was purely linguistic. Probably the main reason why the Arabs have neglected the study of folklore is that Arabic Literature had, with few exceptions, an aristocratic orientation from the start, indicated in its close relation to the rulers, and a disinterestedness with the people at large.

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Problems encountered in collecting the material were immense. Informants, for fear of its being a bad omen, were extremely reluctant to impart any information about death traditions and songs, and imprecations. In general, the most fruitful method employed with my informants (scattered throughout the District) was found to be the indirect one. Direct questioning only led to distrust, reticence or embarrassment. Questions had to be tactfully put (only when the occasion arose naturally), assuming a casual informality intended to lead to the informant's ease. Hence it proved unwise to ask a woman, "What do you take as a feast present to a fiancé?" but instead, "Tell me of the occasion when you presented your son's fiancé with her feast present." Then when the material was collected and analysed - and the authenticity of the information assessed - there came the intricacies of classification and the drawing of conclusions.

Though this study of a limited area is by its nature intensive, yet it does not imply a disregard of other parts of the country. The treatment, which has been severely objective, does not endeavour to idealize things.

A map of the Bethlehem District (officially a sub-District of Jerusalem) is appended to Chapter One. The population of its three chief towns, Bethlehem, Beit Jala, and Beit Sahūr, was until the outbreak of Arab-Jewish hostilities in 1948,

predominantly Christian, mostly belonging to the Eastern Church. The villages and countryside have always been Muslim. Now a substantial percentage of the population are refugees, resulting in a Muslim majority. According to the latest census (1961) the Bethlehem District population was 56344, Bethlehem 15777, Beit Jala 7374, and Beit Sahūr 5155.

I would like to extend my sincere thanks to Professor A. Guillaume and Professor R.B. Serjeant f my adviser at the School of Oriental and African Studies for his great help and encouragement; to Dr. W. 'Arafāt, Reader in Arabic at the same School, and to Dr. T. Caṅ'an for his valuable advice; and to to the Rev. H. Adkins and Messrs. R.A. Simcox and M. Lee for reading the proofs of this thesis. My thanks are also due to Mr. F. Tarazi of the Arabic Department, American University of Beirut, and Mr. Kh. Jadallah for their general discussions, and to Mr. A. Barghūthi for his help on the Chapter of Songs; and to Mr. Yusuf Sa'd the Curator and Librarian of the Palestine Archaeological Museum and Library in Jerusalem, and to the authorities of the Dominican and American School of Oriental Research Libraries in Jerusalem.

Issa Massou

Bethlehem, 23rd July 1962.

TRANSLITERATION OF THE ARABIC ALPHABET

The transliteration and tashkīl have aimed at reproducing the local dialects as far as possible.

The following is the transliteration system followed in this thesis:

a	ا	t	ط
b	ب	z	ظ
t	ت	'	ع
<u>th</u>	ث	<u>gh</u>	غ
j	ج	r	ر
h	ح	q	ق
<u>kh</u>	خ	k	ك
d	د	l	ل
<u>dh</u>	ذ	m	م
r	ر	n	ن
z	ز	h	هـ
s	س	w	و
<u>sh</u>	ش	i	ي
ṣ	ص	()	ى
ḍ	ض	.	• (همزة التضعيف)

The sign (-) over a vowel indicates that it is long.

The silent t (ت) is omitted.

CHAPTER ONE

STORIES OF PLACES AND PERSONS
CONNECTED WITH RELIGIOUS FOLKLORE

The degree of circulation of the following stories varies to a very great extent. Some are quite well-known, while others are known to an extremely limited number of people. Most of them are commonly characterised by the miracle element which is so largely responsible for the maintenance of their circulation. It is to be noted that their nature remains predominantly Christian in essence and outlook in spite of the fact that the Christian population has now become a minority in comparison with the Muslim population in the district under discussion. Many stories are circulated among Christians and Muslims.

Christians and Muslims who have been in contact with education for the most part doubt the truth of these stories, but some have a sincere belief in them and reverently cherish the memory of the saints who are associated with them. It is perhaps, not an overstatement that to simple-minded Christians and Muslims alike the belief in some of these stories forms an inseparable part of the make-up of their religion, the heritage of primitive religion. (1) Naturally these stories with their concrete images and clear-cut descriptions would appeal to simple people more than theological subtleties or philosophical abstractions.

(1) See H.A.R. Gibb, Modern Trends in Islam, pp. 22, 23.

It will be seen from the material collected here that it resolves itself into definite types of miracle. Much of it is connected with litholatry, the cult of stone objects or rocks, which is of course world-wide, but nowhere more marked perhaps than in Arabia. The material bears much relation to the same type of popular religion in Arabia itself, which obviously hardly differs from that of popular Muslim religion in Palestine/Jordan. While the Arabian saints seem to preserve the ideas in their earlier stronger forms, the Palestine saints perform miracles the significance of which in the earlier pagan religion has been half forgotten. (1)

Bethlehem Proper:-

It would seem strange that, in comparison with disputed places such as al-Khadr, so little folklore material can be found relating to the collection of convents and churches that have grown up round the cave of ^{the} Nativity which is the undisputed place where Jesus Christ was born, (2) and which is held sacred by all Christian denominations. It is to be mentioned here that

-
- (1) I owe this to the courtesy of my adviser Professor R.B. Serjeant.
- (2) See The Problem of the Authenticity of the Site of the Nativity by R.W. Hamilton, Government of Palestine Department of Antiquities A Guide to Bethlehem, pp. 85 - 106 .

two places in Jerusalem claim to possess the tomb of Christ, one inside the Wall and the other outside it. The fact that the beautiful story of the Nativity in itself has such a strong appeal to the imagination may well explain why so few other stories were told about this Church.

There is a well-known story associated with the Church of the Nativity which dates back probably to 1009 A.D. The deranged Egyptian Caliph al-Hākim Bi'amr-illāh ordered the demolition of Christian monuments and churches throughout the Holy Land. A contemporary writer relates, "While the infidels were trying to destroy the Church of Bethlehem, at the place of the Nativity of Christ, suddenly there appeared to them a dazzling light and all were thrown to the ground and straight-away expired. Thus the Church of the Mother of God remained untouched." (1) It is quite possible that the Church was saved because of the goodwill of the local Muslims. (2) The monstrous atrocities of al-Hākim (996-1021), and his persecution of Christians are historical facts. His demolishing of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem took place in 1009 A.D. (3)

(1) R.W. Hamilton, A Guide to Bethlehem, p.16.

(2) K.I. Qazaqia, Ta'rīkh ul-Kanīsa ar-Rasūliya (Arabic), p.291
quotes the same story and refers to the French historian Adhemar, "When the Saracens wanted to destroy the Church of the Nativity, there appeared a dazzling light as strong as lightning and killed them all, and so the Church remained intact." X

(3) Philip Hitti, History of the Arabs, p.620.

Another story which bears some resemblance to, and may be a modified form of the previous one, is still nowadays current among the local inhabitants. The Sultan(sic) when visiting Bethlehem was taken with the splendour of the columns and marbles of the Church of the Nativity. So he commanded that they should be removed, wishing to use them to build a palace for himself. A huge serpent appeared and pursued the labourers, who had to run for their lives, and so the Sultan had to desist from his purpose.

Hamilton quotes a strikingly similar legend recounted by Burchardt of Mount Sion(1) who twenty years after Sultan Rukn-ud-Dīn Baybars (1260 - 1277 A.D.) ordered the dismantling of the walls and towers of Bethlehem in 1263 wrote the following account:-" I have seen in that church a glorious miracle. Seeing the previous ornament and the marbles and the columns in that Church the Sultan commanded them all to be taken down and carried to Babylon,(2) wishing to build from them a palace for himself. When the workmen approached with their tools, the Sultan being present and many others, lo and behold there came forth from the wall, which was sound and whole so that it seemed not a needle could penetrate it, a serpent of portentous size and bit the first marble that it came to. And the slab cracked across. In turn it came to a second and a third and a fourth,

(1) R.W. Hamilton, op. cit. , pp. 24 , 25,

(2) i.e. Cairo

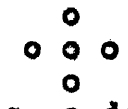
even unto the thirtieth, and so it was with all of them. And they were all astonished. The Sultan himself forthwith revoked his purpose, and the serpent disappeared. So the Church remained, and remains to this day, as it was before. Yet the marks of the serpent's body can still be seen on each of the slabs it passed across, like a scorching of fire." This story is no longer at present found in circulation among the local population. Stories of serpents guarding holy places are told about many Muhammadan Saints.(1)

Sir Richard Guilforde in his book "Pilgrimage to the Holy Land" refers to this same legend.(2) It is worth mentioning however that Sir Richard's pilgrimage took place in the very early part of the 16th century, when Baybar's legend was less than two and a half centuries old and so quite fresh in the memory. Other versions of the legend refer to the serpent having "a tongue of fire", and to " a horrifying black face"

(1) See T. Can'an , Mohammedan Saints and Sanctuaries , JPOS , Vol. VII, No 1 -2 ; and p. 11 where he differentiates between serpent (حية) and male serpent(عربيد) ; the former represents a "good spirit" , the latter a "demon".

(2) pp. 35, 36.

instead of a serpent. (1)

One of the most popular legends associated with the Church of the Nativity, which most probably goes back to the 18th century, is centred round one of the columns of the nave of this church. Starting with the southern colonnade of the nave, and moving from west to east, on the sixth column, one sees five holes at a distance of five feet from the floor. The distance between the uppermost hole and the lowest being six inches, and the circumference of the entire column is nearly 78 inches. Every hole is more than one inch deep and less than one inch in diameter. The holes are in this position and are called "the Cross."  The column itself bears the painting of St. Vencentios, a deacon of Saragossa who was martyred after fearful tortures in 304 A.D. during the persecutions under Diocletian. He wears a dalmatic, stole and maniple.

On entering the Church people are in the habit of placing the fingers of their right hand into these holes, the middle

(1) Cf. de Bréves, Voyages, p. 127, "Vinsmes a la maison de St. Thomas, que la denote Imperatrice de Constantinople fit eriger en Eglere, maintenant deserte, et demy ruinee, mais sondain que les Architectes y entroient, un hideux serpent sortant d'entre les ruines leur faisoit quitter outils et dessein tout ensemble."

finger in the uppermost hole, the forefinger in the right one, the thumb in the lowest, the little finger in the right one, and the ring-finger in the centre hole, and then crossing themselves. According to the legend, some neighbouring Muslims tried to massacre the Bethlehem Christians and to ruin the Church of the Nativity; but when they entered it, thousands of fierce wasps swarmed out from the column referred to, and attacked the invaders who made off in confusion in a westerly direction in fear for their lives, closely followed by the wasps. When they reached "Qaus Az-Zarrāra" (The arch of "Zarrāra") about 400 yards away from the Church, the invaders were cornered(1) and stung, and after a desperate attempt at escaping westwards they expired(faṭasu) (2). Hence the popular theory of the origin of the name of the quarter " Ras Ifṭās", the Head of the Death-Ground which adjoins the "Qaus az-Zarrāra" quarter.

This story, in its general structure, is often confused with a similar story which is equally widespread. The invaders, according to the second story, were coming from the west towards the east, with the intention of destroying the Church

(1) The word "Zarrāra" is derived from the root "zarra", (زرر) colloquially meaning "to corner".

(2) نظروا

of the Nativity. When they reached the Qaus (termed "Az-Zarrāra" later), the Virgin Mary appeared to them in a most dazzling brilliance which took the shape of a wall of light. They were thus blinded and could not proceed any farther, but when they turned their faces to go back they were able to recover their power of vision; but when they turned eastwards to go on with their attack they were again blinded. So finally they decided to retreat whence they had come. This story furnishes a clue to the feminine form of "az-Zarrāra" (The female Cornerer), a form which probably refers to the Virgin Mary. This story links up with the previous one in that the invaders died at "Ras Ifṭēs".

Another story about these holes which is still in circulation is that "a long time ago" a great earthquake shook Bethlehem, and subsided when the Virgin Mary appeared in the Church of the Nativity and placed her fingers on the column. The holes mark the traces of her fingers on the column.

Somewhere along the subterranean passage which leads to the Cave of the Nativity, and before it turns to the north, one observes a round hole on the right. Water is said to have burst forth from this hole for the use of the Holy Family, when Christ was born. In the course of the 15th century the unreasonable tradition was invented, namely that the star which had guided the Magi fell into this spring and that none but virgins could see it.

One other story connected with the Church of the Nativity has a comparatively recent origin. The Rev. Hanna Banāyot of Bethlehem and of the Orthodox Church (d.1922) enjoyed a widespread reputation for piety and remarkable deeds. It is thought that he was able to open the basilica door(1) of the Church of the Nativity, by reading Psalm 23.(2) In the course of my investigation I have come across several people who claim to have been eye-witnesses(3) on several occasions when this remarkable deed was supposed to have taken place. Because of its recent origin this story enjoys a most widespread circulation.

From the Church of the Nativity and at a distance of 300 yards to the south east, the Milk Grotto or Women's Cavern is situated. It is a large irregular cave now converted into a chapel belonging to the Franciscans. The tradition from which it derives its name, and of which there are various

(1) This door is no longer in existence. In 1919 the wall separating the nave from the Church was removed.

(2) Probably because of its references to the Lord as his shepherd; the above mentioned priest used to recite this psalm on going to the Church at 2.30 a.m. to perform morning prayers. This psalm too ends with "I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever".

(3) One of them is my maternal uncle.

versions, is that the Holy Family once sought shelter or concealment here, and that a drop of the Virgin's milk fell on the floor of the grotto. For many centuries both Christians and Muslims have entertained a superstition that the rock of this cavern has the property of increasing the milk of women and even of animals, and to this day round cakes mixed with dust from the rock are sold to pilgrims. (1) "The traditional story is that before their flight into Egypt the Holy Family stayed a short time in the cavern. One day a drop of the Blessed Virgin's milk happened to fall on the chalky rock, and immediately endowed it with miraculous properties. Until the sophistication of recent years the rock was much prized by women of the countryside as a healing agency and aid to lactation." (2) The cavern was known to such early travelers as Mandeville (3) (1322), and the Russian pilgrim Grethnios (c. 1400). The earth which is chalky, white and friable is now made up into tablets about an inch square, roughly stamped with the bust of the Virgin Mary on one side, and a monogram on the other side, and is used by Christians and Muslims alike.

(1) K. Baedeker, Palestine and Syria , p. 250.

(2) R.W. Hamilton, *op. cit.* p. 82.

(3) Ed. Wright , p. 163

Beit Sāhūr

At a mile's distance to the east of Bethlehem lies Beit Sāhūr. Sepp. supposes the name to be derived from Ashūr (1 Chron. 11, 24; iv, 5) (1). The most popular story about Beit Sāhūr proper (2) is that connected with Bir Issideh (The Well of the Lady). Baedeker briefly refers to it, "There are several grottoes and cisterns here. The deepest of the latter, situated in the middle of the village, is famous as the scene of a traditional miracle. The inhabitants having refused to draw water for the Virgin, the water rose in the well of its own accord." (3)

The present writer has heard the story of this traditional miracle(4) in the following way. Bir Issideh is a religious endowment belonging to the whole town. Jacob the son of Ishāq,

(1) Von Prof. Dr. Johann Nepomuk Sepp , Neve hockwichtige Entdeckungen auf der Zevelten Palastinafahrt, Munchen 1896, Vol.II , p. 192.

(2) Excluding the Field of Shepherds one mile east of Beit Sāhūr

(3) Baedeker, op. cit. p. 251.

(4) Heard from ^{the} Rev. 'Azar Qumṣiye of the Greek Orthodox Church of Beit Sāhūr.

the son of Abraham, was the one who dug it. The Virgin Mary while on her way to Egypt passed by it; and, being thirsty, she asked one of the women to give her a drink from a pail of water, as the well was deep, but the women refused. So the Virgin Mary gave utterance to the imprecation that their number should never exceed forty at any time, and truly the number of the family to which the people at the well belonged, namely al-Jarāyseh, never exceeded forty members for some time. Indeed they are the smallest existing tribal clan in Beit Sāpūr till now.

Near the well there is a small basin, five yards in circumference, and a little more than a yard in depth. It is the custom of villagers to draw water from the well and to pour it into the basin for general use. Now tradition has it that the Virgin Mary knelt at the basin where she was refused a drink and the trace of her kneeling is still shown in the rock, the surface of which is slightly hollowed out.(1)
Can'an mentions fourteen places where impressions of this kind in the solid rock are still seen.(2)

(1) Another version of the story claims that the trace indicates the place where the Virgin Mary beat her foot, on being refused a drink. The basin on which the trace appeared has, however, been removed by recent municipal repairs in the village.

(2) Can'an, op. cit., p. 8.

The well is still held in the highest veneration by the local population. It is indeed the current custom when a child falls seriously ill, for his mother or another close relative to vow that if he recovers, she will light the well with an oil-lamp called (srāj). Some people claim that they have on occasions smelt incense coming out from the well.

From another source (1) the writer has heard the following verse attributed to the Virgin Mary as she was addressing the well:-

Ya bīr fūr fūr lashrab minnak u ghūr

"O well overflow overflow; so that I can drink, then sink."

Then she drank and uttered an imprecation against the people who refused her a drink. The same source relates how some relatives of his had seen a lady dressed in white(2) near the well and when they approached her she quickly descended into the well. The same source also related to me how when the priest of the Latin Church in the village, the Rev. Ibrahim 'Ayyād went some years ago to hang a candlestick down the well, the candlestick broke, and when the priest laughed, he himself had his arm broken the next day.(3)

(1) Elias Rashmāwi of Beit Sāpūr

(2) The white and green colours predominate among awlia (Christian and Muslim). Holy persons never appear in black clothes. See Can'ān, op. cit. p. 19.

(3) Probably a reminiscent of Greco-Latin rivalry.

Qabr Hilwe (The Grave of Hilwe)

About one mile farther east and near the road leading to Deir Ibn I'beid, one comes across a heap of stones, known as "Qabr Hilwe" (The grave of Hilwe) - not to be confused with Wadi Hilwe in Silwān near Jerusalem - which is held in great veneration by both Muslims and Christians alike. The writer was unable to trace any reference to "Qabr Hilwe" in Baedeker, Can'an, or indeed in any other writer on the subject of Folklore. The legends connected with this site seem to be fairly recent, and my conjecture is that it was the end of the 19th century that they first gained popularity. The reason is that this site is on the way to Shepherds' Field, and, none of the European travellers, including Baedeker, who have visited the Field, has ever referred to it.

The only story I could get about the origin of this site was related to me by the Rev. 'Āzar. A certain "darwīsha" (feminine of "darwīsh") called Hilwe, daughter of Hilwīn, who had a reputation for her piety and chastity, and who belonged to the tribe of Nseirāt (1) which is highly respected by Muslims, was once travelling on camel-back. Feeling that her end was near, she asked her people to bury her where her camel knelt down, and the site of her tomb is known as "Qabr Hilwe".

(1) Still living near Deir Ibn I'beid; they make a livelihood by pasturing cattle and sheep and agriculture.

The Arabs normally place the body on such occasions on one side of the camel, the other side being balanced by earth, as "man cannot be balanced except by earth". The camel journeyed for two hours away from their tents, then it stopped, and they buried her there according to her wish. There is a tremendous amount of folklore connected with Hilwe's Grave which is held in so much universal esteem that provisions are offered as vows and are placed on the tomb, together with ploughshares, oil and candles with perfect safety and without anybody daring to touch the tomb for the fear of the vengeance of Hilwe. The saints (Muhammadan and Christian), always protect everything under their care. They protect their property, neighbours and village. This is believed by most Orientals. (1)

Elias Raḡmāwi has told me how a certain man from Beit Sāḡūr one night gathered up the ploughshares on the tomb and went away with them. That night he had a fever and was afflicted with paralysis of the leg. His mother, fearing that the reason might be the theft, hurriedly returned the stolen goods, and ^{he} then recovered immediately.

The Rev. 'Āzar related to me how his own nephew when he was once on his way with some friends to Dair Ibn I'beid (Ibn I'beid's Convent), about three miles' distance from

(1) See Can'ān , op. cit., p.31.

Hilwe's Grave, passed by the Grave, and saw some money lying on it and availed himself of two "metliks".(1) But after a short while his leg stiffened and he started crying "Oh my leg, my leg" from the acuteness of his pain. They realized the reason, and soon returned the two "metliks" to the grave and soon his leg was cured. The reason why there are so many references to maladies of the leg in the stories is possibly because that is a very good way of handicapping the wrong-doers.

Similar stories are found in plenty, and I have chosen the above two as representative specimens. The legends pertaining to the "darwishe's" revenge are similar to those of the saints of the region under research; but Hilwe does not seem to have appeared to anyone as the other saints sometimes do, most probably because of the Islamic notion regarding the seclusion of women. The abundance of references to ploughshares in this connection is undoubtedly due to the fact that the neighbouring region is predominantly agricultural, and because the Grave lies in the open near the road.

Similar revenge stories are frequently narrated. A certain sheikh from Beit Sāhūr worked in the mother-of-pearl industry. On the feast of the Forty Martyrs(2) he decided to work and to ridicule the Martyrs. While working, every time he chopped off a

(1) A "metlik" was a Turkish coin worth about a penny.

(2) 9th March.

piece of mother-of-pearl he repeated lightheartedly, "This is the head of the first martyr; this is the second; third etc." One piece flew off sharply and struck him in the eye, and thus he became one-eyed; and for this reason he never worked again on this feast day. (1)

Shepherds' Field

Continuing eastwards, and at two miles' distance from the Grave, we come to the famous Shepherds' Field where, according to tradition, the angels appeared to the Shepherds when Jesus was born. This is the source of a considerable amount of folklore. The most popular story connected with the Church there is not mentioned by the doyens of Palestinian Arabic folklore. I have heard the following story first from the Rev. 'Āzar who had heard it from his father, but I also heard it from various other places.

Forty horsemen belonging to the Qazaha clan of Beit Sāhūr used to make for the site of the Shepherds' Field fully armed with spears. They were so proud and arrogant that they received the benediction (2) distributed at the end of the Orthodox service on the ends of their spears. Immediately afterwards the

(1) Related to me by the Rev. 'Āzar.

(2) Called "Awwaleh" in Arabic.

"wirwar"(1) (plague) came and all of them died as a result of it.

A wealth of anecdotes is connected with Shepherds' Field. One invariably hears stories about people stealing from the olive groves in the Shepherds' Field and meeting either with immediate retribution or with extraordinary occurrences indicating supernatural disapproval. Some women belonging to a Beit Saḥūr Muslim family went to the Shepherds' Field olive groves and stole some olives. As they carried the stolen olives away they were blinded and could not see their way,(2) but when they put down the stolen olives they could easily see their way."This took place about one hundred and fifty years ago."(3) This story can be taken as a "fair sample" of such stories of which there are many. There are, however, some few variants.

(1) Colloquial for "plague"; not heard in Jerusalem. It is probably an onomatopoeiac derivation from "wirr", colloquially used, even in such cities as Jerusalem to mean "throw". I venture the explanation that since cholera is associated with vomiting and evacuation of the bowels, then the term might probably be attached to it. Incidentally the colloquial for diarrhoea is "hrār".

(2) Cf. Qaus az-Zarrāra story p. 7-8.

(3) Heard from Elias Rashmāwi.

When the Rev. Ibrahim Khalil from the Marāshdeh clan, opened the Shepherds' Field Church in order to conduct service, he found a service being conducted already. He then went and informed the Greek Orthodox Patriarch who "upbraided him".

There is also the story of a Ta'mariyye (1) woman who stole some olives from the Shepherds' Field groves, but the stolen property was soon transformed into cockroaches, so that she was forced to leave the stolen produce and go away. A certain woman wood-cutter plucked some olives from the Shepherds' Field, but she soon became blind and could not go on her way; but when she returned the stolen olives, her eyes opened, and she once again tried to carry them away but again she was blinded, and was finally forced to leave the olives alone.

Issyar and Beit Ta'mar

Very near the Shepherds' Field, there is a small well-cultivated plain called by tradition the Field of Boaz but without any authority, and at a distance of not more than two miles to the south east of Beit Sāhūr, there are cultivated fields called "Issyar". A certain man from Beit Sāhūr who watched over the fields thought little of devotional services, and was off-hand at places of worship. He related how at "Issyar" he and his wife used to hear services being conducted, and how

(1) i.e. from the Ta'amre tribe living to the east of Bethlehem.

once the supernatural congregation went up to him and gave him a sound beating. A green light is seen and religious music and prayers are heard in many sanctuaries of Muḥammadan saints especially on Thursday evening. (1)

About five miles to the south east of this place, there lies Beit Ta'mar, the centre of the Ta'Amra tribe. There is a popular story which centres round its mosque called Mosque of 'Umar. A certain young man from Beit Sāḥūr was once shooting in that neighbourhood, and seeing a bird on top of the mosque, he fired at it and killed it; his hand was immediately fractured because he had violated the sanctity of the mosque.

Mar Saba

At about three hours walking distance to the east of Bethlehem (at about 17 kilometres to the north-east of Bethlehem and 18 kilometres to the south-east of Jerusalem, and 20 kilometres to the west of the Dead Sea) there lies the monastery of Mar Saba, hewn out of the rocks on the slope of a mountain in the middle of a vast wilderness, overlooking a most dismal and desolate valley 590 feet below the monastery. This Laura or settlement of monks seems to have been founded here in the 5th century by St. Euthymius. Around the middle

(1) i.e. (ليلة الجمعة), See Can'an, op. cit. pp. 16-17

of the century Sabas (b. circa 439 in Cappadocia) visited Jerusalem and later settled in this wilderness with St. Euthymius. He gained a great reputation for sanctity, and "in 484 he was ordained a priest by the Bishop of Jerusalem, and raised to the rank of abbot of the order of Sabaites named after him". (1)

Baedeker refers to the legend of Mar Saba living peacefully in the same cave with a lion. He also mentions the fact that women are not admitted, and must, when visiting the monastery spend the night in the tower(2) outside. Baedeker, however, does not attempt to account for this. The most current reason, given is that Mar Saba hated women. It is related that, fairly recently, a woman disguised in man's attire, entered the monastery with a group of tourists, but the monastery began to shake immediately. The abbot ordered a thorough investigation which resulted in the discovery of the woman who was peremptorily ordered out, and soon afterwards the shaking subsided. Compare this with the shrine of Fâtmeḥ daughter of al-Barri in Zakaria village, Hebron District, where no male visitors are admitted.

(1) K. Baedeker, Palestine and Syria, p. 272.

(2) Called in Arabic "Qaṣr in-Niswān" (The Women's Tower; colloquially qaṣr means tower).

Baedeker mentions "a palm-tree which is said to have been planted by St. Sabas. Its dates, as the monks declare, have no stones". (1) Crowfoot and Baldensperger (2) do not refer to it, but Can'an (3) does and adds that many women belonging to the Orthodox Church believe that sterility may be cured by eating dates from it. Meistermann refers to it (4) and adds "When the tree dies another one shoots forth". From the chapel of St. Saba entirely hollowed out of the rock, a door "communicates with the cave where the holy founder passed more than half a century in prayer and in the practice of the greatest austerities. To this same grotto belongs the graceful legend of the lion which during many long years kept the company of the holy abbot". "The black-birds of St. Sabas", birds with dark blue plumage and yellowish wings (*Amydrus Tristrami*) still come every day to take their billful from the hands of the monks". (5) A modified version of the legend says that one day when the Saint

(1) K. Baedeker, *op. cit.*, p. 273.

(2) "From Cedar to Hyssop".

(3) *Aberglaube und Volksmedizin im Lande der Bibel* (1914) p. 87, and in *Mohammedan Saints and Sanctuaries*, JPOS Vol IV, No. 1-2, p. 73

(4) "New Guide to the Holy Land, p. 412.

(5) *Ibid.*

was entering his cavern, he found it occupied by a lion, whereupon the Saint began without fear to repeat his prayers and then fell asleep. The legend goes on to say that the lion then dragged him out of the cave twice, but the Saint objected to such proceedings, and assigned him a corner of the cavern, after which they lived peacefully together.

Deir Ibn I'beid (The Monastery of Ibn I'beid)

Half way on the road between Mar Saba and Bethlehem there lies the Greek Orthodox Monastery of Deir Ibn I'beid, or Mar Theodosius, which was in ruins when Baedeker visited it. The Muslim tribe which inhabits the area round this Bræk Orthodox Monastery is called I'bediyyeh.

According to tradition the monastery was built on the site of a cave or shelter (ma'wa) to which the Persian Kings resorted on their way back from Bethlehem to their country after prostrating themselves before the Child Jesus. (1) The cave in which Mar Theodosius lived for many years, contains his remains. It is interesting to notice how the I'bediyyeh tribe inhabiting the surroundings of the monastery, has called it the Ibn I'beid monastery, which is, as far as they are concerned, much easier to pronounce

(1) Maximus Maḡlūm, Kitāb al-Kanz ath-Thamīn fi Akhbār ul-Qiddīsīn, Vol. II, p. 65 , #14 (1868) (Arabic).

naturally. The I'beidiyeh Bedouins are said to be the descendants of the Christian guardians brought by a Byzantine king to guard Mar Saba and Mar Theodosius' convents. They became with time Muslims.

Furdēs Mountain and Tekoa (Tqū')

The Furdēs Mountain is to the south-east of Bethlehem. It is also called the Frank Mountain from a story that it was the last refuge of the Crusaders; in fact it is the fortress and burial place of Herod the Great.(1) To the south-east, too, and at a walking distance of about four hours is the site of ancient Tekoa, mentioned in the Book of Joshua.(2) This place is celebrated as the birthplace of the Prophet Amos,(3) and according to tradition he was also buried here. Another local tradition has it that Herod's Massacre of the Innocents extended as far as Tekoa.(4) The region surrounding Tekoa has been from time immemorial a barren desert.(5) In the middle of its ruins the remains of a church and a baptism basin are still traceable. Owing to excessive taxation one of the inhabitants decided to stand it no longer and to emigrate secretly being afraid of being intercepted. Surreptitiously he sold his possessions bit by bit explaining that he needed the money. Being anxious to teach his townsmen a lesson, he

(1) See A. P. Stanley, Sinai and Palestine, p. 129.

(2) 15:59. (3) Amos 1:1. (4) 2 Chronicles 20:20.

(5) B. Meistermann, New Guide to the Holy Land, p.338.

bought two pigeons and clipped off the wings from one of them, and placed both pigeons under a large wooden bowl, colloquially called (bāṭīeh), in the middle of the front room, and then escaped to safety with the members of his family. Next day he was missed and his friends and relatives went to his house to enquire about him. They forced open the door and found the house clean and empty, except for the bowl which they lifted up. Instantly one pigeon flew out while the other crawled about helplessly. They soon realized the meaning of the lesson he had meant to teach them, that is that they should flee while they were able, and before they were rendered too weak by oppression to do so.

Artās and 'Ein 'Atān

The village of Artās, two miles to the south of Bethlehem and very near to the Pools of Solomon, was called by the Crusaders "Villa Salomon" or Hortus Salomonis - the gardens of Solomon. It seems certain that the Latin word "hortus", garden, was corrupted into the name Artās which is at present a village hidden in the mountains. Meistermann believes that the name "Ourtās" ought rather to be sought for in the Greek word (ἘΨΕΛΤΗΣ), which means a place rich in running waters. (1) Both derivations may be accepted.

(1) B. Meistermann, op. cit. p. 335.

The Crusaders, whose scholarship in this respect was notably poor, possibly turned the Semiticised Greek name into a Latin one. (1) The 1952 official census gave the number of its inhabitants as 1090. At the foot of the village lies a very copious spring (which is believed to be inhabited by white and black sheep) (2) which used to supply the Jabal Furdeis (Mountain of the Franks) with water at the time of Herod the Great. It is definitely the strongest spring on the West Bank of the Jordan, but the strange thing about it is that nobody knows where its waters come from. The Crusaders had built a church over the spring, called The Closed Fountain Church, in memory of the Virgin Mary. Less than a mile to the east of the Sealed Fountain, and ^{at} a very little distance to the west of the lowest of the Pools of Solomon lies 'Ein 'Aṭān the waters of which are considered to be most salubrious and agreeable. The spring is now enclosed in a chamber that has an arched ceiling. It is worth mentioning that the spring "'Ein 'Aṭān" has alone

(1) I owe this suggestion to the courtesy of my adviser Professor R. S. Serjeant.

(2) The other springs in Palestine are believed to be inhabited by white and black sheep: 'Ein ed-Djǒz, Ramallah, and 'Ein Fawār, east of Jerusalem. See T. Can'ān, "Haunted Springs and Water Demons in Palestine", JPOS Vol. 1, p. 168.

preserved the name of the city that had once existed in the neighbourhood. There are references to it in the Book of Joshua (1) under the form Aetham, in Josephus and the Mishna. "It is related by the Sages of Israel when the children of Israel were driven into exile there went with them to Babylon 800 different kinds of locusts, innumerable birds as well as 700 different kinds of pure fish. The fish lived in the waters of River Euphrates; when the children of Israel returned to their land the locusts, birds and fish returned with them. And how did the fish return? Through the channels running underground between Palestine and Mesopotamia, in which the waters of the Euphrates flow right into the fountain of Etam." (2)

This links up with the current Muslim belief concerning certain springs in the Jerusalem area, thus affording a most curious correlation between the Jewish legend pertaining to Etam and Muslim folklore. This seems quite likely for the reason that in Christian belief water running from place to place is not accredited with the power of animation or curative power. (3) But we notice, however, that Muslims have probably derived their popular religious superstitions concerning the power of water to make its way underground over long

(1) (Septuagint XV, 60).

(2) Z. Vilnay, Legends of Palestine, p. 150

(3) Cf. St. John, 5: 2-4.

distances from Jewish superstition, and the curative power of water from Christians - running water according to Muslim belief is the purest.

A contemporary belief is that from under es-Şakhra (The Dome of the Rock in Jerusalem) four streams flow: one goes to the south - to Hammām esh-Shifā (The Curative Bath), a second to the east to Siloam, a third goes to the north to 'Ein Ḥaddji and 'Ein el-Qashleh, and the fourth goes to the west to Hammām es-Sultān. (1) The waters of Zamzam, it is believed, mix once a year with those of Hammām 'Āshurah and of Siloam. (2) Khālid Ibn Ma'dan is quoted in "al-Uns ul-Jalīl" (3) as saying that 'Ein Silwān gets its water from the Djanneh (Paradise). One of the reasons why both 'Ein Silwān and Zamzam are related to each other is possibly because both are fairly saline.

(A western legend that bears some relationship to such legends of the east as the meeting of subterranean waters, is to be found in the legend of the mere at Rosthern in Cheshire, "When the bells in the Church were being hung one of them thrice rolled down the slope to the edge of the lake. The last time one of the workmen said, ' I would the Devil had thee!'

(1) See Dr. T. Can'an, " Haunted Springs and Water Demons in Palestine revised and enlarged from JPOS Vol. 1 pp.15-16 and "Water and the Water of Life", JPOS IX (1929) p.64 ff.

(2) Dr. T. Can'an, "Haunted Springs and Water Demons", p. 17.

(3) Mujir-ud-Dīn al-Ḥanbaliyy, Al-Uns ul-Jalīl, Vol.II,p. 407.

Instantly the bell leaped backward, crushed the impious man to death, and rolled into the mere, where it is to this day. Now the mere is said to be connected with the sea, by an underground channel, and on the morning of Easter Day a mermaid swims up from the ocean, rises to the surface of the lake, and rings the bell.") (1)

Pools Of Solomon

A few yards away to the west of 'Ein 'Atān are the three famous Pools of Solomon ($3\frac{1}{2}$ miles to the south of Bethlehem) situated in a straight line. The first that meets you going from west to east, is 126 yards in length, some 77 yards in width and has a depth of 23 feet. The middle one, on a lower level, and at a distance of 53 yards from the preceding is 140 yards long, 76 yards broad and is 39 feet in depth. The third and deepest pool (the finest of the three) is situated at a distance of 49 yards to the east of the middle pool, and is 192 yards in length, 88 yards in breadth at the western extremity, and 49 yards at the other, with a maximum depth of 56 feet. The name "Solomon's Pools" is based upon Ecclesiastes II, 6 ("I made my pools of water, to water therewith the wood that bringeth forth trees"). Though authorities are fairly well agreed that Solomon constructed the Pools, yet there are some like Baedeker who seem

(1) Henry Bett, English Myths and Traditions, p. 85.

to doubt it for the lack of more conclusive evidence. Anyway, the Pools themselves appear to be singularly free from legends attached to them. Folklore connected with King Solomon is discussed in Chapter Five.

Al-Khadr (Mar Jiryis = St. George)

From the Pools of Solomon the road rises and when we cross the Jerusalem-Hebron road, we find ourselves facing on the right the village of al-Khadr with a Greek Orthodox monastery and its celebrated lunatic asylum, all three the source of a very rich store, of religious folklore. The present monastery was founded on the spot where al-Khadr is believed to have lived a part of his life. The following story about the first establishment of the monastery is not very well-known. But I have heard it from an old man in Beit Jala. The trade route used to pass from the outskirts of Bethlehem to 'Asqalān, the Mediterranean port. Once a small group of merchants was on its way to 'Asqalān with camels loaded with merchandise. When sunset overtook them they chose a place where they could spend the night. As they were resting, some of them decided, in order to sell the goods first, to steal the camel ropes of one of the party ~~victim~~ so as to handicap him, and slip away; and so they did. The unfortunate merchant realising his situation next morning eagerly invoked al-Khadr's assistance vowing to found a monastery on the very spot where he was. Al-Khadr helped him and pointed out

to him the boundaries within which the monastery was to be built, and true to his vow the merchant constructed a monastery there.

The present writer has not been able to find in print any literature related to the above story, in spite of the enormous bulk of literature recorded about this particular monastery. This story, along with others in this chapter, is recorded here for the first time. (1)

"The Greek Orthodox priest in charge of al-Khadr Church, was conducting the service and when on point of delivering the Holy Eucharist to one of the worshippers, his hand shook, and the Holy Wine which was in the Cup was spilt upon his foot. Immediately the foot of the priest was pierced through with a deep wound. The spilt Wine reached the slab of stone which was beneath his foot, and a stain was imprinted which could not be

(1) A little known but similar story is related by Can'Ēn, "Mohammedan Saints", JPOS Vol V No. 4, p. 198 ff., (See also Kahle PJ VI, p. 88), about al-Khadr's maqām in Jerusalem outside the Jaffa Gate, which belongs to the Qurṭ family, and is honoured by Muḥammadans and Christians. St. George appeared to a member of the Qurṭ family and ordered him to build his sanctuary at a certain spot, and when work was begun at the described spot they found the opening of a cave with inscriptions pertaining to al-Khadr.

be erased. A few days later the priest died of his wound."

"Once a man suffering from a nervous disease came to the Church of al-Khadr to pray and incidentally knelt upon the stone which was stained with the Holy Wine, and fervently begged Allah to heal him of his sickness. Allah granted his prayer and to the astonishment of the sick man and all standing around him, he was instantly healed of his grave disease. So from that day on, the fame of the "Holy Stone" in that Church extended far and wide. And so sick people flocked to the Holy Stone and were healed. For the hand of al-Khadr was with them to heal them."

"The fame of the stone reached the ears of the Emperor of the Muscovites who quickly sent messengers to the Holy Land headed by one of his army officers. The Emperor wrote a letter to the Priest of al-Khadr's Church saying: ' When the envoys come, hasten and deliver into their hands the stone which heals the sick of their ills, for I decree this.' "

" So when the Emperor's messenger reached the Church, the priest hastened to obey the word of the Emperor and delivered the stone into the hands of the officers of the army who took it to Jaffa to carry it down to the sea to the special ship brought to bear it. How astonished were all to see that the barque in which they put the stone to carry it from the shore out to the ship would not respond to the oarsmen and to the sailors, and with all their labour they did not succeed in

pulling it out from the shore and did not move from its place, as if a hidden hand held it down with all its might."

"Then the men understood that the hand of Mar Giryis, that is al-Khadr, in whose name the Church is named, was in this, and that it was not the will of al-Khadr to allow the stone to be borne away. Then they hastened and declared the thing to the Emperor. He ordered that it should be returned quickly to its place with great honour. And this stone is in the Church to this day, and all who come to the Church to pray there may see it with their own eyes, and in all men's mouths it is called 'The Stone of Life.' "(1)

The story of the Stone of Life may possibly be reminiscent of the Black Stone of the Ka'ba, since the monastery of al-Khadr itself is situated in the middle of the Muslim village which derives its name from the saint, and since like the Black Stone it is volcanic in structure. It would be almost impossible to record the very many stories showing the miraculous power of al-Khadr. Needless to say both Muslims and Christians alike have the highest respect for him. However,

(1) Slightly altered from Joseph Meyonhes, Bible Tales in Arab Folklore , pp. 200-201. The stone was seen by the present writer inside the temple of al-Khadr's Church on a recent visit. It is divided into five pieces of about equal size. This story is also referred to in Can'Un's "Aberglaube" p. 891 ff. and "Mohammedan Saints" p. 79.

the following stories are related here because of their extensive circulation and appeal, and as fair samples.

The Russian influence runs through another story which bears some relation to the one previously mentioned about the Russian Emperor who sought to take possession of the "Stone of Life". The Russian pilgrims to the Holy Land used to come on board sailing ships. A certain lady who had set her heart on visiting the Holy Land was asked by a friend of hers - who was not able to make the journey herself - to take with her a bundle of "carbonat" (1) to be presented at al-Khadr's Church. The ship was caught in a terrible storm in the middle of the Mediterranean and the passengers lost all hope of being rescued. The lady, who had been entrusted with the money, after a short passionate prayer, threw the bundle of money into the sea calling upon al-Khadr and saying: ' O Khadr here is your money, I am delivering it to you, please accept it.' The bundle was miraculously transported into al-Khadr's Church, "where it was seen by my father still trickling with water." (2)

(1) Roubles - used to be called so in Palestine.

(2) Related to me by Mrs. Ni'meh Faqqūseh of Bethlehem.

The "Rayyis" - Head - of the monastery once wanted to build an annex to the main building, and the foundations were dug. When the work on the foundations was over, everyone was surprised to see them filled with water next morning. The water was pumped out, but again the foundations were filled with water. This was repeated three times. It was shortly after that, that the "Rayyis" saw al-Khadr in a dream and was shown how to lay the foundations. Next morning to the astonishment of the workers, new foundations were found marked on the ground, and when work on the building followed these foundations there was no further interference from water. (1)

The most current story of al-Khadr, that which is generally illustrated in pictures is briefly this: " There was once a great city that depended for its water supply upon a fountain without walls. A great dragon, possessed and moved by Satan himself, took possession of the fountain and refused to allow water to be taken unless, whenever people came to the spring, a youth or maiden was given to him to devour. The people tried again and again to destroy the monster, but though the flower of the city cheerfully went forth against it, its breath was so pestilential that they used to drop down dead before they came within bowshot.

"The terrified inhabitants were thus obliged to

(1) *Supra*.

sacrifice their offspring, or die of thirst; till at last all the youth of the place had perished except the king's daughter. So great was the distress of their subjects for want of water that her heart-broken parents could no longer withhold her, and amid the tears of the populace she went out towards the spring, where the dragon lay awaiting her. But just as the noisome monster was going to leap on her, Mar Girysis appeared, in golden panoply, upon a white fine steed and spear in hand. Riding full tilt at the dragon, he struck it fair between the eyes and laid it dead. The king, out of gratitude for this unlooked-for succour, gave Mar Girysis his daughter and half his kingdom." (1)

Al-Khadr's insistence on the literal fulfilment of vows, whatever they are, is illustrated in many stories of which the following is a typical example. A camel-driver having overloaded his camel, had forced the poor animal to kneel down, causing its owner to utter a cry calling upon al-Khadr to help, vowing that he would send him an egg-shell filled with olive oil if his animal succeeded in getting up safely. Why the camel-driver made such a strange vow is not quite clear. Surely there was no room for joking under the circumstances. Anyway

(1) J.E. Hanauer, Folklore of the Holy Land, pp. 56-58. The picture of al-Khadr killing the dragon is still inscribed on the front doors of Christian houses. See the song which describes the incidents of this story in Chapter 4, No. f, 10.

he seems to have repented having made such a vow, and took with him a large sheepskin leather container(1) full of olive oil to al-Khadr's Church. But try as he might, the Church door would not open. Finally he related his story to the "Rayyis" who counselled him to perform the precise vow which he made; and when he did so the Church door was opened without difficulty.

It is interesting to notice that the Muslim inhabitants of al-Khadr village rarely invoke the name of Muhammad or of Allah in their daily work, but instead always call upon the name of al-Khadr saying, "Ya Khadr" - Oh Khadr - and "Ya Khadr il-Akhdar" - Oh Green Khadr - because it is believed that wherever he walks, the ground becomes green; and "Ya Khadr il-Hay" - Oh Khadr the Alive -, and hold him in the highest veneration,(2) My informants (3) related to me the story of certain labourers who when digging a well in the neighbourhood of the monastery constantly invoked the Saint's name. Those who were inside the half-built well suddenly saw a dazzling light and saw the Saint himself riding on a horse. They cried in their astonishment, and some of their elders who were up near the well looked down and saw the dazzling light.

(1) Called (ظرف) in Colloquial Arabic.

(2) In Iraq he is called "Ad-Durraji" because he walks (yadruj).

(3) The "Rayyis" and the "mukhtār" (chief of a tribal clan) of al-Khadr village.

Such appearances of al-Khadr are fairly common, and it is universally believed that he comes instantly to the rescue of anyone who calls on him earnestly and faithfully. To relate such anecdotes would, in the words of the "Rayis" "take a whole month". However, I am here quoting three short stories of comparatively recent origin. (1)

Some villagers went out gleaning olives (taşyif - in Arabic). By chance they entered some fields belonging to the monastery and collected a sackful of olives and returned home with it. When they opened it, however, they found it full of beetles.

The following story illustrates the Saint's ability to guard his property. Once a group of villagers, "some ten years ago", went out into the Saint's fields and picked some beans. Instantly they saw the Saint and taking to their heels jumped over a loosely constructed stone wall called "sinsila" - in Arabic which gave way under their weight. But when they returned, they saw that the wall was intact with no stone out of place.

The third story is as follows. A company of camel-drivers was passing by the Saint's fields at night on its way to Bethlehem. The fields were sown with peas and one of the

(1) My informant related to me the names of the villagers involved, some of whom are still alive.

camel-drivers picked a handful which immediately turned into thorns. He held on to what he had gathered until the morning, when to his surprise he found the thorns transformed back again into peas.

A certain woman from Beit-Jala sent a shilling with a Khudri (1) boy to be placed in the Church of the Saint of al-Khadr. The boy happened to be a great smoker, though his father knew nothing about it. Being tempted by the shilling, especially because his father never gave him money for such purposes, he bought some cigarettes. Next day his hand became swollen which gave rise to great anxiety. His father questioned the boy persistently until he learnt about the story of the Beit-Jala woman. He immediately took a shilling and presented it to the Saint's Church. In twenty-four hours the boy's hand was back to normal.

Al-Khadr or Mar Girya in the Bethlehem District is not identified with Mar Elias (Elijah) or with other saints as is the case in other parts of Palestine and the Middle East; (2) in Muslim villages he is al-Khadr as in Bal'a, near Tulkarm, and near Battir on the outskirts of Jerusalem. Al-Khadr has many maqāms in different parts of the country such as Nāblus,

(1) Adjective of al-Khadr village.

(2) G.M. Crowfoot, L. Baldensperger, From Cedar to Hyssop,
p. 127.

Lydda, Jerusalem(two), Taibeh, Beit 'Anān, Jifna, Beit Rima etc. "Just as Syrian Moslems make pilgrimages to churches of St. George, so do the Kizilbash Kurds of the Dersim go to the Armenian churches of St. Sergius".(1) It is quite possible that this non-identification of al-Khadr with other saints and with Mar Elias in particular lies in the fact that Mar Elias' monastery, which is as old as al-Khadr's monastery, if not older, is only a few miles away from Bethlehem, which makes the distinction between the two saints quite clear in the minds of the populace. Moreover, Mar Elias has such a very strong hold on the popular faith and imagination, that no mixing of the two saints results.

To conclude our stories of al-Khadr, here is one which is a strange mixture of history, and religious folklore with a streak of local colour.

A Tale of al-Khadr

The feast of Mar Elias (al-Khadr) (2) came and the young men stood together making their vows. One said, "I will give a goat," another "I will give a sheep". Then Jirjis, the son of a widow, desired to offer something. They had but

(1) F.W. Hasluck, Christianity and Islam under the Sultans,
p. 335.

(2) This story is sometimes told in the name of Mar Elias throughout.

one cow. "Then," he said, "I will sacrifice a cow," and he went and killed the cow.

"At evening time his mother called to him and said, "Where is the cow?" He said, "I gave it to al-Khadr." His mother said, "You have cut our lives (i.e. you slay us). Let me not see your face again." That night the young man had a vision. A white haired man appeared to him and said, "Fear not, I am al-Khadr; thou shalt go to Constantinople and to the king's palace. Only each day thou shalt call a blessing upon me." (kul yom bitṣallīlī).

"So the young man went far away to Constantinople and he went to the King's Palace. But he was dressed as a fellah and they sent him away from the door of the Palace. Again the vision appeared, saying as before, "Fear not; I am with you. Only do not forget to ask a blessing on me every day." And this he continued to do. After many nights al-Khadr came and showed him where seven storehouses of gold were hidden. Then the young man went again to the palace, offering to reveal his knowledge, and this time he was allowed to enter in and was made welcome there and he gave all the gold to Queen Helena. Then the saying came true,

"He who gives gold

May marry the Sultan's daughter," (1)

(1) "Illī biḥuṭ flāsu , bint is-Sultān farūstu. antou.

for Jirjis was dressed as a Prince and married to the King's daughter.

"That night, his wedding night, he forgot to ask a blessing on al-Khadr. In the morning he woke to find himself back in Jerusalem, standing at the Bāb el-Khalīl, dressed as a fellah and only the ring on his finger to remind him of his bride, the King's daughter. Months passed and he lived miserably in Jerusalem, ever imploring forgiveness of al-Khadr.

"Now when the time was accomplished Queen Helena decided to travel and to build churches. At every place where she stopped on her journey she built a pillar and a sign was placed on the pillar - some say a light, some say a bell - so that news could be sent back to Constantinople. At last the Queen arrived in Jerusalem and with her came the King's daughter and her babe. Now the babe was not content, and there was his father, a poor fellah out of work, hanging round the Bāb el-Khalīl .

"One day those who stood near the young man said to him, 'Why do you not go and work for the Queen who is trying to find the Cross? She needs many workmen to dig for her.' So he went and was accepted and worked with the workmen, and that same night al-Khadr appeared to him and showed him where the True Cross lay. Next morning he first revealed the secret to the Queen and then showed the ring to the King's daughter,

and as soon as ever he came near her, the babe, his son, stopped crying.

"After the Cross was found, Queen Helena sent the news to Constantinople by means of her pillars(sic).

"So by the wisdom of al-Khadr the True Cross was found and through the gold of al-Khadr all the churches of Queen Helena were built." (1)

Al-Khadr is undoubtedly the most popular saint in the area. In the absence of any proper facilities for the mentally deranged in Turkish times, the asylum, attached to al-Khadr's monastery was the only resort left to the deranged of all faiths. Many cases have been reported cured by al-Khadr, which gained him a tremendous reputation. This, together with the innumerable miracles he is believed to have performed, and the countless number of cases of al-Khadr's curing of people, and specially children, either when critically ill, or when facing very dire circumstances, largely accounts for his popularity. He is believed to extend his help to those who seek it warmly and wholeheartedly.

(1) Crowfoot and Baldensperger , op. cit. , pp. 128-129.

Concepts from the Arabic classics appertaining to al-Khadr find no appeal in the District. Thus Ibn Kathir's references that al-Khadr and Elias were brothers, and that their father was a king (1); and ^{Ibn} Hajral-Asqalani's assertions that al-Khadr was Adam's son "from his loin" (2) ; and that he was Dhul-Qarnain's (Alexander the Great) Minister, and that he stood with him on the "Mountain of India (3) , and his relation that al-Khadr and Elias were present at Prophet Muhammad's death (4) - are not known in the area. The appellation Khidr(Elias) (5) is unknown too. Al-Khadr is also called Abul-'Abbās by Muslims and Christians.

'Ein Kibriān(The Spring/^{of} Kibriān)

On the way between al-Khadr village and Beit-Jala, and nearer the latter, there lies 'Ein (Spring) Kibriān, believed to be inhabited by St. Gabrianus (Saint Cyprianus). (6)

(1) "Al-Bidāyah wan-Nihāyah", Vol. I, p. 330.

(2) "Al-Iṣābah" , Vol. I , p. 429.

(3) Ibid, p. 432.

(4) Ibid, p. 443.

(5) See Hamdallah Mustafawi ibn-Qazwini, Nuzhat ul-Quṭūb, p. 9.

(6) T. Can'ān, "Haunted Springs and Water Demons in Palestine" (revised and enlarged), JPOS Vol. 1 , p. 9.

The story of St. Cyprianus has the authoritative approval of the Church - both eastern and western. This saint is believed to have been originally a pagan who lived in the latter part of the second century and early part of the third century of the Christian era, in the city of Nablus, and was a wizard by profession. He was not as yet a convert to Christianity. He carried on a prosperous business with his witchcraft, until a certain young man who had wanted to marry a Christian girl resorted to him seeking his professional assistance, because the girl did not reciprocate his passion. When the young man insisted, the wizard prepared him charms to be placed in front of the girl's house, and told the young man that the girl would submit to him in a week's time. But the week passed and nothing happened. Again the wizard tried, this time employing the help of greater powers. But again the effect of the charm was a failure. So making a final effort he inquired about the matter from the most potent chief of the spirits who told him that he had no power over her since the girl was wearing a cross on her breast. When the wizard heard this he went to the girl imploring her forgiveness. It was then, that he became a Christian and later a Saint.

But what could possibly be the relationship between St. Cyprianus who lived in Nablus and the spring called after him on the outskirts of Beit Jala? I can only hazard the conjecture that St. Cyprianus lived a part of his life near Beit Jala

since the spring still bears his name.

Al-Maskhūṭah

Divine justice has revealed itself at a place north-west of Beit Jala called al-Maskhūṭah. Can'ān says it is the best example of a petrified human assembly. It is a large field consisting of a-village different sizes of rocks. "The peasants of a village celebrated a wedding. The bride was brought from her father's house on a camel. The accompanying crowd sinned so glaringly that God punished them on the spot by changing the whole procession into a field of rocks." (1) It is almost certain that these stories are no more than reminiscences of the story of Genesis (2) of Sodom and Gomorrah and of Lot's wife turning into a pillar of salt, the analogy of the crowd sinning so glaringly and the very grievous (3) sin of Sodom and Gomorrah is certainly very close. On the eastern shores of the Dead Sea there still stands what seems to be a striking natural monument to Lot's wife, which still bears the name of the woman who by disobeying the command

(1) T. Can'ān, "The Curse in Palestinian Folklore", JPOS Vol. XV pp. 3-4. A similar instance is mentioned by ^{the} Rev. Antoine Jaussen, "Coutumes des Arabes Au Pays de Moab", p. 37.

(2) 19 : 24-26.

(3) 19 : 20.

of God became a pillar of salt (1). What leads to the confirmation of this view is the fact that the story of the woman turned into a pillar of salt is familiar to the Palestinian peasantry(2) and must have left its strong impact on the popular imagination of the Beit Jala peasants.

(Many analogous stories are found in English folklore, Henry Bett quotes some in his book "English Myths and Traditions"(3) from which I have chosen the following which seems to be the nearest to al-Maskhūṭah story of Beit Jala.

"There are many early remains on the summit of Penmarnawr, and amongst these, at the Carnedd of Moelfre, are three women upright stones. The tradition here is that three women were winnowing corn on a Sunday, and for this impiety they were turned into stone. A curious detail is that the stones are of different hues, red, white, and blue, which are supposed to represent the colours of the women's gowns.")

Khabṭat al-Khadr

An interesting example of the extremely powerful effect al-Khadr has on the people of this district is the footprint

(1) See also A. Forder, Daily Life In Palestine, pp. 103-104.

(2) A. Forder, op. cit. pp. 103-104.

(3) P. 41.

supposed to have been left by al-Khadr at a certain place in the western part of Beit Jala called ash-Sharafe, (1) which is why it was called "Khabtat al-Khadr". It is used to be surrounded by some stones, in the shape of a low wall, and when people passed by, they used to throw bread, figs, apricots and apples into the circle made by the wall. This relic of al-Khadr has disappeared in the course of the municipal road repairs.

Knisit is-Sideh (The Church of the Lady Mary)

Almost in the centre of Beit Jala there is a church sacred to the Virgin Mary known as "Knisit is-Sideh". The church is very famous for its stone known as "Hajar is-Sideh" or "Sirir is-Sideh. "Sideh" is the Arabic colloquial for "Sayyidah" - lady - here referring specifically to the Virgin Mary. The story attributed to this stone and which is very well known is associated with the Field of Peas, a place on the northern outskirts of Bethelham, which will be referred to later in this chapter. The Virgin Mary (2) so the story goes, as she

(1) It is believed by some that this appellation was derived from the fact that the place overlooks (شرف)

al-Khadr's Church.

(2) According to very few narrators it was Elizabeth, mother of John.

was passing the Field of Peas asked the workers there to give her some. "No, these are not peas, they are stones" came their reply. "Then let it be so", answered the Virgin Mary. The peas were then instantly transformed into peas stones. The workers then pursued the Virgin Mary who hid in a rock which split itself to conceal her after the Virgin's uttering of these words "Inshaqqi yā ṣakhra, wi-hmi-il-'Aḥra" (i.e. split Oh rock and protect the Virgin.) The rock used to be kept at a house belonging to a Bethlehem family called Saqa. Later it was placed in the Church of the Virgin in Beit Jala, because the land of the Saqa family is inside the Beit Jala territory. This Church was built in 1862.(1)

I have heard the following story from Dr. Can'ān. After leaving Srīr is-Sideh, the Virgin walked towards Jerusalem. Some people saw her carrying her baby and went and indicated to her pursuers where she was. In a short time her pursuers were again about to overtake her. The Virgin found a flock of goats and addressed it saying; "Usturīni, Allah yustur 'aleikum", "Shelter me, may God shelter you", and she threw herself into its midst, but the goats dispersed. She then ran away, and finding a flock of sheep she repeated her request. The sheep gathered round and concealed her; hence their big fat tails which cover up all their vital parts, contrary to

(1) This story is also mentioned by Can'ān in "Mohammedan Saints," p. 80, footnote 2.

the goats' tails. The Virgin then sweated, having been concealed among the sheep. She rubbed her forehead with a plant which immediately became fragrant and was then called "mēramiyeh"- a plant - (from Miryam ; the Virgin Mary). Other stories attribute the plant to the Virgin but not to her escape from Jrūn - il - Hummus. (For "meramiyeh" see Appendix A.)

Mar Nicola (St. Nicholas)

And now, we have come to a fitting place to mention the patron saint of Beit Jala, Mar Nicola whose feast falls on the 6th December (O.S.). Mar Nicola who hails from Cappadocia in Asia Minor is reputed to have inhabited a small cave in Beit Jala for a period of three years. The present Mar Nicola's Church was founded on the site of the old cave.

The stories connected with this saint are innumerable, resembling to some extent those of Mar Girysis. The story which seems to have the most widespread appeal and circulation is the following one which is of comparatively recent origin, and in which the Saint appears as the defender of the town, against some of the unruly Muslim tribes notorious for their ferocity, which surrounded the town. That the Saint gave his patronage to the Qais town of Beit Jala is illustrated by the following story originally dealing with the constant feuds which used to take place in Palestine between the Qais and Yaman. This age-long feud was greatly encouraged by

Ibrahīm Pasha, when he controlled Palestine, for the obvious purpose of weakening the staunch resistance of the Palestinians to his rule.

My informant(1)said, "The Zrūf family, which constitutes part of the tribal quarter called aḡ-Ṣarār of Beit Jala, following up a certain tribal feud, sought the assistance of Mustafa Abu Ghōsh and in doing so acted against the will of the townsmen. The whole district was divided into two divisions, Qais under the leadership of al-Laḥḥām and Yaman under the leadership of Abu Ghōsh. There was no question of any differentiation between Muslim and Christian in this split, which shows that the racial differences outweighed religious ones. In the preliminary skirmishes that ensued Abu Ghōsh suffered severe losses. Undaunted, however, he instigated the tribes of Tayāha, Zullām, Ta'Amre, Abu Dīs, I'bēdiyeh and Sawāhret-ilwād(2) to attack Beit Jala offering them the zinka(3) and bughma(4) of the women and the wealth

(1) Maṣūr Lūqa of Beit Jala.

(2) Not to be confused with the inhabitants of Beit Sāḥūr who who are predominantly Yaman.

(3) Originally zinqa, colloquial plural of zināq - women's collars decorated with gold.

(4) "Bugma", a necklace of silver worn round the neck; (a thing like the necklace with which women ornament themselves - Tāj-el-ARūs, - this is apparently postclassical, from the Turkish موج . In the present day it is applied to a necklace of pearls.)

of the town as plunder. He finally succeeded in recruiting some seven thousand armed men who advanced towards the approaches of the town.

At this time al-Lahhām himself, chief of the Qais party, who hailed from Beit I'tāb was paying a visit to Khalīl Abu Zgēbre, chief of the Samā'ne tribal quarter. As the invaders approached, people began to take shelter at the Latin Convent. Al-Lahhām tried to escape, but the Samā'ne women cast ashes on him (1) and upbraided him for his cowardly intention. He had, therefore, to stay in town and to send for reinforcements from al-'Arqūb, the Qais district. The attack started from the east and south of the town, an hour before sunset. Beit Jala, at that time, only possessed sixty riflemen. A certain Ibrāhīm Kharūfe gathered together some hundred boys, armed them with sticks and led them from one high position to another shouting "il 'inān 'inēku", (our eyes are yours) encouraging the defenders and simultaneously creating the impression that the town was seething with armed men. The defenders of the town withstood the onslaught bravely and some of the raiding leaders such as "Snēnat il-Ghūleh" [literally the ghūle's (2) teeth) were killed. Every time the invaders tried to take the

(1) (فجر) 'affara, (a sign of contempt).

(2) Female of "ghūl".

town by storm they saw an old man(Mar Nicola) with a lance obstructing them. The invaders felt that even the olive branches of the trees surrounding the town were taking part in the battle against them. The attackers are reported to have said, "We see its(i.e. Beit Jala's) stones strike and its trees strike." The battle continued until the arrival of reinforcements, and the attackers retreated closely followed by the Beit Jalites and their allies singing enthusiastically the following "verses" :

Ya Abu-Ghōsh rudd wer-rtadd,
Hadhi hrūb min jadd,
La tiḥsibha lu'b ulādi,
Ya Yaman la thārbu Qais,
Qais lakum 'aleikum ~~fi~~ falāḥa,
Kbīrkum yishbih lat-tēis,
U antum ghanam ladh-dhabāha.

(Oh Abu-Ghosh go back and retreat,
These are serious wars,
Don't think it childish play,
Oh Yaman never fight Qais,
Qais has scored a success against you,
Your leader looks like a he-goat,
And you are sheep for slaughter).

When the raiders reached Bethlehem in the course of their retreat some of the Bethlehem tribal quarters such as the 'Anātra, Najājreh and certain families such as the Zablah Zabāha, who were pro-Qais, mediated with the Beit Jalites and requested them to cut short their pursuit of the routed invaders; and so they did in compliance with their wishes, and went back to their town victorious. The raiders related how relatively uneffected they were by the bullets of the townspeople in comparison with the deadly harrasing of the (Old Man) who had a lance in his hand, and who "impeded us" (1), and who never allowed them to proceed to their target. Abu-Ghōsh was reviled by his own folk; "O Abu-Ghōsh, may God rout you, you say Beit Jala is but a small village, but we have seen its walls firing bullets, its olive trees firing bullets, its men and children firing bullets." (2) Can'an mentions several examples of such help given by saints in his "Mohammedan Saints".

(1) Colloquially (^{لجأنا}) imjahhifna

(2) Can'an refers to this story very briefly in another version in "Mohammedan Saints" p. 169, and adds "The peasants of the village assembled in the church of this saint to thank him for having delivered them so wonderfully from their fierce enemies. They observed, to their great surprise, that the qūneh (icon) was dripping sweat, which was another sign of his power." Another version speaks about Mar Nicola gathering the angels of heaven and defeating the invaders,

A very well-known and frequently repeated story is told about the Saint intervening on another occasion. In 1936 at the time of the Arab rebellion, the English soldiers came to Beit Jala and proceeded on a very intensive and thorough search for arms after having rounded up all the young men. The search was so thorough that even covers of wells were broken. There were very heavy penalties against those in whose possession arms were found. Mar Nicola's Church was carefully searched, and townspeople became very alarmed when the soldiers approached a shed on the roof which was full of weapons, but they were not discovered. And, of course, people believed that it was Mar Nicola who had diverted the soldiers' attention from the arms.

Even in more recent times the Saint is believed to have given his protection to the town. In the Arab-Israeli War of 1948-1949, the Rev. Ya'qūb Beltriti (1), the then Latin parish priest of Beit Jala claims to have seen Mar Nicola pushing back the Jewish bombs with his hand, wearing his full Oriental priestly robes. The Rev. Beltriti then vowed to place an icon of the Saint in Oriental robes in his Patriarchate Church, which he did.

The Saint appears in a great many other stories from which I am choosing two more. The following story shows him as the

(1) At present Secretary of the Latin Patriarchate, Jerusalem,

rescuer of helpless women. It is characterised by its sheer innocence and simplicity. An old woman from Beit Jala with the nickname " 'Allūshiyeh" went to pray in Mar Nicola's Church. After some time she fell asleep. The Church Warder, 'Odeh (1) Qatṭān came at dusk as usual and locked the doors of the Church without noticing the old woman. When she awoke up, she realized the helplessness of her situation, but going up to the icon of Mar Nicola hopefully begged him to release her adding "my dough is in the bowl (2) and my son is without supper." She then saw the old man (Mar Nicola) descend from the icon and walking with her open the inner door and then the outer door of the Church adding these words: "Tell 'Odeh Qatṭān to come and lock the doors." She went to him and said, "O Abu Yūsif (his title of honour), Mar Nicola asks you to lock the Church doors." "But I did, O 'malhūbe'," (3) After some insistence on the part of the old lady, he went to see the Church doors and to his surprise he found them open. He then believed the old woman's story.

(1) For 'Audeh meaning literally 'return', but metaphorically "recompense".

(2) (*بابيه*) bātieh

(3) Colloquially used in Beit Jala, meaning literally "The Blazed One".

As Mar Nicola is considered to be the champion and protector of the town, he is naturally, therefore, looked up as the procurer of rain in time of drought, but more of that in Chapter FOUR.

Bīr 'Ōnah (The Well of 'Ōnah)

Going down the road from Mar Nicola's Church northwards, one reaches the bottom of the valley where Bīr (well) 'Ōnah is situated, about which a very well-known story connected with the Virgin Mary is told. It seems almost certain that this well was the watering place referred to in the Bible story of Saul when he went with his servant to see the Seer, "And as they went up the hill to the city, they found young maidens going out to draw water, and said unto them, Is the Seer here?" (1). The very close similarity of the Bible description to the geographical features of the place makes this suggestion not unreasonable. The "High Place" alluded to repeatedly in the same Bible Story, seems to refer unmistakably to the present Ras (head) - promontory to the north west of Beit Jala, the highest peak in the entire neighbourhood. No attempt has been made to establish the proof of the linguistic derivation of the term " 'Ōnah". Dr. T. Can'an in his masterly article "Haunted Springs and Water Demons in

(1) 1 Samuel, 9 : 11.

Palestine" (1) says that it is believed the spring is inhabited by the Virgin Mary, but in spite of the many references he had made to the well he has not ventured an interpretation of the possible linguistic origin of the term. Lieutenants Conder and Kitchener in their "Survey of Western Palestine" (2) refer to the well as Bīr 'Auna and the editor adds that it is a word to which no meaning can be assigned.... and will form interesting problems for future investigation." Consequently the present writer puts forward the following suggestions.

- 1) The word ('Ūnah) could be the colloquial ('Ūnah) of the noun from ('ān) (3) meaning "to assist". Possibly the popular imagination has linked the issue of the water from the well, originally built on a mineral spring with the (ma'ūna) or ('Ūnat) - assistance - of Allah. What supports this view is the most widespread circulation of the invocation (Ya 'Ūnat Allah), that is "Oh for God's assistance". The name of Allah being constantly invoked in primitive society. (4) This particular form of

(1) Revised and enlarged from the Journal of The Palestine Oriental Society, vol. I, pp. 153-170.

(2) London 1881, p. 288.

(3) بون

(4) See Chapter Three.

invocation is still constantly in current use to indicate wonder at an extraordinary or unusual happening. In addition to this, a most popular saying which is widely quoted is "in shuftha sukhra ij'alha 'ōneh" - (if you have to do something for somebody without reward, appear to be helping him willingly), that is if you are forced to work, do not appear to be unwilling because it is of no use, but seem to offer your services voluntarily which will, of course, preserve your dignity.

- 2) Another possible theory for the interpretation of this strange name of the Well, is that the owner of Ar-Rās, previously referred to, which overlooks the Well, was called " 'Ōnah" - feminine of " 'Ōn" (classically "'Aun") a common family name. (1) This seems to me the most satisfactory explanation. Either the well was owned by a woman called 'Auna, or it was named after the owner's i.e. "'Aun's" wife or daughter. However, some including my informant claim, that ar-Rās (the highest hill-top in Beit Jala) was once called Rās 'Ōnah. If this is true then because the water of the well comes from the direction of ar-Rās, it is possible that people started calling the Well after

(1) Cf. Karīm - Karīma; Nabīh - Nabīha ; Jamīl - Jamīla

the name of ar-Rās' owner. It may be added in this connection that people in this are^a, are^o, accustomed to name springs after the name of their owners. (1)

3) The noun " 'auna " in Arabic could come from " fa'lā' " (2) that is the feminine form of "helpful" (mu'Ina). 'Auna could also be the feminine form of "'aina" meaning "the owner of the big eye" ; the aliph and waw interchange in Semitic languages, so 'auna could originally be 'aina.

4) In Hebrew " 'ana " (3) is present participle meaning "helping" or "replying" that is "echoing". The Hebrew 'ana (4) also means "toiling" (5) which could mean resulting in drawing out water from this deep spring.

(1) 'Ein Indriyya in the Beit Jala suburbs (Arabic for Andrew) is so called from the name of its owner. An interesting example of spring names is that of ('Ein Hantash) to the west of Beit Jala - ("hantash 'aleiha meaning colloquially to grasp her greedily").

(2) فَعْلَاءُ

(3) אָנָה

(4) אָנָה

(5) Cf. Arabic.

The Virgin Mary once passed by the Well while women were drawing water. She asked for some water to drink, but the women inhospitably refused her request. The Virgin then knelt on the "hummarah" (well-mouth), and asked God to offer her a drink of water. The water was soon raised from the Well and the Virgin drank, then the water descended- receded. The water is no less than twenty yards below the surface of the ground -at least that is how it is at present. Up to now, one is shown the traces of the Virgin's kneeling on the "hummarah" of the Well. This story links up in most of its details with the similar story of Bîr is-Sideh in Beit Sâhûr which was mentioned on pp 11-13 . This connection between the Virgin and the Well is certainly the basis of the belief which very few people know about at present - that the water of the Well rises by itself to the brim on the Virgin's feast-day which falls on the eighth of September (Julian Calendar), and the stones at the well-mouth are dyed red. (1)

Can'ân seems to think this is a vestige of menstruation, and adds that this belief is a very old one. He quotes Mudjir ed-Dîn al-Hanbaliyy (2) who relates that when Abraham was

(1) Dr. T. Can'ân, "Haunted Springs and Water Demons in Palestine" (Revised and enlarged from the Journal of the Palestine Oriental Society,) Vol. I , p. 9.

(2) " 'Uns ed-Djalîl bita'rikh el-Quds wal-Khalîl " Vol. I, p 34.

driven away by the inhabitants of Beer Sheba, the well of the town became dry. The inhabitants were thus obliged to go to this man of God and beg him for advice and help. Abraham gave them seven of his sheep and said, "As soon as you bring them to the well the water will rise to the brim. But beware, as soon as an unclean woman approaches the well, the water will disappear for ever." Sure-enough (1) Sure enough everything happened as Abraham said. The spring of Jericho is inhabited by a woman who once a year for ten to twelve hours has her menstrual period. At this time the water is tinged red. But this redness appears during the night of that day and disappears at daybreak. (2)

One other watering place is also believed to be inhabited by the Virgin Mary, namely 'Ein Kārem, in the village of 'Ein Kārem to the west of Jerusalem. Can'ān adds that he has heard "only from one person" that Hammām (bath) Sitti Mariam (there is no spring in the bath) is inhabited by the Virgin Mary. At times, Bīr 'Ōnah is believed to be inhabited by and 'Abd. (3) (a negro).

(1) Ibid. p. 21.

(2) Ibid. p. 15.

(3) Ibid. p. 9.

Bir Qādismu (The Well of Qādismu)

Another well which has had some connection with religious folklore from early times is "Bir Qādismu"; the source of the name is not quite certain, and authorities are not in agreement concerning it. One thing seems certain, the name is not Arabic though the popular notion is strongly in favour of giving the name an Arabic derivation such as ' Bir Qaddis ' or ' al Bir al Muqaddas '(1) - which seems rather a far-fetched alternative, phonetically. Maistermann(2) seems to think that it may be derived from the Hebrew, "Qadashim" which means "seat" or "place of rest", while Dalman, (3) believes the name to be originally Greek (Kathima) (4) meaning "seat". The Bir Qādismu is also called the Well of Rest. It is also called the Well of the Magi or of the Star (5) where the three sages are said to have again seen the guiding star, "because in ancient times it also served to recall the memory of the marvellous event related by St. Matthew (2: 9-10)" (6) in the story of the Nativity of Christ. In addition, an old tradition which

(1) Holy Well.

(2) Guide to the Holy Land, p. 297.

(3) Sacred Sites and Ways, p.148.

(4) ΚΑΘΙΜΑ.

(5) Maistermann, op. cit., p. 297.

(6) Ibid.

goes back to the sixth century, and is related by the deacon Theodosius, says that the blessed Virgin rested on this spot when she was on her way to Bethlehem.

Mar Eliās (St. Eliās)

Proceeding southwards from Bīr Qādismu up the main road leading from Jerusalem to Bethlehem one comes to the monastery of Mar Eliās on the left, pleasantly situated on the saddle of a hill almost midway between Jerusalem and Bethlehem. Dalman believes that the eminence on which the monastery of Elijah stands may possibly have been the "Baalperazim" of 2 Samuel 5: 20, the scene of one of David's victories over the Philistines alluded to by Perizim. (1). It was erected by a bishop Elias at an unknown date (2). This is the monastery of the Abbot Anastasius (5th century). Having been abandoned in the Seventh Century, it served as a refuge for the monks of St. Sabas who had escaped the fury of the Persians in 614 A.D. A Persian soldier who was converted to Christianity became monk there under the name of Anastasius and was martyred by the Persians at Caesarea. In 1160 the Emperor Manuel Comnenus rebuilt the convent under the title of St. Elias the Prophet.

(1) G. Dalman, Sacred Sites and Ways, authorised translation by P. Levertoff, p. 19

(2) K. Baedeker, Palestine and Syria, p. 241.

"It is only since the 15th Century that the Greeks have shown on the road facing the entrance of the convent a rock on which Elias, fleeing from the vengeance of Jezebel, and perishing from hunger and thirst, is supposed to have rested when the angel of the Lord brought him the bread and water which strengthened him to continue his journey to Mount Herob." (1)

Actually the tradition connecting this site with Elijah's flight from the vengeance of Jezebel originated earlier than the 15th Century. It goes back to the time of the Crusaders. (2) The depression visible in the rock opposite the monastery gate, across the road, marks the place where the Prophet is supposed to have rested, the depression being caused by the weight of his body, not of his foot as Baedeker assumes. (3) Such traditions are frequently repeated in the works of Greek Orthodox writers (4). The same writers seem, however, to throw some doubt on the relationship between the present monastery and the Bible story (5), a doubt which is shared by such Protestant

(1) Meistermann, Guide to the Holy Land , p. 297.

(2) Rolla Folly, Song of the Arab , p. 30.

(3) K. Baedeker, op. cit. p.242.

(4) Khalil Ibrahim Qazaqiya, Ta'rikh ul-Kanisa al 'Urashilimiya
(Arabic) p. 300.

(5) Ibid

writers as W.H. Thomson in his most celebrated book, "The Land and the Book."(1) What seems quite obvious is that this monastery was given the name of Mar Eliās to protect it from the fierce raids of the neighbouring Bedouins who revered the Prophet. The depression in the rock opposite the monastery seems also to have been thus accounted for.(2) Dhul-Kifl's

(1) p. 644.

(2) Meistermann quotes Fr. Fransisco Quaresimus; Historica Theologica et Moralis, (1623) Vol.2, p.881. and comes to the same conclusion that Elija's journey from Beersheba was southwards, into the desert. If that could be established then the authenticity of the monastery of Mar Eliās is open to doubt. And though it is quite out of the scope of this thesis to establish or disprove the authenticity of the sites I have referred to, yet the present writer wishes to point out that Quaresimus and Meistermann's conclusion does not seem to be vouched for by Biblical evidence. Meistermann, indeed, quotes 1 Kings 19: 3-8 to support his theory, but the above-mentioned reference, as it appears after careful study, does not indicate the direction to which the Prophet made when he was fleeing from Jezebel' anger. Besides, it is not likely that had he gone southwards he would have found a "juniper tree" as is mentioned in the Bible. On the other hand it is not improbable that the present site of Mar Eliās could be reached from Beersheba in " a day's journey".

identification with Eliās (1) is not known in the District.

Another tradition (2) connected with the Monastery of Mar Eliās is that it is built on the place where the angel appeared to Joseph in his dream and asked him to take Mary his wife "for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost". (3)

Mar Eliās has captured the imagination of the common people, both Christians and Muslims and has occupied a distinctive place in their hearts almost as important as that of Mar Giryis; and the stories of the miracles he performed are almost inexhaustible. While it is true to say that Christians and Muslims look upon him with the same reverence as Mar Giryis, it is equally true to say that Mar Nicola does not occupy as high a position among the Muslim population, undoubtedly because of the part he played in repulsing the Muslim raiders headed by Abu-Ghūsh against the Christian town of Beit Jala. This is also to be attributed to the fact that Beit Jala has always been preponderantly Christian. (Two more towns in Palestine were, up till recent times, preponderantly

(1) Qur'ān XXI, 85 and XXXVIII, 48. See also Qaswini
op. cit. p. 186 footnote 1.

(2) See Khalil Ibrahim Qazaqiya, op. cit. p. 300.

(3) St. Matthew, Chapter 1, No. 20.

Christian: Hamallah and Taybeh). Indeed, there was a belief which persisted up to the time when recently the refugees arrived that no muezzin had ever called the faithful to pray in Beit Jala, and that any Muslim who ventured to build a house there would die within three days. Now neither Mar Girysis nor Mar Elias is known to have possessed such a record toward Muslims. Elias is quite a common name among the Muslims of the Bethlehem district, and so is the name "Khadr" - the Muslim equivalent of "Girysis", but it is not so with "Nicola".

The three saints, Girysis, Nicola and Elias are also rain-bringers. It is not difficult to understand why Mar Elias is approached when rain is scarce. Elijah in the Bible seems to have empowered been empowered by God to control the rain.(1) As for songs calling for the rain, see Chapter Four. Not a long time ago people from Bethlehem, Beit Jala, Beit Sahfir and Jerusalem used to celebrate the feasts of Mar Girysis and Mar Elias by visiting their churches and spreading about in the fields under the olive trees, singing, dancing, eating and drinking while their children frequented the merry-go-round. These celebrations lasted three days. Up to now celebrations are held but on a minor scale.

There is found in Mar Elias' Church a large chain supposed to have been taken from a similar chain found in Mar

(1) 1 Kings, 17 : 10.

Giryis' Church and which is believed to have been originally part of the harness of Mar Giryis' horse. These chains are kissed by visitors, wound round the neck three times then slipped down the body, to derive blessings.

The Field of Habaqqūq

Beyond the monastery of Mar Elias , the road leads to the right. Here the field of Habaqqūq which is not known at all to the local inhabitants of the area, is supposed to be found. Indeed the only place in print where I have seen a reference to this field is in Vilnay's book(1). It is not mentioned in the Bible and Vilnay does not specify its geographical location. The story connected with the field is that when the Prophet Habaqqūq went there to bring food to his labourers during the harvest, he heard the words of God coming to him saying, "Go and bring this meal to Daniel my servant, who is in the hand of the Chaldees in the den of the lions" (2). Habaqqūq said, " O my Lord, who will lead me there in this time, for the way is very far?" But suddenly an angel came and seized the prophet by the tuft of hair on his

(1) Legends of Palestine , p. 147.

(2) Daniel : 6: 22. (In the Bible Habaqqūq is written Habakkuk.)

head and carried him with the food in his hand and brought him to Daniel in the den of lions. Daniel and Habacquq ate and drank together. After that the angel came and took Habacquq and brought him back to his field before the harvesters had finished their meal.

Jrūn il-Ḥummas (The field of Peas)

A few minutes walk from the Field of Habacquq brings one to "Jrūn il-Ḥummas" (lit. the threshing floors of peas), but generally called the Field of Peas, not of Grey Peas as some writers erroneously call it. It is found on the left of the road. The story about this field is very famous, and its extremely wide circulation has given rise to some confusion regarding the characters who take part in the story. Its theme has appealed to the imagination of the Arabs, and at the same time has furnished a subject for one of those stories which are so popular in the East. According to the story a man once was sowing peas in the field when Jesus was passing by, and He called to the sower in a friendly voice, "Greetings my friend, what are you sowing?" "Stones", answered the disgruntled farmer without so much as turning to see the passing traveller or even exchanging customary greetings. "Stones! very well, you will reap stones" came the answer. Later when the farmer and his family returned to the field to gather the peas at harvest time, they found to their utter amazement nothing but petrified peas. Up to now many of

these stones are found scattered upon the flat rock, and visiting pilgrims collect them to remind them of the retribution that follows a lie. There is a tradition still extant that these stones are inexhaustible, and that they are mysteriously replaced (1).

This story is quoted in a slightly different way by Henry Bett in his interesting book "English Myths and Traditions" (2) In his version of the story, St. Joseph is said to have greeted the farmer and to have asked him what he was sowing; but that it was Jesus, who was accompanying St. Joseph, that answered "And stones ye shall reap." Actually current folklore does not allude to St. Joseph as the one who had conversed with the farmer.

Qubbet Rāhīl (The Tomb of Rachel)

A few hundred yards from the Field of Peas and to the right of the road, just before it forks off to the Pools of Solomon and Hebron, stands an insignificant-looking building styled "Qubbet Rāhīl" (The Tomb of Rachel). The dome of the tomb closely resembles those of the innumerable Muslim Welis i.e. (Muslim Saints). Now the tomb is revered by Muslims, Christians and Jews. In its present form, it can have no

(1) We have seen earlier in this chapter that the one who passed by the farmer was Virgin Mary and not Jesus, and how the story is slightly different.

(2) P. 138.

claims to antiquity, nevertheless its sacred associations are deeply interesting. Most authorities are fairly-well agreed that it marks the site of Rachel's grave mentioned in the 35th Chapter of Genesis where Rachel, as her soul was departing from her named her new-born babe Ben-oni, son of sorrow. "And Jacob set a pillar upon her grave: that is the pillar of Rachel's grave unto this day." (1). But Baedeker throws a serious doubt on the authenticity of the place (2) on the ground that the passage in 1 Samuel 10:2 where Rachel's tomb is described seems to be on the border of Benjamin. As the boundary between Judah and Benjamin could not, for many reasons, have been located here, therefore, Baedeker concludes that it is more probable that the tomb lay on the north side of Jerusalem.

The reason why according to Jewish legends Jacob buried Rachel on the way to Ephrath, which is Bethlehem, is that Jacob foresaw that the exiled children of Israel would pass that way, and so Rachel might ask them for mercy as it is said, "A voice was heard in Ramah, lamentation, and bitter weeping; Rachel weeping for her children refused to be comforted for

(1) Genesis 35: 18-20. Another reference can be found in Genesis 48 : 7.

(2) Palestine and Syria , p. 242.

for her children, because they were not." (1). Vilnay quotes the Jewish traveller Rabbi Pethahial who visited the Holy Land in 1187, "And then I came to Rachel's grave -- and because Benjamin was only born at her death there is no stone erected for him. They are of marble. The stone of Jacob, however, consists of one piece of marble and stands above all. It is very large and would take many men to lift it. A certain Christian priest once took away the large stone from the grave and placed it in a building for a strange service. In the morning however, it was seen on the grave as before. This was repeated several times until at last they abstained from carrying it away. On the stone is engraved the name of Jacob." (2) This story is not at all familiar in the Bethlehem district at present, nor has the present writer seen or heard of it from any other source.

David's Well

On continuing along the main route, for a few minutes, one reaches the hill opposite Bethlehem. To the left of the hill a path leads to the so-called David's Well. Here there are three cisterns hewn out of the native rock. According to tradition these are the cisterns which were "by the gate of

(1) Jeremiah 31 : 15.

(2) Z. Vilnay, Legends of Palestine , p. 149.

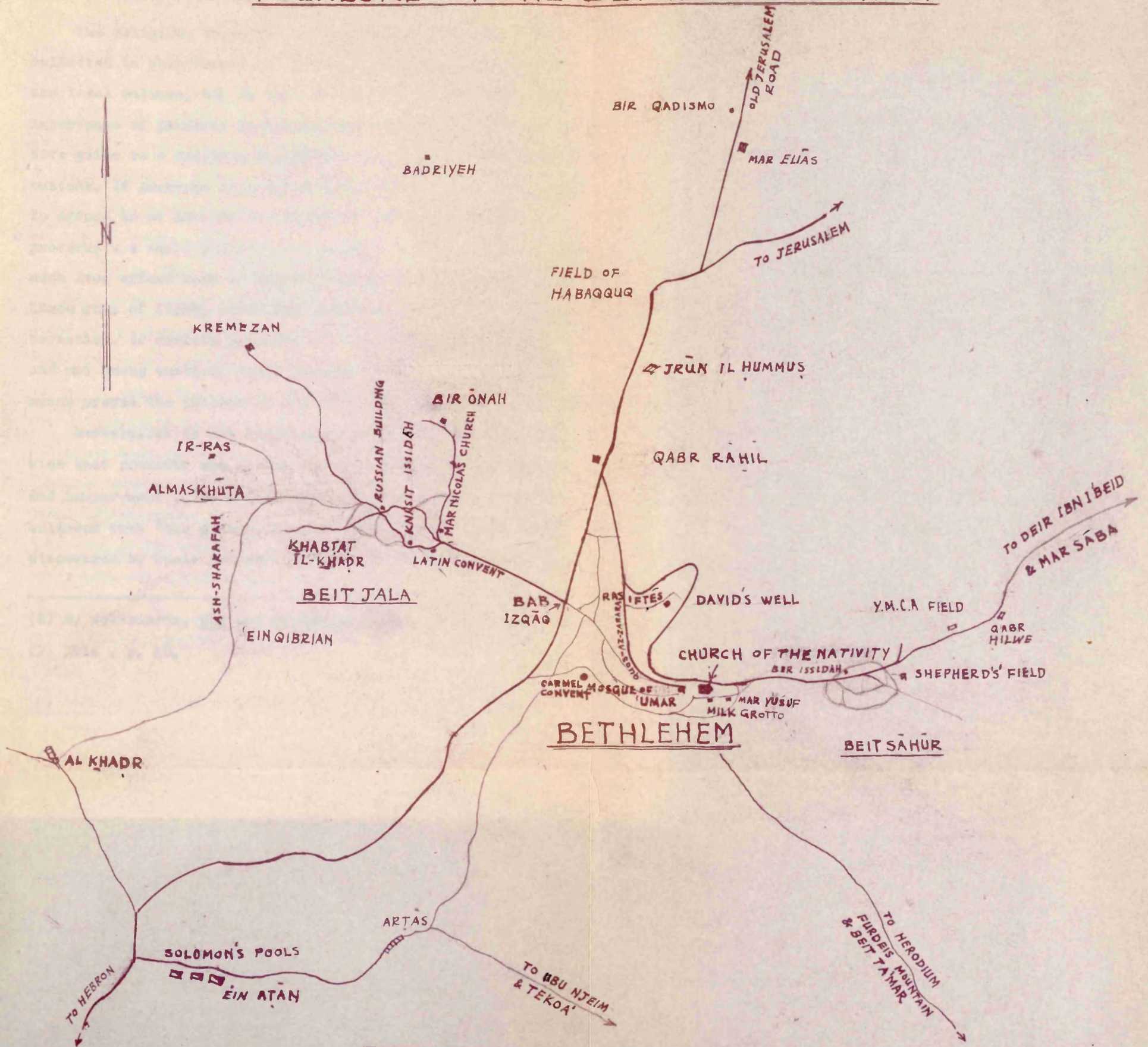
Bethlehem" , from where the "three mighty men" brought water to David having forced their way through the ranks of the Philistine army.(1), In Baedeker's opinion the association of this tradition with this location dates from about the end of the 15th century.

We have come across a wide range of stories, characterised by the miracle element, stories of retribution, of rescue, of protection and stories that have been obviously fabricated to serve a special purpose. But they are all characterised by their straightforwardness and simplicity of plot and structure, and are of obvious moral significance, which is naturally enough because they well suit the simple nature of the narrators themselves and their devoted audiences. These stories and their morals in particular are a great power for good among most of the rank and file of the populace, who look upon them as part of their religious convictions. And thus it is that we conclude this chapter with the completion of the circle which started with the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem, then went east till it reached Mar Sēba and from there turned southwards to Artās and al-Khadr in a clock-wise direction, and then westwards to Beit Jala, then northwards to Mar Eliās until it reached David's Well which

(1) 2 Samuel 23: 14-17.

is a few hundred yards in direct line from the Church of the Nativity, which should be considered the centre not only of the present study, but also of the whole Christian world. The tradition that when its bells rang, the bells of 366 churches in the immediate neighbourhood and the surrounding districts instantly responded and rang at the same time, well suits the position it occupies in the hearts and minds of so many people in the whole world.

MAP OF PLACES CONNECTED WITH RELIGIOUS FOLKLORE IN THE BETHLEHEM DISTRICT



SCALE: 1 INCH \approx 0.4 MILES

CHAPTER TWO

RELIGIOUS PROVERBS AND SAYINGS

The religious proverbs of the Bethlehem District collected in this thesis are in many respects reflections of the local culture. But it will be easy to overestimate the importance of proverbs in general and to consider them a safe guide to a people's character, opinions, feelings and customs. If proverbs as a whole cannot be relied on therefore to afford to us inroads to a people's spirit, religious proverbs - a small portion of a people's total proverbs - can much less afford such an understanding. "Proverbs can only throw rays of light, never full light upon national characteristics. If certain proverbs are found among one people and not among another, their absence among the latter by no means proves the absence of the facts they ~~express~~ express." (1)

Westermarck is not inclined to support the traditional view that proverbs are a true guide to a people's character and temperament (2) - a view upheld by Francis Bacon who believed that "the genius, wit, and spirit of a nation are discovered by their proverbs." Seiler, before Westermarck,

(1) E. Westermarck, Wit and Wisdom in Morocco, pp. 52-54.

(2) *Ibid*, p. 48.

has questioned the traditional view which regards proverbs as mirroring the spirit of a certain community. (1)

Westermarck's main claim is that a people's proverbs cannot be taken as indicative of their character without full knowledge of other facts that the proverbs do not state. As will be seen in reviewing the proverbs in this chapter, one will not infrequently encounter some that diametrically contradict the teaching of others. Many proverbs are imported. (2) A large number of them are international common property, that indicate universal wisdom, and are consequently expressions of general human nature.

Besides, even the great frequency, popularity and adoption or the scarcity of proverbs dealing with a certain subject, could not be taken as conclusive evidence of the acceptance of that particular subject. In the pattern of folk life of the community under discussion, the focal point - apart from the few dissatisfied deviants - is to be found undoubtedly in religious beliefs, ethics and practices. Quite a few of our proverbs condemn clergymen and the inhabitants of the holy land. Yet it cannot be claimed that clergymen and people of this part of the world are more wicked than elsewhere. On the other hand not a single proverb in this collection alludes to

(1) F. Seiler, Deutsche Sprichwörterhunde, Munchen , 1922, pp 290 sq.

(2) Such as "Religious Ethics, No. 15 ".

the rite of partaking the Holy Eucharist, though this is such an essential and vital and most frequently practised rite in Christian religious practice. There is only one proverb involving a reference to a particular church e.g. "Ecclesiastical and Religious Practice" , No.5. Yet the typical Bethlehemite is a regular church-goer. The reason for this abstention might be the great respect in which religious associations are held,

Proverbs in general, and religious proverbs in particular, are not only reflections of life, but they also play an active part in it (1). The importance of the functional role that proverbs play in a community, has been duly emphasized by Dr. R. Firth in his interesting article in "Folk-Lore" Vol. XXXVII (London 1926) "Proverbs in Native Life , with special reference to those of Maori." One of the main aims of proverbs is to influence people's course of behaviour. The population of the district under discussion is certainly very fond of quoting proverbs in their talk. In this the town-dwellers, such as Bethlehemites, and villagers (such as those of Artās and al-Khadr are all alike, regardless of whether they are Christians or Muslims. An argument might be ended by quoting a proverb suitable for the occasion (2), and it shows knowledge; besides, they supply ready made forms of expression which save trouble of finding words.

(1) See E. Westermarck, *op. cit.*, p. 54.

(2) This seems to be the principal aim of using proverbs.

This influence which proverbs exercise is also partly due to their form. Most of the proverbs listed below are short, sharp and acute. These characteristics are essential in proverbial expressions. James Howell in his book "Paroimiografia", published in 1659, said that the chief ingredients which go to make a true proverb are "sense, shortness, and salt." (1) This compression of the idea is one of the reasons why translation is often such an uneasy and unrewarding task. The condensed cryptic character of many of the Arabic proverbs in the following collection, their tendency to be formal and elevated, their rhythm and assonance, their figurative devices, all have combined to add to the difficulty of translating them; since it is the form that gives the majority of proverbs their "salt" and pungency.

In my English rendition of these proverbs, I have aimed primarily, and as much as possible at literal accuracy, without falling into ambiguity. Any attempt aiming at literal accuracy and doing justice to the formal beauty of the original, is apt to fail inevitably. As the great humanist Erasmus, a student of proverbs, remarked, "Most proverbs have the peculiarity that they sound best in their native tongue, but if they are translated into another language they lose much of

(1) James Howell, Paroimiografia, Proverbs, or, old Sayed Sawes and Adages London 1659; quoted by Westermarck, op. cit. p.1.

their beauty." (1)

A problem, no less important than that of translation, obtains in the classification of the contents or subject matter of these proverbs. One might, at first sight, think that an easy way out might be to classify proverbs into Biblical or non-Biblical categories proceeding then to classify each according to certain themes such as "universal wisdom" and "religious morality." but the bases of such a classification is thereby confused, since "sources" of proverbs are mixed with their "morals". This writer has therefore attempted, without much success, to follow a classification, not based on "sources" but on "themes". Unfortunately, the same proverb may fit ~~under~~ more than one theme; and, this classification is too general for a discussion of religious folklore.

In various collections of proverbs, however, one notices many different schemes of classification - ~~regarding~~ ranging from one based on the order in which the writer had jotted proverbs in his notebooks(2), to alphabetical classification according

(1) Quoted by E. Westermarck, op. cit. p.33.

(2) C. Landberg, "Proverbes et Dictons de la Province de Nykie: Section de Nayda" (Leide and Paris, 1883), p. XVIII.

to the first letters of the first word (1), or according to the first word itself, if it consists of one letter only, as in the case of English proverbs beginning with the word "A" (2); or according to the first letters of the first significant word; or according to subject (3); or according to various headings suggested by the person, animal, object, or anything else round which they are woven. (4)

Every such system of classification is susceptible to fault, and is not difficult to criticize. Proverbs are subject to alterations and modifications which make alphabetical classification impractical. The weakness of classification under various headings suggested by the person, animal, or object, is evident when we see Rattray placing this proverb

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- (1) The Rev. Sa'īd 'Abbūd Ashqar, Kitāb Atturfa al-Bahīja; Freytag, Arabum Proverbia (Bonnae ad Rheunum 1838-1843); and Mohammad ben Cheneb's, Proverbes Arabes de L'algerie et du Maghreb; J.L. Burckhardt, "Arabic Proverbs."
 - (2) W.C. Hazlitt, "English Proverbs and Provincial Phrases" (London 1907) ; James Kelly, "A Complete Collection of of Scottish Proverbs", London 1818.
 - (3) Burton Stevenson: "Book of Proverbs, Maxims and Familiar Phrases".
 - (4) R.S. Rattray, "Ashanti Proverbs", (Oxford, 1916).

"If you strike a lion, your own hand will pain you" under the heading "Wild Animals" (1), although, of course, the proverb is purely metaphorical. "Collectors and compilers of proverbs have obviously been anxious to find a principle of some sort to put order into their chaotic material, but I fail to see that any of these formal methods of arrangement can be of much practical use. What has been disconnected before is brought together into a hotchpotch hardly less difficult to digest; and if anyone wants to know what may be said on a certain subject in this medley of proverbs he has to find it for himself." (2)

Westermarck's classification however follows a new pattern which seems to me the most satisfactory of all the classifications mentioned above. The proverbs which he has collected have been grouped together according to subjects or situations upon which they have a bearing. (3) The system of classification adopted in this thesis follows Westermarck's principle in grouping proverbs according to subjects or situations within the limitations of this chapter: religious proverbs. This does not, however, mean that all difficulties are virtually removed, but it is

(1) Ibid, pp. 8 , 61.

(2) E. Westermarek, op. cit. , p. 43.

(3) Ibid.

certainly an improvement on the theme classification adopted by some other writers. The number of proverbs that could fit under more than one category is therefore substantially reduced.

To the best of my knowledge, a large percentage of the proverbs mentioned below are being recorded for the first time. It is a sad fact that the doyen folklorists of this District who have preserved these proverbs for us, are rapidly passing away, leaving no one to take an eager interest in them. The younger generations have not heard a great many of these proverbs, and would not care to use them in real life situations when the occasion arises. Even the older generations have evinced a great amount of astonishment and incredulous bewilderment at the writer's investigations in this field, which is considered unworthy of scientific research. This, however, is not to be wondered at, since the whole domain of folklore is looked down upon as belonging to the unenlightened and the half-literate old men and women. (1)

It would seem rather unwise to draw decisive generalizations about the accuracy with which these proverbs reflect traits of character of the local inhabitants because of the reasons noted above. But in this context, religious proverbs of the area, which form a large percentage of all proverbs in

(1) See Introduction.

common use, are ^{an} indication of the great influence religion exerts on people. In general they may be said (except when used ironically or satirically) to exhort people to the good, to forbearance and mercy, to perform their religious duties and to bear life's ~~an~~ vicissitudes. It might however be safely said that the proverbs reveal a strong criticism directed against clergymen.

The proverbs about priests seem to imply a certain anti-clerical attitude ~~or~~ rather than that the priests are disproportionately wicked in comparison to those elsewhere. In this respect proverbs may be considered a reflection on the priests' cultural and social background. Possibly, too, the frequent clashes between eastern and western clergy about rights and "status quo" in the Church of the Nativity account to a certain extent for such an attitude.

In line with the typical Oriental outlook, women are not favourably looked upon in Christian and Muslim proverbs - which are closely interrelated in this respect, hence, "He whose daughter dies Virgin Mary dances in his house," (1) and, "Women are deficient in reason and religion," (2) Women notorious for their long tongues and too much interest in clothes are constantly the targets of attack by Muslims and Christians alike, "Hell is paved with women's tongues". (3)

(1) Saints No. 2

(2) Islamic No. 3

(3) Religious Ethics, No. 27

and, "It is neither a feast nor Pentecost, why is the thoughtless woman bedecked?" (1)

Owing to the fixed nature of most of the Christian feasts, Muslims, and especially peasants, employ proverbs containing references to Christian feasts, in the ordinary concerns of their life, since their own feasts vary. (2) Thus we get, "As long as the Christian is fasting, the winter is still going on" (3) and, "Do not cut the grapes to make raisins until the feast of the Cross has passed" (4), and "On the feast of Lydd plough and cut open (the ground)." (5) The inter-reaction of Islamic concepts such as predestination with the speech of Christians is evidently seen in the very common use by all of such a proverb as, "You may throw into the sea those whose safety is predestined."

The proverbs that are strictly derived from Muslim sources are used by both Muslim and Christian, and are comparatively few in number, the reason being that Muslims were - until recently - a small minority in this District. (6)

(1) Feasts No. 5. (2) See also Chapter Six, Feasts.

(3) Islamic No. 9. (4) Feasts No. 13. (5) Feasts No. 14.

(6) The present numerical superiority of Muslims over

Christians in this District is due to the flood of Muslim refugees following the 1948-1949 Arab-Israeli War, and the constant stream of emigration of Christian Arabs from this District to the Americas.

Indeed such a proverb as, "It's good that it is your fault and not mine, O mosque of God" (1) is more often used by Christians than Muslims. While proverbs with Christian connotations are frequently used by Muslims such as "Like him who says 'Peace be unto you O Virgin (Mary)' at the Jewish Quarter" (2), and "Like St. George you are (always) present and watchful"(3). The reason for this is probably the great veneration with which Muslims regard Virgin Mary and St. George; indeed some of the Bethlehem Muslim women are known to observe the Virgin's Fast (August 1st - 14th).

The study of the form - linguistic and metaphorical - of those proverbs does not, however, lie within the scope of this thesis. Westermarck's treatment of proverbs from a linguistic point of view has covered this field admirably.

Ideally, it would seem most satisfactory if the names of the individual informants of these proverbs could be remembered. Unfortunately, this is well-nigh impractical. The fact of my residence in the District since early youth, has brought these proverbs frequently to my ears from different sources. Consequently it is not easy to remember the individual source of every proverb. I should mention in this connection that many of these proverbs were first heard from my parents. A biographical sketch of some informants who

(1) Islamic No. 12. (2) Saints No. 8. (3) Saints No. 10.

have contributed to this collection is appended. (1)

The following proverbs, having a direct or indirect bearing on religion, are "fair samples" of the proverbs used in the District, and are divided for the sake of convenience into the following sections:-

(1) See Appendix C

A L L A H

1. To have mercy on people is pleasing to God.

ارحموا من في الارض يرحمكم من في السماء
Irhamu man fil-'arḍ yarhamkum man fis-samā'.

"Have mercy upon those who are on earth and He who is
in heaven will have mercy upon you."

2. If you are predestined to be safe, you need not fear dangers.

اكتب سالم واري في البحر
Uktub sālīm wirmi fil-baḥar ;

"You may throw into the sea those whose safety is
predestined."

3. Good deeds are rewarded by God.

ان ما نفع عند العبد ينفع عند الرب
In ma nifi' 'ind il-'abid binfa' 'ind irrabb.

"If it does not avail with humans, it avails with the Lord."

- 4.

ان ما بان عند الخالق بان عند المخلوق
In ma bān 'ind il-bāliq(1) bibān 'ind il-khāliq.

"If it is not acknowledged by the created it is acknow-
ledged by the Creator." (The q is locally pronounced k.)

- (1) This word is not found in dictionaries, and has no sense
outside its context; it is possibly a person's name, or
most probably it is coined to rhyme with "khāliq"; or it
is possibly derived from "ablaq" : open; colloquially :
'ĕīnu imbalqa : his eye is wide i.e. rude; hence "bāliq"
may mean : rude, ungrateful.

5. A similar saying is: ان ما يبحرى مع الانسان يبحرى مع الله
In ma biḥri (1) ma'il insān biḥri ma' Allah.
"If it is not acknowledged by man it is acknowledged by
God." (2)

6. اعوذ بالله من ثلاث : تناد الرهبان وكيد النسوان وظلم السلطان
'A'ūdhu billāh min thalāthih: 'inād irruhbān wa kaid
inniswān wa zulm issultān.
"I seek protection in God from three (things); monks' obsti-
nacy, women's intrigue, and the sultan's iniquity."

7. God takes care of His creatures and does not forget them
but provides them with sustenance.

الله شق الاشداق وحيالها الارزاق
Allah shaq-qilashdāq wa hayyāha-l-'arzāq.

"God clove mouths and provided them with sustenance." (3)

(1) This word is the colloquial of "effect".

(2) Heard from my mother.

(3) A similar variant to this which is widely used is:-

الولد يبي وجيب رزقه معاه
Il walad bīji wa bijīb rizqu ma'āh. "The baby comes and
brings his sustenance with him."

8. Priests, who are ^{not} highly educated, are oftentimes made the subject of ridicule and anecdote. A half illiterate priest in order to facilitate his reading the Gospel used to read the Gospel at a certain page, which he had carefully marked out. A cunning fellow once removed the mark, causing the priest considerable embarrassment.

Allah 'alli shāh il-'alāmah : الله ما اللي شال العلامة

"May God be after him who removed the (book)mark."

9. Allah ma bibtli tāi'in : الله ما بيتلي تايعين (1)
"God does not inflict a calamity without providing help."

10. He who is cut off from his relations may rely on God.

Illī malūsh ab ilū rabb : اللي مالوش أب اله وب

"He who has no father has a God."

11. A convent servant was once sacked from his job, and he uttered the following proverb:

Bāb Allah awsa' min bāb iddēir : باب الله اوسع من باب الدير

"God's door is wider than the convent's door." (2)

(1) Cf. I. Corinthians, 10 : 3.

(2) Heard from Yūsuf Ishāq of Beit Jala.

12. The following proverb is frequently seen in shops whose owners do not encourage customers' debts:

الدين ممنوع والعتب مرفوع والرزق على الله

'Iddein mananū' wil 'atab marfū' wirriziq 'alallah.

"Debt is forbidden, blame is forestalled, and sustenance is on God."

13. رزق ناس مناس ورزق الكل على الله

Rizq annās 'annās wu rizq il kul 'alallah.

"Sustenance of some people depends on others and the sustenance of all depends on God."

14. It is of great importance that one should obtain the satisfaction of his parents in everything. The parents' satisfaction and benediction are supposed to help one in his life and promote success to his plans.

Riḍa-l-'ab min riḍar-rabb : رضى الاب من رضى الرب

"The father's satisfaction (with his son) is from God's satisfaction." (1)

15. When the rain is withheld, people are not hopeless and they trust in God's help.

Sā'a min sā'ātuh btiqdi ḥājātuh : ساعة من ساعاته بتقي حاجاته

"One hour of His hours satisfies His needs."

(1) Cf. Fifth Commandment.

16. Subhan man yughayyir walā yataghayyar :

سبحان من يغير ولا يتغير

"Glory be to Him who changes but does not change."

17. An obstinate, uncom-promisable and a narrow-minded man sees things according to his own way.

شاييف ربنا تركي و ملايكته اعجم

Shayif rabbna turki wa malāyiktu a'jām.

"He sees our God a Turk and his 'angels non-Arabs."

18. The love of the mother-in-law towards her son-in-law is exemplified by this narrative: A woman's husband and son-in-law were both called Jiryis. She used to go to church daily, kneel in front of St. George's icon, and pray for him to preserve Jiryis. Once her husband hid behind the icon and when his wife began her prayers he asked her, changing his voice, "Which Jiryis? Your husband or your son-in-law?" She answered with these words which later became a proverb: (1)

شيري يا قدوس الله : صيري يا قدوس الله

"My son-in-law , O Holy One."

(1) This anecdote is also known in the Ramallah District.

19. صوت الجمهور من صوت الرب

Sawt ul jumhūr min sawt irrab.

"The public's voice is from God's voice."

20. العون بالله من مكرم اذا حكم

'Il 'ōn billāh min mahkūm idha ḥakam.

"(I seek) God's help from the ruled one if he rules."

21. Difficult cases of sickness are in the hand of God.

العيا ما والطيب الله

'Il 'aya 'aya wiṭṭabīb Allah.

"The disease is a severe one and God is the doctor."

22. He who is idle or unemployed is ridiculed.(1).

فلان قواس مند ربنا : فلان قواس مند ربنا

"So-and-So is a beadle to God."

23. Neighbours are the best people who know of the true conditions of one another.

ما بلهم حالهم فسير ربك وجارك

Ma bifham hālak gheir rabbak wa jārak.

"No one understands your condition except your God and your neighbour.

(1) A most popular saying is (مهندس شوارع) Mhandiz

shawāri', "He is an architect of the streets."

24. Shall we not do as others do ?

المطوش العالمين مطوشنا
*Il mṭawwīsh hal-'ālam mṭawwīshna.

"He who makes all people float is apt to make us float."

25. God rewards you according to your own intention.

من صندوق صدرك يلبسك ربك
Min sandūq ṣidrak yilabbak rabbak.

"From the box of your breast your God dresses you."

26. God is capable of changing conditions.

من حين لحين يفرجه رب العالمين
Min hīn la hīn yifrijhā rabbil 'Ālamīn.

"From one time to another the Lord of the Universe dispels all care."

27. God is free to bestow wealth upon anyone He chooses.

من چه وجهه استخاره جلب له رزق له باب داره
Man habbu rabbu *istakhāru jāb lu rizqu labāb dāruh.

"He whom God chooses and loves will have his sustenance brought by God to his house door."

28. Forgiveness is strongly exhorted.

من قدر منا كان أجره الله
Min qidir wa'afa kān ajru Allah.

"He who is able and forgives will have God as his reward."

29. God is guardian.

Nāmi ya ghanam wil hāris Allah : نامي يا غنم والحارس الله
"Sleep, O sheep, the guardian is God." (1)

30. God rewards the good-doer.

نيالك يا فاعل الخير والاجر (والتوب) على الله
Niyyālak ya fā'il-il-khēir wil 'ajir withthawāb 'alallah.
"O for your good luck O doer of good deeds, the reward is
with God."

31. Nitak matītak : نيتك مطيتك

"Your intention is your mount." (2)

Compare with the Prophet's saying : انما الاعمال بالنيات
Innamal a'māl binniyyāt, "Actions are judged by intentions."

32. لا براك الله في أكله فصاتها أكثر من لغماتها
La būrak Allah fi 'akleh ghaṣṣātha akḥar min luqmātha.
"May God not bless a meal from which the eater gets more
chokings than mouthfuls."

(1) Cf. Psalm 23. See Chapter 6 of this thesis (p.432).

(2) Animal used for riding.

33. Taunting others is strongly condemned.

لا تعابروا بالصوم والصلاة على شيء يمكن الله بيبلك نبيه
La t'Hyir illa biṣṣom wiṣṣalāh 'alāshī mumkin Allah
yiblik fīh.

"Do not taunt (one) with anything except fasting and praying, it may be that God will inflict you with the same catastrophe."

34. لا يرحمك ولا يخلي من يرحمك ولا يخلي رحمة الله تحل عليك
La birḥamak wala biḫhalli min yirḥamak wala biḫhalli raḥmit
Allah thil 'alēik.

"He does not have mercy upon you, nor does he allow anyone to have mercy upon you, nor does he let God's mercy come to you." (1)

35. يا فافل الله : يا فافل الله :
"O heedless, you have God as your guardian."

36. يا مكيل الزيت في العتمة الله عليك رقيب
Ya mkayl izzōit fil'atmeḥ Allah 'alēik raqīb.

"O you measurer of oil in the darkness, God is a watcher on you."

(1) Heard from my parents.

37. God is capable of putting an end to a problem or a catastrophe quicker than one thinks.

ز ت صا ت لك ل فوق ما تنزل الا و نوجهها الله

Zit asātak la fōq ma tinzil illa wafarraḡha Allah.

"Cast your stick upwards and ere it comes down God has solved it (the problem)."

38. يا هارب من قضاى ما لك رب سواى

Ya hārib min qadāy mālak rabbiway.

"O you who are running away from My justice, you have no Lord but Me."

39. الا و ض اذا اثمرت بتقول انا جيت وان امحلت بتقول الله ما طاش

Il ard idha athmarat bitqūl ana jibit win amḡalat bitqūl Allah ma'tāsh.

"When it yields a good harvest the earth says, 'It's I who produced', but when it yields nothing it says, 'It's God who didn't give.'"

40. ان كان الله راد بخصبها فالجمر وان كان الله راد بمحلبها فالنهر

In kān Allah rād bikḡsibha 'aljamir win kān Allah rād byimḡilha 'annahir.

"If God wills He lets it (the crop) prosper even on burning coals, and if God wills He inflicts it with barrenness (even though it grows) by a river."

41. Ghadab il'ab min ghadab irrabb: غضب الاب من غضب الرب

"The wrath of the father comes from the wrath of God."

42. Every creature (even birds) praises the Lord.

Itṭsir bisabbih rabbuh : الطير يستبح ربه

"The bird praises its Lord."

43. Subhān kāfi' il jāj 'assyāj : سبحان رافع الجاج عالى الجاج

"Glory be to Him who raised up the hens on the fence." (It

is God not man who has raised man to his high estate—)

also ironically. (1)

44. Jājeh btishrab bitsabbeh rabbha : جاجة بتشرب بتسبح ربها

"The hen when drinking praises its God."

45. Sabbwu kabmin irrabb : صب وكتب من الرب

"Pouring and showering from the Lord."

46. One is frequently recommended to use the expression "if God wills". A certain peasant hoarded sufficient money to buy an ass. On his way to the Friday Market of Jerusalem(2)

(1) See St. Stephan: "Animals in Palestinian Folklore," JPOS Vol VIII, No. 2, p. 87.

(2) Known as (suq iljum'a) on the Jerusalem-Bethlehem old road.

he was met by some friends who enquired about the purpose of his journey. "I am going to buy an ass" said the peasant. "Say 'if God wills' " they advised him. "Why should I? Don't I have the money?" he retorted. On reaching the market he discovered to his dismay that he had lost the money. On his way he was met by the same friends who enquired about the ass, and he answered them having learnt his lesson, "If God wills I shall start hoarding money once more, and if God wills I shall buy an ass."

ان الله راد قضينا المراد. In Allah rād qad̄sina il murād.
"If God wills we shall achieve our aim."

47. The power of the mind is applauded.

الله ما شناه بالعقل مرئناه

Allah ma shafnāh bil 'aqil 'rifnāh.

"We have not seen God but we perceived Him through our mind."

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S A I N T S

1. Someone was preaching about Jonah the Prophet and he compared the length of the whale to the size of the quarter (tribal compound in a village). A man from the congregation gave him a sign that that was too long. The preacher said that the whale was two cubits shorter than the quarter. The man gave him the same sign. The preacher went on decreasing the length but the man still gave him the sign until the speaker became bored and uttered this proverb. (1)

أطلعت الحوت بلا ذنب : Atlas't il hūt bala dhanab

"You have made the whale become tailless."

2. Girls are not held in such high esteem as boys. Quite frequently many a couple are disappointed when a baby girl is born to them; she is a great responsibility, and she may bring disgrace to her parents.

اللي بتوت بنته بترقص العذرا بدياره

Illī bitmūt bintu bturqus il 'Adhira bidyāruh.

"He whose daughter dies, Virgin Mary danced in his house."

(1) See the Rev. Sa'īd 'Abbūd Aḥqar, Kitab Atturfa al-Ba-hija, p. 15.

3. People should try their best to cope with their difficulties.

اللي مش قادر يحمل صليبه يجزّره جـ

Illī mish qādir yihmil ṣalību yijurru jarr.

"He who cannot carry his cross should drag it."

4. برى برا' الذيب من دم ابن يعقوب

Barī' barā'it idh-dhīb min dam 'ibin Ya'qūb.

"As innocent as was the wolf of the blood of Jacob's son."

5. Even the best of men is capable of fault.

حتى عود الصليب فيه دخان

Hatta 'ūd 'iṣṣalīb fīh dukhkhān.

"Even the wood of the cross has smoke." (1)

6. Women and friends may be good or bad.

صليب بنداس و صليب بنتاس و صليب بنحط على الراس

Ṣalīb bindās wu ṣalīb binbās wu ṣalīb binḥaṭ 'arrās.

"(There's) a cross (that deserves) to be trodden, a cross to be kissed, and a cross to be placed on one's head (a sign of respect)."

(1) A local variant is (ما عود الا فيه دخان)

Ma 'ūd illa fīh dukhkhān.

"Every stick has smoke."

7. Many people do not heed good advice and the Bethlehemite, therefore, asks the adviser why he bothers.

على مين بتسيرا مزاميرك يا داود

'Ala mīn btigra mazāmīrak ya Dawūd?

"To whom do you read your Psalms, O David?"

8. In a similar circumstance this might be used.

مثل اللي بيتول سلام على العذرا في حارة اليهود

Mithil illi biqūl salām 'ala-l'adhra fi hārit il Yahūd.

"Like him who says 'Peace be unto you O Virgin(Mary) ' in the Jewish Quarter."

9. The following proverb was originally used about the squint-eyed. It is also used for the dishonest greedy person, (1) who tries to earn money from many directions.

مين عارطاس وين عار السياس

'Ein 'artās wu 'ein 'amār 'Eliās.

" (He keeps) an eye on Arṭās (2) and one eye on Mar Elias."

(1) See the Rev. Sa'Id 'Abbūd Ashqar , op. cit. P. 135.

A variant to this is مين عالدير وين عجل موير 'ein 'addeir wu 'ein 'ajebel Morēr, "An eye at the convent and an eye on Jebel Morer." (to the south-west of Bethlehem known today as Jebel Zahir.)

(2) Arṭās is a small village to the south of Bethlehem; Mar Elias is a Greek Orthodox Convent to the north of Bethlehem half-way on the old Jerusalem road.

10. An alert and watchful person is compared to St. George.

Mithil Mār Jirjis ḥādir nāzir. مثل مار جرجيس حاضر ناظر

"Like St. George (he is always) present and watchful."

11. Strange sights are compared to St. Spiridūnus' asses. The heads of some asses were cut off; their bodies and heads were mixed up, and St. Spiridūnus was asked to put life back into them, and so he did and the sight was very strange.

Mithil ḥamīr Mar Spiridūnus : مثل حمير مار سبيريدونس

"Like the asses of St. Spiridūnus." (1)

12. The following proverb is supposed to have been said by the hoopoe to King Solomon apologizing for the insignificant gift he had presented him.

Il ḥādiyeh 'aqad muḥāḥa. الهدية قد مهيها

"The present is according to the one who presents it." (2)

(1) Ibid , p. 198.

(2) See Chapter 5, pp. 329-330 , no. 18.

13. The following proverb is said by those whose help is constantly asked or those who are loaded with needless responsibility.

هو نوح مات ووكلني بداريته

Hu Nūh māt wu wakkalni bdhirriyuh.

"Has Noah died and entrusted me with his progeny?"

14. Job's patience is constantly invoked.

يا صبر أيوب على ما هو مكتوب

Ya ṣabr 'Ayyūb 'ala ma hu maktūb.

"O for Job's patience for what is recorded (written in the book). (1)

15. 'Amant ya Tūma ? : آمنت يا توما ؟

"Have you believed, O Tom ? " (2)

16. About the intolerable person it is said.

زيح يا مسيح وجره يا خضر

Zihuh ya Masīh wu jurruh ya Khadr.

"Turn him away O Christ and drag him O Khadr." (3)

(1) A curious mixture of Christian and Muslim traditions ; the conception of the "written book" is derived from Muslim sources.

(2) Cf. St. John 20 : 25. (3) St. George.

17. A woman considers her children to be better than other women's children.

قال سيدنا سليمان للهومة جيبى أحسن الطيور راحت جاءت بنتها
Qal sidna Slēiman lalbūmeh jībi aḥsan-itṭyūr qāmat rāḥat
jūbat bintha.

"Our Lord Solomon said to the owl, 'Fetch me the best of birds.' She rose and went and returned with her daughter. (1)

18. أكذب من أخوة يوسف : 'Akḏhab min ikhwit Yūsif
" (He is) a greater liar than Joseph's brothers."

19. Refer to good things, and they might come true.

أذكروا الملائكة برؤفوا بأجنحتهم
Uḏkuru il malā'ikah birafriḥū bi'ajniḥathum.

"Mention the angels, and they will flutter their wings."

(1) See Chapter 5, pp. 297-299, No. 2.

F E A S T S

1. At Epiphany (6th January) it is believed that winter will lose its grip. This, however, is not strictly true.

في الغطاس بتفتس نص الساعا

Fil-ghtās btughtus nuṣṣ issaq'a.

" At Epiphany half the cold dives (disappears)."

A variation to this is:

Fil-ghtās bughtus nuṣ-el-bard: في الغطاس مغطس نص البرد

("El-bard" is a synonym to " saq'a".) (1)

2. The week before Easter Lent is commonly known as
(جمعة المخالفين : Jem'et el-mkhalfin), "Week of the
Dissenters". Members of the Greek Orthodox Church who
abstain from eating meat on Wednesdays and Fridays
throughout the year are allowed to break this practice

(1) Dr. T. Can'an mentions two other proverbs connected with
Epiphany, not used in the Bethlehem District: (b'n el-
ghtās wil-milādeh la tsāfir ya hādi)

بين الغطاس واليلا لا تسافر يا هادي

"Between Epiphany and Christmas don't journey O quiet man";
and ^{يا مجنون} بين الغطاس وعيد الروم لا تسافر يا مجنون : ben el-ghtās u-'Id er-rūm la
tsāfir ya majnūn), "Between Epiphany and the Greek feast
(Christmas), don't journey, O fool." See. Dr. T. Can'an
"Folklore of the Seasons in Palestine" JPOS, Vol III ,
No. 1 , p. 32.

during this week. It is probable that the name Mkhālif might be derived from the fact that Christians in this week must eat leavened bread contrary to the Jews who only eat unleavened bread during this period.

Jem'at el-mkhālifīn illi ma 'indush lahme yi'ud raddet-el-el-waṭa. (أو الأرض) جمعة المخالفين اللي ما عندوش لحم بعض ردة الوطا
" On the week of the Dissenters, he who has no meat should bite the sole of his shoe (or the earth.)" (1)

3. On the Middle Week of Easter Lent people are exhorted to start getting their clothes ready for Easter.

جمعة النص اللي ما فصل ينصل واللي ما قص يقص

Jem'at en-muṣ illi ma faṣṣal yifaṣṣil willi ma qaṣ yiquṣ.
" On the Middle Week he who has not fashioned (a dress) must do so, and he who has not cut out (a dress) must do so. (2)

(1) Heard from Mrs. Jamila Sa'īde of Bethlehem.

(2) For other variations of this proverb see Dr. Can'ān ,
op. cit. p. 34.

4. During the Easter Feast, young people are seen in the streets carrying dyed eggs and challenging one another about whose egg is stronger. (1) But it is not advised to challenge one who has one egg only out of pity and because he is apt to resent your winning.

Abu bēda lā tfāqṣu : أبو بيضة لا تتأتمه

"Do not challenge the owner of one egg." (2)

5. When a thoughtless woman is seen too smartly dressed on no occasion she is criticized; while dressing smartly on the right occasions is encouraged.

لا عهد ولا عصره وشو مال الرما مختصره

La 'Id walā 'anṣara wuṣḥū mūl irra'na mkhanṣara.

"It is neither a feast nor Pentecost, why is the thoughtless woman bedecked with Jewellery (even up to her little finger?)" (3)

(1) See Chapter Six, p. 366.

(2) Also mentioned by the Rev. Sa'Id 'Abbūd Ashqar, op. cit. p.3, (tfāqṣu is from the root faqṣ : break an egg. Cf. local and S. Arabian colloquialism "faqash" used in this context and also used to mean "to dislocate a limb of the human body. (Barthelemy)

(3) Other references to proverbs dealing with Pentecost are to be found in Dr. T. Can'an's "Kalender des Palaestinischen Fellachem," ZDPV 1916, and St. Stephan's "The Division of the Year in Palestine" JPOS, Vol. II, No.3, p. 164.

6. اللّبي ما يتلبس بالعنصره بتعوت محسره

Illī mā btilbis 'al'anṣarah bitmūt mḥassarāh.

"She who does not dress on Pentecost dies of pique." (1)

7. Summer begins with Whitsuntide and comes to an end at the Feast of the Elevation of the Holy Cross. The Christians of the Bethlehem District reside in their country homes during this time, and the Christian peasant gives the advice:

'Anṣer wiṭla' , u-ṣallib wudkḥul منصور واطلع وقلب وادخل

"Celebrate Pentecost and go out (to the country); celebrate the Feast of the Cross and go back." (2)

(1) Dr. T. Can'an, op. cit. p. 34.

(2) The true significance of this proverb was perhaps misunderstood by Dalman who quotes a variant of this e.g.

'Ayyid wiṭla' u-ṣallib we-'bur : عيد واطلع وقلب وامسبر

"Celebrate Easter and move (to sleep out), celebrate the

Feast of the Cross and get in." Here the exhortation (اطلع)

(itla') certainly means "to go out to the countryside."

See G. Dalman, "Sacred Sites and Ways" authorised translation by P. Levertoff p. 48.

Variants to this are also found in St. Stephan's, op. cit. p. 163 who also quotes Dr. Can'an .

8. في عيد مار الياس بتظلق الغيين

Fi 'id Mar Elīās bitkhallaq el-ghēin.

" On the feast of St. Elias (20th July) the clouds begin to be formed." (1)

9. The Feast of the Transfiguration , August 6th, already sees the first coming of Autumn. But those who have gone out to their summer homes in the country, still linger till the Feast of the Cross.

(1) Rarely used in Behhlehem ; quoted by Dr. T. Can'an , op. cit. p. 28. A more popular saying is:

في آب بتظلق فين السحاب

Fi 'Āb bitkhallaq ghēin es-sahāb.

" In August the clouds are formed. "

The classical (غيم) (ghaim) is pronounced (ghēin) by the illiterate.

Proverbs 1 and 8 in this section have a very close resemblance to the Arabian weather sayings. See Professor R.B. Sergeant, "Star- Calendar and an Almanac from South-West Arabia" ; Anthropos , 1954 , pp. 443 - 459.

عيد التجلي يقول للصيف واذهب

'Id it-tajalli biqūl laṣ-ṣēf walli.

"The Feast of the Transfiguration says to summer, 'Get out.'" (1)

10. في عيد الجلي الشمس يتجلى

Fi 'id il-jilli ish-shams ibtitjalla.

"On the Feast of the Transfiguration, (6th August) the sun appears at its best." (2)

11. في عيد مار يوحنا الشمس ابتجلى

Fi 'id Mar Yuhanna ish-shams ibtitjalla.

"On the feast of St. John (29th August) the sun appears at its best."

12. في عيد الصليب لا تأمن صيب

Fi 'id eṣ-ṣalib la t'āmin ṣīb. (3)

(1) A most popular saying.

(2) See Chapter Six, page 371.

(3) Dalman (ibid) misunderstands (صيب ṣīb) for dew. In fact (صيب) is derived from (صب) which is (pour out).

"On the Feast of the Cross (14th September) do not trust the downpour." (1) , (2)

13.

لا تقطع العنب للزبيب قبل يوم الصليب
La tiqṭa' el 'ineb lazzbib taymurr eṣ-ṣalīb.

"Do not cut the grapes to make raisins until the Feast of the Cross has passed." (3)

14. Fi 'Id Lidd uhruth wa kidd. (4) في عيد ليد أحرث وكث

"On the Feast of Lidd (St. George, 3rd November) plough and cut open (the ground,) (The q being pronounced in the Bethlehem District as k : qidd becomes colloquially kidd, originally qudd.)

(1) There are other proverbs about the Cross in other parts

of Jordan such as, Mata ṣallabat kharrabat: متى صلت خربت
"After the feast of the Holy Cross (the rain) destroys."

See the Rev. Sa'īd 'Abbūd Ashqar, op. cit., p. 47.

(2) The sense of "trust" here is "beware".

(3) Also mentioned by Dr. Can'ān, "Plant-lore in Palestinian Superstition," JPOS vol. III, no. 1, p. 27, and no. 3, pp. 136-137.

(4) For variants of this popular proverb see Dr. T. Can'ān, "Folklore of the Seasons in Palestine," JPOS, vol. III, No. 1, pp. 21-35. These variants, however, are not used in the Bethlehem District. Cf. the root "kadd" in S. Arabic of agricultural labour.

15. The Feast of the Burbāra (St. Barbara, 4th December) is believed to mark the shortest day of the year. Although this is not strictly true yet the Julian Burbāra falling on the 17th December is not far from 21st December which is the shortest day of the year. After that the day starts to "take" from the night.

في البربارة بصير النهار نطة نارة

Fil-Burbāra biṣīr en-nhār natṭtet fāra.

"At the Burbāra Feast, the day's length equals a mouse's jump."

16.

في البربارة النهار يخذ من الليل شكارى

Fil-Burbāra en-nhār bōḳhidh men illīl shkāra. (1)

"At the Burbāra Feast the day takes a bit from the night."

17.

إذا اطرت في عيد البربارة وانهل قرن الثور اطم ان الدنيا (او السنة) مطارة

Idha amṭarat fi 'īd il-Burbāra, wanballa qarn eththōr,

i'lam anna-ad-dunia (aw es-sanah) maṭṭārah.

-
- (1) "Shkāra" is colloquial - a small piece of land ploughed and sowed (Barthelemy). The word is still used among farmers. The Transjordan Bedouins have this verse:

يا رب أجيّب الفيت لاجل الشكارى وتجعل سهلها لنا والتهاير

Ya Rabb ij̣jīb il-ghēith li'ajl ish-shkāra, wu tij'al

subulha naifan 'alqahāqīr. (Qahāqīr : stone signs to

mark boundaries.)

"If it rains at the Feast of the Burbāra and the bull's horn is moistened, know that the year will be rainy."

18. في عيد الميلاد، يولد البرد ولده
Fi 'Id il-Milādeh būlad il bard wilādeh.
"On Christmas the cold is truly born."

19. في الميلاد، يزيد البرد زياده
Fil Milādeh bizīd il-bard ziādeh.
"At Christmas the cold greatly increases." (1)

20. In as much as work accumulates on Saturday (for the Christian family) one is forced to sit up late at night to finish it; while Sunday seems shorter owing to freedom from work.

السبت أطول من الأحد : Issabt aṭwal min-il-aḥad ;
"Saturday is longer than Sunday." (2)

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(1) Also mentioned by Dr. T. Can'an, op. cit. p. 31.

(2) The Rev. Sa'id 'Abbūd Ashqar, op. cit. p. 102.

ECCLESIASTICAL AND RELIGIOUS PRACTICES

1. Repentance is normally exhorted in the following proverb:

Ihrim ya khūri : احرم يا خوري
"Excommunicate, O priest." (1)

2. Godfathers are kind.

اشبين المبرون مثل الاخ الحنون
Ishbīn il mēirūn mithl il-'akh il ḥanūn.

"The godfather at the anointment is like a kind brother." (2)

3. It is most unwise to take a hand in bringing about a marriage match.

اشي بجانزة ولا تشي في جيزة وجواز
Imshi bijanāze wala timshi fi jīze wu jawāze.

"Walk in a funeral procession but do not walk in a match and a wedding." (3)

(1) If I do it again. (2) See Chapter 6, Baptism.

(3) It is unwise to take part in bringing about a match because, according to popular belief, if the couple become happy, the match-maker will be soon forgotten, and if they are unhappy, they will pour curses on him. See how this contradicts Proverb 23 of this section. A very similar proverb is found in Carlo Landberg, "Proverbes et Dictons de la Province de Syrie, p. 21.

4. Those who are not particular in observing their religious duties are reproached. أول الهريسه وأخير الكنيسة

Awwal il harīse wu ākhir il knīseh :

"First the pottage (1) and lastly the church."

5. To exaggerate the age of someone, it is said:-

حاضر بنايت بين الممدان

Hāder bnāyet bēin il- 'imdān.

"He was present at the building of the Columns of the Basilica of the Church of the Nativity." (2)

-
- (1) A kind of thick pottage prepared of cooked wheat and cooked flesh-meats much pounded together - probably one of the kinds of "harīseh" peculiar to post-classical times, which kinds are many (Lane). It seems to me that the origin of this proverb is found in the Armenian long-established custom of cooking a meal in their convent in Bethlehem on the eve of their Epiphany Feast on January 29th, consisting of the mentioned ingredients and commonly called "harīseh" which is served to the congregation before the midnight mass.
- (2) Built by Constantine and Helen 333 A.D.

6. When a mistake is committed it should not be frowned upon but tolerated.

Il khūri bighlat fil-injīl : الخورى بغلط في الانجيل :
"The priest commits a mistake in (reading) the Gospel,"

7. Appearances may often deceive.

زى قبور اليهود من برا رخام ومن جوا سخام
Zay qbūr il Yahūd, min barra rkhām wa min juwwa skhām.
"Like the graves of the Jews, from outside marble, but from the inside soot." (1)

8. Food which is delicious and pleasant to look at is:

Zay quddāsīt is-smīd. : زى قداسة السميد
"Like the ceremonial loaf." (2)

9. Prayers before undertaking a journey ward off evils.

صلي واركب لا تتركاب
Ṣalli wirkab la tintakab.

"Pray and ride, you will not be afflicted with calamities."

(1) Metaphorically "soot" here means "scum."

(2) A fine white loaf presented during the Orthodox Church service to receive benediction.

10. Ironically it is said that praying and fasting interrupt work.

صوم وصلي ورتك بيولتي

Ṣūm wu ṣalli rizqak biwalli.

"Fast and pray your livelihood will turn away."

11. A guest must be well entertained even though considerable expense may be incurred; but it is believed that a guest is destined to bring good luck to the family he visits.

الضيف يجي ورتك بيولتي

Id-ḡāṣif bīji^{wu} rizqu ma'āh. (1)

"The guest brings his livelihood with him."

12. Misfortunes come together.

التيس أعمى والكيسة ممتة

Il qassīs a'ma wil-kuīseh m'attmeh.

"The priest is blind and the church is dim."

13. Under no circumstances, however adverse, must one fail to attend Mass.

لو طيك قطع الراس ما تنسوت القداس

Law 'alēik qat'irrās la tfūt il-quddās.

"Even though your head will be cut off never forgo Mass."

(1) A variation to this is "a baby" instead of "a guest".

14. It is of no use doing favours for those who do not appreciate them.

مثل اللي بيؤد بخور اقدام الحجاراة

Mithlillī biōqid bakhkhūr quddām lihjāra.

"Like him who kindles incense before stones."

15. An uncouth burly fellow incapable of understanding is:-

مثل برميل الديرو : مـ

"Like the barrel (1) of the convent."

16. The load-bearer is:-

مثل حمار المطران

Mithl ḥmār il-maṭrān :

"Like the metropolitan's ass."

17. Drunkenness is frowned upon.

مثل صلاة السكران ان صلى حرام وان ما صلى حرام

Mithl ṣalāt is-sakrān, in ṣalla ḥarām, win ma ṣalla ḥarām.

"Like the drunkard's prayer, if he prays it is unlawful, and if he does not pray it is unlawful."

18. Monks can be very devilish.

مثل قلوسة الراهب فيها سبعة وسبعين شيطان

Mithl qallūset ir-rāhib fīha sab'a u-sab'in shītān.

"Like the monk's cap, it contains seventy-seven devils."

(1) Used for refuse.

19. وين بيلقى الشيطان؟ تحت قلايس الرهبان
Wēin biltqi ish-shītān? Taht qalālis ir-ruhbān.
"Where is the devil found? Under the monks' caps."

20. Appearances deceive:
مش كل من لبس اسود صار راهب
Mush kul min libis 'aswad ḡār rāhib.
"Not everyone who dresses in black is a monk."

21. The advantages of something are reaped by one while its disadvantages befall another.
الذرة للدير والوسخ ع سمان
Innidḡr lad-dēir wil-wasakh 'a Sam'ān.
"The offering (1) is for the convent and the filth is for Sam'ān."

22. The sleep of oppressors is a great boon.
نوم الظالمين أحل من الصلاة والصوم
Naum iz-ẓālmīn aḡal min iz-ṣalā wuṣ-ṣūm.
"The sleep of oppressors is more lawful than prayer and fasting."

(1) An animal.

23. Matchmaking is a good deed, and he who succeeds in bringing two people to marriage is blessed.

يَإِلا من وَفَّقَ رَاسِيَيْنِ عَلَى مَخْدَةٍ

Niyyāl man waffaq rāsēin 'ala mkhaddeh.

"Lucky is he who brings two heads to a pillow."

24. A bad community goes hand in hand with a bad ruler.

هَالِكِيَّةُ الْخِرْبَانِيَّةِ بِدَمَا هَالِكِيَّةِ الْاِمْرَانِيَّةِ

Hāl knīseh ilkhārbāneh bidha hāl-qassīs il-a'war. (1)

"This ruined church fits well with this one-eyed priest."

25. Some are prepared to commit evil if their demands are not met. Once a priest was to be transferred, against the community's wish, and a member of the community in his zeal for the priest gave utterance to these words which have become a proverb:

هَاتُوا بَيْتَ اللَّهِ تَاهِدُوهُ : هَاتُوا بَيْتَ اللَّهِ تَاهِدُوهُ

"Bring God's House and we shall destroy it." (2)

26. Small talk and useless things are referred to thus:

مَدِيَّتْكَ هَدِيَّةٌ رُهْبَانِيَّةٌ وَتَوْنٌ وَجُلْبَانِيَّةٌ

Hidiytak hidiyet ruhbān, quwan wu ḡulbān.

"Your gift is like that of monks; icons and crosses." (3)

(1) Quoted by the Rev. Sa'Id 'Abbūd Ashqar, op. cit. p. 225.

(2) Ibid.

(3) Ibid.

27. Is it conceivable for the wicked to behave well ?

Hu il biss bitrahban ? : هو اليس يترهبين ؟

"Can the cat become a monk ?"

28. Thoughtlessness is compared to a priest's inconsiderateness.

لا تعطها ش ركبة قسيس

La ti'malhāsh rukbit Qassis.

"Do not make it a priest's ride. " (1)

29. It is no use for the slanderer to perform his religious obligations.

بيقرا الفرض ويطلع من المـرض

Biqra il fard wu biṭ'an il 'ard.

"(The priest) reads his religious assignments but slanders women's honour. "

30. Zay rāhib id-dēir : زي راهب الدير :

"Like the convent's monk."

(1) Once a priest accompanied a peasant who was riding a donkey. The priest asked the peasant to allow him to ride the donkey; and he did so all along the road, leaving the owner to walk beside him.

31. Friends do not ask one another to swear in order to prove the truth of something. It is enemies who demand that. Swearing, particularly in the Grotto of the Nativity or the Grotto of Milk (1) is an extremely solemn occasion. False swearing leads to terrible consequences.

مِنْ لَيْتِكَ تَطْلُبُكَ مِنْ تَأْخُذُكَ مَادَاكَ

Man ḥallafak qatalak, u min qāḏik 'ādāk.

"He who has asked you to swear has killed you, and he who has prosecuted you has made you his enemy."

**** * * * ****

(1) See Chapter 1 .

RELIGIOUS ETHICS

1. A Syriac (1) woman's only son fell dangerously ill, but she did not call a doctor ; in agreement with her son she took three drops of oil from a lamp in front of Christ's Sepulchre, three drops from a lamp at the Church of the Nativity, some dust from some holy places, and some water from the well of Saint Mark; she mixed all and anointed her son at night. He recovered the same night .

•Amin bilḥajar tibrā : آمين بالحجر تبراً

"If you have faith in a stone you will recover."

2. If a passer-by plucks fruits from a garden and instantly eats them, it is not unlawful; but if he carries them until the^{ir} leaves wither, then this is considered a theft.

اخضر ورقه من حرام ما اللهي سرته

Akhḍar waraqūh mish ḥarām 'allī saraqūh.

"If its leaves are green, then it is not unlawful for him who steals it." (2)

(1) There is a large Syriac community in Bethlehem.

(2) Cf. Deuteronomy, 23 : 24 , "When thou comest into thy neighbour's vineyard then thou mayest eat grapes; but thou shalt not put any in thy vessel."

3. A passer-by is allowed to drink from a well, but he should not attempt to ruin it.

ملعون كل من شرب من بئر ورمى فيه حجاراً

Mal'ūn kul min shirib min bīr wu rama fih ḥajar.

"May he be cursed who drinks from a well and throws a stone in it." Metaphorically, one must not harm those who have been benevolent to him. (1)

4. Alms-giving should be strictly unostentatious.

إيد تعطى وإيد ما تدري : إيد تعطى وإيد ما تدري

"One hand gives (alms) without the other's knowing." (2)

5. Many proverbs bear very strong relationship to the Bible proverbs and some may have been affected by the Bible.

(1) Many wells in the countryside are ruined because thirsty passers-by drop stones into them endeavouring to raise their shallow water to drink, or to find out whether they contain water. The resulting accumulation of stones blocks the wells.

(2) Cf. Matthew, 6:3, "But when thou doest alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth."

Tājir il qūt mamqūt : تاجر القوت مقوت

"The merchant of victuals is unpopular." (1)

6. الحق مش طلي زرع والسطح الحق طلي سلك والرجسد
Il ḥaq mush 'alli zara' 'assaṭiḥ, il ḥaq 'alli
sallaf 'arrajad.

"It is not the fault of him who sowed on the roof, it is the fault of him who advanced money when the (harvested) crop was still coming in." (2)

(1) Cf. Proverbs, 11:26, "He that withholdeth corn, the people shall curse him." It also resembles the Muslim injunctions against food hoarding, such as, "He who hoards provisions for forty days will be renounced by God's conscience," and "No one monopolizes (provisions) except a sinner." See also R.B. Sergeant, "A Zaidi Manual of Hisbah" (Revista Degli Studi Orientali, vol.28, 1953.)

(2) Cf. Psalm 129:6, "Let them be as the grass upon the house tops which withereth afore it groweth." It is ambiguous in Arabic, ^{and} could possibly mean that you cannot blame the peasant who stores seed on his roof to eat when he should have sown it in the field, but you should blame the grasping creditor who takes the whole crop to pay off his advances to the peasant, and then even on the threshing-floor when the crop is coming in, makes a new loan to tide him over to the next harvest. - I owe this explanation to the courtesy of Professor R.B. Serjeant.

7. خبزة ناشة برياحه ولا خروف محشي بصياحه
Khubzeh nāshfeh biryāha wala kharūf maḥshi bisyāha.
"It is better to have a dry morsel with quietness than
a stuffed sheep with strife." (1)

8. Water disputes were (and still are) very common.
'Idd irjālak wiwrad 'al mayyeh : عد رجالك وأورد واليه
"Count your men and then make for the water." (2)

9. Be well-prepared before facing dangers. The following
proverb appears to be derived almost directly from St.
Luke :
عدل سفنك قبل ما تنزل بالبحر
'Addel safīntak qabil ma tinzil 'al baḥar.
"Adjust your ship before you go down to sea." (3)

-
- (1) Cf. Proverbs 17:1, "Better is a dry morsel, and quietness therewith than a house full of sacrifices with strife."
(2) Cf. Exodus 2 : 16-17, "Now the priest of Midian had seven daughters and they came and drew water and filled the troughs to water their father's flock. And shepherds came and drove them away; but Moses stood up and helped them and watered their flock."
(3) St. Luke 14 : 28, "For which of you intending to build a tower, sitteth not down first and counteth the cost, whether he have sufficient to finish it."

10. This also bears a strong analogy to the Gospel:

مراك ما تتمد مطرح ما بيتولوا لك قوم

'Umrak ma tuq'ud matraḥ ma biqūlūlak qūm.

"Never sit in a place where you might be asked to get up."
----- (1)

11. Kbīr il qōm khādimhum : كبير القوم خادمهم

"The chief of the tribe is its servant", (2) - in line
with ancient Arabian poetry.

12. It is more honourable to give than to take.

كلمة خذ ولا ألف كلمة مات

Kilmit khudh wala alf kilmit hāt.

"One word 'give' and not a thousand words 'receive'."
(3)

(1) Cf. Luke 14:8, "When thou art bidden of any man to a wedding, sit not down in the highest room, lest a more honourable man than thou be bidden of him...."

(2) Cf. Matthew 20 : 26-27, "But it shall not be so among you; but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your servant."

(3) Cf. The Acts 20:35, "I have shewed you all things how that labouring ye ought to support the weak and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, it is more blessed to give than to receive."

13. Min asmāk aghnāk : من أسماك أفتاك
"He who quotes your name (in connection with something good) adds to your ^awealth." (1)

14. Many people are afraid of malicious invocations against them especially from the poor and distressed and children. However one need not be frightened of them if he has not perpetrated evil. لا تخفش من الدعوات خاف من السيئات

La tkhafsh min idda'wat khūf min issayī'āt.

"Do not be afraid of invocations, but be afraid of evil deeds."

15. لا تعيرني (لا تعيرني) يا بوضي وانت أجوى مني شوي
La t'ayirni (la t'ayyirni) ya bū gway winti ajwa minni
shwayy.

"Do not taunt me O you owner of a pebble while you are still worse than I." (2)

-
- (1) What makes me include this proverb is the strong bearing it has to the Bible. Cf. Proverbs 22:1, "A good name is rather to be chosen than great riches, and loving favours rather than silver and gold."
(2) Cf. Matthew 7:3, "And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye?" This is very rarely used in the area; it is frequently used however, in the north of Lebanon.

16. One is advised not to be sure of himself, one does not know what may happen to him.

يا واقف على اجريك ما بتعرف شو مقدر عليك

Ya wāqif 'ala ijrēik (colloquial for rijlēik - legs)
ma bti'rif shū mqaddar 'alēik.

"O you who stand on your feet, you do not know what is predestined (estimated) for you." (1)

17. Illi ahsant ilū khāf minnu اللّٰي اٰحسنت الّٰه خاف منه
"Fear him for whom you have done a favour." (2)

This together with the following are reminiscent of ancient Arabian verse though of course the ideas are universal.

اللّٰي بيته الملاح بيع السّالاح

(1) Cf. [Corinthians 10 : 12, "Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall." and James 4 : 14, "Whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow...."

(2) Cf. Psalm 41 : 9, "Yes, mine own familiar friend, in whom I trusted, which did eat of my bread hath lifted up his heel against me."

18. Illi biddu limlāh bibi' isslāh: اللّٰي يَدُه الطَّالِحُ يَبِيعُ السَّلَاحَ:
" He who wants the fair must sell(his) arms." (1)

19. It is preferable for one to live with dignity anywhere than with humiliation in the best place. (What a strong resemblance to John Milton' famous line "Better to reign in Hell than serve in Heaven" uttered by Satan! (2)

جَنَّةٌ بِاللَّائِلِ مَا تَرْضَى بِهَا جَهَنَّمَ بِالْعِزِّ أَفْضَلُ مَنْزِلٍ

Jannah bidhdhul ma nirda bihā, Jhannam bil 'izz
afdal manzil.

"We do not agree to Paradise with humiliation, hell with honour is the best residence."

20. An uninhabited place is far from being pleasant or
suitable^{for} residence.

Il jannah balā nās ma btindās الجنة بلا ناس ما بتداعق

"Paradise without people should not be trodden."

(1) Cf. Matthew 13 : 45, 46, "Again the Kingdom of heaven is like unto a merchant man seeking goodly pearls: who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had and bought it, "

(2) John Milton, Paradise Lost , Book 1 , 1 : 263.

21. Irresponsible people feel free to do any thing they wish without fear of consequences.

الجنة ماني خاششها وجهنم ما حد سابتني عليهم

Il janneh māni khāshishha wi jhannam mā had sābīqni'alāiha.

"I shall not enter Paradise and ^{none} will go to Hell before me."

22. Make the best of a bad job.

Jhannam bijhannam baq'ud biṣṣidīr: جهنم بجهنم بقعد الصدر

OR

Jhannam wala bid baq'ud biṣṣidīr: جهنم ولا بد بقعد الصدر

"If it's going to be Hell inevitably I ^{had} better sit in the front place."

23. It is difficult for a judge, or a divider of fortunes, to be unbiassed. consequently he will not enter Heaven.

'Umru ma mḡassim dakhāl il Janneh: عمره ما تقسم دخل الجنة
عمره ما تقسم دخل الجنة

"Never did any divider enter Paradise."

24. It is not for humans to revenge themselves on a person; revenge should be left to God.

لا تجازي والک فی السما مجازی

La tjāzi wu 'ilak fīssamā mjāzi.

"Do not avenge when you have an avenger in Heaven." (1)

25. Many a time does one escape a catastrophe only to fall in a greater one.

شردنا من هزرايين لانا قباض الروح

Sharadna min 'azrāyin lāqāna qabbāḍ irrwāh.

"We have escaped Satan but we were met by the Seizer of Souls."

26. The evil-eye is a widespread institution with definite rules of how to avoid it and how to be cured from it.

عن ما بنعمينك والعين بنصيبك

'Ūn ma bin'Inkum wu bil'ēin binṣībikum.

"We shall not offer you help but we shall inflict you with the evil eye."

27. Women are looked down upon as chatterboxes.

جهنم مبلطة بالنساء وان

Jhannam mballatah bi alsinat inniswān.

"Hell is paved with women's tongues."

(1) Cf. Romans 12 : 19 ".... for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay saith the Lord."

28. Il faqir tiwṣāytu ibn-il-ḥalāl : القير توصيته ابن الحلال :
"The poor man is in the trust of the good man's
care." (1)

-
29. The following proverb is applied to persons of weak religious fervour. A certain bedouin heard a preacher preaching about the resurrection of the dead and so he asked him, "Are animals resurrected?" "Yes" said the preacher. The bedouin was jubilant and said, "I had stolen some goats from So-and-So and I had a guilty conscience, but now I am at peace with myself. On Resurrection Day I shall lead the goats to their owner and say ' Oh So-and-So, here are your goats.' " (2)

Biqūmu ma' il 'anzāt : بيتوموا مع العنزات
"They will be resurrected with the goats."

(1) Cf. Leviticus 19 : 9-10.

(2) Quoted by the Rev. Sa'īd 'Abbūd Ashqar: op. cit., p. 65.

30. It is said that two brothers, one married and the other bachelor, used to thresh their corn together. At night the married brother would slip away and take some corn from his heap and add it to his brother's, because he thought his brother being a bachelor and in need to marry, was in great^{er} need. While the bachelor brother similarly slipped away and took from his heap and added to his brother's, thinking that since he had a family, he was in greater need. (1)

يا بركة أخسین ما خانسوا بمشهم

Ya barkit akkhēin mā khānu ba'dham.

"O for the blessing of two brothers who were not treacherous to each other."

(1) In Jerusalem this story is connected with the Dome of the Rock.

I S L A M I C

1. A female relative is considered a heavy burden.

اللي يتموت ولـيـتـه من حـسـن نيتـه

Illi bitmūt welītu min husun nītu.

"He whose female(relative) dies has good intentions." (1)

2. Nāqil il kufr laisa bikāfir. : ناقل الكفر ليس بكافر

"The carrier(reporter) of infidelity is not an infidel."

3. The Islamic attitude which looks down upon women,
prevails to some extent in the following :-

النساء ناقصات عقل ودين

Inniswān nāqsāt 'aql wu dīn.

"Women are deficient in reason and religion." (2)

4. Oh for the bad luck of him who does things in the
wrong time.

زى اللي أسلم الظهر مات العصر: لا عيس شمع له ولا محمد درى له

(1) The reward of his good intention is the death of his
female relative.

(2) Also used in Morocco. See E. Westermarck "Wit and Wisdom
In Morocco, p. 65.

Zai illi aslam iẓẓuhur wu māt il 'asir; la 'Īsa
shafa' lu wala Muḥammad diri fīh.

"Like him who embraced Islam at noon and died in the
mid-afternoon; neither did 'Īsa intercede for him,
nor did Muḥammad know about him." ('Īsa = Jesus)

5. When one person relies on another for doing a job
for him, then that job will not be successfully conducted.
One therefore should depend on himself and not on others.

بي أركان عبي ضاقت البقرة

Nabi arkan 'a nabi , dā'at il baqarah.

"A prophet relied on another prophet and the cow was lost."

6. It is a meritorious deed for one to conceal a disgrace.

النبي شاف بعينه وغطى بذيئه

Innabi shāf bi'ēimu wu ghaṭṭa bdhēilu.

"The Prophet saw with his eye and concealed with his
skirt."

7. A trivial detail in the midst of matters of importance
elicits the following proverb:-

مد الحزّة واللزّة جابوا القاضي يطهروه

'Ind il ḥazzeḥ wil-lazzeḥ jābu il qāḍi yitahrūh.

"In the midst of bustle and excitement they brought
the judge to circumcise him."

8. Some sheikhs are noted for their ignorance and almost illiterate condition.

شافوا الشيخ يتهجا قالوا بتخلفه بالسراط

Shāfu ish-shōikh bithajja qālu bitkhattam 'assirāt.

"They saw the sheikh spelling (his words) they said, 'He is treading on the Path.' " (1)

9. ما دام النصراني صائم ما دام الشتاء قائم

Mā dām Innasrāni ṣāyem mā dām ishshita qāyem.

"As long as the Christian is fasting, (2) the winter is still going on. "

10. كبير المسلمين شور وكبير النصارى مسخرة

IKbīr īlmuslimīn shōrah wu kbīr Innasāra maskhara.

"The Muslim elder is a counsellor and the Christian elder is a ridicule (laughing-stock).

11. مثل أباريق الجامع كلهم مشققة

Mithil abāriq il-jāmi' kulhuma mshaqqamīn.

"Like the mosque's pitchers they are all with broken parts."

(1) A thread joining the Eastern part of the wall of Jerusalem with the Mount of Olives according to Islamic tradition.

(2) Easter Lent.

12. People who undertake to do something unwillingly are glad to be relieved of such an undertaking, like the reluctant worshipper who finds the mosque door closed.

طـيـح الـلـي أـجـت مـنـك و مـن مـنـي يا جـامـع الـلـه
Mīḥ illi ajat minnak wa mīsh minni ya jāmi' Allah.

"It's good that it's your fault and not mine, O Mosque of God."

13. It is a common belief that a bowl full of water is ritually clean. Hence a man having bathed in the sea need not perform his religious ablutions before prayer. It is applied to the simple-hearted people who do not keep a grudge and never wish for evil for anyone.

الـمـلـي مـلـو الطـائـسـه ما فـيـهـا شـنـجـاسـه
Il mali milu ittāseh mafihāsh najāseh.

"The water which fills the bowl is not impure."

14. An impoverished person brings forth this comparison:-

نـم أـهـل الكـهـف لا فـرـشـهـم و لا لـحـافـهـم
Nōm ahl il kahf lā farshih wala lhāf.

"The sleep of the people of the cave without a mattress or a quilt. (1)

(1) Qur'an XVIII , 24

15. In 1925 the heavy rains destroyed Bethlehem vineyards. A Bethlehemite said to a^o Hebronite, "This year we shall share your grapes together." The Hebronite answered:-

الله والنبي يحييك ان طبخنا بنظمك

Allah winnabi yihayyik lan ṭabakhna bintā'mik.

"God and the Prophet greet you, if we cook we shall feed you," that is "If we live and our vineyards are saved, we shall take care of you." (1)

16. When a Muslim drinks spirits, or the Christian learns grammar, or the Jew goes on pilgrimage, then the result is disastrous.

أمر بالله من ثلاثة : المسلم لن شرب والنصراني لن تتقن واليهودي لن حج

'A'ūdhu billāhi min thalāthih : ilmislim lan shirib,
winnuṣṣrāni lan tnaḥḥa, wilyahūdi lan haj.

"I seek protection in God from three : the Muslim when he drinks, the Christian when he learns grammar, and the Jew when he goes on pilgrimage."

17. The following are supposed to be basic characteristics of Jews, Christians and Muslims.

اليهودي يحفظ والمسيحي يتقن والمسلم بآمين

Il Yahūdi biḥfaḥ wil Masīḥī biyaqqin wilmislim bi'Āmin.

"The Jew is secretive, the Christian credulous and the Muslim a believer."

(1) Quoted by the Rev. Sa'id 'Abbūd Ashqar, op.cit. p. 21.

10. Pride is such a hideous thing.

لا تكبر الله اكبر : لا تكبر Allah akbar

"Do not feel mighty, God is mightier."

19. Beit Jala was up till the end of the British Mandate over Palestine (May 1948) one of the very few Christian towns in Palestine. There is a strong belief common in Beit Jala that any Muslim who buys any property there, will die within three days of his purchase.

مـرء ما طلـع من بيت جـالا مـؤذن

'Umru ma tili' min Beit Jala mwadh^hdhin.

"Never has a muezzin come out from Beit Jala."

20. If one has nothing good to say about others he had better not say anything. When a Muslim dies the Sheikh asks those present, before the burial, what they thought of the deceased. Normally people say, "We do not testify except that he was good." Once an evil woman who was hated by her folk died. When the Sheikh enquired about her, none answered. One present said, "Irdim ya 'Id," that is, "Start burying her." So when a wicked man's name is mentioned in a meeting, one may repeat the following words:

Irdim ya 'Id : اردم يا عيد

"Close up (the grave), O 'Id. " (1)

(1) See Chapter Six, page 411

21. The sanctity and awe inspired by religious endowments is great and so is the fear of abusing their yield. We have seen many examples in Chapter One about divine retribution directly ensuing from acts of sacriligious robbing of sanctuaries and shrines. No wonder then that the following proverb has a very wide circulation :

Māl il-waqf bihiddis-saqf : مال الوقف يهدئ السقف

"The (abuse of the) property of religious endowments demolishes the ceiling.

M I S C E L L A N E O U S

1. One does not cause himself a disfavour. A Christian woman married a Muslim, and her husband gave her liberty to remain Christian. When she was once asked whether her husband would allow her to baptize her children so as to become Christian she answered with the following words which have become a proverb:

Il arđ ma btākul thamarha : الأرض ما بتاكل ثمرها

"The earth does not eat its own fruits." (1)

2. The following three proverbs might have originated from the unfair treatment that tourists sometimes received at the hands of some of the local population of the Holy places, such as when purchasing souvenirs and devotional articles. The proverbs were then probably applied among the local people when some were disgusted with the treatment of others:

Arđ mqaddaseh wu ahālīha mballaseh: أرض مقدسة وأهلها ملأسة

"A holy land but Satanic inhabitants."

3. Arđ mqaddaseh wu ahālīha mnajjase: أرض مقدسة وأهلها منجسة

"A holy land but profane people."

4. Aqdas arđ anjas qōm : أقدس أرض أنجس قوم

"The holiest country, the profanest folk."

(1) Quoted by the Rev. Sa'īd 'Abbūd Ashqar, op. cit. p. 11.

CHAPTER THREE

I M P R E C A T I O N S A N D I N V O C A T I O N S

Curses and blessings have been used by all nations and from time immemorial. But perhaps the Semitic languages abound in them more than other languages. The influence of the Bible, itself a great source of invocations and imprecations, can hardly be overestimated. And though it is naturally difficult, or well-nigh impossible, to establish the extent to which the current tendency to invoke and imprecate is due to the Bible, yet, significantly, the Semitic nature of the Bible and the Arabs perhaps helps to account for it. Hence it is ^{not} surprising to find in Arabic the great diversity of situations in which curses and blessings are constantly employed up to the present time. After a hair-cut one is addressed by everyone present by "Na'imeh" (i.e. May you feel well) for which he has to reply "Allah yin'im 'alġik" (i.e. May God make you feel well) - possibly reminiscent of the primitive tools barbers used in olden times, that inflicted severe pain which those present wished to alleviate by using this wish.

Similarly when you have had your glass of water, the wish addressed to you is "hanġ'an" (i.e. may you feel pleased) for which the reply, "Allah yihannġikum bil-'āfġeh" (i.e. May God make you feel pleased with your health) is given.

The inherent character of the Arab may account for this outstanding characteristic in Arabic speech. He is basically more of a dreamer or worshipper than the Westerner, and certainly a far less competent business man or politician. The saying "il mara illi bitsammish btinkhitibsh" (the woman who does not invoke the name of God is not betrothed) is sometimes heard.

Besides, the Oriental's utter dependence on God, and his juvenile temperament also account for this. "If one keeps in mind the juvenile temperament of the Oriental and his habit of turning to God in all circumstances, as unreservedly as a child turns to his father, our judgement of the son of Palestine will be greatly tempered with mercy. Such outbursts have always served the Oriental as a safety valve. As a rule the Orientals quarrel much but fight little. And just as the Anglo-Saxon smiles at the wordy fights of the Orientals, the Oriental shudders at the swiftness of the Anglo-Saxon in using his pistol." (1) Thus the Oriental tends to use in his daily speech expressions indicating very wide extremes.

Though the present writer agrees with Dr. Can'an in saying that women make more use of curses - and I add of blessings - than men, because of their limited vocabulary

(1) A.M. Rihbani, The Syrian Christ, pp. 94, 95.

yet I seriously question Dr. Can'ān's statement, "inhabitants of cities make more use of imprecations than do peasants, and these more than the Bedouin." (1) Obviously imprecations and invocations generally indicate a more primitive mentality than that obtained in more civilized communities. And whereas the extent of application of imprecations and invocations varies according to the social and cultural standards of individuals and their ages, yet, I think it is safe to assume on the basis of my observation in the Bethlehem District under the present circumstances, that the bedouins come first in their frequent use of such terms, followed by peasants and lastly by city-dwellers - provided they belong to the same age-group. Can'ān makes no distinct reference to age-groups, a most important factor in deciding the degree of application and usages of the terms, which seem to be roughly directly proportional with age. In other words, the older the person the more apt one is to use them, the younger the less-again provided

(1) Can'ān, "The Curse in Palestinian Folklore," JPOS, Vol. XV, Nos. 3-4, p. 236, also quoted by Hilma Granqvist, Child Problems Among the Arabs, p. 251.

we take into consideration persons belonging to the same social and cultural backgrounds.

I - GENERAL CHARACTER AND NATURE:-

Invocations and imprecations are wishes expressed in words that some evil or good may befall a certain person. Here we shall be only dealing with such wishes as pertain to religion, or possess a religious significance. Thus insult and abuse or desire and wish involving one's honour and prestige are excluded unless they are associated with certain religious connections.

"A curse or blessing may be regarded now as a spirit, now as a thing, now as a word, but in each case it may be regarded as travelling along a material or psychical conductor, or as embodied in a material object, its energy then being potential ready to become kinetic when discharged." (1)

It is quite clear that it is not always possible to draw a hard and fast line between prayer on the one hand, and a blessing and curse on the other. A prayer may involve a request for the welfare and prosperity of oneself, friends

(1) A.E. Crawley : Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics ,
vol. 4 , p. 368.

and relatives; it may also involve an evil wish to the enemy. People appeal to God in their prayers in the same way as they appeal to Him when invoking a good or a bad wish. A thief when in the act of breaking through a house may invoke God's name to assist him in his attempt.

We may conceive of the force of a blessing or a curse, in the same way as scientists do when thinking of a force as a graphic straight line. To this conception there are attached social and religious connections. The Talmud warns against looking at the priest while he is pronouncing the blessing for "the Glory of God is on him." Similarly it is also considered an act of impiety to look at the priest while holding the Cup that contains the Holy Eucharist which is considered a source from which blessing can emanate, and that may respond to the invocations of the congregation. Thus it is seen how an elderly person places his hand on the head of the person intended to receive the blessing, so as to facilitate the transmission of the wish.

In both categories of invocations and imprecations a supernatural power is called upon to do some harm or good. We cannot do ~~supernatural power~~ that and thus we resort to a supernatural power to do it for us. The supernatural power may be good or evil. The good includes God, saints, prophets,

angels and welis and their power is invoked to perform some good or inflict some harm; whereas the evil powers such as the devil, Satan or 'Uzra'īl (colloquially 'Uzrēin or 'Uzrayīn) are called upon to inflict evil only. God is by far more called upon than any power for He is the All-powerful. Significantly both powers can be combined in one formula, "Allah yij'al 'Uzrēin yōkhdak," (May God let the devil take you away.)

II - FORMULAS AND GESTICULATIONS.

(a)- Formulas : The attempt of classifying the various formulas used in invocations and imprecations into coherent linguistic groups is not easy. A close examination of the largest possible collection of invocations and imprecations shows the futility of classification on a purely linguistic basis, if the basis is to be strictly logical or coherent. Thus it is easy to confuse in the study of the several patterns the "import" of formulas with their linguistic structure. (1)

A thorough investigation of the problem reveals that the formulas of invocations and imprecations may fall

(1) I am afraid Can'ān is not free from this fault in his endeavour to analyse the "Eternal Form" of the curse. JPOS, vol.XV, no. 3-4, p. 259.

phonetically into few distinct divisions. "Phonetically" in this respect does not merely refer to the accepted meaning of the term. But the term here refers to the "rhymed prose"-(saja'), which plays such a predominant role in the structure of the formulas, and which is of vital importance in not only facilitating their remembrance in their oral transfer from one generation to another, but in their more magic or impressive effect produced on hearers. The rhymed prose, too, figures most prominently in other forms of Arabic expression such as songs and proverbs. (1)

Thus it may be observed that the simplest formula contains no rhymed prose. But the compound formulas almost invariably contain rhymed prose. Consequently if we indicate the simple or plain formulas by the letter (s), and the rhymed prose formulas by the letters (rp), then we can obtain the following divisions of the formulas :-

- (a) s ; (b) s + s ; (c) s + rp + rp (with variations)
(d) rp + rp + s ; (e) rp + rp ; (f) rp + rp + rp .

Illustrations from both invocations and imprecations on the above divisions follow:-

- (a) (i) "Allah yumuqmak", (May God revenge against you).
(ii) "Allah yirda 'alĕik", (May God be pleased with you).

(1) See Chapters 2 and 4.

- (b) i- "Allah yij'alkum titkannusu bimukunseh khadra?"
(May God sweep you away with a green broom.)
- ii- "Ya Allah ta'tīna khēir han-hār wu tibid sharru 'anna."
(O God may You give us the good of this day and remove its evil from us.)
- (c) i- "Allah yiqta' ahlak min dūn in-nas('ala is-sās)."
(May God exterminate you from among the people (from your origin.)
- ii- "Allah yujburku jabbrit il azm il maksūr bijāh sayyidna il ghayūr." (May God relieve you in the same way that a broken bone is relieved when set, by the dignity of our zealous Lord.) (1)
- (d) i- "Yiqta' ahlak bilmarrāh bishafā'at is Sayyida il hurrah, wa bishafā'at il Khadr il akhdar."
(May God eradicate your family altogether by the dignity of the Chaste Lady and the Green Khadr.)
- ii- "Ya rabbi ṭṣalliḥ il awqāt bijāh il 'ali illi fissa-māwāt, illi ma ghifal wala binūm." (May God improve the times by the dignity of the Highest who is in the Heaven, who never forgets or sleeps.)
- (e) i- "Bijāh Fātmeḥ bint innabi, la yikhallif la bint wala sabi." (By the dignity of Fātmeḥ daughter of the Prophet, may he not beget wither a daughter or a son.)

(1) Here "Lord" refers to Muḥammad.

- ii- "Irrab la yi'wiznk lin-nās, bijāh il Adhra wa Mar Elias." (May God not make you in need of people, by the dignity of the Virgin Mary and Mar Elias.)
- (f)- i- "Allah yij'alik tuq'udi qa'idti, wa tōkli luqumti wa tishrabi shurubti." (May God make you sit in my place, and eat up my food and drink of my drink.)
- ii- "Irrab yib'id 'annak awlād il harām illi ma btighfal wa la bitnām la sē'it illēil wa la sē'it innhar." (May God remove the evil boys who never forget and and never sleep neither in the hours of the da night nor the hours of the day, from you.)

Slight and unimportant variations to these divisions do not, however, alter ~~from~~ the fact that they can be said to apply to the greatest majority of the formulas in use. But we should always keep in mind the great affinity between an imprecation and invocation, as an imprecation may be changed into an invocation and vice versa by using the negation of the respective formula.

b- Gesticulations : It is customary for a person to lift his hands and eyes towards heaven when giving utterance to an emphatic invocation or imprecation. Uncovering a woman's head (or in extreme cases her breasts) or beating the heart is normally resorted to when uttering an imprecation, which is considered as a sign of complete surrender to the will

of God. A woman goes up to the roof of the house at night to invoke or imprecate God and the Angels, in which position she thinks she will be nearer to them. When giving vent to one's utter disdain to a person, one often accompanies his imprecation by either spitting on the ground or at a person, especially in his face or head, or saying "Tfū" , or "Tfū 'alēih" which is milder than spitting.

The present writer has seen a Ta'mariyya woman pointing to her right and left breasts and repeating, "Allah aṭlub min bizzi il-yamīn wa aṭlub min rab-il-'ālamīn, wa aṭlub min bizzi il-yasār wa rabnā il jabbār," (O Allah, I seek from my right breast and seek from the Lord of the Universe, and seek the left breast and from our All-Powerful God....)

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3. SUPPOSED EFFICACY OF INVOCATIONS AND IMPRECATIONS.

The degree of emotional vehemence involved in the actual utterance of the wish is of supreme importance. In the Bethlehem District there is a strong belief that the more vehemently a wish is uttered, the more effectual it will be, particularly from the lips of old people, dying men, the oppressed, the poor, young children (1), widows, the more saintly, orphans and the blind. Indeed in Muslim communities, where there is a well's shrine, the young children are buried closest to the shrine.

Naturally the form of the imprecation or invocation is all important, and if a wish is casually uttered, it loses a great deal of its efficacy, though still it remains potent. Westermarck observes, this "purely magical power, independent of any superhuman will ... is rooted in the close association between the wish, more particularly the spoken wish, and the idea of its fulfilment. The wish is looked upon in the light of energy which may be transformed by material contact, or by the eye, or by means of speech to the person concerned, and then becomes a fact." (2)

(1) See John Finemore, The Holy Land , p. 25.

(2) E. Westermarck, Origin and Development of the Moral Ideas, 1906, 11 , p. 879.

The efficacy of the wish is greatly enhanced by means of physical contact. Thus the medium of "transmission" is rendered more powerful when it takes the form of personal touching, and when that is impossible the form of a wax image. Thus "the efficacy of a wish or a curse depends not only upon the potency which it possesses from the beginning, owing to certain qualities in the person from whom it originates, but also on the vehicle by which it is conducted - just as the strength of an electric shock depends both on the original intensity of the current and on the condition of the conductor. As particularly efficient conductors are regarded blood, bodily contact, food and drink." (1)

The effect of the wish may spread, and the curse has the power to taint everything which it contacts. Also imprecations and invocations are capable both of descent and ascent genealogically, "The just man that walketh in integrity, blessed are his children after him." (2)

Curses and good wishes of parents are believed to possess unusual efficacy. "Ya raḍa il-wāldēin" (Oh for the good will of parents) is very commonly heard, and one invokes it under

(1) Ibid, i, p. 590.

(2) Proverbs 20 : 7

trying circumstances. I have also heard "ya raḍa il-akhḥīn" (Oh for the good will of brothers), which is reminiscent of the well-known story. (1) In general the curse is greatly feared, "Wala dj-jabal ma biḥmil il-la'nah" (even a mountain cannot bear a curse).

The efficacy of an invocation may also be enhanced when uttered inside a church, a shrine or a mosque, or on roof tops at midnight. Muslims believe that ^{on} the midday of Friday (2) and the night of the 27th of Ramaḍān known as "lailat-ul-qadr" (the night of power or honour), ~~when~~ the heaven opens and the trees bow down. When we see this mystery and ask for a blessing, it will be granted, but the request must be uttered exactly at the right time which only lasts for a few seconds. To the Christians it is the night of Epiphany because heaven gates open, Sundays, feast days and the days of Lent when their invocations are most likely to secure a response. In Lebanon there is a belief that on the night of Epiphany all

(1) See Chapter 2 , p. 135.

(2) A Hadīth transmitted by Abu Hunainah is, "The best day in which the sun arose is Friday, for Adam was created in it, in it he was cast down, he repented and he died. On Friday Resurrection took place. There is an hour in this day in which no Muslim asks anything without being answered." See William Goldsach, "Selections from Mohammedan Tradition, p.60

trees kneel down(1) except the mulberry tree which is obstinate and the fig tree which was cursed by Christ. Christ passes by in the houses in invisible ways, and women shake their jars of provision so that Christ may bless them when passing. (2) It is also believed that at the birth when the navel cord is cut the gate of heaven stands open, and the time is most suitable for those women to express a wish. (3) The same can be said when a woman opens the lid of an oven or a "tābūn". (4)

The custom of sweeping a shrine when one is barefooted, a symbol of humiliation, as a means of doubling the effect of an invocation is also prevalent among Christians and Muslims alike. To enhance efficacy a woman may resort to sweeping the shrine until her own wide cloth (tarbī'a) that covers her head dress (shaṭwe), (5) which she never removes except when in bed, and which otherwise incurs criticism. But on such occasions it is taken to be a token of complete self-resignation and humiliation. At times in order to increase the efficacy

(1) See also Chapter Six , p. 373.

(2) See Amīn Fr̄īḥa, Ḥaḍāra fi Ṭarīq Izzawāl, (the Lebanese Village, A.U.B. Publications, Arabic, 1957) p. 262.

(3) Hilma Granqvist, Birth and Childhood Among the Arabs, p.94.

(4) A cone-like oven used by peasants built with clay where loaves are baked on pebbles.

(5) See Appendix B .

of an imprecation a woman creeps or walks to "Al-Khadr" Convent and sweeps the floor with her best clothes or with her "taqşire" (an embroidered woman's jacket). The expression "kannasat il Mahd (or) il Badriyya 'alġih" (1) (she swept the Church of the Nativity or il Badriyyah against him) is used. Such an act is very greatly feared as it can bring about terribly fateful consequences, and swearers do not resort to it except when very heavily oppressed.

The baring of a woman's breast is also resorted to as means of increasing the efficacy of a curse or a wish, "Wallah laṭlub min bizzi il yamġn wu laṭlub min rab il-'ġlamġn", (O God, I ask from my right breast and I ask from the Lord of the Universe) (2) that such and such a wish or a misfortune may take place. This practice is most interesting as the breast of a woman is considered a symbol of mercy and honour. She beseeches God to show mercy as she has often showed mercy in the many times she has suckled her children.

Repetition is one of the ways that increase the efficacy of an imprecation, not in the sense of repeating the

(1) A Muslim female Saint shrine in Beit Şafāfa to the North West of Bethlehem.

(2) Heard from a Ta'mariyya woman.

formula itself, but in the sense that the utterer of the curse curses the recipient a certain number of times such as three, seven or forty times saying, "Allah yil'anak sab' marrāt" (May God curse you seven times), (1) One of the commonest formulas is, "Allah yil'an abūk 'ala abu bayy abūk", (May God curse your father, and your father's father) , with the variation, "Allah yil'an abu abu abūk" , or "Allah yil'an abūk 'ala abu abu abūk", (May God curse your father's father's father.)

4. THE RECIPIENT.

The motives behind the widespread custom of cursing God deserve some investigation by the interested student. It is almost a by-word in the Arab East - and the Bethlehem District is no exception at all - to curse God on the slightest provocation. Though in great number of cases the utterer of the curse is not really aware of what he is saying, since he is very prone to use it as a verbal mannerism, yet there are cases in which the utterer is genuinely aware of what the curse means.

Possibly this seems to be a survival of an ancient Semitic custom which probably dates back to the times when

(1) Cursing five times is not common in the district. "Five" is quoted by Can'ān, op. cit., p.259.

every village and tribe had its own God. In those old ages of constant tribal warfare and village feuds, it was customary for tribesmen and villagers to curse the gods of other tribesmen and villagers or to invoke their own god or well's assistance. (1) Later, when the monotheistic religion brought the conception of the One God, survivals of the old custom still lingered. A slight verbal variation is, however, introduced to the word "God" (Dīn) by some who use (tīn) -(literally : fig)- instead and which perfectly rhymes with (Dīn). It is used as an alternative for the obvious direct cursing which, more often than not, is uttered most carelessly, and on the least provocation, but which is very repugnant to more pious adults.

Children are in particular the recipients of the blessings of parents. (2) On the other hand the imprecation is normally directed by the wronged or the oppressed against more powerful opponents, or against someone who has unjustly inflicted harm on others. There are many references in the

(1) The mosque at Abu Dīs, a village to the East of Jerusalem, was built by an immigrant from the village who had fallen sick while in America. He invoked the assistance of the well of his village and on recovering he built him the mosque.

(2) Cf. Genesis 9 : 26, 24 : 60 , 27 : 7-38.

Bible explicitly forbidding the cursing of God, parents, authorities and the helpless deaf. (1) A person draws to himself general execration by his evil deeds, "Allah yil'an illi bisib innās, qālu, Allah yil'an illi bikhalli innās tsibbuh" , (May God curse him who insults people ; but they said, may God curse him who lets people insult him) i.e. because of his malevolence.

Among the many boons brought about by blessings to the recipient are long life, good health, prosperity, many children and a good name. On the other hand curses bring about misfortunes, calamities and diseases. God's vengeance might strike quickly, "Allah mahūl, bōkhiḏh 'ala tūl" (God is wonderful, He takes very quickly).

If God withdraws His grace from a human being then that human being will be inflicted by "naḥs" (ill-luck). Thus some people who are cursed by God bear throughout their lifetime the stigma of heavenly retribution. Such people may even become a curse (la'neh) to others, a wrath (ghaḏab). Manifestations of this are shown in their deprivation of offspring, or their begetting daughters only, since by sons can the

(1) Cf. Exodus 22:28 , 21:17; Leviticus 20:9 , 19:14,
24:15 ; Ecclesiastes 10:20.

family be perpetuated; or the death of several members of the family within a short time, or in their exposure to bodily defects, such as complete blindness, paralysis, the loss of one eye, and baldness. "Laula Allah mush ghadbān 'alēih ma a.'māhush," (If God had not been angry with him, He would not have blinded him) ; "Laula Allah mush ghadbān 'alēih ma khallāsh il ghuraba yuwraḥūh," (If God had not been angry with him He would not have allowed his heritage to pass to strangers).

Indeed it is believed by some that blindness, complete or partial, is not inflicted unless God knows in advance what evil life that person was going to live. (1) Up to now the belief that was held among the ancient Hebrews (2) about the supposed debasement of the character of the blind still prevails. Up to now the one-eyed is spoken of as "a'war il bein" (the one-eyed from whom I wish to be apart). A Bethlehemite might indeed discontinue his journey if, on setting out in the morning, he chances to meet a one-eyed person, a circumstance which is considered ominous. It has already been seen in Chapter One how divine justice has petrified an entire human assembly. (3)

(1) Cf. St. John, 9, 1-2.

(2) Jewish Encyclopedia III, article on "Blindness".

(3) Page 46.

The blessing and the curse may also be directed against inanimate objects or abstractions, a clear proof of the primitive idea of mental objectification still prevalent. For food and water which has been boiling for a long time it is said, "Iqtaraq dīnha 'ala īmānha wa hī tighli" (Her religion as well as her faith has been burnt by boiling). (1)

A most frequent recipient of curses is, of course, Satan, whose name should not be mentioned without the automatic accompaniment of "La'nat Allah 'alaih" (May God's curse alight upon him) - usually in Muslim communities - , and "bism is-salīb il 'azīm" (In the name of the Great Cross) , in Christian communities.

Nevertheless the curse may rebound upon its utterer. This is specially the case when the curse is extremely unfair and undeserved such as when the recipient is an innocent child; or when the curse is directed against God, a Saint, or a heavenly power. Thus the utterer of a curse becomes its recipient; or the causeless curse will not be fulfilled (2) in particular when the curse is unfair. A Muslim tradition says that a curse

(1) See also Père A. Jaussen, Naplousse, pp. 138 ff.

(2) Cf. Proverbs 26 : 2

when uttered climbs up to heaven but it finds it closed, so it descends to earth which closes its doors; then it moves right and left, and if it does not find justifiable grounds, it returns to the one who originated it. (1) The Romans had a certain notion (2), still prevalent in the District, that certain imprecations were so powerful that the utterer suffered as well as the recipient. It is also believed that God "does not change any more human beings into animals, but his curse changes their character, feelings, and doings so they become like animals." (3) The apparent contradiction between this belief and general practice is that, "Allah yiskhatak," (May God change you into a lower being) is one of the most frequent curses heard.

Recipients of heavenly curses may be the entire population of a country, the good and the bad. It is strongly believed that natural calamities such as droughts, earthquakes and the outbreak of devastating epidemics are punishments for the sins of adults. When such calamities overwhelm the country we hear

(1) Kitāb-ul-Idhah icar al Muntakhab min Kalām Sayyid ul-Ahrar,
(Arabic) p. 197.

(2) Plutarch, Vita Crassi, p. 16.

(3) Can'tān, op. cit. p. 277.

the saying, "Malak il-mōt biyuhṣud", (The Angel of Death is reaping).

The recipient of a curse may be a distant or near relative of the sinner. God may or may not take revenge on the sinner himself. He might ^{take} revenge on his descendants to the seventh generation. Many occurrences indicate the truth of this phenomenon characterised by the saying, "Al-'Ābā' ya'kulūn al-ḥisrim wal awlād yadrusūn," (The fathers eat the sour grapes and their children's teeth are set on edge,) (1).

The following story explains the proverb: "Ahmad Khalīl, although he belongs to the Mashani clan, (2) has no sons living. The three who were born to his first wife, Hadba, of the Ta'āmare tribe, all died in infancy. Hoping to get sons, he took a second wife from the village. Her name was also Hadba, and her sons also died in infancy."

"The explanation is that Ahmad had to suffer for the wrong which his father had done to a woman; disliking his brother's widow, he was angry that she remained in the house and spread the rumour that she was with child. On account of this her brother killed her and then it was found that she was

(1) Cf. Ezekiel 18:2 and Jeremiah 31: 29-30.

(2) In Artās.

innocent. She was ill and had become swollen because of the growth. People think that Ahmad's sons were not allowed to live as a punishment for his father's crime.

"Also the brother who killed his innocent sister on account of false slander lost his sons by death and has no male descendants; the whole family has died out."

"A saying goes:

"The sin against a woman cuts off the descendants and the descendants of the descendants." (1)

Contrarily, when a man has performed a praiseworthy deed he is blessed with the formula, "May God multiply thee and thy descendants and the descendants of thy descendants." It is a grave error to assume here that the blessing is having descendants as Dr. Granqvist did. (2) The great number of children has always been looked at as a great blessing.

We have seen how the Virgin Mary cursed the Field of Peas (3) near Bethlehem, which was changed into stony piece

(1) Hilma Granqvist, Child Problems Among the Arabs, pp.71,72.

(2) Ibid., p. 149.

(3) Chapter One , p.49.

of ground. Thus it is seen that places can be cursed; they can be blessed too, animals and plants are cursed or blessed. The raven is cursed and thus it is black and hence considered ~~emi~~ominous; while the white pigeon is blessed. Similarly the fig tree was cursed by Jesus (1), whereas the olive tree, and the plant *Salvia Triloba*, Sage of Vertue, called in Arabic "Mira-miyyeh", after the Virgin, are blessed. (2) The olive tree together with the palm tree, are believed to be of the trees of Paradise. (3)

Lastly there is a most widespread tendency to curse as a means of expressing admiration or fondness or to keep away the effect of the evil eye. Thus when admiring the eloquence of a speaker it is said: "Yikhrīb bēituh ma afṣahuh," (May his house be ruined how eloquent he is, or, how clever he is.) A proud father may point to his child and tell his visitors, "Shūfū ma ahlāh, mal'ūn il wāldēin wala-shshāhdein," (Look how pretty it is, may his parents be cursed and not those present.)

(1) St. Mark XI, 14, 20 sq.

(2) Appendix A

(3) Can'an, "Plant-lore in Palestinian Superstition," JPOS Vol 8 pp. 153, 160.

The "Mukhtār", who is the social and political leader of a village or a tribal quarter, might be the recipient of many curses for one of two reasons; either for the gross corruption "mukhtārs" are generally notorious for, or because the "mukhtār" who is responsible for bearing the dignity of a tribal quarter, becomes the object of abuse by the conflicting interests in the same village or hostile villages. Priests and sheikhs similarly, are the objects of abuse.

5. WAYS OF PROTECTION AGAINST IMPRECATIONS.

The great fear of imprecations that people harbour naturally results in their inventing ways and means of neutralizing their force. Not only is the danger of imprecations feared, but equally, too, there prevails widespread apprehension from the dangers emanating from Jinn, Qarīne, (lit : Associate) the evil eye and unclean women. Qarīne is a female genie who is the enemy of women in general and pregnant women in particular, and her main speciality is to injure infants. (1)

The precautionary measures adopted to neutralize the effect of an imprecation or an evil wish include the utterance

(1) For more information about Qarīne, see ^{A.} Jausse, Naplousse. pp. 34 , 35. Can'ān , Dāmonen_glaube in Lande der Bibel , p. 43; Idem, The Child, p. 181, S.Hargrove, Mekka, II, pl23.

of certain formulas or counter imprecations, or the practising of certain rites, ceremonies and actions.

First the formulas. The most common formula in use is, "Mikfīna sharr-esh-shrār", (May God stop from us the evil of evil-doers) to which there is added a great multiplicity of variants. It is observed that Can'ān translates "yikfi" (protects) (1), but the present writer prefers "stops" as the root of the verb {kafa" has really nothing to do with "protect" or "protection", but means "to be satisfied", "to dispense with". So the real meaning of the invocation strictly signifies that we have had enough misfortune, so may God enable us to dispense with any more. The cause of the inaccuracy in the translation may have arisen from wrongly associating "Yikfīna" with "qīna" which means (protect us), from the root "Qī ق" (protect). (2) I am not, however, inclined to think that the common people have in mind "Qina قِنا", when using "Yikfīna" for the simple reason that "Qī" is classical and not colloquial.

A conspicuous omission from both Can'ān and Granqvist's works on this particular subject is the wish "fālha 'alāiha," (May her bad omen return to her). Now this affords an interesting case for the research-worker, as the dictionary meaning

(1) JPOS Vol. XV nos. 3-4, "The Curse in Palestinian Folklore",

p. 273.

(2) Or perhaps: help us against.

of the term "fāl" (good omen) is the exact opposite of its meaning as used by the masses, who commonly use the expressions "la tfawwilsh 'alēih," (Do not predict a bad omen to befall him.)

Protective formulas include such expressions as "b'īd 'ankum" (May it - i.e. - the imprecation - be far from you) , and "b'īd 'an is-sēm'in," (May it be far from hearers) ; also "b'īd ish-sharr," (May evil be far from you). When someone utters such an expression his hearer is believed to gain immunity, as an imprecation may attack him although he may not actually be the object intended. Thus when such protective formulas are uttered the force of an imprecation previously represented as a graphic straight line is thought to by-pass the hearer, and to go straight to the intended recipient without harming any of the hearers.

Similar to this protecting wall which is thus created is the immunity by which a person is fortified when the expression "Ḥadd Allah bēina wu bēinkum," (God's boundary between us and them), it is also used for expressing disgust and repugnance towards the disgraceful deeds of others rather than as Can'En seems to think. (1) Thus the verbal wish becomes a

(1) JPOS , op. cit. p. 277-8.

physical barrier which renders the bearer inaccessible to the force of others.

On hearing a particularly strong imprecation one commonly repeats, "Allah yustur" or "Allah yihmīna" (May God protect us). The formula "Allah yikfīna sharrha," (May God prevent its evil from coming to us) is used in two different kinds of situations : for driving away the force of an imprecation or driving away the evil of an evil woman or "sharruh" of an evil man, or when thanking someone for having lighted one's cigarette. In the latter connection "its evil" refers to fire in general and in particular to hell-fire.

One of the most effective means by which disputants or belligerents are quietened, and by which the heat of a controversy that threatens to spark off a quarrel is cooled, is to mention the formulas, "Ṣalli 'annabi," (Bless the Prophet), or "Ṣalli 'al Adhra," (Bless the Virgin), "Ṣalli 'al Khadr," (Bless St. George). It is to be noted that the last two are used by Muslims and Christians alike. (1)

(1) It is worth mentioning that many Muslims especially those of the Fawaghre Quarter in Bethlehem, and in Artās venerate the Virgin and fast during the Virgin's Lent (13th-28th August).

The most efficacious protective expression remains of course the formula used by Christians and Muslims alike, "Ḥa-waṭṭak ballah" (I surround you by Allah), twisted by the most hopelessly illiterate into "ḥabattak ballah"; "Iam-allah 'alīk" (May God's name be on you).

A pretty child should never be openly admired without the formula, "ḥawaṭṭak balla" to exercise a protective influence over the child. The Rev. G. Robinson Lees (1) mentions the rite of women's collecting dust from the four corners of a room into a shovel after placing the child on the floor, and throwing the dust in the fire exclaiming "Fie on thee, evil eye" if the invocation "ḥawattak balla" has not been uttered when admiring the child. I have not, however, heard of this rite in the Bethlehem District. Though it is still most persistently believed that the omission or the neglect of the invocation will bring about most pernicious consequences. Indeed visitors sometimes prefer to pour abuse on the pretty child and to express their dissatisfaction with his looks deliberately so as not to invite the evil eye. They commonly address it by "Tfū 'aleik, ya khanzīr" (I spit on you, O pig) and: "Dkhs 'aleik ya ḥmār" (Fie on you, O ass). In Egypt there is the custom of dressing the male child in skirts

(1) Village Life in Palestine , p. 214 , 1905.

putting up his hair so that he may be mistaken for a girl and thus avoiding the evil eye to which boys are more exposed since they are more cherished than girls).

Typical Christian protective formulas used when something utterly abhorrent is mentioned such as a terribly bad disease as cancer or diphteria, (1) or a terrible misfortune are: "Ism-iş-şalib şawalşh" (May the name of the Cross be around him) or " Bism-iş-şalib il ađm," (In the name of the Great Cross) normally repeated three times ; as well as "Hawađđak bil kEs wil quddEs, wil 'Adra wa Mar Elias yakafu 'alŞik şurrEs" (I surround you with the Cup (2) and the Mass; and may the Virgin and St. Elias stand guarding you.)

So much for the verbal formulas. Let us now examine the physical precautionary measures.

The custom of censuring (tabkħir - from bakhħir : incense) remains fairly widespread. "Smek Censing" is usually resorted to as a means of dispelling the effect of the "Evil eye" , which is supposed to be the consequence of malicious envy. It

(1) Known to the common people as "Abu khanūq"(The evil spirit, that which strangles).

(2) Of the Holy Eucharist.

is also resorted to as a means of neutralizing the effect of an imprecation on a listener though he may not have been originally intended by it. The person struck by the evil eye falls sick and may die if combative measures are ignored. It is firmly believed that no less than two thirds of the dead, "those under the earth" have passed away because of the sinister effect of the "Evil eye". (1)

The traditional way of combating the evil eye is this: a pious elderly woman holds a handful of salt in her hand which she moves in a circular anti-clockwise movement round the head of the patient reaching down to his breast, muttering a long series of prayers. This ^{is} generally accompanied by placing a piece of alum together with some incense in a coal fire, which in turn is placed in a clay brazier called "känün". The indications that prove the patient to be under the effect of the evil eye are the continual yawning of the praying woman, and the alum taking the shape of the head of the malicious evil-wisher, a situation which gives rise to several conjectures as to whom he or she is. The salt must not be thrown away; it is usually melted in water and disposed of by sprinkling it over a clean place.

It is worth mentioning that Muslims and Christians practise the censuring rite, using very much the same procedure,

(1) Also see Can'En, Aberglaube p. 56 ff.

except that the Muslims use Qur'anic texts and Muhammadan terminology. They also differ from Christians by burning a black cloth and letting the patient inhale from it, and then turning the burnt cloth round his head, possibly to drive away the evil spirit. The most frequently repeated Islamic text is the Chapter of the Daybreak, "In the name of the Merciful and Compassionate God. Say, I seek refuge in the Lord of the daybreak, from the evil of the night when it cometh on; and from the evil of the envious blowers upon knots (1) and from the evil of the envious when he envies."

One of the most frequently used Muslim "censing" formulas in the District is this:-

اللهم صلي على سيدنا محمد يا ذاكر الله ، يا ذاكر الله ، يا ذاكر الله ،
• اللهم صل على سيدنا محمد (٣ مرات) • بين الحسود فيها عود وحياة رب المعبود .
• نار وارود في بين الحسود يا الهي يا معبود • بين الجارة فيها نارة (٣ مرات) •
• بين الخشت فيها بشت • اللهم صل على سيدنا محمد وبارك عليه • انك سميع

(1) Also Witches who make knots in string and blow upon them uttering at the same time some magical formula and the name of the persons they wish to injure. See E.H. Palmer's translation of the Qur'ân, pp. 537 - 538.

Allāhumma ṣalli 'ala sayyidna Muḥammad, ya dhikr
Allah (3times), allāhumma ṣalli 'ala sayyidna Muḥammad (3 times)
'Ēin il ḥasūd fīha 'ūd wiḥyāt rab-bil-ma'būd. Nār wu bārūd fi
'Ēin il ḥasūd ya ilāhi ya ma'būd. 'Ēin il jārah fīha nara (3
times) . 'Ēin il khusht fīha busht (1). Allāhumma ṣalli 'ala
sayyidna Muḥammad wu bārik 'alēih, innaka samī' mujīb.

O God, many peace and prayer be upon our Lord Muḥammad.
O I mention the name of God (3 times). O God, may peace and
prayer be upon our Lord Muḥammad (3 times). May a stick enter
the eye of the envious by the life of the worshipped ~~and~~ Lord.
May fire and gunpowder enter the eye of the envious, O my God,
O worshipped, May the (female) neighbour's eye have fire (three
times). May the eye of the envious have a stick (1). O God ,
may God's prayer be upon our Lord Muḥammad and bless him; you
are the Listener the Complier.

(1) Not known in dictionaries in this sense.

The following formula is known in Artās:-

"May God be around thee
in the first place with God
and in the second place with God
and the men of God
from my eye and the eye of the God-created
and from him who does not pray to the Prophet of God
and those who pray to the Prophet of God.

In the eye of the neighbour there is a fire,
in the eye of the guest there is a sword,
in the eye of the man there is a stone.

In the eye of the maiden there is a spike,
in the eye of the woman there is a burning coal,
in the eye of the woman neighbour is something bitter.

In the eye of the child there is a peg.
In the eye of the jealous one there is a stick.

The eye has disappeared and runs swiftly in the darkness of the
night,

The Lord Solomon, son of David, came
and found the black eye in the dark night.
he said to it: "Whither goest thou, Oh eye ?

It replied:-

I will take the young men
and put them in the grave.

I will take the camel from its burden,
I will take the baby from its bed.

He said:-

Turn back, Oh eye.

And divide thyself into two parts.

I will put thee in a copper box
and throw thee into the sea,
for fear that thou wilt hurt the children.

And mayest thou be kept and have health.

I was further told: "This is an amulet."

This formula of incensation is quite clearly uttered against the evil eye. King Solomon's name appears in many legends which still live on the lips of the people. He, the great and wise King, had also power to nullify the evil eye.

When in bathing a baby they pour water over it, they say:-

Mayest thou be protected.

In the name of God, the Beneficent, the Merciful.

May he who is distant not come to us

And those who are near not harm us." (1)

Salt is thrown on wedding processions to blind the eyes of evil-wishers or the malicious. A wedding procession must not return along the same way by which it is set out, nor should the circumcision procession do so either. It was feared in those days, when the bride, or boy used to ride on animals, that either the animal might die or get caught in something. (2) The return of the bride by the same route is a bad omen, and it is believed that misfortune will follow the couple. In the rural districts it is believed that neither bride nor bridegroom may cross a stream for seven days after their wedding, as this would be most unlucky and may prevent them from having children. It is significant that one of the Arabic terms for

(1) H. Granqvist, Child Problems Among the Arabs, p. 106.

(2) See H. Granqvist, Marriage Conditions in a Palestinian Village, vol. II, p. 91 ; and Birth and Childhood Among the Arabs, p. 199.

crossing a stream is the same as cutting it, e.g. "qata'a". (1)
In the case of ^ocircumcision procession, a fork or pitchfork is hoisted aloft, on which a woman's clothes, a bridal dress are hung to turn away the evil eye from the child, the idea being that such a dress conspicuously displayed will divert any intended evil. (2)

Charms, amulets, gospels, the Qur'ān, the story of the Virgin Mary, St. Cyprianus Gospel (3), icons, crosses and other protective means are carried by people. Persons who carry them are not affected when imprecations are uttered. A. Forder seems to think that most of the charms are worn by Muslims and not by Christians (4). But Forder was speaking of Orientals in general terms, and his observation does not apply to the population of the Bethlehem District.

The favourite charm is a blue bead, which is not only used on the trappings of animals, but is also hung on cars and new buildings for the same purpose. It is interesting to

C.
(1) See ^{C.}Wilson, Peasant Life in the Holy Land, p. 114. See also Westermarck, Marriage Ceremonies in Morocco, p. 326.

(2) H. Granqvist, *op. cit.*, p. 199.

(3) See Chapter One, p. 44.

(4) A. Forder, Daily Life in Palestine, p. 64.

see how sometimes the bead is made in the shape of an eye and hung on buildings, presumably acting as safety valves (similar to lightning conductors on high buildings) to divert malicious wishes. In rural district a blue bead is worn on a child's head, or is fastened around its neck by a string. It may even be placed in a man's turban or hidden in a woman's veil or stitched into a pack-saddle to preserve the animal from harm by diverting an onlooker's evil eye. "These blue beads are intended for a rough representative of the eye which causes the mischief and are blue because blue eyes are believed to have a specially evil influence, and their owners are generally dreaded." (1)

The presentation of votive offerings such as livestock, oil, candles and incense at holy shrines helps in cancelling the effect of imprecations, and is in common practice among Muslims and Christians alike. It is interesting to notice how some Muslims take to baptizing their offspring to ward off an anathema or an imprecation (although they are not anointed by the holy oil (Meirūn)). A Muslim woman who has continuously lost her children, or a barren woman, may vow to baptize her children if she gets any. Baptism is thus believed to be the means of combating any prior imprecation, curse of God, or

(1) John Finmore, The Holy Land , p. 61.

her active qarīneh. Some Muslims indeed give their offspring under certain circumstances Christian names, hoping that the patrons of those names will guard the life of their children.

But Muslims do not dress their children in sheikhs' dresses as a blessing or a vow as is the case with Christians who vow to dress their children in the robes of priests, Catholic or Greek Orthodox, for a certain time. Christians, too, vow to dress up their children's hair for a certain time, normally for six months or a year or even two years. They ~~they~~ take them to a sanctuary where their hair is cut and weighed against silver or gold which is offered to the sanctuary. Other precautionary measures include the interesting custom common to Muslims and Christians alike which is the begging of a child's clothes from neighbours, relatives or even complete strangers for a certain period of time. Thus all the child's clothing in that time is not bought but begged.

When a woman hears or reports a scandal of which she is sceptical, and she is unwilling to commit herself to believe in its authenticity, it is customary for her to hold the hems of her dress above her breast and shake them a few times, simultaneously repeating the formula, "Khōf Allah" (Oh for the fear of God), meaning, "I cannot guarantee the truth of the story, nor do I consider myself responsible for it." This is

especially the case when the honour of a woman is in question. This practice is resorted to in order to avoid the revenge that necessarily must follow slanderers if the story is untrue. Men also follow this practice but on a lesser scale than women.

And finally, covering one's head, and particularly children's heads, by one's " 'abāyeh" (outer loose Oriental cloak), or any other garments, is resorted to as a means of fortifying oneself against imprecations, if uttered within the hearing of someone, who may not be involved in it directly or indirectly.

6. IMPORT OF INVOCATIONS AND IMPRECATIONS.

The ambitious collector of invocations and imprecations soon finds it impracticable to collect all the invocations and imprecations in common usage. The reason is not found only in the immense multiplicity of situations to which they are applicable, but in the constant new coinages, especially by those gifted with a vivid imagination and glib tongue, that frequently come into circulation year by year. In the same way the established formulas undergo various verbal alterations in the course of time though the original meaning remains the same.

Accordingly it can be seen how such imprecations as, "Inshāllah MĀlta tōkhdak" (May it please God Malta should take you) , are now losing popularity because of the facility of world communications. Malta meant to the unenlightened of a few generations ago, a remote, barren, uninhabited and unpleasant place. Now "Al-Marriḳh" (Mars) is increasingly used instead of Malta. Conversely , such imprecations as, "Inshāllah balmoniye (used to be called bunta) tōkhdak," (May it please God that pulmonary disease take you away) i.e. cause your death , were unheard of in the not very distant past, but are now widespread. An interesting example on the comparatively new coinages is , "Inshāllah bitrabbu fī Schnēnner", (May God please that they -your children- should be brought up in Schneller's School), "Schnenner" being a corruption of Schneller the founder of the German Orphanage in Jerusalem. (1)

With this in mind, the writer has collected a fairly large representative number of invocations and imprecations in most common use, not placed in any special order, and has chosen the following:-

Note their rhythmic form.

(1) Can'ān has heard this imprecation in Ramallah a long time ago, though Ramallah contains no Schneller Orphanage. See JPOS vol. XV, nos. 3-4. p. 250.

I N V O C A T I O N S

1. Allah yirda 'alēik, wir-rabb yihinn 'alēik, wu yiyassir
ir-rizq bēin-idēik,

"May God be pleased with you, take pity on you, and put
sustenance before you."

2. Ir-rabb yib'id 'annak iḡ-ḡālmīn wu yiftaḥ lak il abwēb
il-'āḡsieh wu yihannin il qlūb il-qasieh,

"May God remove the oppressors from you, and open for you
the obstinate doors, and make tender the cruel hearts."

3. Allah yiftaḥ lak fi ḡul dīq ḡarīq bishafa'at Mar Yūḡanna
Iḡ-ḡiddīq,

"May God open to you every narrow path, by the mediation
of the true St. John."

4. Allah yinshlak min kul shiddeh wu min kul dīq.

"May God deliver you (lit. pluck or snatch) from every
difficulty and every distress."

5. Ir-rabb yib'id 'annak wlūd il ḡarām illi ma btighfal wu la
bitnām la sē'it illēil wala sē'it inhār,

"May God remove from you the sons of evil(1) who are never
inattentive or off their guard neither by night nor by day."

6. Allah yisahhil ḡarīqak wu yikaththir ḡadiqak,

"May God facilitate your path and increase your friends."

(1) Lit. "illegal sons", who through lack of proper care in
their upbringing tend to turn out wildly.

7. Irrabb ya'tīk min 'aṭṭh wu yirdīk min raḍāh.
"May God give you from His bounty and satisfy you with His satisfaction."
8. Irrab yikaththir dhirrītak wu dhirriyat dhirrītak.
"May God increase your descendants and the descendants of your descendants."
9. Allah yiyassir lak bint il-ḥalāl illi ti'rif qīmat irrjāl.
"May God make it easy for you to find a decent wife (1) who will know the value of men."
10. Allah yinishlak min ish-shiddāt bijāh il 'Alī fi-s-samāwāt.
"May God deliver you from difficulties by the dignity of the Highest who is in the heavens."
11. Irrab la yi'iwzak linnās bijāh il 'Adhra wu Mar Elias.
"May God not render you needy to people, by the dignity of the Virgin and St. Elias."
12. Inshallah ma t'ūz ghēir is-Sayyid il Masīḥ illi fi-samāh tqīm bishafā'at irrab il azīm.
"May God wish that you will be in need of no one except the Lord Christ, in whose heaven may you abide by the mediation of the Great Lord."
13. Allah yi'ammir dārak(or bēitak) wu yikaththir rijālak wu yizīd mālak.
-

(1) Lit. "A legal daughter".

"May God build up your house (by giving you at least a male child,) (1), increase your men and add to your wealth."

14. Allah yib'id 'annak kul siyyah bishafā'at Il-Badriyyeh.
"May God remove from you every evil deed that may be brought upon you by the mediation of the men of Il-Badriyyeh."

15. Allah yirda 'alāik wu yirizqak birizq il ḥalāl.
"May God be satisfied with you and render you lawful sustenance."

16. Allah yiftahha biwijnak wu yikfīk shar-ish-shrār wu sharr ulād il-ḥarām.
"May God facilitate your finding work, and remove from you the evil doers, and the evil of the sons of evil."

17. Allah yikaththir māлку u'yālku wu yikaththir minku.
"May God increase your wealth and your families and increase your descendants."

18. Allah yijburku jabrat il 'azm il maksūr bijāh sayyidna il ghayūr.
"May God relieve you in the same way that a broken bone is relieved when set, by the dignity of the zealous Lord."

(1) Karl Jager, in Das Bauernhaus in Palestina, Göttingen, 1912, pp. 48, 49, 53, is wrong in assuming that "yi'ammir bēitak" refers to the well-being of the stone-house.

19. Allah yirda 'alēiku ya ulēidāti bi'adad raml il-baḥar wu
bi'adad waraq ish-shajar.

"May God be satisfied with you O my small sons as many
times as the number of the sand of the sea, and the
number of the leaves of trees." (1)

20. Allah yirda 'alēiku, biriḡāh yufrushku wu yighaṭṭiku wēin
ma ruḡtu wu wēin ma jītu.

"May God be satisfied with you, and with His satisfaction
prepare your mattress and cover you, wherever you go and
come."

21. Allah yirda 'alēiku^{wu} yi'mi iḡ-ḡālmīn 'anku^{wu} yiftahha
biwijihku wēin ma ruḡtu wu wēin ma jītu.

"May God be satisfied with you, and blind the oppressors
from you, and facilitate your finding wherever you go
and come."

22. Ya Allah ta'tīna khēir han-nḥār wu tib'id sharruh 'anna.
"O God (please) grant us the good of this day and remove
its evil from us."

23. Ya rabb la tikshifilna rās wu la tishmit fīna nās bishaff-
'at il 'Adhra wu Mar Elias.

"O God do not disgrace us, and do not let the enemy

(1) Notice the Semitic character of exaggeration in speech
found in this invocation. Cf. Genesis, 22, 17 "That in blessing
I will bless thee, and in multiplying, I will multiply thy
seed as the stars of heaven, and the sand which is upon
the sea shore.." Also Genesis 32 : 12.

(lit. people) rejoice at our misfortune (lit. at us) by the mediation of the Virgin and St. Elias."

24. Ya Allah ta'ṭīna min 'aṣṭāk wu tirdīna min radāk.
"O God provide us (sustenance) from your sustenance and be satisfied with us from your satisfaction."
25. Ya Rabb it-jallilna biḥimāt sitrak wu tusturna bisitr janāḥik.
"O God shelter us by the protection of your tent, and hide us by the shelter of your wings."
26. Ya Rabb qaṣadnāk tinshilna min ish-shiddāt wu min id-diqāt.
"O God we have repaired to you to deliver us from difficulties and from distresses."
27. Ya Rabb ṭṣallih il-awqāt bijēh il-'Alī fis-samāwāt.
"O God improve the times by the dignity of the Highest in the Heavens."
28. Ya Rabbi tiftah ~~id-drūb~~ id-drūb wu ṭfik il-hrūb.
"O God ease the ways and solve (the problem of) wars."
29. Allah yiṭawwil 'umarak.
"May God prolong your life."
30. Allah yustur 'alṣiki.
"May God protect you." (used for women) (1).

(1) A woman is "protected" when she is married. If she is not, then she is exposed to many dangers. Thus "satara" has come to mean colloquially "marry"; and also means "shelter from dishonour."

31. Allah la yirāḱ fi shiddeh.

"May God not throw you into difficulty."

32. Allah yaqaf ma'āk. (1)

"May God stand with you, (support you.)"

33. Allah yirḡam wāḡdeik.

"May God have mercy on your parents."

34. Allah yiftahha fi wijhak.

"May God facilitate your finding work."

35. Allah yikfīḱ sharr|ulād il-ḡarām.

"May God remove from you the evil of the sons of evil."

36. Allah yikhallīlak ulēmāk (ikhwitak).

"May God keep your sons for you, (or your brothers.)"

37. Allah la yijawwi'lak kabid wala yi'arrīlak jasad.

"May God not starve your liver and not bare your body."

38. Inshallah btīḡhri wa btīmri. (2)

"May God wish that you will become rich and beget children."

39. Allah yit'amak iḡ-subyān.

"May God grant (3) you children."

(1) A variation is , "Allah yikūn ma'āk;" (May God be with you.)

(2) A variation is, "Matraḡ ma yisri yimri" (Wherever it - the food - runs may it render healthy.)

(3) Lit. "feed you with."

40. 'Amār inshāllah.
"May God wish that (your house) will always have children."
(1)
41. Allah la yizighrak.
"May God not belittle you."
42. Allah yujubrak.
"May God relieve you (in the same way that a broken bone is relieved when set)."
43. Allah yikfīk 'athrāt iz-zamān.
"May God save you from the vicissitudes of time."
44. Allah yisahhil umūrak.
"May God facilitate for you your affairs."
45. Allah yirizqak birizq hal-'iyāl.
"May God provide you with the livelihood of those families (indicating near relatives)."
46. Ya rēit dārək khadra bijāh Miryam il-'Adhra.
"May your way be green (2) by the dignity of Mary the Virgin."
47. Inshāllah bitshūf 'ala qdūmha il-khēir.
"May God wish you will encounter good luck in her (i.e. bride's coming)."

(1) Said by visitors after drinking coffee.

(2) Green is a lucky colour; if good luck accompanies the husband in his marriage, then it is said that "his bride's leg is green." "Ijirha" colloquially for "rijl" khadra.

48. Allah yi'awidd 'alġik.
"May God compensate you." (1)
49. Inshallah bitrabba fi 'izzak (or fi ħayġtak).
"May God wish that he (the son) will be brought up in your prosperity" (or in your lifetime).
50. Inshallah walad lalħayġh.
"May God wish that he will be a life-long boy."
51. Inshallah fi fariġtak.
"May God wish that (this will be done) at your wedding." (2)
52. Allah yisġmhu fi ta'abna.
"May God pardon him for our toil."
53. Allah yisabħil 'alġik wu rada il-wġldein yikun 'alġik.
"May God facilitate (your affairs) and may the parents' satisfaction be on you." (3)
54. Sayyidna Yasu' il-Masġh yġfġu hu wi'yġlu sabġh wu masa.
"May Our Lord Jesus Christ preserve him, he and his families, morning and evening." (4)

(1) Said by the seller on selling something to the buyer, i.e. compensate you for your money; also used on the death of a child.

(2) Lit. "your rejoicing", one of the commonest invocations.

(3) Parents' satisfaction is considered of vital importance in rendering one prosperous.

(4) Used in the plural - an indication of the large number in a family.

55. Inshāllah yiruddak (la-waṭanak) sālīm ghānim.
"May God return you (to your country) safe and prosperous."
56. Allah yirajji' ghiyyābak.
"May God return your absent ones."
57. Biḥaqq sayyidna Yasū' il-Masīh, kul ma bada il quddās warta-
fa' il Kēs, Allah yikūn ma'āk wu ma' 'iyālak.
"By the right of Our Lord Jesus Christ, every time the
Mass starts and the Cup (1) is raised, may God be with you
and with your families."
58. Allah yithannan 'alōik,
"May God provide you with sustenance and have pity on you."
59. Allah yib'atlak ulād il-ḥalāl.
"May God send you on your way the good boys." (2)
60. Inshāllah bitrabbīkum wu btifrah fīkum fi bēitak (or
ḥayātak).
"May God wish that you will bring up your children and
that you will rejoice (at their marriage) in your house
(or in your lifetime)."
61. Inshāllah bitshūr il khēir wil awlād fi bēitak.
"May God wish that you be granted success and children
in your house."
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(1) The Cup of the Holy Eucharist is raised^d up by the priest
during the Service.

(2) As opposed to "ulād il-ḥarām" No. 5.

62. Allah yikhallī il bēit wu ṣhābu.
"May God keep the house and its owners."
63. Allah Inshāllah bitkūn min naṣībak wu naṣīb ulādak.
"May God wish that it (the house) may be your and your children's lot."
64. Allah la yimawwitni la ḥarīq wala gharīq.
"May God not make me die by fire or drowning."
65. Allah yifrijha.
"May God relieve it." (i.e. the bad situation)
66. Allah yi'fi annak.
"May God relieve your misfortune." (1)
67. Ahlib min bizzi il-yamīn waṭlub min rab-il-'Alamīn, wahlib min bizzi il yasār wu rabna il jabbār (2) , wa bihaqq il-Ka'ba illi waqaft 'alēiha ya'tfik bint il ḥalāl.
"I suck from my right breast and I invoke the Lord of the Universe, and I suck from my left breast and by our Lord the Almighty, and the Ka'ba on which I stood , may He grant you a lawful girl." (3)
68. Allah yihīqq (4) qalbi il-maksūr.
"May God behold my broken heart."

(1) Lit. "May God pardon you."

(2) This part of the formula may be applied as an introduction to other invocations.

(3) As a wife. (4) Not found in this sense in dictionaries.

69. Allah ya'tīk il māl wil-'yāl.
"May God grant you wealth and families."
70. Allah yunusrak wu yirfa'ak 'ala-l-'a'dā.
"May God render you victorious and raise you over your enemies."
71. Bijāh il-Haram wil-Bēit wil Ka'ba illi raka't 'alsiha, wu Musa Kalīl Allah, uKhalīl Allah, yirauhu sālmin wu yun-gurkum jamī'an.
"By the Dignity of the Haram (i.e. The Dome of the Rock in Jerusalem) and the House of the Prophet and al-Ka'ba at which I knelt, and Moses the Speaker to God, may they return safely (i.e. from their travels), and may He render all of you victorious."
72. Allah yunṣur ḡḡurkum wu kbārku.
"May God grant you help, young and old."
73. Allah yij'al 'a'qābkum subyān.
"May God grant you male children."
74. Allah yiṭ'īkum (1) fil ḡḡayib wil-ḡḡadir.
"May God provide you sustenance for those who are absent and those who are present."
75. Allah yiqbal ḡḡurtak lan ḡḡammalt au ḡḡarrabt au qabbalt au ḡḡarraqt. (2)

(1) A Ta'amri colloquial for (ya'tīkum) "give you".

(2) A variant : "Allah yiqbal ḡḡurtak u ḡḡurat ḡḡikhwitak."

"May God accept your picture (presence) whether you go northwards, westwards, southwards or eastwards."

76. Allah la yiqṭa'ak min 'iyālak.

"May God not sever you from your families."

77. Allah la yiqṭa' wālide min waladha, la Masīhiyeh wala Muslimeh.

"May God not sever a mother from her son, whether she be Christian or Muslim."

78. Allah yisallik maqṣūduh.

"May God facilitate the carrying out of his intention."

79. Allah yinajji ahlak wil ghāyib wil hādir. (1)

"May God save your family (from danger), those who are absent as well as those who are present."

80. Allah yij'al 'umrak bkhātrak.

"May God decree that your span of life may depend upon your will."

81. Allah yikfīk sharr iḡ-ḡullām.

"May God save you from the evil of the oppressors."

82. Allah yimidd fi 'umrak.

"May God prolong your life."

83. Allah ya'tīk tayirdīk.

"May God grant you as much wealth as will satisfy you."

(1) A variant: "Allah yinajji il ghāyib wil hādir", (May God save the absent and the present.)

84. Allah ya'ttik il 'umr it-tawil.
"May God grant you a long life."
85. Allah ya'ttik il 'afieh.
"May God give you health and strength." (1)
86. Allah yikaththir sadīqak wa yiqill bghīdak.
"May God increase your friends and lessen those who dislike you."
87. Allah la yimawwitni illa wutrāb it-tariq 'ala ijrāyeh.
"May God not make me die except with the dust of the road on my legs." (i.e. when strong enough to be walking)
88. Allah yidīmak.
"May God prolong your life."
89. Allah yikaththir khēirak.
"May God increase your wealth." (2)
90. Allah yij'alak qudweh linnas.
"May God make you a good example to the people."
91. Allah ya'ttik is-sihha wil 'afieh.
"May God give you health and strength."
92. Allah yirziqak rizq il halāl wa stīret il hāl.
"May God grant you lawful sustenance and lawful shelter."

(1) Most commonly used.

(2) It could be used as a substitute for "Thank you", originally it meant, "May God increase your beneficence", though this second meaning is not usually intended.

93. Allah yikhlif 'alēik.
"May God recompense you."
94. Allah yibārik fīk.
"May God bless you."
95. Allah yihsin khitāmak. (1)
"May God prosper your hereafter."
96. Allah yiftah fi wihak il- abwāb il mughlaqah.
"May God open in your face the closed doors."
97. Allah yi'alli marātbak.
"May God promote your rank."
98. Allah yikhallīlak ibnak (walādak). (2)
"May God keep your son (sons) for you."
99. Allah yiqīmha bissalāmah.
"May God get her up in safety." (3)
100. Allah yihinn 'alēik. ('aleih).
"May God pity you (him)." (4)

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- (1) Another invocation pertaining to hereafter, was heard in the Nablus District, "Allah yib'id 'annak 'adhāb il qabr", (May God remove from you the punishment of the grave.)
- (2) Never(your wife) except by the way of joking.
- (3) Said to a woman expecting a baby.
- (4) Said to a patient gravely sick.

IMPRECATIONS (1)

1. Inshāllah yilqūha ma yitlaqqūha.
"May God make them get it (i.e. misfortune) and render them helpless to fend it off."
2. Allah yirayyihna minnak.
"May God relieve us from you." (i.e. by your death)
3. Allah yiramalak.
"May God make you a widower."
4. Allah yighuṣṣ bālak.
"May God distress you."
5. Allah la yikabrak. (2)
"May God not make you great."
6. Allah yōkhdak.
"May God take you away."
7. Allah yijūr 'alēik waṭṭā wu yit'amak min laḥm idēik.
"May God oppress you and make you feed on the flesh of your hands."

(1) In all imprecations God's name, "Allah", "Irrab", "Il Mawla" is frequently omitted, but is always understood. The imprecation may also start with the name of a well or saint. It could also start with "inshallah", (May God will that...)

(2) Another variation is "Allah la yi'aznak."

8. Allah yij'al dār abūk wirthēh, (kharāb).
"May God render your father's house a common inheritance (a ruin)."
9. Allah yij'al dār abūk ma'wa lalghurāb.
"May God render your father's house a shelter for ravens."(1)
10. Allah yiqta'ak min dārak wu dār ahlak.
"May God sever you from your house and your family's house."
11. Allah yij'al ma yidal lak had taht qutb il-'arsh.
"May God not leave you anyone under the axis of the throne." (2)
12. Allah yuqṣuf shabābak. (3)
"May God nip off your youth."
13. Allah yighdab 'alēik(wu 'ala wāldēik).
"May God be angry with you (and with your parents)."
14. Allah yij'alha tiji fi rāsak.
"May God make it (4) hit you in your head."

(1) Ravens are believed to live in ruined houses. A proverb says, "Ilḥaq il ghurāb bidillak 'al kharāb," (Follow the raven and he will lead you to ruin.)

(2) Meaning heavens, the throne of God.

(3) And the variation is "yiqarrib ajalak."

(4) Referring to anything bad such as, catarrh, a shot, etc.,.

15. (Allah) yij'al nāzle tinzil 'ala qalbak ('ala rās qalbak),
(mi'dtak), ('al banāt idh-dhināin).

"May God inflict a stroke on your heart (1), (the top of your heart), (stomach) , or (tonsils) ."

16. Allah yisakkir dār abūk 'al balāṭ wu 'al fār.

"May God close your father's house on the floor and on the mouse," (i.e. annihilate it,)

17. Allah la yibārīkīk.

"May God not render you prosperous."

18. Allah yij'alkum titkannasu bimukunseh khadra.

"May God cause you to be swept with a green broom." (2)

19. Allah yikharrīb bēitak.

"May God ruin your house." (3)

20. Allah yij'al dār abūk tindhadd min is-sāsāt.

"May God cause your father's house to be pulled down to its very foundations."

21. Allah yij'alīk tuqubri ulādīk (ikhwitik).

"May God make you bury your children (brothers)."

(1) Meaning your stomach.

(2) Being brand new, it sweeps better; this metaphorically signifies your being thoroughly wiped out.

(3) This one of the most commonly used. Other variations are:

"Allah yikharrīb dārak", "Allah yij'al dār abūk kharab,"

(May God render your father's house a ruin.)

22. Allah yij'al 'inēik yi'mēin ma yishufin il faḍa.
"May God blind your eyes so that they could not behold
the light."
23. (Allah kij'al) waja' yikhla' nī'ak.
"May God cause^a pain to dislocate your jaw." (1)
24. Allah yij'alik tuqu'di qa'idti wu tōkli luqumti.
"May God make you sit in my place and eat my (bitter)
morsel." (2)
25. Allah yilwik (3) thummak wu yihriq ummak.
"May God twist your mouth and burn your mother."
26. Allah yihriq qarāibak wuwlād 'ammak.
"May God burn your relatives and cousins."
27. Allah yiqta' ḥamūltak (qarāibak).
"May God uproot your clan (relatives)."
28. Allah yij'al luqme tsid ḥalqak.
"May God make a mouthful choke your gullet."

(1) This imprecation may be abbreviated to simply "Waja'".

(2) Said by a woman who has been inflicted by the death of a
dear one.

(3) Probably a distortion of "yilwi" (twist) ; "yilwik" is not
known in dictionaries in this sense. Al Bustani mentions
(اللقوة, allaqwa) a sort of facial paralysis, and allaqwa
the female raven called so for the breath of her jaws.

29. Allāh yiqta' ahlak min dūn innās.
"May God uproot your family, out of all people."
30. Bijāh il-Khaḍr il-akḥḍar yirakbak 'ala ḥmār a'war.
"By the high rank of the Green Khaḍr, may you ride on a one-eyed ass." (1)
31. Allāh yikhaffif 'aqlak.
"May God make you light-headed."
32. Allāh yij'alak tuqbur mālak wi'yālak.
"May God make you bury your wealth and family."
33. Allāh yihriq dammak.
"May God cause your blood to boil." (i.e. inflict you with a consuming fever.)
34. Allāh yusqum (or) yisaqqim ḥālak wu yikharrib diyārak.
"May God inflict you with sickness and destroy your house."
35. Allāh yihriq wāldōik.
"May God burn your parents."
36. Allāh na yikhallīlak ḥada wala yidallīlak nada.
"May God not leave you anyone or keep your dew." (2)

(1) A one-eyed man is considered a bad omen - let alone an ass.

(2) In common use, "nada" is not taken to mean generosity; it can be considered to mean "dew" i.e. "... deprive you completely from dew which makes vegetation in the hot summer months live and yield fruit; it may also be a rhyming tag.

37. Yiqta' ahlak min marra bishafā'at is-Sayyida il-ḥurrah,
"May God uproot your family altogether by the high rank
of the Free Lady." (1)
38. Allah yiqta' illi khallafūk willi jābūk.
"May God uproot those who begot you and produced you."
39. Allah yidhāḥāk biwāldōik wu sādōik.
"May God inflict you with the loss of your parents and
your two arms."
40. Bijāh Fātmeḥ bint innabi la yikhallif la bint wala ḡabi.
"By the high rank of Fātmeḥ, daughter of the Prophet,
may he not begot either a girl or a boy."
41. Allah yij'alak tiqlib shawāreb abūk bi'ūd.
"May God make you turn your father's moustach^e with a
stick." (2)
42. Allah yij'al damawiyeh tirsīlak.
"May God strike you with a haemorrhage." (Lit. anchor you
with a haemorrhage.) (3)
43. Allah yisawwid wijhu yōm il qiyāmeḥ. (4)
"May God blacken his face on Doomsday."

(1) Virgin Mary.

(2) i. e. when he is dead.

(3) Variation, "Damawiyeh 'ala qalbak" (a haemorrhage on your
heart).

(4) Also without "yōm il qiyāmeḥ".

43. Allah yij'al ṭā'ūn yiliffak.
"May God send a plague to wrap you up."
44. Allah yij'al dāhieh tsimmak.
"May God poison you with a catastrophe."
45. Allah yisakkirha fi wihak.
"May God shut (the doors of success) in your face."
46. Allah yijāzik.
"May God punish you."
47. Allah yunuqmak (yistanqim minnak).
"May God take revenge on you."
48. Allah yiksirhum (or yiksir khātrak).
"May God defeat them (or disillusion you)."
49. Allah la yiwafqak wala yuruddak 'ala awṭānak sālim.
"May God not render you successful or return you safely to your country."
50. Allah yidūr warāhum mithl ma hum dāirin warāna.
"May God pursue them as they are pursuing us."
51. Allah yij'alak ma tikbar.
"May God not allow you to grow."
52. Allah yibi'dak 'anni.
"May God remove you from me."
53. Allah yifdahak.
"May God expose you." (i.e. cause you to be found out.)
54. Allah yiskhatak.
"May God change you into a lower being."

56. Allah yimarmrak.
"May God torment you."
57. Allah la yikhlif 'alēik.
"May God not reward you."
58. Allah la yihannik fīha (fīh).
"May God deprive you of enjoying it (house or bride)."
59. Allah la yiftah 'alēik.
"May God not open to you (the doors of success)."
60. Inshallah matrah ma yisri yihri.
"May God make (the food or drink) burn wherever it passes."
(1)
61. Inshallah rōpah bala raj'a, wu nōmeh bala mkhaddeh (or
bala qōmeh).
"May God ~~make~~ send you on a journey without return, and
a sleep without a cushion (i.e. the sleep of death) or
(a sleep without awakening.)"
62. Allah yij'al dā' yisibak ma hada yi'riflu dawa.
"May God inflict you with a disease whose cure nobody
knows."
63. Allah yihri lahmak 'an dazmak 'azmak.
"May God make your flesh wear away from your bones."
64. Allah yihirmak 'āfitak.
"May God deprive you of your good health."

(1) Contrary to Invocation No. 38, foot-note 3.

65. Allah yikhsif manāfsak.
"May God destroy your respiratory organs."
66. Allah yi'dimni hash-shūrīb.
"May God deprive me (through your death) of this moustache (of yours)."
67. Ya Rabb itfarriḥna ib'azāh.
"O Lord, may we enjoy the wailing at his death."
68. Allah yiattim ulādak.
"May God make your children orphans."
69. Allah yiḥirmak mēmāk.
"May God deprive you of your mother."
70. Allah yil'an abu mukhtār baladak wu 'abu shēikh baladak.
"May God curse the father of the mukhtār and the father of the shēikh of your village."
71. Allah yiqta' nasl immak min es-sab' jīzan.
"May God cut off the posterity of your mother from seven husbands." (1)
72. Allah yikhzi shēikh il-ḥamūleh il-hāmleh.
"May God disgrace the shēikh of this base clan."
73. Allah yil'an il baṭn illi ḥamalāk.
"May God curse the womb (2) which bore you,"
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(1) i.e. even though she may marry seven husbands.

(2) literally the abdomen.

74. Allah yil'an illi 'aşarak willi bazarak.
"May God curse him who squeezed and sowed you."
75. Ya Allah qaṭī'ah tkarker (1) ahlak ma yidal ḥada.
"O God, may astrangement grind your family leaving no one."
76. Allah yihriq jdūd jdūdak(abūk 'ala immak or qar'it abūk.)
"May God burn the ancestors of your ancestors (your father as well as your mother, the baldness of your father's head) ." (2)
77. Allah yitli' rōḥak min 'inōik.
"May God extract your soul out of your eyes." (3)
78. Allah yij'al nuqta tijmad 'ala qalbak.
"May God make a drop (4) of blood congeal on your heart."
79. Allah yi'mi qalbak dunya wa ākhre.
"May God blind your heart in this world and the next."
80. Allah yikhzi hal-lihyeh.
"May God disgrace this beard." (i.e. referring to another person.)

(1) Unknown in dictionaries in this sense; here possibly an onomatopoeiac sound of stream-roller taken to mean, "clear out, wipe out".

(2) Can'ān thinks "qar'a" here to mean "skull". See Can'ān, JPOS, Vol. XV, nos. 3-4, p. 249. A variation is "... jdūdak ala jdūd jdūdak".

(3) i.e. May you suffer agonies at your death.

(4) Nuqṭah means apoplexy and angina pectoris.

81. Allah yisawwid wid^hjak.
"May God blacken your face." (1)
82. Allah yij'al is-sawād yughuṣṣak (or 'alṣik),
"May God choke you with blackness (or cover you with it)."
(2)
83. Allah yifḍaḥ 'ardak.
"May God disgrace your honour." (3)
84. Allah yil'an il-arḍ illi māshi 'alṣiha.
"May God curse the ground on which you walk."
85. Allah yij'alak turkuḍ wir-rghīf yurkuḍ.
"May God make you run and the loaf of bread run (before you)."
(4)

(1) i.e. to dishonour him. The present writer thinks it is far-fetched to refer this imprecation to "Lamentations" 4, 7-8, as Can'ān, op. cit., page 255, seems to indicate, since the reference to "black" in Lamentations is literal.

(2) The actual meaning of this being that, may you mourn so much the loss of your dearest that you should be choked with the black colour; Can'ān however interprets "sawād" as complete loss of honour and dignity; op. cit., p. 255.

(3) By the exposure of your women folk - the worst kind of exposure. Can'ān translates the same as, "May God disgrace your repute." op. cit., p. 259.

(4) i.e. to make you unable to earn your daily bread.

86. 'Uzrayīn (1) yuqbuḍ rōḥu.
"May the devil (the angel of death) seize his soul."
87. Allah yij'al yijīk il bein wu yōkhdak yōm il-itnēin.
"May God dispatch you on a Monday." (lit. May God make parting i.e. death, take you off on a Monday.) (2)
88. Allah la yihaddīlkum bāl wala yiqarribilkum ḥbāl.
"May God deprive the peace and(lit.)not facilitate the fulfilment of their desire."
89. Allah yi'ūqak.
"May God obstruct (your way)."
90. Allah yikhūnak.
"May God desert you."
91. Allah yighḍab 'alēik bi'adad ish-sha'ar illi 'ala rāsak, wu bi'adad waraq ishshajar.
"May God inflict you with His wrath as many times as there are hairs on your head and leaves on trees." (3)
92. Allah yishghil bālkum.
"May God disquiet them."

(1) Colloquial for " 'Uzrāīl "; "Azrael" is used in some places.

(2) Monday was chosen for the sake of the rhyme, but Can'ān quotes in his Auber Glaube p. 13 the proverb "Kul bid-dein wa la tsāfir yom il-itnein" (Eat from debts but don not travel on a Monday.)

(3) See Invocation No. 19.

93. Allah yidurrak darr.

"May God strike you with harm." (1)

94. Allah yi'athrak.

"May God cause you to stumble (over misfortune)."

95. Allah la yiwarrīhum yōm abyad.

"May God not show them a white day."

96. (Allah) yil'an dīnuh (Īmānuh).

"May God curse his religion (faith)."

97. Allah yizalzil i'zāmuh fi qabruh.

"May God shake his bones in his grave."

98. Allah yishoshhu min (2) min rumāsh 'inših.

"May God swing him by his eye-lashes." (3)

(1) Variation to this are "Darar yidurrak," (May a harm harm you); and "Marad yidurrak," (May a disease harm you).

(2) Not found in dictionaries in this sense.

(3) It is believed that if one carelessly or deliberately drops some salt on the floor, he will in Hereafter be made to collect it with his eyelashes - salt being a blessed substance. If two people partake of the same food then they should not betray each other as there is will be "Salt and bread between them"; (**بينهم من وطع**); and "no one betrays the salt and bread except the rogue." If a piece of bread accidentally falls on the ground, it must be immediately picked up, kissed and placed in a clean unfrequented place.

99. Allah la yiraihu.

"May God not rest him."

100. Allah yil'an is-sā'a illi shufnāk fīha.

"May God curse the hour when we saw you."

Hundreds of invocations and imprecations have been collected, and those mentioned above are just a fair representative sample. The bases for their selection are their currency and exhaustiveness of the area under consideration. A close analysis of this sample shows that they are directed at the most important aspects of human life and what matters most to man. Thus it is seen that imprecations touch upon:-

1. Health, safety and protection.
2. Welfare.
3. Family and relatives.
4. Property and sustenance.
5. God's satisfaction.
6. The Hereafter.

It is most interesting to notice the conclusions arrived at after comparing the substance of both invocations and imprecations. It seems quite clear that to every category of invocation there exists a corresponding category of imprecation. Thus, 1. Health, safety and protection among invocations are sharply contrasted with 1. Physical harm, among imprecations. 2. Welfare, with unhappiness, social harm and dishonour. 3. Family and relatives, with family and relatives. 4. Property, with property and sustenance. 5. God's satisfaction, with God's dissatisfaction and hindrance. 6. The Hereafter, with the Hereafter.

However, the sorting out of every invocation and imprecation under a rigid system of categories was not found perfectly feasible, and the classification, at times, has had to be rather loose with a certain amount of unavoidable overlapping or dovetailing. In certain cases an invocation or imprecation could contain more than one meaning, and then what seemed to be the main meaning, or the most important part of the text, was chosen as a basis for classification.

The first category of invocations comprising Health, safety and protection, with its counterpart of Physical Harm in the imprecations featured most prominently in both sections accounting for no less than about one-third of the total sum. That was followed, with an equal proportionate agreement, in both sections, by No. 5, God's satisfaction, accounting for 20 % of the invocations; and God's dissatisfaction and hindrance accounting for 25 % of the imprecations.

Next in the degree of circulation comes No. 2 - Welfare, 17 % of the invocations. And in this respect there was observed a slight difference since the corresponding category in imprecations namely, No.2 -Unhappiness, social harm and dishonour showed a slight fall- 13 %. A bigger difference was revealed in the next category No.4 -Property and Sustenance - 17 % in the invocations and only 5 % in the imprecations as

they are relatively unimportant. There is a greater circulation of imprecations touching Family and Relatives, No.3, 20% than in the invocations 10%. Significantly, both sections agree in their, comparatively speaking, few texts dealing with No.6- the Hereafter, showing a figure of 4% in invocations and 5% in imprecations.

The following table sums up these findings:-

<u>INVOCATIONS</u>	<u>Percentage</u>	<u>IMPRECATIONS</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
1. Health, Safety and protection	32%	1. Physical harm	32%
2. Welfare	17%	2. Unhappiness, social harm and dishonour	13%
3. Family and Relatives	10%	3. Family and Relatives ...	20%
4. Property and Sustenance	17%	4. Property and Sustenance	5%
5. God's Satisfaction	20%	5. God's Dissatisfaction and Hindrance	25%
6. The Hereafter	4%	6. The Hereafter	5%

And lastly , a rather curious peculiarity used more than might be expected, is the combination of both an invocation and imprecation in one formula such as, "Allah yit'am illi at'amna wa yikhalli illi jāb, wa yihrim illi ahramna wa yisakkir 'alēih il bab", (May God feed him who fed us, and keep him who procured (sustenance) and deprive (from sustenance) him who deprived us, and close the door (of work) on him.)

7. THE OATH - (IL YAMIN).

The use of an oath in every day situations is most frequent. Oaths have become the traditional heritage of the ages, and are by far more current among peasants than city dwellers. Oaths may be divided into two large categories,

a) Simple oaths, and b) Sanctuary oaths.

a) Simple oaths may be subdivided into:-

1) Religious oaths, mentioning the name of God, saint, well, or sanctuary, alone or followed by a qualifying word or phrase such as:-

(والصليب الحي wiṣṣalīb il ḥayy : By the living Cross) ;

(وحق الكهنة والساكين فيها wu ḥaqq hal kinīsa wissūknin fiha : By the truth of this Church and those i.e. saints abiding in it.) ;

(والخضر الاخضر wil Khadr il akhdar : By the Green Khadr i.e. St. George.) ;

(والمهد الشريف Wil Mahd ish-sharīf : By the honourable Church of the Nativity.) ;

(والله وحمد رسول الله Wallāh wa Muḥammad rasūl Allah : By God and Muḥammad , God's Apostle.) ;

(وحق القبة المحمدية Wu ḥaqq il-Qible il Muḥammadaiyeh : By the truth of the Muhammadan' Direction of prayer.) .

ii) Non-religious oaths mentioning "honour", parts of the body particularly the head, and various phenomena, such as:-

(حياة شرفي *wiḥyāt sh̄arafi* : By the life i.e. the existence of my honour.) ;

(حياة شرف أبوك *wiḥyāt sh̄araf abūk* : By the life of your father's honour.) ;

(حياة ماشارب والا أدمه *wiḥyāt hash-sh̄arib willa 'a'damu* : By the life of this moustache (of mine) or may I be deprived of it (in case I prove false); (1) ;

(حياة البساط الأخضر التي طلع من الأرض خرسا طرشا *wiḥayāt il Bisāt il-akhḍar illi tili' min il-arḍ kharsa ṭarsha* : By the existence of this green carpet which grew dumb and deaf) i.e. quietly from the earth.) (2)

iii) Mixed oaths, namely combination⁵ of religious and non-religious wording such as:-

(حياة ماالشجرة التي يتشرب من عرقها ويتسبح ربها *wiḥayāt hash-shajara illi btishrab min 'irīqha wu bitsabbih rabha* : By the existence of this tree which drinks with its root, and which praises its Lord) ;

(حياة ماالنهار ومن أوجده *wu ḥayāt han-nhār wu min awjaduh* : By the existence of this day and Him who founded it) ;

(1) The deprivation or shaving of one's moustache is considered highly disgraceful.

(2) Can'Ēn, JPOS, Vol. VI, No. 1-2 , p. 2

(حياءة هالعة الجارية والسماوات العالسة Wihyāt halmayyeh il-jārieh
wis-samāwāt il 'ālyeh : By the existence of this flowing water
and the high heavens) ;

(وحق من يعلم كم ورقة في هالشجرة وكم شعرة في هالحيوان wu haq man
yi'lam kam waraqa fi hash-shajara wu kam sha'rah fi hal paya-
wān : By the truth of the One who knows how many leaves there
are on this tree, and how many hairs on this animal.) (The
utterer of this oath points to a tree and to an animal.)

b) Sanctuary Oaths.

Sanctuary oaths are naturally of ^a more serious nature.
When no material evidence can be held against a suspect who
denies committing a wrong doing, he may, at the joint agreement
of all concerned, prove his innocence by taking a solemn oath
in a church, mosque or any other sanctuary. This is normally
done in the presence of representatives of the two parties as
well as others. It must be made clear, however, that the oath-
taking ceremony is most seriously looked at, and is never re-
sorted to except as an ultimate and extreme measure. Many
stories are quoted to show the most fatal consequences of
perjury on such occasions. False oaths or oaths whose wordings
are externally true, but essentially untrue are supposed to
bring with them death of the person taking the oath, or some
of his dearest. They may be accompanied by sudden loss of
health, horrible diseases, loss of limbs, bad accidents and

loss of wealth and property. Such retribution may take place almost simultaneously with the oath-taking.

An example of the horrors ensuing from false swearing is seen in the following story:-

Once a man borrowed a hundred pounds. Having repudiated the loan, he was asked to take an oath. But being afraid of the ominous consequences he devilishly thought of a trick to get round the oath and make off with the money. He thus filed it into a hollowed walking stick which he carried with him to the sanctuary. As he had to raise his hand when taking the oath, he requested the claimant to hold his stick for him while he took the oath, and the claimant all unsuspecting obliged. Thus the defendant could swear that he had "given" the money to the claimant. When thereupon he began climbing the stairs of the sanctuary on his way out, he slipped violently, fell down and broke his arm. Meanwhile the handle of the stick gave way and the cash dropped out. The claimant gleefully collected his money while the defendant left in utter disgrace.

On entering the sanctuary the accused raises his hand, and is bareheaded and barefooted. There are five men from his relatives standing behind him. If it is a Muslim shrine

everybody takes off his shoes. The accused then crouches in the niche (mihrāb), stretches forth his hand and swears. While uttering the formula of the oath he must not be interrupted.

As products of the same environment the oaths partake indeed a common character and unconsciously illustrate each other. In the Bethlehem District the most frequented shrines and churches for oath-taking are, the St. George's Church at al-Khadr, Ibn Njēm Shrine to the south of Bethlehem, the Badriya shrine at Sharafāt, St. Elias' Church on the old road to Jerusalem, the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem and the St. Nicolas' Church in Beit Jala.

The actual text of the oath varies in its wording according to the circumstances of the case not only between Christians and Muslims but also within each sect. There is no one recognized formula though certain phrases recur in various oath formulae. There is also observed the principle of "il yamīn 'ala niyyit il mhallif" (The oath is (to be fulfilled) according to the intention of the one who requires the oath.) This signifies that the accuser has the right to appoint the sanctuary and the time for the oath-taking, and also that the oath should be explained in the sense intended by the accuser

to preclude any sullen attempt to use verbal tricks. (1)

The most common texts seem to be the following:-

" Uqsim billah il-'aliyy il-'aẓīm, wa ḡāhib il maqām
ish-sharīf illi ana wāqif fīh, innu lais li 'ilm bihādhil-
qādiyeh wala sāsēit wala wāsēit, wala 'indi khabar fi
hādha il-shi."

(I swear by the Exalted, the Almighty, and by the pat-
ron of this shrine in which I am standing, that I have no
knowledge of this question, and that I have not been involved
in it, nor have helped in it, and have no information con-
cerning this matter.)

Another formula reads:-

"Wallahi il-'aẓīm, wu ḡaḡ ḡāhib hadha il-maqām inni la
a'lam wala adri, la sāsēit wala wāsēit, wala qaddēit lahum
jild, wala yattamt lahum walad, wala adri, wala 'indi sibbeh
wala hibbeh, mabliy balweh."

(By God the Almighty, and by the right of the patron of
this shrine, I have no news or knowledge (in this affair);

(1) See also Can'ān, "Muhammadan Saints and Sanctuaries in
Palestine, JPOS Vol. VI, No. 1-2 , p.23.

I have not been involved in; nor helped in (this affair); I have not torn a skin to them; I have not made any of them orphans; I know nothing, I have neither knowledge nor information; I have been unjustly accused.)

The introduction of the Church of the Nativity Oath goes like this:-

"Wu haqq masqat 'Isa Ibn Maryam, illi ana fih, wal-injil it-tāhir war-rab il qāhir"

(By the right of the Birth Place of 'Isa Ibn Maryam (Christ), in which I am present, and the pure Gospel and God the Vanquisher))

An interesting formula is that used among the fellaheen and bedouins of southern Palestine near Beer Sheba. (1) It reads:-

"Wallah il-'azīm (repeated three times), khāliq illēil win-nhār, il wāhid, il qāhir, myattim il-atfāl, mrammil in-niswān, qāhir il mulūk, wu mubīd iq-zālmān, inni ma fa'alt, wala qatalt, wala arēit, wala smi't, wala drīt,

(1) Quoted by 'Umar Barghūthi, JPOS, Vol. II, No. 1, p.51; written as one word (Beersheeba) in Hastings Dictionary of the Bible, p. 89; revised version has it hyphenated.

wala qaddamt 'āsiyeh wala mēmasīyeh."

(By the Great God -repeated three times - the Creator of night and day, the only One, The Victorious (lit. the Vanquisher) , who deprives children of their fathers and makes women widows, who vanquishes kings, who subdues oppressors, I have not acted, nor killed, nor seen, nor heard, nor known, nor accomplished evil, nor helped to do it.)

Such formula as "Dākhil (ala walāyāk " (I beseech you by your women folk) and " *Īdi taht abūtak (1) (ḥzāmak)," (My hand under your arm-pit (or your girdle), though not oaths in the strictest sense, yet are frequently used with oaths, and are interesting as indications of the Semitic aspects of the nature of the inhabitant of the district with his regard to womanly chastity and honour. The latter expression perhaps derives from the custom of which Genesis 24 : 2 speaks. (2)

The oath-taker is normally supported by five of his kindred who must second the oath, by swearing good faith.

(1) Colloquial for " ibṭ".

(2) " And Abraham said unto his oldest servant of his house that ruled over all that he had, put, I pray thee, thy hand under my thigh."

they stand behind him and are barefooted. They raise their hands and say, "Ṣadaq fī ma qāl," (He is true in what he said.) In Beer Sheba the "muzakkūn" say, "Niṣḥad billāh in yamīnhum wa kul ma qalūh ḡudq," (We bear witness by God that their oath and all that they have said is true.) (1) The "muzakkūn" must be ritually clean on entering the sanctuary. (2) The oath, in Muslim communities, is generally taken on Friday to make it more solemnly binding. Women are not known to take sanctuary oaths.

Finally, "an oath" may be regarded as essentially a conditional self-imprecation, a curse by which a person calls down upon himself some evil in the event of what he says not being true. (3) This may be applied to all kinds of oaths, and is illustrated in such formulas as, "Allah yij'alni amūt idha bakdhib," (May God strike me dead if I lie.)

(1) 'Umar Barghūthi, op. cit.,

(2) E. Westermarck, II, op. cit., p. 118.

(3) Because of their fear of the revenge of the well.

CHAPTER FOUR

S O N G S

It has been noted that the Bethlehem District population is in no way an exception to the other Jordan Districts in general in following the pattern of the widespread practice of using songs in a great multiplicity of situations. The Bethlehemites, and in particular the women, find in songs a suitable medium for expressing their emotions.

Of course, apart from anything else, a song may help as a motivating urge. It enhances a labourer's energy, or furnishes him with consolation in his daily toil. When in the act of roofing a house, the group of labourers engaged in the work, participate in singing lively songs, with one of them normally leading, and the others replying to him, or repeating his verses. One can hear this voluntary singing of individuals or groups, almost in any situation, where people are involved in any activity, such as when the baker is at his bakery, the smith in his smithy, the women gleaning the corn in the fields, the ploughmen ploughing the land, or the workmen dressing stones, and naturally on formal occasions.

In this Chapter, it is my purpose to study these songs employed on formal occasions; and to consider not only songs

sung on religious occasions where songs are employed, such as marriages, funerals, circumcisions, but also songs whose wording includes religious terminology, or are tinged with a religious significance, that prevail in the District under research.

This does not necessarily imply that all, or the majority of songs employed in marriages or funerals or other formal occasions possess a religious indication. On the contrary ~~religious~~ most songs of this category rarely ever contain a religious significance. The writer has collected from one locality, namely Beit Sahūr, no less than five hundred verses of songs employed at weddings, of which no more than twenty verses had anything to do with religion.

Thus it is seen that religious songs are only a part of the songs employed in an exceedingly great multiplicity of situations. Naturally the situation itself controls the ratio of the religious constituent in the song; thus in weddings religious allusions are naturally fewer than in rain songs or songs traditionally sung when visiting holy shrines.

The images employed in such songs are strikingly similar to those found in Invocations and Imprecations (Chapter Three).

Even the phraseology is very close. Thus it may be said that the texts of many songs are no more than invocations given tunes and sung. Thus we get in Invocations:- "Allah yirajji' ghiyyābak", (May God return your absent ones.) (1) While we get in Songs:- "Ya rabbi il-'āli trud il-ghiyyābe" , (May God the Lofty return your absent ones;) (2) And we get in Invocations:- "Allah yi'ammir dārak ḡ or bēitak)" , (May God build up your house - by giving you at least a male child.) (3) While we get in Songs the same expression. (4)

A remarkable similarity emerges from the study of these songs, their ideas and images and certain parts of the Bible and Qur'ān; the Canticles of the Book of Songs in particular, and to a much lesser extent Psalms and other books. This is the case though it is tempting to arrive at far-fetched or erroneous conclusions by exaggerating the tracing of modern folkloric songs to religious sources because of some sort of similarity, distant or near, which could have been purely accidental, springing from common feelings and reactions relating to the life of man and woman, specially in the love vocabulary and figurative expressions.

(1) Chapter 3, p. 193, No. 56.

(2) Songs, g , No. 9.

(3) Chapter 3, p. 186, No. 13.

(4) Songs , e, No. 2.

Stephan (1) is apt to trace many of the Palestinian songs to the Book of Songs. He thus believes the famous song:-

سُتِّتِ الْحَلِوَةُ يَا عِيسَى زِيَّ الشُّعْمَةِ بِكَيْسَةٍ
لَمَّا شَلَحَتْ قَمِيصَهَا صَارَ الْمَلِمُ نَصْرَانِيًّا

I saw the fair one, O 'Isa, like a candle in the church,
When she took off her chemise the Muhammadan became a
Christian,

to have echoes from Solomon's Songs Chapter 5, verse 14 e.g. "His hands are as gold rings set with the beryl; his belly is as bright ivory overlaid with sapphires", by commenting, "This passage (first verse of the vernacular song) indicates whiteness of the body in particular and bodily beauty in general." But I believe this too far-fetched. It is also too far-fetched to link, "When she took off her chemise" with the same chapter, verse 3, "I have put off my coat, how shall I put in on?" - as the general lines of thought are so distinctly different. Moreover the local Christians are not at all well-versed in the Old Testament, and are not prone to quote from it.

Another of these far-fetched parallels of the Old

(1) "Modern Palestinian Parallels to the Song of Songs",

JPOS, Vol. II, No. 4, p. 224.

Testament, and ~~are~~ modern songs, not necessarily of a religious nature is this:-

رَأَحُوا عَلَى الْحَمَامِ حَلُّوا شَعْرَهُمْ كُلُّ الْبَنَاتِ نَجْمٌ حَبِي قَمَرُهُمْ

"They went to the bath, loosening their hair. All girls are stars, my beloved is their moon."

Stephan refers "They went to the bath" to Ezekiel, Chapter 23, verse 40, "...for whom thou didst wash thyself" and "my beloved is their moon" to Solomon's Song, Chapter 6, verse 10 "fair as the moon".

On the other hand one cannot help but be almost certain that the folkloric bard was fairly well acquainted with the religious books because of the remarkable affinity in thought, such as in the following specimen :-

يَا رُبَّتْهَا بَارَكَةٌ بِالسَّبْعِ بَرَكَاتٍ
لِي مَا بَارَكَ الْمَسْبُوحُ عَلَى السَّبْعِ خَبَرَاتٍ

"May she (the bride) be blessed with seven blessings; in the same way that Christ has blessed the seven loaves." (1)

(1) Five loaves in Matthew , 14 : 17-21.

References to the Qur'ān are amply attested:

مَتَابَا بِأَوَّلِ الزَّيْنَاتِ حُطَيِّ
زَهَادٍ وَبَدَا الْقُرْمُولِ حُطَيِّ
فِي وَجْهِكَ نَهْرٌ مِنْ أَمْنَةٍ وَرَدَّتْ
صَدْرُكَ رَوْضٌ مِنْ تَحْتِ الْعُشَايَا

"Sing an 'atāba to the first of the fair;

Put civet and ambergris on your plait;

Your eyes are a river, from whose source I drew,

And your breast is a garden, with herbs underneath."

The metaphor in the fourth verse clearly shows close affinity with the Qur'anic description of Paradise. (1)

LITERARY CHARACTERISTICS

Very commonly many versions of the same song, and countless variations and slight alterations obtain in the same locality. The song, or the trill, is by no means restricted to one occasion, but is sung on various occasions. One encounters occasional charm, passion and eloquence in the very rusticity of the words, a residuum of the folk-poetry.

The songs are anonymous and are sung on the important occasions of an individual's life. Their length varies

(1) Qur'ān, Chapter of the Bee, Verse 33.

immensely, from a single verse to thirty verses (not counting the refrain.) They are on the whole simple and unaffected in their approach, and the lines vary in ~~length~~ length, not only between one song and the other, but also within the limits of the one song itself. The rhythm is often broken and abrupt and devoid of any deliberate artistic attempts. The customary unity of the line of verse inherent in traditional Arab poetry is notably observed here too.

It is obvious from the occasional archaic expressions and references to primitive forms of life in the songs recorded here, that there had been an unbroken tradition of religious poetry. Although many of those songs are highly coloured, richly figurative, and at times passionate even dramatic, yet most of these songs have very little narrative plot, and if one tried to extract the story from those narrative or semi-narrative ones, there would be only a simple episode or the briefest story (with few exceptions), and indeed, in some cases, hardly any story at all.

The style and vocabulary are inevitably simple, and often enough the phraseology is not at all in common use except in songs. The expression is generally harsh, and the multiplicity of rural allusions is suggestive of rural

surroundings. Nevertheless, the explicit simplicity inherent is trenchant in many a verse; many of the metaphorical expressions are equally piquant and forcible, though they are never extended or compound. Nor is ~~an~~ there an extensive imagery or detailed observation and little humour. There is no subtle intellect, and the broken crude abrupt (with the occasional forceful) style are all typical qualities of this kind of song. The emphasis is on the situation rather than on the narrative.

Though these songs are naturally restricted in their range of ideas, their subject-matter may be considered a combination of ordinary life, and a strong suggestion of the supernatural, prayers and invocations. The abrupt introduction to the subject gives the feeling of narrative urgency. The naïve emotionalism is exquisitely natural.

There is to be found throughout these songs the Oriental proneness to exaggeration and boasting, as well as the Oriental inhibited horror of enemies' jubilation at one's misfortunes. Members of the non-Catholic clergy (with the exception of the senior ranks as Bishops and Patriarchs) are generally not looked upon with favour, possibly a reflection of their social and educational backgrounds, which coincides with the general conclusion reached at concerning this topic in Chapters Two and Three. The elderly heads of the community also share in

this general disapprobation, probably due to the gross corruption and fraudulence of many of them. Jews of course are condemned and regarded as inveterate enemies. On the other hand women do not seem to receive the customary denunciation launched against them in other parts of this thesis as in the Chapter on King Solomon. This is only to be expected as those who perform the actual singing are mostly women.

The Metre, Rhyme and Tune:

The public ear follows the rhythm of the song deliberately, but the public improvisation cannot be expected to be accurate in this respect. What interests the improviser is the rhyme which he strives to obtain by the inclusion of traditional tags and stereotyped endings which are apparently employed solely for the purpose of sound harmony.

St. H. Stephan says, "As to the metre I do not hesitate to state that the bard has generally no rule but composes empirically. The tune is an important factor in the construction of stanzas, at least more important than the metre..... vernacular poetry is..... independent from classical so that it is often next to impossible to scan the stanzas

according to fixed classical rules." (1)

But this statement is far too general and rather superficial. It is true that the public improviser lays far more stress on the tune rather than on the metre. But a long time of "training" on listening and improvisation has led the improviser to a rather an astonishing degree of metrical accuracy, disclosed by a careful scanning of the verses. When working out these verses one often meets "rajaz" (and majzū' ir - rajaz) , baṣīt, (and majzū' il baṣīt) predominating, and mujtath fairly widely, with occasional other traditional metres such as majzū' - il - mutaqārib, sarī' , madīd, ramal and hazaj.

Naturally the rhythm is not perfect in many verses. In the singing, an irregularity in the metre - such as the existence of a syllable too many, or the need for a long syllable instead of a short one, or of a short one instead of a long one - is normally, and unconsciously slurred over by the tune, by lengthening or shortening the syllable as the case requires. In other words much is made of the tune which helps as a vehicle to smooth over metrical irregularities, by extending

(1) "Modern Palestinian Parallels to the Song of Songs" ,

JPOS, Vol. II , No. 4 , p.224.

the tune or shortening it to meet rhythmical requirements. Actually, as Professor Serjeant points out, the application of the traditional metre on the songs is the best check of their authenticity. One notices the abundance of the long "taf'īleh", as well as the frequent use of two, sometimes three successive "skūns".

It is rather rare to find two distinct metres in the same song. The rhyme as well, at the end of the lines, varies tremendously. We may get what may be regarded the English "rhymed couplets" - sometimes even triplets. But on the whole there is not much restriction in the vernacular poetry-. The two hemistichs of one verse may, or may not rhyme; or the rhyme of the first two hemistichs may be carried on to the third hemistich, and sometimes to the third and fourth hemistichs of the following verse. More often than not verses possess independent rhymes.

The tunes used in religious songs do not vary from the tunes prevalent in non-religious songs. The explanation of this lies in the fact that improvisers of these folk songs are the same ones, whether the songs have a religious significance or not. Furthermore no section of the religious sections monopolizes a certain kind of tune or metre. The common tunes ('alyādi), and (ḥalāli ya māli) are employed with an occasional saḥje.

The trill (zaghrūt) generally consists of four verses (occasionally six, too) with the widest freedom in the rhyme. Thus we get a wide variety of rhyme patterns such as:

a a a a ; a a b a ; a a b b ; a a b c
a b c b ; a b a b ; a b b b ; a b c c
a b a c ; a b c d (1)

OCCASIONS

As to the detailed description of the circumstances that accompany the singing process, they lie outside the scope of limitations of this thesis. But a few points have to be clarified concerning the religious practices and rites that accompany these songs.

As the Bethlehem District has been till fairly recently preponderately agricultural depending on rain for its livelihood, then seasons of droughts have always been the cause of

(1) See Texts: b, No. 13 ; b, No. 14 ; b, No. 16 ;
f, No. 34 ; b, No. 17 ; b, No. 20 ;
b, No. 33 ; g, No. 14 ; g, No. 12 ;
g, No. 11 .

genuine alarm and apprehension. During seasons of droughts therefore groups of women and children, belonging to various religious denominations, Christians and Muslims alike, go to places of worship, and in particular, to St. Mary's Grotto, adjacent to the Church of the Nativity, to the Mosque of 'Umar just opposite the Church of the Nativity, to St. Eliās' Convent on the old Jerusalem highway, to St. George's Convent in al-Khadr village, and to St. Nicolas' Church in Beit Jala. They sing songs invoking God's help, the Prophets as well as Virgin Mary's assistance, to succour them with rain. It was customary, too, for some in the procession to hoist aloft an old man's garment, called (شَرشُوح : sharshūh), (1) so that the congregation may pray that it may get wet. How many times we are told that no sooner had the congregation arrived back to their homes - or not yet arrived - after their singing procession was over, when their prayers were responded to, and the heavens rained abundantly. It is only natural for children to accompany the procession since it is believed that their prayers are more readily responded to than the supplication

(1) Not found in dictionaries in this sense.

of their sinful elders. As to the old man's dress, it may have some bearing to the Muhammadan tradition:-

لولا البهائم الرضع والأطفال الرضع والشيوخ الركع لما نزلت من السماء قطرة

(Had it not been for the grazing animals, the sucking children, and the kneeling old men, no drop would have descended from heaven.)

In weddings, songs started to be sung at night three to seven days before the religious ceremony, generally by night, reaching their climax on the eve of the ceremony. Indeed songs accompanied the procession to the church, and on the way back, halting several times on the way. The climax of the wedding eve celebrations features what is known as "shaving of the bridegroom" which is accompanied by a lot of excitement, singing, trilling and clapping. Seated on a chair the bridegroom is hoisted aloft by his friends; and the shaving operation that follows may last for more than an hour; as the soap is rubbed off his face almost continuously, while some of his friends even go to such lengths as to remove it with the aid of an old slipper. The bridegroom's family normally engages a (shā'ir) - poet - who accompanies himself on a one-string violine called "rabābeh" relating traditional stories which he or some other has composed.

The conclusion of the church ceremony is generally marked by the exultant, though shrill, trilling of enthusiastically jubilant women most closely related to the bridegroom - who had been most anxiously waiting for this hour to realise their age-long dreams.

In the home the singing is generally exchanged by two groups of women accidentally seated, and the rhythm is kept by the beating of a "ṭubbāleh", a circular, stiff, coloured leather, stuck on the opening of a cylindrical piece of pottery whose other end is left open, to give the necessary resonance. Or a woman may dance in the middle of the room and sing simultaneously and be answered by the other women.

Not only do relatives and friends join in these active forms of celebrations; but other women, too, consider it an obligation to participate actively in the weddings, so that when their turn comes to have a "faraḥ", i.e. a marriage (lit. glce) in their family, they will receive a comparable measure of cooperation as a payment for what is considered a "debt", - an unavoidable principle of recompense.

Men may dance with swords, while women may dance waving their handkerchiefs, or poising a bottle of alcohol on their head. In the men's circle, a "shūbāsh" is generally practised

with two groups of men moving forwards and backwards, facing each other with reciprocal singing, and often exhibiting a remarkable skill in manipulating their sticks or swords which they hold in their hands. Or one may sing a "shūbāsh" while the others answer him.

In the case of baptisms singing accompanies the procession of friends and relatives to the church or convent, walking in the past, and in cars and buses at present, usually halting at the gate or entrance of the sanctuary for a song or a dance. Shrill trilling accompanies the vitally psychological moment when the child is dipped three times into the water, in the Greek Orthodox service, while in the western churches more reticence is observed.

The birth of a male child is the cause of much jubilation in the family, while the birth of a female child is met with a silent disappointment. Thus we get the invocation, "Allah yi'annir beita", (lit. May God grant you a child). (1) That is why birth, baptism and circumcision songs occasionally refer to the flying of a white flag on roof tops as a sign of gratification, and a fulfilment of a long-wanted wish.

(1) See Chapter Three, Invocations.

In circumcision ceremonies, the guests invited to attend the festival are greeted in the following introduction:

Yea people, pray to the Prophet,
A prayer with two prayers,
A prayer to drive away the devil,
And a prayer to keep away the evil eye.

As is usual in weddings, some woman begins a song, others follow, throughout the evening, clapping their hands and trilling.

In songs sung when visiting shrines and churches, most frequent references are made to St. George, Virgin Mary, St. Elias, St. Nicolas, Muhammad, Moses and Christ. In most cases the visits are for the purpose of the fulfilment of vows, specially votive offerings. Trilling accompanies the slitting of the ear of the sheep or the goat's offerings at the gate of the sanctuary. Singing, too, attends the cooking of the offering.

When the visit is on the occasion of the saint's feast, then most of the singing is done on the way to, and back from the saint's sanctuary, and especially under the olive trees abounding in the precincts of the sanctuary, accompanied by

the "ṭubbāleh", and occasionally by the lute and violin.

A trill generally accompanies the departing traveller when crossing the threshold of his house, wishing him well, and desiring his safe return. The traveller is met, too, on his return, with so much singing and trilling that one may think himself in a wedding feast.

The death song is characterised by its slow sad cadence. It is surprising to find so little religious reference made in such songs - indeed much less than in wedding songs. This can be partly rationalized by the fit of temporary despair and resentment that some relatives of the deceased undergo, which may, for the time being at least, turn the thoughts of some of them from religion. When the deceased is a dear young man or girl, wedding songs may be ironically sung, and even, occasionally, wedding trills.

The trill is generally sharp, and is essentially a woman's song, though in exceptional cases men indulge in it. The woman, bending the head a little to one side, cries the four verses loudly, starting every verse with a high shrill (ā yīī) - an interjection presumably calling forth the attention of her audience to her - at the end of which her audience join with her in a unanimously quick (lu - lu - lu - lu - lu)

in which sound some men may join. The trills are employed to welcome guests or to add cheer to the feast. They as a rule intersperse songs, generally coming in quick succession from the same woman or many women who vie ^{with} one another in giving expression to their feelings in this way.

In the texts of the songs and trills recorded here, I have endeavoured to reproduce every text through the tashkil, as accurately as it could be colloquially recited in the vernacular by the local inhabitants, even showing as far as possible, the strictly local dialects. But as Professor Serjeant truly points out, though the tashkil cannot represent this pronunciation with great accuracy, yet it is, undoubtedly, adequate to give us some idea of it.

(a) RAIN SONGS : أغاني الاستسقاء :

١- يَا أُمَّ الْغَيْثِ (١) يَا رُوبَةَ (٢)
حَرَقْنَا هَا الشَّمْسَ
يَا أُمَّ الْغَيْثِ يَهْتِنُنَا
تَرْوِي الْأُزْرُوعَ رَأْمِينَا
(مجزوءة الرجس)

٢- رَأَتْ أُمَّ الْغَيْثِ تَجِيبُ الرَّعْدَ
رَأَتْ أُمَّ الْغَيْثِ تَجِيبُ الْعَطْرَ
رَأَتْ أُمَّ الْغَيْثِ تَجِيبُ الزَّلَازِلَ
مَا أَجَتْ إِلَّا الْقَمْعَ طُولَ التَّمِيدِ (٣)
مَا أَجَتْ إِلَّا الْقَمْعَ طُولَ الشَّجَرِ
مَا أَجَتْ إِلَّا الْقَمْعَ طُولَ السَّنَائِلِ (٤)
(مدية)

٢- يَا رَبِّي مَا هُوَ بِطَرٍّ
يَا رَبِّي قَبْلَ الشَّرْحِ (٥)
يَا رَبِّي شَوْهَا الْكَيْتَةُ
يَا رَبِّي يَا مَعْبُودِي
تَمَجَّلْ مَلِينَا بِالطَّرِّ
إِنَّا مِينُكَ وَبَيْنَ نُرُوقِ
طَحْنَا مَرُوقِي الْكُورُوسِنَا
يَا أَبُو الْكُورِ وَالْجُودِي
قَصَدْتِكَ وَأَنْتَ الْعَصُورُ
(مجزوءة الرجس)

(1) Umm-il-ghēith : the rain-bringing cloud; in Lebanon "Umm il-ghēith", or "Umm il-ghēid" refers to Virgin Mary. See Laḥd Khātir, "Lebanese Proverbs and Legends" (Arabic), al-Mashriq, May 1933, pp. 383 - 384.

(2) Rūbeh : resembling curdled milk.

(3) Qa'ūd : young camel. (4) Sanāsīl : stone fences.

(5) Sharshūh : colloquially, old dress. See p. 237.

١- تَصَدَّنَا اللَّهُ وَالْجَامِعُ يَجِي بِرُقْبَا لَا مِصْعُ
تَصَدَّنَا اللَّهُ وَالرَّافِعَاتُ يَجِي الطَّرُّ مَا دَنَعَاتُ
تَصَدَّنَا اللَّهُ وَالرَّافِعَاتُ يَجِي الطَّرُّ مَا لَوَادَاتُ
تَصَدَّنَا اللَّهُ وَسِتِّ السَّيْدَةُ تَجِي الطَّرُّ مِنْ بَعِيدَةٍ
تَصَدَّنَا اللَّهُ وَمَارِ السَّمَا تَجِي زُرْعَنَا الْيَبَاسُ
((مجزوءه الرجز))

٢- بِرِ السَّيْدَةُ مَا اسْتَحَيْتُ رَشِقِ الطَّرُّ بِعَبْرٍ نَيْكُ (1)
((مجزوءه الرجز))

١- مَارِ نَقْلًا جِنَا لَيْكُ شَنْبُ (2) الطَّرُّ دَاخِلُ لَيْكُ
وَنَعْنُ الْيَوْمَ مَيْدَكَ مُتَاحُ السَّمَاءِ لِي لَيْدَكَ (3)
((مجزوءه الرجز))

(1) See Chapter 1 , p. 50.

(2) Shakhb : stream of rain ; cf. Dār Ghassāneh's version:

شَنْبُ مَعْرَدُ اِبْتَرَجِيكَ
رَشِقِ الطَّرُّ بِعَبْرٍ نَيْكُ

(3) Muslims believe Heaven's gates open on the night of the 27th Ramadan, (lailatul-Qadr) : (the Night of Power).

Christians believe Heaven's gates open on the eve of the feast of the Cross and Epiphany (September 13th and January 6th respectively). See Chapter 6, Feasts; see Also T. Can'ān, "The Palestine Arab House" , JPOS vol.xii, No. 4.

٢- رَشُونَا يَا دَارَ الشَّيْخِ وَالْمَهْ عَلَيْكُمْ زَمَحْ
رَشُونَا بِالْمَنْخُلِ مَا رَمَتْ أَبْنَكُمْ يَدْخُلُ (1)
((جزوه الرجاء))

٨- هَمْبُو يَا هَمْبُو (2) هَمْبُو يَا هَمْبُو
حَطُوا اللَّيْلُ فِي الْجَمْرِ وَأَسْتُوا رَحْمَةَ اللَّهِ
((جزوه الرجاء))

١- يَا رَبِّي لَا تَوَاخِذْنَا كَلَّ مِنْ مَشَايِنَا
مَشَايِنَا هَالِكٌ بَارَ اللَّهُ يَحْرِقُهُمْ فِي النَّارِ
((جزوه الرجاء))

(1) Yudkhul : to marry.

(2) Hēmbū : O water ; embū is the baby's word for water.

٢- الأُمَراس : MARRIAGES (b)

١- وَأَحْسَنًا نُونًا عَالِدِيحُ يَا نَاسَ صَلُّوا عَلَيَّ
أَوْجِبْنَا الْأَطْيَالِ عَشْرَةَ مِنْ عِنْدِ تَاجِرِ مَغْرِبِي
(مجزؤ الرجـز)

٢- نِي يَمُّ مَرَسِكَ يَا مَرِيَسَ لَطَوِي ثَرِيَا أَوْ تَنَدِيَلِي
وَأَنَا لِأَنْرَحَ وَأَتَهَيَّنَا أَوْ نِي الدَّيْرُ صَارَ التَّكْلِيَلِي
لَطَوِي ثَرِيَا أَوْ شَمَعَا وَأَعَزَمَ أَحَابِي مَنَدِي
(مجزؤ الرجـز)

٣- صَلُّوا عَلَيَّ يَا لِي عَالِبَكُون صَلُّوا عَلَيَّ يَا لِي عَالِبَكُون
صَلُّوا عَلَيَّ يَا لِي عَالِبَكُون صَلُّوا عَلَيَّ يَا لِي عَالِبَكُون
(سـط)

٤- صَبُّوا مِنْ جَرَارِ الزَّيْتِ تَنْظَوِي مَا رَ تَقُولَا
اللَّهُ يَجِيرُكَ يَا (فَلَانُ) يَا (عَلَانُ) رَامِي الصُّوَلَا
صَبُّوا مِنْ جَرَارِ الزَّيْتِ تَنْظَوِي هَالرَفَنَوَاتِ
اللَّهُ يَجِيرُكَ يَا أَبُو (فَلَانُ) يَا رَامِي ظَمُونِ الْهَنَاتِ
صَبُّوا مِنْ جَرَارِ الزَّيْتِ تَنْظَوِي الْمَهِيَدَاتِ
اللَّهُ يَجِيرُكَ يَا خَمِي يَا رَدَادِ الْجَوَابَاتِ
صَبُّوا مِنْ جَرَارِ الزَّيْتِ تَنْظَوِي مَا رَ تَقُولَا
اللَّهُ يَجِيرُكَ يَا خَمِي رَدَادِ الْجَوَابَاتِ هَوْلَا (1)

(1) Hölle : much (colloquial).

مجزوءة
القطر

٥- مَنْ شَانِكُنْ يَا بِنْتَكَ
وَاتَّخَعَ لِمَيْسِ الْمَسِيحِ

لَصِيرَ أَنَا قَوَّاسٌ
وَأَوْخِلْتُ نَصْرَانِيَّةً

٦- لَا طَلَعَ عَلَى نَوْقِ الْحِمِطِ
يَا رَبَّنَا يَا إِلَهِي نُوْقُ
لَا طَلَعَ عَلَى نَوْقِ الْحِمِطِ
يَا رَبَّنَا يَا إِلَهِي نُوْقُ
لَا طَلَعَ عَلَى نَوْقِ الْحِمِطِ
يَا رَبَّنَا يَا إِلَهِي نُوْقُ

وَأَنَادِي كَثْرَمَسَهُ
الْفَرْخُ بِهَيْبَتِنَا
وَأَنَادِي يَا حَنَّةُ
تَطْعَمَنِي هَالِكَتَهُ
وَأَنَادِي يَا شَاطِرَ
تَجِبِرُ الْخَوَاطِرَ

٧- فَرَسَكَ يَا خَيْبِي
وَالْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ جَادِ طَيِّبِي

أَنْشَرَحَ لَكَ تَلْبِيَّ وَهَالِي
وَأَعْطَانِي رَبِّي الْعَالِي

((مجت))

٨- قَلَّ لِي مِنْ أَكْلِكَ
فِي صَلَاةٍ مَارَ نَقْلًا
قَلَّ لِي مِنْ أَكْلِكَ
مَا أَهْمَكِ الْعَمَلُ
قَلَّ لِي مِنْ أَكْلِكَ
فِي الصَّخْرَةِ الشَّرِيفَةِ
قَلَّ لِي مِنْ أَكْلِكَ
فِي الصَّخْرَةِ الشَّرِيفَةِ
قَلَّ لِي مِنْ أَكْلِكَ
فِي الصَّخْرَةِ الشَّرِيفَةِ

يَا (فُلَانُ) يَا زَيْمَنَ
وَمِنْ الْهَيْكَلَيْنِ
يَا (فُلَانُ) يَا زَيْمَنَ
وَمِنْ الشَّمْعَتَيْنِ
يَا بُوَيْمُونُ مَسْلَاحُ
عِنْدَ النَّبِيِّ جِرَاحُ
يَا بُوَيْمُونُ السُّودُ
وَالنَّبِيِّ دَاوُدُ
يَا (فُلَانُ) يَا زَيْمَنَ
وَحِرْجَةُ (١) بَابِ الدَّيْرِ

((مجزوءة المقارب)) (2)

(1) Harjet ; courtyard (colloquial).
(2) Not found in prosody; scansion warrants this appellation.

١- اَمَّا بَارِكْ اَمَّا بَارِكْ
كَمَا بَارِكْ مُحَمَّدًا
اَمَّا بَارِكْ اَمَّا بَارِكْ
كَمَا بَارِكْ اَمَّا بَارِكْ
اَمَّا بَارِكْ اَمَّا بَارِكْ
كَمَا بَارِكْ اَمَّا بَارِكْ
اَمَّا بَارِكْ اَمَّا بَارِكْ
كَمَا بَارِكْ اَمَّا بَارِكْ
اَمَّا بَارِكْ اَمَّا بَارِكْ
كَمَا بَارِكْ اَمَّا بَارِكْ
اَمَّا بَارِكْ اَمَّا بَارِكْ
كَمَا بَارِكْ اَمَّا بَارِكْ
اَمَّا بَارِكْ اَمَّا بَارِكْ
كَمَا بَارِكْ اَمَّا بَارِكْ
اَمَّا بَارِكْ اَمَّا بَارِكْ
كَمَا بَارِكْ اَمَّا بَارِكْ

(مشطور البسيط)

١٠- صَلُّوا عَلَيَّ مِنْ سِي
صَلُّوا عَلَيَّ مِنْ سِي
صَلُّوا عَلَيَّ مِنْ سِي
صَلُّوا عَلَيَّ مِنْ سِي
صَلُّوا عَلَيَّ مِنْ سِي

(1) Or Al-Hasan wal-Husein, 'Ali-Ibn- I'lin , a welli who has a shrine near Qibye in Ramallah District.

(2) Or Ibn Maryam.

١١- اِسْمُ اللّٰهِ عَلٰى (فَلَانِ) اِسْمُ اللّٰهِ عَلَيْهِ
حَطُّوا قَنَابِي الْعُطْرُ كَلِمَاتُ عَلَيْهِ
زَيْنُوَيْكَ مُزَيِّنُ فَحَسَّ نَسَائِ عِرَاقِ (1)
وَأَمْسَهُ حَزَنَانَهُ وَقَلْبَهَا مُشْتَاقِ (1)
زَيْنُوَيْكَ مُزَيِّنُ وَأَسْمُ اللّٰهِ عَلَيْهِ
وَرَشُّوا قَنَابِي الْعُطْرُ كَلِمَاتُ عَلَيْهِ
((مجزوء* البسيط))

١٢- اِطْلَعْتِ عَلٰى الْجَبَلِ اَشْكِي الْاَمِيرَ لِلّٰهِ
لَتَيْتِ (فَلَانُ) نَائِي نَائِي فِي اَحْضَانِ اللّٰهِ
كَسَفْتِ مِنْ وَجْهَتِهِ قَلْتِ اَمَا شَا اللّٰهُ
يَا هُنَّ خَاتِمُ دَهَبِ قَارِي كَسَلَامِ اللّٰهِ (2)
(مجزوء* البسيط)

Zaghārit

١٣- اَيْيِ وَالْحَمْدُ لِلّٰهِ صَبْرٌ قَلْبِي وَلَا قَصْرُ
اَيْيِ وَاَحْلُ حَبْلِ الْجَفَا مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا اَتَمَسْتِ
اَيْيِ وَاَحْيَاةٍ مِنْ لَوْ اَنْجَمَ اللّٰيْلُ بِسَرِّ
اَيْيِ اَوْ قَلْبِي هَبَاظَا السُّهُومِ بِشَعْرِ
(بسيط)

(1) 'rāq : rock (colloquial).

(2) Sung after the end of the wedding.

أَيُّيَا شَابِ (فَلَانٌ) يَا كَمِّي مَلَانٌ وَمَانٌ -١٤
أَيُّيَا قَصَادِ رَبِّ السَّمَاءِ يَا اللَّهُ بِطَعْمِكَ صَيَانٌ
أَيُّيَا قَصَادِ رَبِّ السَّمَاءِ وَشَوْنِهِمْ فِي الدَّارِ
وَأَنْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ يَا رَمِّي تَفْرَحُ بِهِمُ الْعَرَبَانُ
(بسيط)

أَيُّيَا اللَّهِ مَعَكَ اللَّهُ مَعَكَ -١٥
أَيُّيَا وَالْهَكَا مَا يَنْفَعُكَ
أَيُّيَا وَأَنْ كَانَ فِي دَارِ أَبِيكَ مَسَامِرٌ
أَيُّيَا إِخْلَمِيهَا وَخَلِيهَا مَعَكَ
(مجث)

أَيُّيَا أَهْلًا وَسَهْلًا يَا مَرْ أَحَابِييُ -١٦
أَيُّيَا مَشَاكُؤُنْدِي اللَّهُ كَبَابِي (1)
أَيُّيَا مَعَادِ الْمَاءِ اللَّهُ يَمَسُّكَ
أَيُّيَا نَوَيْتُوا عَلَى الْفَرَحِ اللَّهُ يَهْتِكُكُمْ
(بسيط)

(1) Kabābi : roasted meat.

آيَاتِي يَا تَاهِلَ الرَّبِّ رَاهِمَهُ -١٧
آيَاتِي وَأَزْبَعُ مَعَالِبَ رَهْمَتِ
آيَاتِي أَوْ هَالِكَةَ أَمَارِكِهِ يَا رَبِّ
آيَاتِي إِلَهِي تَعَمَّرَ الْهَيْمَتِ
(مجتت)

آيَاتِي يَا أُمَّ الْعَرُوسِ يَا بَرَكْتَهُ -١٨
آيَاتِي يَا لُطِيَّةَ (1) فِي شَبَكْتَهُ
آيَاتِي إِخْبَاءَ أَوْلَادِكَ
آيَاتِي تَتَمَلَّنَا بِالْبَرَكَةِ (2)
(مجتت)

آيَاتِي يَا رَهْمَتَهَا أَمَارِكُهُ -١٩
آيَاتِي بِالْمَسْبُوعِ بَرَكَاتِ
آيَاتِي كَمَا بَارَكَ الْمَسْبُوعِ
آيَاتِي عَلَى السَّبْعِ خَبَرَاتِ (3)
(مجتت)

(1) Luliyeh : from Lu'lu' : pearl.

(2) This is trilled by the bridegroom's mother.

(3) This is the bride's mother's answer.

٢٠- آمِي يَسْتَأْهِلُ الرَّبَّ رَايَسَهُ
آمِي وَالْمَسْكُ وَالْبَخْسُورُ نَيْسَا
آمِي يَا رَبَّتْهَا سَاعَةَ أَجَارِكُكُمْ
آمِي إِلَّيْ عَجُوزٌ (فَلانَ) نَيْسَا
((مجت))

٢١- آمِي يَسْتَأْهِلُ الرَّبَّ رَايَسَهُ
آمِي وَأَرْبَعُ مَعَالِبِ وَيَسْتَكْتُ
آمِي أَوْهَانَ سَاعَةَ أَجَارِكُ يَا رَبَّ
آمِي إِلَّيْ أَعْمَرُ الْبَيْتِ
((مجت))

٢٢- آمِي حَوِطَتِكَ بِاللَّيْلِ وَحَدِهِ
آمِي وَالثَّانِيَةَ تَشْتَبِهِينَ
آمِي وَالثَّلَاثَةَ الْعُلَى مَرْيَمَ
آمِي وَالرَّابِعَةَ تَرُدُّ عَنْكَ الْعَيْنَ
((مجت))

۲۳- آيَاتِي وَالْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ يَا اللَّهُ
آيَاتِي زَلَّكَ الْهَمُّ أَنْ شَأَ اللَّهُ
آيَاتِي وَالْعَالُ جَرَّارِي (1)
آيَاتِي وَالنَّصْرُ مِنْ قَدِّ اللَّهِ

((مجت))

۲۴- آيَاتِي يَا (فَلَان) يَا مِيَّي
آيَاتِي يَا سَاوِي فِي أُيْدِي
آيَاتِي يَا رَبِّي يُطَوِّقُ فَرْكُ
آيَاتِي تَمَّ هَيْبَتَكَ عَلَيَّ

((مجت))

۲۵- آيَاتِي يَا نَاصِرًا يَا مَنْصُورًا
آيَاتِي يَا خَالِقَ الدَّوْدَةِ فِي السُّورِ
آيَاتِي سُبْحَانَكَ يَا رَبِّي
آيَاتِي يَا جَاهِرَ الْعِظَمِ الْعَكْسُورِ

((مجت))

۲۶- آيَاتِي يَا بَابَ الْمَهْنَدِ عَلِيَّ
آيَاتِي لِرَفْعَةِ يَدَيَّ
آيَاتِي يَا رَبِّي أَتَخَرَّجُ قَلْبِي
آيَاتِي قَدْ مَا بَكَّوْنَا مِنْ يَّي

((مجت))

(1) Jarrari : flowing

٢٧- آيَاتِي صَلُّوا عَلَى عَمْسِ بْنِ مَرَمٍ
آيَاتِي صَلَاةَ إِصْلَاتِيْنَ
آيَاتِي صَلَاةَ ابْتِخَارِي الْإِلْمِيْنَ ((مجت))
آيَاتِي صَلَاةَ بَتْرَدِ فَنَكِّمِ الْعَمِيْنَ

٢٨- آيَاتِي إِسْمُ اللَّهِ عَلَى بِنْتِ الْجُودِ لَا سَعَتْ
آيَاتِي يَا بِنَادِيَّ رُوقٍ مِنْ رُوسِ الْجِبَالِ طَلَّتْ (بسيط)
آيَاتِي يَا رَيْتَ مِنْ شَانَتْ رَجَالِنَا وَمَا سَعَتْ
آيَاتِي بِحِيَابِ الْعَزِّ (1) قَبْلَ الشَّمْسِ مَا وَكَّتْ

٢٩- آيَاتِي يَا نَاسَ صَلُّوا عَالِ الشَّيْ دَاوِدَ
آيَاتِي وَأَحْنَا رَمَانِيْنَ فِي رَاسِ عَوْدِ
آيَاتِي حَلُونِ حَلُونِ وَلَوْنَا عَيْدِ سَوْدِ (بسيط)
آيَاتِي وَيَنْ شَانْنَا وَأَخَذْنَا رُوحَهُ عَلَيْهِ بَتَعُودِ

٣٠- آيَاتِي انْتَحُوا بَابَ السِّدَارِ
آيَاتِي خَلُّوا الْعَزِيْ بِهَيْتِي
آيَاتِي وَأَنَا طَلَبْتُ مِنَ اللُّبَّةِ
آيَاتِي وَاللَّهُ مَا فِيرَ ظَنِّي ((مجت))

(1) 'Izz ; used ironically to mean the opposite; humiliation or a catastrophe; people in a wedding refrain from uttering words referring to a tragedy.

٣١- أَيْي لَا تَحْسَبُونَا يَا نَاسَ
أَيْي عَقَبَ الْمَوْتُ لَدَيْنَا
((مجتث)) أَيْي إِحْنَا اللَّهُ مَعَانَا
أَيْي وَكَلَّ النَّاسُ أَجَمَ لَيْسَانَا

٣٢- أَيْي وَسَطَ الرِّزَاقِ ابْتِغَرَحُوا
أَيْي قَلْبَ الْأَعَادِي ابْتِجَرَحُوا
((مجتث)) أَيْي وَاللَّي مَاتَ اللَّهُ يَرْحَمُوا
أَيْي تَسَلَّمُوا رَجَالَنَا مَطَرَحُوا

٣٣- أَيْي يَا طَيْرَ طَائِرِ عَالَمِي
أَيْي هَدَى عَلَنَ الْبِلَانِ (1)
((مجتث)) أَيْي وَهَدَى نَوْرَتِكَ يَا (فِلَان)
أَيْي وَأَنْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ مِنْدَ (فِلَانِ) بِالصَّبِيَانِ

٣٤- أَيْي وَلِيْ ائْتَا فِشْرَ سَكَا
أَيْي وَالِي ائْتَا فِشْرَ مَسَامِ
((مجتث)) أَيْي بِمَعْدٍ فِي الْأَيْسَامِ
أَيْي نَدَّرَ عَلِيَّ لَوْ طَاعَتِكَ الرُّهْبَانِ
أَيْي لَصَوْمٍ وَأَصْلِيَّ وَأَتَدِمُ لِلْخَضِرِ قُرْبَانِ (2)

(1) Billān : green thorn tree.

(2) One of the rare cases where the trill consists of 5 verses.

٢٥- أَيْيَ يَا (فُلَانٌ) يَا سَلَةَ تَوْتُ
أَيْيَ يَا مَوْجَهُ (1) يَنْبُوتَ (2)
أَيْيَ وَالْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ يَا اللَّهُ (فُلَانٌ)
أَيْيَ (فُلَانٌ) كَبْرٌ وَسِرٌّ أَيْسُوتَ

((مجت))

٢٦- أَيْيَ يَا رَبَّ خَلِيٍّ بَيْنَهَا
أَيْيَ يَا رَبَّ كَرَمٍ مَالِكٍ
أَيْيَ أَطْلَعَ الْجِهَارَ (3) الْعَالِيَّ
أَيْيَ أَطْلَعَ الْقَمَرَ مِنْ دَارِهِ

((مجت))

٢٧- أَيْيَ (يَا فُلَانَهُ) يَا وَزْءَ
أَيْيَ يَا تَفْلَحَهُ مِنْ لَمْرَةٍ
أَيْيَ اللَّهُ يَخْلُقُكَ جَوْزَكَ
أَيْيَ وَتُضَلِّيَ لِي مَا الْعَزَّةَ

((مجت))

(1) Mwajjah : whose surface is covered with.

(2) Yanbūt : a plant.

(3) Jihūz : bride's outfit.

أغاني الميلاد والاطفال (e) BIRTH SONGS AND CHILDREN

١- نَدْرُكُ يَا (فَلَانُ) هِيَ أَنَا أُوَيْتُهُ
وَأَلْحَمِدُ لِلَّهِ يَا اللَّهُ الَّذِي مَرَّ بِبَيْتِهِ

...

نَدْرُكُ يَا (فَلَانُ) وَدَيْتُهُ بِأَيْدِي
نَدْرُكُ لَبِيحَتِهِ يَا رَبِّي عَلَيَّ

((مجزوء البسيط))

...

نَدْرُكُ يَا (فَلَانُ) فَتَدِي رَطْلُ زَيْتِي
وَأَلْحَمِدُ لِلَّهِ اللَّهُ كَمَرُ بَيْتِي

...

نَدْرُكُ يَا (فَلَانُ) أَشْرَحُهُ قَلْبِي
وَأَلْحَمِدُ لِلَّهِ جَادُ مِلِينَا رَبِّي

٢- يَا حَبْلَ لَوْلُو (1) فِي الْمَهْدِ لَظْمَتْ (2) يَا ابْنِي عَزِيمًا أَوْ مِنْ اللَّهِ طَلَبْتُ
يَا حَبْلَ لَوْلُو فِي الْمَهْدِ لَظْمَتْهُ نِ ابْنِي حَنَّانٌ أَوْ مِنْ رَبِّي شَحَدْتُ
يَا حَبْلَ لَوْلُو فِي الْمَهْدِ مَدَيْتُهُ (فَلَانُ) وَحَدَّ اللَّهُ مَعَمَّرَ بَيْتَهُ
((رَجَز))

(1) Lālū : colloquial for lu'lu'.

(2) Lazamtuh : i.e. on which (string) I threaded pearls.

نظمت

Birth Songs and Children - Zagarit:

آمِّي مَادَ الرَّبِّ عَلَيْنَا عَادَ
آمِّي عَادَ مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا تَخَلَعْنَا الْأَوْتَادَ
آمِّي وَالْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ يَا رَبِّي
آمِّي إِلَهِي مَا أَشَمَّتِ الْعَدَوَاتُ (1)

-٢-

((مجت))

-
- (1) The general sense of this is that God has returned His bounty on us after our complete loss of property indicated in the dislocation of the tent peg.

d. i. BAPTISM

المعمدان :

١- قُلْ لِي وَهِنْ أَمَدَكَ يَا (فَلَانُ) يَا وَهِنْ
مَعْدِي يَا سَيِّ بَيْنَ السَّيِّكَيْنِ ((مجزوء المتقارب))
مَهِيكِلِ الْمَسْلَرَا أَوْ مَضِرِ الشَّمَعَتَيْنِ

Baptism - Zaghārit

٢- أَيْتِي بِسَآهَلِ الرَّبِّ رَيْسَه
أَيْتِي وَالْمَسْكَ وَالْبَخُورَ لَيْهَا
((مجت)) أَيْتِي يَا رَبَّهَا سَاعَةً جَارِكَا
أَيْتِي إِلَيَّ تَعَمَدَ (فَلَانُ) لَيْهَا

٣- أَيْتِي يَا رَبَّهَا سَاعَةً جَارِكَا
أَيْتِي بِالسَّبْحِ بِرَكَاتِ
((مجت)) أَيْتِي كَمَا بَارَكَ الْمَسْبُوحُ
أَيْتِي عَلَى الْمَسْبُوحِ خُبْرَاتِ

d.ii. CIRCUMCISION الطهور :

٤- طَهْرَه يَا طَهَّرَ حَتَّ تَفَاحِسَه
وَهْتَه (1) فَرِحَانَه وَأَخْتَه مَشْتَانَه
طَهْرَه يَا طَهَّرَ وَوَارَه لَامُسَه
يَا دَمِيعَ الْعَدَلِ نَقَطَتْ عَلَى كَمْسَه
أَوْجَهْنَا الْعَطَهَّرَ وَأَصَلَه مِنْ الْخَلِيلِ
أَوْلَبُوا الْعَدَلِ مِنْ خَاصِ الْعَرَمِ

(1) Meimtuh : colloquially "his mother" .

أَوْجِنَا الْعَطَهَّـرَ وَأَصْلَهُ مِنْ حَلَبٍ
أَوْلَبُوا الْمَدَلَّـلَ سَاطًا مِنْ ذَهَبٍ
أُوبَاللَّهِ يَا مَطَهَّـرَ أُوْبَاللَّهِ عَلَيْكَ
سِنِّنَ أَمَاسِكَ أَوْخَفِّفْ لِيَدَيْكَ
تَوَجَّعْتَ (1) الْمَدَلَّـلَ بِنِعْتَبَ طَلَبِكَ
طَهْرَةَ يَا مَطَهَّـرَ حَتَّ نَائِي مُرَاقٍ
بِي الصَّخْرَةَ الشَّرْمِيْنَةَ حَتَّ سُرِّ الْبِرَاقِ
طَهْرَةَ يَا مَطَهَّـرَ عَلَى الْقَشِّ النَّاشِفِ
جِبْلَا (2) يَا بِيَا بَدَلَةَ الْكُتْفِ
طَهْرَةَ يَا مَطَهَّـرَ عَلَى الْقَشِّ الْأَخْضَرِ
جِبْلَا يَا بِيَا بَدَلَةَ الْعَمْسِكْرِ
طَهْرَةَ يَا مَطَهَّـرَ أُوْبَاللَّهِ لِبَاهِ (3)
يَا دَمْعَ الْمَدَلَّـلَ نَقَطْ عَلَى الْجِهَانِ
((مجزوءه البسيط))

(1) Nōja'it : colloquially for (in wajja'it) : if you pain.

(2) Jībla : village accent for (jīblu) : bring him.

(3) Labāh : for his father.

شَمْعَةٌ طَهَّرَ الصَّبِيَانَ لَمَلَّتْهَا عَلَى الرَّئِيسِ
لَنْدَاهُ (1) وَأَقُولُ يَا حَبِيبِي (مُحَمَّدٌ) فِي أَوَّلِ الزَّوْفَةِ
شَمْعَةٌ طَهَّرَ الصَّبِيَانَ لَمَلَّتْهَا بِأَبِ الْبَدَارِ
وَالَّذِي تَجِي تَهَيَّنِي لِبَيْتِهَا شُكَّالُ الْوَانِ
((مجزوء البسيط))

Circumcision - Zaghārit:

أَبِي يَا مَا تَعَدُّوا عَلَى الْحَيْطَانِ
أَبِي أَوْتَعَاهِدُوا بِدِيهِمْ
أَبِي وَقَالُوا رَبِّي مَا تَعْطِيهِمْ
أَبِي رَبِّي عَادَ وَقَلَعَ مِنْهُمْ
((مجتث))

أَبِي الْعَرْسُ مَا هُوَ فَرْحَةٌ
أَبِي وَلَا رَفْعَ الْجَدْرَانِ
أَبِي وَلَا طُلُوعَ الْحَيْطَانِ
أَبِي مَا فَرْحَةٌ إِلَّا طَهَّرَ الصَّبِيَانَ
((مجتث))

أَبِي هَذَا الْزَّفَانُ ضَيْقٌ مَا دَأَسَتْ بَيْتَهُ
أَبِي مَا دَأَسُوا إِلَّا (فَلَانٌ) يَا نُورَ هَيْبِي
أَبِي يَا نُورَ مَفْرُقِ النَّوْرِ
أَبِي يَا (فَلَانٌ) يَا مَسْبَحَةَ بِنُورِ
أَبِي لِي أَيْدِ الْأَنْدِيَّةِ
((مجتث))

(1) Landah : verily I shall call out.

(e) - LULLABIES :

تَهْلِيل

<p>يا لَم الشَّعِّعِ وَالْبَخُورِ الْبَلَّحِ أَتَيْتَنِي مِنَ الصَّلَاةِ سَلَامَ اللَّهِ عَلَيْكَ أَنْتِي (1)</p>	<p>1- يَا عَذْرَا يَا أُمَّ النَّسْرُ يَا عَذْرَا يَا أُمَّ الْإِلَهِ أَوْ يَا عَذْرَا يَا سَيْتِي</p>
<p>وَأَنْتِي رَمَشَكَ عَلَيْهِ وَأَنْتُمْ الْبَطْرُوكُ عَلَيْهِ (3)</p>	<p>2- بَرَجْمِلُهُ (2) يَا حَمَامَهُ (فَلَانُ) بَزْلُ مَالِسْرَايَهُ</p>
<p>وَأَنْتُمْ بِالسَّلَامِ اللَّهُ يَحْفَظُهُ وَحَيْرُهُ بِأَلَيْهِ مَا يُغَيِّبُ مَنَا وَأَنْ حَضَرَ بَوَسَّسْنَا</p>	<p>3- بَرَجْمِلُهُ يَا حَمَامَهُ بَدُو يَنْتَامُ بِسَرِيرِهِ بَدُو يَنْتَامُ وَتَهْنَتْنَا وَأَنْ غَابَ بَوَحْشْنَا</p>
<p>قَوْلٌ لِلْبَاهَا بِحَيِّ رَبِّ السَّمَاءِ يَنْصُرُهُ</p>	<p>4- يَا قَوْلُ قَمَرْنَا يَا (فَلَانُ) خَاتَمُهُ فِي خَنْصَرِهِ</p>
<p>سَمْنَةٌ وَهَلَّ لِي الْجَرَّةُ وَأَبْنُرِي الْكُوكِشَ (4) لِيرَهُ</p>	<p>5- حَجَّاجَةٌ يَا بَيْتَ اللَّهِ مَنْوَكِلَ أَنَا وَالنَّبِيَّ</p>

(1) Stephan, "Palestinian Nursery Rhymes and Songs," JPOS ,
vol. XII, No. 1-2 , p. 70.

(2) Barjmīlūh : soo to him

(3) Beit Jala.

(4) Kōkīsh : colloquially for small dog.

٦- هَلِّي لَهٗ يَا حَمَامَةَ
يَا مَحَبِّينَ النَّبِيَّ
هَلَكْتَ مَكَّةَ وَقَالَتْ
مَرَحًا بِالشَّيْخِ مَنْكُورًا
وَأَنْتَ يَا رَمْلًا طَائِفَةً
سَلْمُولِي طَائِفَةً
مَرَحًا يَا زَائِرِينَ
يَا شَبَابَ يَا تَائِبِينَ

٧- رُوِّي يَا بِنْتَهُ
(أَكَّ مَخْلِيَّ أَبْنِي)
رُوِّي يَا بِنْتَهُ
(مَخْلِيَّ أَبْنِي)
رُوِّي يَا جَائِعَةً
(مَخْلِيَّ أَبْنِي)
حَاجَجِي (2)
(يَنْبُجَرُ أَبْنِي)
تَعَالِي يَا بِنْتَهُ
فِي الدَّارِ يُونُسِي
تَعَالِي يَا بِنْتَهُ
(1) مَخْلِيَّ أَبْنِي
تَعِي يَا جَائِعَةً
يُتَضَلُّ العَاجِئَةَ
بَطْنِ العَاجِجِي
(3) أَوْ يَجِيبُ العَاجِئَةَ

٨- يَا عَذْرَا تَعَالِي
أَوْ يَبِي حَبِيبِي
وَأَرْكِي عَلَيْهِ
أَوْ كَلِّبِي عَلَيْهِ

))
مَرْحًا
ط))

- (1) Hisshhe : originally hashshiyye , colloquially a large jar.
- (2) Hajjāje : pē pilgrims.
- (3) Beit Jala - last couple sung when rocking the baby in the arms. Stephan, op. cit., p. 27.

(ف) - SHRINES AND SAINTS : MAR JIRYIS (ST. GEORGE):

- ١- يَا خَضْرُ الْأَخْضَرِ نَذْرُكَ لِيَوْمِهِ خَرُوفٌ لَدَيْهِهَا مِنَ السُّوقِ لِأَشْتَرِيَهُ
يَا خَضْرُ الْأَخْضَرِ نَذْرُكَ عَلَيَّ لَنْ رَوْحُوا الْغَيْبَ لِيَوْمِي بِعَمِيٍّ
((بسط))
- ٢- هِيَ يَا مَارَ جَرِيْسَ جَدَلٌ إِشْعَرُوكَ دَشَرَتْ أَشْغَالِي أَوْجَيْتَ أَرْوَكَ
وَأَتَعَشَّرَ لِيَوْمِي تَمَنُّ بِخُوكَ يَتَقَبَّلُ اللَّهُ يَا أَبَا الْعَمِيُونَا
((بسط))
- ٣- يَا خَضْرُ الْأَخْضَرِ فَطِيٌّ بِعَنْدِيكَ يَا خَضْرُ الْأَخْضَرِ (فَلَانٌ) دَخِيكَ
يَا خَلِيلَ اللَّهِ إِحْمِي بِيَوْمِيكَ يَا خَضْرُ الْأَخْضَرِ (فَلَانٌ) دَخِيكَ
يَا خَضْرُ الْأَخْضَرِ يَا عَلِيَّ بْنَ عَلِيٍّ تَحْرُسُ شَهَابَنَا مِنْ الْحَمْدِ وَالْعَيْنِ
((بسط))
- ٤- يَا خَضْرُ الْأَخْضَرِ أَوْيَا بْنَ دَاوُدَ تَحْرُسُ شَهَابَنَا مِنْ ضَرْبِ الْبَارُودِ
يَا خَضْرُ الْأَخْضَرِ يَا بِيَّ الْيَاسِ تَحْمِي شَهَابَنَا مِنْ ضَرْبِ الرِّصَاصِ
((بسط))
- ٥- يَا خَضْرُ الْأَخْضَرِ نَعْنِ الْيَوْمِ زَوَارِكَ وَأَحْنَا الْغَرَابَا (١) وَدَلُونَا عَلَى بَاهِكَ
يَا مَرَحِبَا بِكَ وَمِنْ ذَلِكَ وَمِنْ جَاهِكَ يَا مَرَحِبَا بِالطَّرِيقِ الْعَرَفَتْنَا بِكَ
((بسط))

(1) Gharāba : foreigners.

٧- يَا خَضْرَ الْأَخْضَرِ لَا تَرْخِي أَلْحَالِ ابْنَا يَا دَمْعًا سَحَلَتْ (1) بَلَّتْ وَسَائِدُنَا
يَا خَضْرَ الْأَخْضَرِ تَقَفْ مَعَنَا تَبَارَكْنَا نَعْنُ فَرِيحِينَ تَرَجَّعْنَا لَاهَالِنَا
((هـ))

٨- إْحْنَا النَّصَارَى وَالشَّمْعُ لِي أَيْدِينَا عَامَارُ جَرِيْسٍ وَالْخَضْرُ صَلِينَا
يَا خَضْرَ الْأَخْضَرِ يَا نَبِي دَاوُدَ يَحْرَمَكُو اللَّهُ مِنْ عَيْنِ الْحَسَوَدِ
يَا خَضْرَ الْأَخْضَرِ يَا نَبِي الْهَاسِ تَحْرَسَلِي الْوَلَادِي مِنْ مَيِّنِ النَّاسِ
((ز))

١- اللَّهُ يَا لَيْلُ اللَّهُ يَا لَيْلُ
وَالْأَخْرَى لَيْلُ وَالْأَخْرَى لَيْلُ
كَلَّا اللَّهُ يَا خُوِي نَشْطَحُ بِكَ وَمِنْ
مَا الْخَضْرُ مَا مِنْ فُلَيْلُ (2)
يَعْنِي مَنَا الظَّالِمِينَ (3)
((مجزوءه التدارك)) (4)

(1) Sahsala : colloquial for sahala (possibly); flowed.

(2) See p. 249.

(3) May be said in prose.

(4) Though not found in traditional Arabic prosody, yet scansion warrants this appellation.

تصديقه مار جريس

١٠- أول ما يهدي بسدح في مار جريس سيدنا
بوجريس راج الحرب ومات خلف لجريس حسكرات
يا حلالسي يا مالسي

أوتام جريس هو وامسه من مدينتهم وار تحلوا
أطاحوا بيروت أنزلوا فيها انهم وأحزابسي
يا حلالسي يا مالسي

لها وحش ما كان عنيه قدح سيران
جمعوا بعضهم وأطولوه كل يوم لغة أو انسابسي
يا حلالسي يا مالسي

راج الزمان أت الامام
أني دور الطيك الذي قال

دورك يا ملكك دورك ما حدا خالف شورك
قدم بنتك تصطورك (1) قدمها للحججوا سي
يا حلالسي يا مالسي

قال يا من ياخذ ملكتي أو يعنني مني وعن بسيتي
دورك يا ملكك دورك دورك الآن دورك
يا حلالسي يا مالسي

(1) Taştürak: colloquial for "dastürak", with your permission.

قَدِمَ بِنَتِكَ تَصْطُورَكَ قَدِمَهَا لِلْحَيَوَانِ
 لَيْسَ بِنْتُ لَيْسَ الْكَلِيلُ وَأَدْمُو مَا خَدُّو دُو تَسِيلُ

يَا خَلَالِي يَا مَالِي
 أَوْطَيْحَ (1) بِنْتَهُ تَدْرَجُ كَلَّ الْعَدَايِنُ تَنْفَرَجُ
 فِي مَرْتَةِ جَرِيْسِ الْخَيْالِ اللَّهُ يَرْزُقُنَا مِنْ مَا كَانَ

يَا حَلَالِي يَا مَالِي
 قَالْ هَا يَا صَبِيَّةَ مَالِكِ أَخْبِرْنِي عَنْ حَالِكِ
 قَالَتْ يَا شَبَّ أَهْرَبَ أَهْرَبَ مَا نَيْكَ تَحِي وَلَا تَضْرَبُ

يَا حَلَالِي يَا مَالِي
 (2) بَحْرُ زَيْنِي مَا تَضْرَبُ رَوْحُ خَلِيْنِي لِي أَمْرَادِي
 قَالْ يَا صَبِيَّةَ لَا تُخَانِي أَنْتِ أَيْمَانُكَ أَنْفِي

يَا حَلَالِي يَا مَالِي
 أَنَا مِنْ قَطْطُهُ مَا مَعْنِيْشُ أَنَا مَا زُ جَرِيْسِ النَّصْرَانِي
 أَوْحِيْنِ مَا شَانَهُ مَا رَ عَلَيْهِ أُوْدِي الرَّمْحَ بَيْنَ مَيْنِهِ

يَا حَلَالِي يَا مَالِي
 زَهْرَتِ الصَّبِيَّةِ ذَاكَ الْحَيْنِ أَوْجَدَ السَّيْفَ وَتَمَلَّ التَّيْنِ
 كَدَّو جَاهِلُهُ سَمِعَ فِدَايِنِ جَرِيْنَا خَلْفَ الْحَيْطَانِي

يَا حَلَالِي يَا مَالِي
 لَحْمَ التَّيْنِ يَتَدْرَجُ الْوَفَّ النَّاسُ تَنْفَرَجُ
 جَابِ النَّصَارَى أَوْ أَشْهَمَ أَوْتَسَعُ مَعَهُ الْكَفَّ عَمْدَهُمْ

يَا حَلَالِي يَا مَالِي

مجزوءة الرجز

(1) Tayyah : colloquial , brought down.
 (2) Bahhir : colloquial , look.

MAR ELIAS (St. Elias).

١١- يَا مَارَ الْيَاسِ لَطَوَى لَكَ قَامَكَ
لَنْ أَجُو الْغِيَابَ خَيْرٌ وَهَنَابَا
يَا نَبِيَّ الْيَاسِ لَا رَفَعَ قَامَكَ
إِنْ رَجَعُوا فِهَابَنَا خَيْرٌ وَهَنَابَا
(وَاذْكُرْ)

١٢- صَلُّوا عَلَيَّ سَيِّدَنَا هَمْسِي
وَمَارَ الْيَاسِ النَّبِيَّ الْبَهَادِيَّ
هَلْ شَرَّفَ اللَّهُ ذِكْرَكَ
وَنَطَقُوا فَرَّالَ الْوَادِيَّ (1)
(مجزوءة الرجاء)

١٣- يَا مَارَ الْيَاسِ أَدُونَا اللَّيَّ جِنَا
وَإِحْنَا النَّصَارَى وَالشَّمْعُ فِي لَيْدِينَا
(2)
((رجاء))

Zaghārit

١٤- أَيَّيَّيَّ يَا مَارَ الْيَاسِ يَا جَارِيَّ مُجَاوِرِيَّ
أَيَّيَّيَّ جَارَ السَّرْوَرِ مَانْتَشَ جَارَ خَوَانِسَهْ
أَيَّيَّيَّ صَاحِبَ الْعَجِيْبَةِ بَتَّظْهَرُ فِي عَجَابَاتِكَ
أَيَّيَّيَّ هُمُ الضِّيقِ اِبْتِشَعُ فِي جِرَانَاتِكَ
(بسيط)

(1) May be the introduction to any song of the tune , " Ya ḥalāli ya māli".

(2) Adōbna: colloquial for "just now".

THE PROPHET MUHAMMAD (In-Nabi)

١٥- وَأَوَّلَ مَا نَهَدَى مُحَمَّدٌ نَبِيْنَا
وَيَسْنَ بِنَ مُرَيْمَ فَالِي عَلَيْنَا
يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ بِيْتَلَعُ لِينَا
جَمَعْنَا إِلَهُم نَحْنُ طَائِعِينَا
(..... يَط)

١٦- إِشْمِسُ طَلَعَتْ وَمَا تَطَّلَعُ وَمَا يَنْتَوِرُ
إِلَّا تُشَاهِدُ جَمَالَكَ يَا مَهِي النَّوْرُ
(..... يَط)

١٧- مَا أَحْلَى مَدِيْحَكَ يَا نَبِيَّ اللهُ
لِي بِب (1) حَظِيْرَتِكَ نَصْبِ الْعَنَكَبُوتِ
(..... ز)

١٨- يَا حَاضِرُنْ كَلِّمْ
بَلَدَ مَكَنَتِهَا النَّبِيِّ
يَا رَابِحِيْنَ فَالنَّبِيِّ
يَا سَمْعِدْ مِنْ رَاحٍ
قُولُوا مَعَايَ دَسَنَسْتَوْرٍ
صَبَتْ تَشْعِشَعُ نَسُورٍ
شَوْصَةَ الشَّكْكِهَاكَ
لِبَيْتِ النَّبِيِّ مَشْتَقِي
(مجزوءه البسيط)

(1) Bab : shortened from bāb : door (for the metre).

The Virgin Mary : (Il Adhra).

١٩- طَلَّتِ الْعَدْرَا وَقَالَتْ
مَرَحًا يَا زَلَّيْرِينَ
وَأَلْتَسُونَ الْهَادِلِيْنَ
وَأَنْظُرُوا قَبْرَ الْمَسِيْحِ
وَأَنْظُرُوا مَقَرَّ الصَّلِيْبِ (2)
وَمَخْطَاكُمْ تَادِمِيْنَ

(مجزوء السمريل)

٢٠- أَمْدَحْ لِعَرِيْمٍ لِي الْأَلَامِ
وَأَمْدِيْ لَهَا مِنِّي السَّلَامِ
جَاءَتْ يَسْتَوْعِ مِنْهَا فُلَانٌ
فِي بَيْتِ لَعِيْمٍ يَا كِرَامِ
يَا حَلَالِي يَا مَالِي

طَلُّكَ أَجْنُومَا سَائِرِينَ
مِنْ هَيْرُودَسَ سَائِلِيْنَ
مَعَ الْكَوَاكِبِ سَاجِدِينَ
لِيْنِ يُوْجِدُ الْفُلَامِ
يَا حَلَالِي يَا مَالِي

سَأَلَهُمْ هَيْرُودَسَ الْمَنْجُوسَ
لَنْ وَجَدْتُوْهُمُ الْعَرِيْمَسَ
سَأَلَهُمْ مِنْ مَحِيِّ النَّفْسِ
فَعَجَبْتُوْنِي بِالْتَمَامِ
يَا حَلَالِي يَا مَالِي

(1) Jalājil: The Golgotha, where Christ was crucified.

(2) Imghazzi: for maghazz, where the Cross was transfixed.

أَجْوُ الْمَلُوكِ تَحُو الْقِيَامَ سَجَدُوا لِهَيْبَتِهِ بِاحْتِرَامٍ
قَدَّمُوا الْهَدَايَا أَثْمَانًا لَهَا رُبْرًا وَطَبَّانًا
يَا حَلَالِي يَا مَالِي

أُمُّ الرَّمَاعِ تَرْعَى قَنَمَهَا أَوْ سَاهِرَةٌ قَدَمَهَا
مَلَكَ السَّمَاءِ بَشَّرَهَا وَأَخْبَرَهَا مِنَ الْبَلَاءِ صَارًا
يَا حَلَالِي يَا مَالِي

يَا بَيْتَ لَحْمِ الْإِنْسَانِي جُوكَ مَلُوكِ الشَّرْقِ زَوَارِ
الَّتَجْمُ يَمْشِي مَعَهُمْ هَيْتَ لَحْمِ الْعَوْلَادِ الْحَقَانِي
يَا حَلَالِي يَا مَالِي

((مجزوء الرَّمَل))

خَرَّ النَّجْمُ مِنْ نُوْقِ رَأْسِ الطَّلَلِ مِنْ نُوْقِ هَذَا هُوَ وَطَيْدِ الْعَوْلَادِ مَلِكِ الْمَلُوكِ
هَذَا هُوَ الَّذِي تَنَحَّجُ لِنَابِ السَّمَاءِ مِنْ صَدَقَ بِأَسْمِ هَيْبَتِهِ (1) فِي السَّمَاءِ
يَوْمَ هَا (2) وَوَدِدْتُ أَنْ تَجْتَ الْأَرْضَ وَالسَّمَاءَ
الَّتِي مَا يُصَدَّقُ بِسُوءِ وَاحِدٍ أَصْفَرَتْ كَمَا الْفَصَّاحِ وَالْقَنْدِيلِ
يَسُوءُ طَاحَ لِبَابِ الْجَحِيمِ وَسُدَّ هَذَاكَ مَجْتَوًى وَقَلْبُهُ هَيْبَلُ (3)
وَصَارَ الْعُلَمَاءُ ضَيْقٌ وَشَدَّةٌ وَشَرَحُوهُ فِي كِتَابِ الْإِنْجِيلِ
وَصَوَّمُوا وَصَلُّوا وَفَعَلُوا الْخَيْرَ دِيمَةً (4) صَارَ كَالْمَخْزِيِّ حَيْلُ الْهَيْبَلِ
فَمَشُوا عَلَى الدُّنْيَا بِغَيْرِ جَمِيلِ

((هَيْبَل))

(1) Hūtū: for (hū): he; a local Bethlehem vulgarism not used in Beitt Jala.

(2) yōmin ha: abbreviation of (yom annaha), on the day when

(3) Habīl: colloquialism, foolish.

(4) Dīme: colloquialism for (dā'im): always.

٢١ - كَيْفَ الْهَتُولُ تَحْمِلُ وَتَوْلِدُ ابْنًا مِنْ فَيْرٍ مَا زَرَعُ وَفَيْرٍ ابْنُ دَارٍ
 مِنْهَا مِنْهَا (1)

أَنَا مَلَكُ اللَّهِ قَدْ أَرْسَلْتَنِي لَمَّا رَأَيْتِ وَارِدَهُ عَلَى الْعَيْنَةِ
 عَلَى الْعَيْنَةِ

قَالَ انْرَحِي يَا طَاهِرَةٌ طَاهِرِي رَبِّ السَّمَاءِ مِنْ بَعْتِ وَأَطَاكِي
 أَطَاكِي

سَتَجِبْنِي وَتَوْلِدِي مَوْلَاكَ مَوْلِدِ مَطْلَةٍ مَا أَرَيْتِ بِالْعَيْنِ
 بِالْعَيْنِ

((رجوع))

٢٢ - طَاحَ الطِّبْكَ جَبْرِي أَمِنَّا لِّلْمِيْنِ

قَالَ أَشْرِي يَا بَكْرِي أَنْتِ تَحْلِي بِئِيْنِ
 فَحَلِي بِالرُّوْحِ أَنْتِ تَلْدِي مِن

رَدَّتِ الْمَسْدَرَا وَقَالَتْ يَا رَسُوْلُ
 كَيْفَ تَعْنِي أَحْمَدُ وَأَنَا بِنْتُ بَعُوْلُ

لَا تَوَاخِذِي بِي أَبْهَذَا الْجَهْلِي
 اللَّهُ أَتَوَاخِذِي مِنْ رُوْحِهِ قُدْسُهُ

حَلِيكَ وَأَطَاكَ

قَدِ الْأَرْضُ اللَّيْلِي أَنْبَذْتُ لَهَا بِنْدَارُ
 وَأَطَلَعَتْ حَنْطَلُهُ وَهَذَا الْأَشْيُ اللَّيْلِي صَارُ

وَأَطَلِي إِيَّاكَ بِكْرِي مِنْ خَاصَّةِ الْأَهْكَارُ

(1) Mneina : how ? , refrain sung by the listeners.

(عندما حلت القديمة حنة في العذراء*)

٢٣- دَاخِلُ مَيْتِ اللَّهِ لِرُحْمَانٍ هَتَمَ لِرَبِّي قُرْبَانٍ
لَقِيْتِي أَخِيَّةً (1) وَأَكْسِيمٌ وَقَالَتْ قُرْبَانُكَ مَرْدُودٌ
عَسْتُو مَالِكِي مَبْلُودٌ

((ر م ع))

٢٤- جِيَتْ أَمَدُ مَدَائِحِ بِنْتِي (ثَلَاثَةٌ) شِعْمَةٌ دُمٌّ لِي تَدَسُّهَا (2)
رَبِيْتُ بِحُبِّهَا مِنْ صَفْرِ سِنِّي وَآتَارِي (3) النَّاسِ مِنْ قَبْلِي هَوْرَهَا
((ط ه ل))

٢٥- طَاوَتْ حَنَّةٌ عَالِيَهُنَّ تَانِ تَطَلَّبُ مِنْ رَبِّي قُرْبَانِ
قَالَتْ يَا رَبِّي أَطْعَمْتَنِي شَعْرَةٌ بَطْنِي لَا تَحْرَمْنِي
طَاوَتْ الْعَلَاقَ وَشَرَّهَا قَالَهَا يَا حَنَّةُ أَنْرَحِمِي
يَا حَنَّةُ بِيْحِيكَ الظَّلْمَ يَا حَنَّةُ بَلِّغِ الْبَرْقَ
يَا حَنَّةُ تَحِبِّي مَرِيْمَ يَا حَنَّةُ يَا سِتَ الْخَلْقِ
بَرِيْمَهَا سَبْعَ سِنِيْنٍ مَيْتَ اللَّهِ قُوْدِيْمَهَا
تَخْدُمُ الرَّبَّ الرُّوحَانِي

((ه ج و ° الر ج م ع ل))

(1) Akhawiyyeh : religious brotherhood.

(2) Dūm : tadūm : lasts.

(3) Atāri : colloquialism : and lo.

٢٦- سِرِّ لِلْبَيْعِ بِتَلَاكِييَ
هَذَا يَسُوعَ رَبَّ الْعَجَمِ
شَوْطَكَ حَكِيمَ مَاهِرَ
وَأَعْتَرَفَ مِنْ كُلِّ فَكْرِكَ
لَنْ خَبَيْتَ حَرْفَ تَهْنُوكَ
عَيْنِي يَا عَذْرَاءَ عَيْنِي
يَا وَايِلَ الْعَبْدِ إِلَيَّ مَا يَتُوبُ
يَا خَاطِي تَوْبُ وَتَرَا جَمْعُ
(1) بَلْكَي الْعَذْرَاءُ بِتَشْنُوعِ
يَا خَاطِي تَوْبُ مِنْ حَالِكَ
فَدِ يَنْتَحُوا أَحْسَنًا بِكَ
بِتَوَلَّى مَالِدِيهَا وَلَسَدِ
يَا سَعْدَ مِنْ لِيهِ أَخْتَارُ
وَأَعْتَرَفَ مِنْ قَلْبِ طَاهِرِ
مِنَ الْخَطَا مِنْ يَوْمِ جَهْلِكَ
وَجَهَنَّمَ وَسَطِ نَارِهِ
يَا أُمَّ الْمَسَاكِينِ
وَحَوْنُ مِنْ دَرْبِ الْعَيْوَبِ
وَأَبِكَ عَلَيْهَا وَأَتَوَجَّعُ
يَا خَاطِي يَا مَسْكِينِ
وَأَتْرَكَ أَهْلَكَ وَأَحْبَابَكَ
يَبِينُ حَرْفِ الْهَيْبِ عَيْنِي
((مجزوء الرجاء))

٢٧- يَا عَذْرَاءُ يَا أُمَّ الْمَسِينِ
تَشْفِي عِنْدَ الْمَسِينِ
يَا حَلَالِي يَا مَالِي
تَقْبَلِي مِنَّا الصَّالِحِينَ
يَا عَذْرَاءُ يَا أُمَّ الْإِلَهِ
تَشْفِي عِنْدَ الْإِلَهِ
يَا حَلَالِي يَا مَالِي
تَقْبَلِي مِنَّا الْفُؤَادِ
فِي خَلَاصِ نَفُوسِنَا

(1) Balki : colloquialism , perhaps.

يا عذرا يا أم الخير
تقبلي منا التضرُّع
تشفعي مع الخير
في خلاص نفوسنا
يا حلالي يا مالي
يا عذرا يا مار الكياس
تقبلي منا التضرُّع
تشفعي مع مار الكياس
في خلاص نفوسنا
يا حلالي يا مالي

((مجزوء الرجاء))

٢٨ - يا عذرا بكبره وانقبه
الک شباك من فضله
حنونه واشفعي في
رؤوده بيض وجلديه

يا حلالي يا مالي
يا نبرك بله فربي
تسم يا هوا فربي
يا حلالي يا مالي
يا نبرك زاره الزوار
تسم يا هوا الأشجار
على رؤس الصهيبه

يا حلالي يا مالي
دخلت كيمه للرم
فيها مطراي للرموم
فيها اثريا من اسطبول
يبارك على كل نصراي
يا حلالي يا مالي

((مجزوء الرجاء))

THE PROPHET MOSES (In-Nabi Mūsa).

٢١- يَا زَوَّارَ مُوسَى
إِحْنَا زَرْنَا مَعْنَدُ
زَوَّرُوا بِالْمَعْنَدُ
قَبَالِ الْحَجَّيَّةِ
يَا زَوَّارَ مُوسَى
قَبَالِ الْخَلِيلِ

((مجزوء البسيط))

٢٠- يَا بِيَّيْ مُوسَى مَا أَسْرَ حَجَّارِكُ
وَاللَّهُ يَا رَبِّي لَا زَلْعَ قَامِكَ
لَوْ مَا مَعْنَدُ مَا حَدَا زَارِكُ
لَنْ رَجَعُوا الْخَيْبَ الَّذِي مَحَبُونَا
وَالْيَوْمَ رَاجِعَكَ وَأَنَا قَبْلِيَّةِ
وَالشَّعْ نُي يَدِيهِ حَيْتَكَ يَا مُوسَى
إِحْنَا زَوَّارِكُ يَا بِيَّيْ اللَّهِ
وَمَيْتَكَ مِنْ أَنْبَارِكُ يَا بِيَّيْ اللَّهِ
يَا بِيَّيْ مُوسَى مَا أَسْرَ حَجَّارِكُ
وَالْيَوْمَ يَا مُوسَى وَالْحَسَنُ مَلِيْدِيهِ

(1)

((بسط))

(1) Sung on the "Dal'ōna" rythmical pattern.

CHRIST (Il Masih).

دَخَلَتْ بَسْتَانَ اتَّخَرَجَ عَلَى أَجَاصِوُ -٢١-
وَلَقِيَتْ يَسُوعَ مَنَدِيلُو عَلَى رَاسُو
يَا وَيْتِ مَنْ رَفَعَ الْعُنْدِيلَ وَلَا يَأْسُو
بِمَلَا بُدُولَةَ سَكَارَى يَقْطَعُوا رَاسُو
دَخَلَتْ بَسْتَانَ تَتَفَرَّجُ عَلَى أَلِّي نَسِيهِ
لَقِيَتْ يَسُوعَ وَأَمَّهُ تَلَابُ فِيهِ

((بسيط))

الْمَسِيحِ أَجَانَا -٢٢-
وَأَحْنَا أَلِيمَ لِرَاحَا
يَا يَهُودَ يَا يَهُودَ
وَدِينَا دِينِ الْمَسِيحِ
وَدِينَهُ اشْتَرَانَا
وَالْيَهُودَ حَزَانَا
يَا لِحَاسِينَ الْجُلُودِ
دِينَكُمْ دِينِ التُّرُودِ

((مجزؤ الرجز))

يَا رَبِّي أَطْلَعْ طَلَعَ عَلَيْنَا -٢٣-
يَا عِيسَى بْنِ مَرْيَمَ تَشَلَّقْ عَلَيْنَا
مَنْ جُورَ الزَّمَانِ هَلَكْنَ إِيْدِينَا
وَتَرَجَّعَ زَمَانًا بَخِيرَ وَهَنَا يَا
((بسيط))

Zāghārit.

أَمِّي يَا مِينِ هُوَ مِيزَانِ الذَّهَبِ -٢٤-
أَمِّي مِينِ هُوَ تَرَا جِهْمُو
أَمِّي يَسُوعَ مِيزَانِ الذَّهَبِ
أَمِّي وَأَعْتَهُ تَرَا جِهْمُو

((مجث))

٢٥- آهِي تَوَمُوا الْعَبَا شَهَابًا يَا مَلَا
آهِي وَمَا تَلَعَبُوا إِلَّا بِدَقِّ رَمَاحِ
آهِي فَيَسُ بْنُ مَرَمٍ مَعَكُمْ يَا شَهَابِ
آهِي فَيَسُ بْنُ مَرَمٍ مَعَكُمْ يَا هَيْلَا (١)

((بِسَط))

٢٦- أَجِينَهُ (٢) أَجِينَهُ كَلِي وَأَشْرِي
رَحَلْنَا رَحَلْنَا عَلَى قَبْرِ الْمَسِيحِ
فَرَشَلْنَا بِسَاطِرٍ قَلْنَا أَتَعَدُوا
نَحَلْنَا كَأَبْرٍ قَلْنَا أَسْمَعُوا
وَصَوِي وَصَلِي قَبْلَ تَرْحَلِي
لَقِينَا مَارِيحًا تَاعَدُ مَنْرِيحِ
تَعَدْنَا تَعَدْنَا قَلْنَا أَسْمَعُوا
أَسْمَعْنَا صَلَاتُو بِنْتَوِي النَّفْسِ

((مَجْرُودُ الْمُتَقَارِبِ))

(1) Hēila : from ahlan : welcome.

(2) Proper noun.

THE SONG OF LAZARUS. (Madīh La'azar).

أَبْدُوا مَدِينًا لَا تَقَا ٢٧
لَا جَلَّ مَسُوعَ ابْنَ الْبَعُولِ
تَبَلَّأَ شَرِيفٌ أَسْطَرَا
بِالسَّبِيحِ دَائِمًا نَشْكُرَا
يَا حَلَالِسِي يَا مَالِسِي
مِنَّا جَمِيعَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ
عَبَا مَطِينًا مِنْ مَسُوعِ
يَا حَلَالِسِي يَا مَالِسِي
إِلَيْمَ مَسُوعٍ كَأَنَّ فَاثِنَا
لَمَّا طَمَّ خَبَرَ الْحَبِيبِ
أَنَّهُ دِينٌ تَحْتَ الْكُفْرِ
يَا حَلَالِسِي يَا مَالِسِي
لِلْحَيِّ قَالِ لِلتَّلَامِيذِ
قَالَ أَرِيدُ أَعْلَمَكُمَا
مَعْلَنَ لَهُمْ وَمَنْخَبِرَا
إِلَيْمَ نَامِ الْعَسَاوُرَا
يَا حَلَالِسِي يَا مَالِسِي
رَاجِعِ سَوَالَهُ وَقَالَ لَهُمْ
قَالُوا يَا سَيِّدِ يَقْتُمْ
يَا حَلَالِسِي يَا مَالِسِي
قَالَ لَهُمْ حَقًّا يَقْتُمْ
فِي ظَرْفِ سَاعَةٍ تَعْبُرَا
وَلَا الصَّحِيحِ إِلَيَّ جَرَا
يَا حَلَالِسِي يَا مَالِسِي
قَالَ لَهُمْ قَوْمُوا جَمِيعُ
لَبِيتُ مَعَنَا نَنْظُرَا (1)
سَارُوا جَمِيعًا مَعَ مَسُوعِ
طَوَّلِ الطَّرِيقِ سَاهِرَا
يَا حَلَالِسِي يَا مَالِسِي

(1) Beit 'Anya is Bethany.

شَاعَ الْخَبِيرَ رُوحَ يَسُوعَ جَثُّ لَهُ الْجَمُوعِ تَحَالُفًا
وَمَرِيضًا جَاءَتْ وَأَخْتَبَهَا إِلَى التَّعْلَمِ جَاءُوا
يَا حَلَالِي يَا مَالِي
سَجَدَتْ وَقَالَتْ يَا يَسُوعَ لَوْ كُنْتُ هَاهُنَا حَاضِرًا
مَا مَاتَ أَخِي هَاهَا الْعَيْتَابُ وَلَا فَلِينَا تَحَسَّرًا
يَا حَلَالِي يَا مَالِي
قَالَ إِنَّ كُتْمَ تَوْمُونٍ تَرَوْا عَجَائِبَ بَاهِرًا
تَأَلَّوْا أَمَّا بِكَ يَسُوعَ إِنَّكَ إِلَهُ تَائِدًا
يَا حَلَالِي يَا مَالِي
قَالَ لَهُمُ ابْنِ الدُّنْيَانِ يَسُوعَ كَانَسَانٍ يَمْتَجِدَانَا
قَالَ لَهُمُ هَاهَا الدُّنْيَانِ يَسُوعَ كَانَهُ حَاضِرًا
يَا حَلَالِي يَا مَالِي
قَالُوا أَنْتَنَ يَا يَسُوعَ أَرْبَعَةَ أَيَّامٍ تَحْتَ الشَّرَى
وَقِفْ وَهَلِّي تَائِدًا يَا أَبَتَاهُ لِنَتَّظِرَا
يَا حَلَالِي يَا مَالِي
حَتَّى يَشْرُوبُوا هَالْجَمُوعَ يَمَجِدُوا أَسْمَكَ شَاكِرًا
كُلَّ الْجَمُوعِ تَحَيَّرُوا وَالْمُؤْمِنُونَ اسْتَشْرَبُوا
يَا حَلَالِي يَا مَالِي
وَأَنَا سَأَلْتُكَ يَا يَسُوعَ بِجَاهِ هَذَا الْعَازِرَا
تَحْفَظْ جَمِيعَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ يَا رَبِّ إِلَهُي تَتَّظِرَا
يَا حَلَالِي يَا مَالِي
يَا رَبَّنَا ابْنِ الْوَحِيدِ تَعْطِي مَعُونَةً وَأَنْبِرَا
بِعَنِ الْخَطَاةِ نَطْلُبُ إِلَيْكَ مِنْكَ نَسْأَلُ الْمَغْفِرَا

((مجزوءه الرجس))

G. TRAVEL AND PILGRIMAGE AND ABSENTEES.

١- اللَّهُ مَعَكَ يَا حَبِيبِي اللَّهُ مَعَ رَبِّكَ
اللَّهُ مَعَكَ وَاللَّهِ بِي بِمَهْلٍ طَرِيقَكَ

((مجتث))

٢- يَا عَدْرًا مَرَمٍ أَوْ لَا تُرَخِي الْجِبَالَ إِنَّا لَسَاعَةَ الضِّيقِ أَوْ تُجِي تَشْعِمِي إِنَّا
أَوْ مِنْ الشَّدَائِدِ إِتْحِي أَلْنَا حَلِينَا أَوْ بَرْدَةَ الْغَائِبَاتِ لِي مَطَالِبِنَا

((هـ))

٣- بِالسَّلَامَةِ بِالسَّلَامَاتِ وَالْخَضِرِ قَبْلَ التَّدْوَرَاتِ
وَالسَّلَامَةِ يَا خَضِرَ لَا خَضِرَ بِالسَّلَامَةِ طَلَعُوا مِنَ الْعَرَبِ
بِالسَّلَامَةِ بِالسَّلَامَاتِ طَلَعُوا مِنْ بَحْرِ الظُّلُمَاتِ

((هـ ج))

٤- يَا رَبِّي يَا مَعْتَلِي يَا أَبَوَالسَّبْحِ بَرَكَاتِ يَا رَبِّي يَا مَعْتَلِي لَا يَطُولُوا الْغِيَابِ
يَا رَبِّي يَا مَعْتَلِي يَا بُوخَمِي زُرْقَا يَا رَبِّي يَا مَعْتَلِي لَا أَتَطُولُ الدُّرُقَا

((هـ ط))

٥- يَا رَاحِيْنَ مَالِنِي شَوْصَةَ الشَّهَابِ يَا سَعْدُ مِنْ رَاحِ لِبَيْتِ النَّبِيِّ مُشْتَاقُ
يَا رَاحِيْنَ مَالِنِي شَوْصَةَ الشَّهَابِ يَا سَعْدُ مِنْ رَاحِ لِبَيْتِ النَّبِيِّ حَبَهُ
يَا رَاحِيْنَ مَالِنِي شَوْصَةَ أَحْجَارِهِ يَا سَعْدُ مِنْ رَاحِ لِبَيْتِ النَّبِيِّ وَزَارِهِ
((بسيط))

٦- مَرْصُوفَةُ شَجَرٍ خُنْ يَا طَرِيقَ النَّبِيِّ مَرْصُوفَةُ شَجَرٍ خُنْ
أَوْ مِنْ الْحَرِّ أَوْ مِنْ الدَّنْجِ خُونِي عَلَى الْحَجَّاجِ أَوْ مِنْ الْحَرِّ أَوْ مِنْ الدَّنْجِ
مَرْصُوفَةُ شَجَرٍ وَرْدُ يَا طَرِيقَ النَّبِيِّ مَرْصُوفَةُ شَجَرٍ وَرْدُ
أَوْ مِنْ الْحَرِّ أَوْ مِنْ الْبَرْدِ خُونِي عَلَى الْحَجَّاجِ أَوْ مِنْ الْحَرِّ أَوْ مِنْ الْبَرْدِ
((مجزوءه البسيط مع لازمة متوسطة))

٧- كُونِي هَدِيَّةً يَا طَرِيقَ الْحَجَّاجِ كُونِي هَدِيَّةً
زَيْدِي طَرِيْقَهُ تَحْتَ رِجْلِهِمْ زَيْدِي طَرِيْقَهُ
((مجزوءه البسيط مع لازمة متوسطة))

٨- تَحْتَ الْقَنَاظِرِ وَدَعْوِي الْأَحْبَابِ أَنَا حَاجٌ وَشَاطِرٌ أَرْجِعُوا يَا الْأَحْبَابِ
وَاحِدَةٌ مَعَ أَرْبَعَةٍ يَا نَجْمَ السَّمَاءِ طَلِعْتُمْ الْأَرْبَعَاءُ مَعَكُمْ يَا نَبِيَّ
وَاحِدَةٌ مَعَ اثْنَيْنِ يَا نَجْمَ السَّمَاءِ طَلِعْتُمْ الْإِثْنَيْنِ مَعَكُمْ يَا نَبِيَّ (1)
((بسيط))

(1) 6, 7, 8 are sung for pilgrims before their travel and are known as " tahnin ".

١- حَطُوا الحَطَّاطُ عَلَى العِرَاقِ يَا اللّٰهَ تَصَاعَدُ عَلَى اللِّسَانِ
يَا رَبَّ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْغِيَابِ وَتُكَيِّدُ العَدَى وَالْمُنْضُونَ
عَلَى سَطْحِ الحَرَمِ صَارَ العِرَاقُ لِحَبْوِ العَدَى لَبْحِ النَّعَاجِ
يَا رَبِّي العَلِيِّ تَرَدَّ الغِيَابِ وَتُكَيِّدُ العَدَى وَالْمُنْضُونَ
((بِسَط))

Zaghārit

١٠- أَيْبِي يَا طَاهِحِينَ البَحْرِ اللّٰهَ يَتَّقُ مَعَكُمْ
أَيْبِي وَالخَضْرَ الْأَخْضَرَ يَتَّقُ مَعَكُمْ يَهَارِكُو (1)
أَيْبِي وَنَدَيْتُمْ لَكُمْ بِالنَّصْرِ اللّٰهَ يُعِيدُ كُو
أَيْبِي وَالْعَذْرَاءَ مَرِيحًا تَوَجَّحُوا لَهَا هَالِكُو
((مَجَّت))

١١- أَيْبِي يَا بَابَ المَهْدِ وَاطْيِي
أَيْبِي يَدْرُ عَلِيَّ يَا رَبِّي
أَيْبِي لَا تَقْطَعَنَّ وَأَعْلَيْتِي
أَيْبِي إِنْ رَجَّحَ الغَالِي طِي
((مَجَّت))

١٢- أَيْبِي يَا سَعْدَ مَنْ حَجَّ النَّبِيَّ
أَيْبِي وَطَلَى لِيَالِهِ السَّعِيدَةَ
أَيْبِي يَا مَنَ صَلِيَّ عَلَى النَّبِيِّ
أَيْبِي كُرْمَالِ (2) مُحَمَّدَ وَطَلِيَّ
((مَجَّت))

(1) Yibārīku : colloquial , protect you, walk with you.

(2) Kurmāl : originally kurmānan lak : for your sake, (i.e. karāmatan lak.)

١٢- آمِي يَا مُتَاهِلَ الرَّبِّ رَلِهْ
آمِي وَالْمَسْكَ وَالْبُخُورَ فِيهَا
آمِي يَا رَبَّتْهَا سَاهُ مَارَكَهْ
آمِي إِلِي أَجْنُ الْغَائِبِينَ فِيهَا
(مجت)

١٤- آمِي إِيَانَا الَّذِي فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ
آمِي أَتَقَدَّسَ اسْمُكَ
آمِي يَا مَدْرَ إِيَانِقْسِيَهْ
آمِي تَرَجَّحْ جَمِيعَ الْفَرِيْسِيَهْ
(مجت)

١٥- آمِي طَرِيقَ إِيَانَا يَا عُرْدَ الْوُدِّ (1) بَدِيْتِي
آمِي وَالْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ مَثَلُ مَا أَخَذْتِي رَدِيْتِي
آمِي بَدْرَ طِي لَو رُوْحَ عَزِيْمَ بِيْتِي
آمِي لِأَذْبَحُ ذَبِيْحَ وَأَقُولُ أَتَلْطَلُنِي يَا خِيْتِي
(بسيط)

١٦- آمِي طَارَتِ الْعَمَامِنَةُ
آمِي وَهَدَّتْ مَالْتِيَامِنَةُ
آمِي يَا رَبَّنَا تَوَصَّلْ
آمِي الْخَطْرَ بِالسَّلَامَةِ
(مجت)

أو

آمِي وَالْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ الَّذِي
آمِي وَجَّعَ (لَأَنَّ) بِالسَّلَامَةِ

(1) 'Ud innidd : aloes-wood.

الموت : DEATH

1- لا هُوَ يَدِي وَلَا أَنَا تَعَيْتَهُ هَذَا حَكْمُ رَبِّي أَوْ مَا أَعَدَّيْتَهُ
لا هُوَ يَدِي وَلَا يَدِيهِ هَذَا هُوَ حَكْمُ مَنْ رَبِّي عَلَيْهِ

((رمل))

2- يَا رَبِّي صَبْرِي يَا رَبِّي مَيْتِي
يا رَبِّي صَبْرَ أَيُّوبَ مَالِكُوتِ
يا رَبِّي صَبْرِي عَلَى مَا بَلَّغْتَنِي
يا رَبِّي صَبْرَ أَيُّوبَ مَا بَلَّغْتَنِي
يا مَنِ حَكَّمَ اللَّهُ أَوْ مَا مَنِ أَصْبَرِي
يا مَنِ كَوْنِي مَالِكُوتِ صَبْرِي

((سريع (1)))

متنوعات : MISCELLANEOUS

1- أَوْلَ مَا نَهَدِي بِذِكْرِ الْأَتِينِ مَيْسَى وَمَحَمَّدَ هَا الرَّسُولِينَ
اللَّهُ يَنْصُرُ الْمَلِكَ حَسْبَيْنِ لِأَنَّهُ حَامِلُنَا مِنَ الصَّهْمُونِيِّ

((بسط))

2- يَا أَبُونَا وَأَكْلَكَ (2) فِي الْخَوْرِيَّةِ وَكَمْ مِنْ بَدَلِهِ إِبْتَدَوْقِ مَطْوَهْ
بِحَيَاةِ رَأْسِكَ فِي الْعَيْدِ تَبَسُّبَهَا أَوْ تَرَا إِنِّي لَكَ مَالِ مَيْتِي

((بسط))

(1) With variations.

(2) Akamlak : colloquially : kam lak : how long?

٣- يَا هَيْكَلُ اتَمِّعْنَا
وَالْعُدْرَةَ مَا يَمِينُكَ
يَا هَيْكَلُ اتَمِّعْنَا
وَالْعُدْرَةَ مَا يَمِينُكَ
يَا صَخْرَةَ اتَمِّعِي
وَالنَّبِيَّ مَا يَمِينُكَ
لِلخُورَى تَمُورُكَ
وَالشَّعْبَ بِخُورُكَ
لِلخُورَى تَهْطَلِي
وَالطَّقِيسَ شَمَالِي
لِلعُتْبَى تَهْطَلِي
وَالطَّقِيسَ شَمَالِي (1)

((مجزوءه البسيط))

٤- رَاحَتٌ تَهْطَلِي يَوْمَ عِدِّ الصَّلَيبِ
وَلَمَّا شَانَهَا الخُورَى هِيَ وَالْحَبِيبِ
لَقَتِ الخُورَى بِشَرْبِ الْخَلِيبِ
دَشَرَ القُدَّاسِ وَجَعِ الْوَلْدَانِ
((خفيف))

٥- صَبِرْتُ أَنَا صَبْرَ أَيُّوبَ كَمَا بِي
تَوَلَّوْا لَأَمِّي لَا تَهْكُنِي عَلَى حَالِي
اتَّعَاشَرُ سَنَةً فِي التَّدَلِّ بِدَارِي
طَبِيبِينَ قَائِبٍ وَالْمَوْتَ بِحَلَالِي
((بسيط))

٦- يَا مَا تَأَلَّوْا أَعْدَانَا عَمْرُنَا مَا نَعْبُودُ
يَا مَنْ هُوَ بَنَى عُدَّةَ جُدَيْدُ
عَادَ اللّٰهَ فَمَلِينَا وَمِنَهَا النُّعُودُ
وَتَهَدَّتِ الْجَمَالَ مِنْ نَقْلِ الْحَدِيدِ
((رمل))

(1) 'Uthmalli : Othman, probably signifying Byzantine.

نُقال على البدر خلال العمل

٢- يا بَدْرًا تَبِيٍّ وَمِنْ قَمَاتِيٍّ
قَمَاتِيٍّ وَالصُّلْبَانِ (1)
شَوْشَاكِيٍّ لَحْمِ أَوْزِيٍّ
يَا اللَّهُ يَا اللَّهُ (2) يَا خَلِيلَ اللَّهِ (2)
يَا أَبُو الظُّلْمَانِ (3) أَخْطَرَ لِهَانِ
أَحْضَرَ فَنَدِيٍّ شَبَّهَ الْجَنْدِيٍّ
بِرُكَّةٍ حَنْدَرٍ نَبَا الْبَيْدَرِ
بَيْنَ وَحْبِيٍّ لِي بَيْدَرُوكَا
بِرُكَّةٍ رَبِّيٍّ هَانَا طَبِيٍّ

-
- (1) Aṣ-ṣulbān : called so because the heap of corn to be threshed is generally marked with the sign of the Cross.
- (2) Khalīl Allah : i.e. the Friend of God, Abraham.
- (3) Abu iḡ-ḡuḡifān : lit. father of guests, i.e. entertainer of guests.

رمضان : Remadān

شَهْرَ رَمَضَانَ شَهْرَ الصَّيَامِ ٨
فِيهِ يَأْتِي رَمَضَانَ نَزْلُ الْقُرْآنِ
فِيهِ يَأْتِي رَمَضَانَ نَزْلُ الْهَيْلَالِ
الْمَجْدِ لِلنَّبِيِّ عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ
فِيهِ يَأْتِي رَمَضَانَ نَوْرُ الْإِسْلَامِ
يَا كَلَامَ اللَّهِ نَزْلَ الْقُرْآنِ
هِيَ يَا طِبَّ مَسْلَمِينَ حَيَّوْا الْإِسْلَامَ
لِمَجْدِ النَّبِيِّ عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ
يَا مُؤْمِنِينَ صُومُوا رَمَضَانَ
لِمَجْدِ النَّبِيِّ عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ
فِيهِ الْبَرَكَاتُ وَفِيهِ الْإِحْسَانُ
وَصَلُّوا عَلَيَّ فِي كُلِّ زَمَانٍ
يَا رَبِّي وَاللَّهِ الْإِسْلَامُ صِيَامٌ
حَيَّوْا عَلَى الصَّلَاةِ يَا إِلَهِي تَيَجُّونَا
يَا هَادِيَ السَّالِمِينَ يَا الْأَبْرَارَ
هَادِيَ السَّالِمِينَ وَالْمُؤْمِنِينَ
وَأَرْوُوا لِلْحَسَنَاتِ وَالصَّيَامِ
حَيَّوْا عَلَى الصَّلَاةِ يَا إِلَهِي تَجُّونَا
وَأَرْوُوا لِلْبِرِّ وَأَرْوُوا لِلْحَسَنَاتِ
حَيَّوْا عَلَى الصَّلَاةِ أَوْ حَيَّوْا عَلَى الْفَلَاحِ
« ————— »

١- يَا (فُلَان) يَا نَامُوسِي
يَا طَالِحٍ عَلَى الطَّرَانِ
يَا لَيْسَ الْحَرِيرِ أَجْنُوسِي
يَا فَانِكِ الْعَبُوسِي (1)
((رجز))

(1) Cf. Dēr Ghasāneh:-

لَمَّا كَمَا (فُلَان) مَا رَفَعَتْ عَقُوسِي
يَا كَامِلِ الْعَقَلِينَ يَا حَيَّوسِي
يَا مَطْلَعِ الصُّفْرَةِ أَجْنُوسِي أَجْنُوسِي
يَا كَامِلِ الْعَقَلِينَ يَا اللَّهُ تَنْصُرُهُ

Zaghārit:

أَيْيَ يَا لَيْلُ طَوَّلُ طَوَّلُ
أَيْيَ وَاللَّهِ مَا يَبْزُؤُونَ
أَيْيَ بِمَرْجٍ لِيَالِي الشَّيْخِ
أَيْيَ تَجِينُ لِيَالِي سُورُورُ
((مجت))

أَيْيَ يَا حَلُو مَا بَرْتَقَانُ (1)
أَيْيَ يَا قَشْرَةَ تَهَيْهْ
أَيْيَ هَذَا مَا بَغْنِي هَذَا
أَيْيَ اللَّهُ تَبْغْنِي هَيْدَهْ
((مجت))

أَيْيَ يَا سَارَكَ جِينُ مِنْ هَمَانُ
أَيْيَ مَزِينَاكَ بِالْوَرْدِ وَالرَّمْحَانُ
أَيْيَ اللَّهُ يُبْصِرُكَ مَا حَبِي حَبِيرُ
أَيْيَ يَا حَابِبِ الْفَرْمَانُ مِنَ السُّلْطَانِ
((مجت))
(2)

أَيْيَ (فَلَانُ) شَوْ قَطَّلُوا نَبِيهْ
أَيْيَ دَقَّةَ لَهَبٍ زَلَّ (3) مَا يَهْ
أَيْيَ يَا رَمَتْ مِنْ رَاغٍ لِلْعَطْرَانِ وَخَسَّ يَهْ
أَيْيَ يَهْدِمُ حَرِيمَهْ وَكَلَّ النَّاسُ تَشْحَى يَهْ
((بسيط))

(1) Burtqān ; local vulgarism for burtuqāl : oranges.

(2) Farman ; firman : decree.

(3) zaghāl : debasement , alloy.

أَيُّي يَا دَارَ (فَلَانِ) مَفْرَشَةً رَمَاحَ رَمَاحَ
أَيُّي مَفْرَشَةً لِلضَّيْفِ أَحْسَنَ وَرَاحَ
أَيُّي يَا مِنَ الْعَصْرِ فَضْوَى قَنَادِيلِهَا
أَيُّي يَا ضَوْهَا يَا نَجْمَةَ الْعَبَاحِ

((سيط))

أَيُّي صَلِّوا عَلَيَّ
أَيُّي يَا لَأَطْمَةَ بِنْتِكُمْ
أَيُّي وَالْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ يَا رَبِّي
أَيُّي إِلَهِي طَلَبْتُ بِنْتَكُمْ

((مجت))

أَيُّي صَلِّوا عَلَيَّ مُحَمَّدَ
أَيُّي صَلِّوا عَلَيَّ الْبَهَادِي
أَيُّي هَلِّي شَرَفَ اللَّهِ ذِكْرُهُ
أَيُّي بَرَجْمَةَ الْعَطَامِ فِي الْوَادِي

((مجت))

أَيُّي الصَّلَاةِ وَالسَّجْدَةِ
أَيُّي وَالصَّلَاةِ وَالْعِبَادَةِ
أَيُّي فَصْلِكَ يَا (فُلَانِ)
أَيُّي يَا كَامِلَ السَّيَادَةِ

((مجت))

CHAPTER FIVE

K I N G S O L O M O N

"But the word of the Lord came to me(David), saying, ... Behold, a son shall be born to thee, who shall be a man of rest; and I will give him rest from all his enemies round about; for his name shall be Solomon,... and he shall be my son, and I will be his father." (1 Chronicles 22: 8. sq.)

Causes for the abundance of King Solomon Folklore:

The three Solomon Pools lie at a close proximity to Bethlehem proper. They are all situated in a straight line, and are about three miles due south of Bethlehem. (1) There can be little doubt archeologically that these three Pools were originally constructed by King Solomon himself. These Pools have at various times supplied Jerusalem with water, and excavations indicate that the Romans ~~have~~ built aqueducts for this purpose.

In the nearby village of Arṭās there is a spring in a deep narrow valley which according to tradition is the place of King Solomon's Gardens where, again according to tradition, he built a palace for Sulamith whom he praises in his Songs.

(1) See Chapter One, p.29.

This, combined with the fact that Solomon's father, David, was a Bethlehemite; the data and stories supplied by the Old Testament as well as the Qur'ān; in addition to the wide fame of Solomon's Temple in Jerusalem, help to explain the extensive popularity King Solomon enjoys in the District. (2) No wonder then that King Solomon has become the chief figure in an endless wealth of folkloristic material that relates particularly to his reputed control over supernatural agencies. "Owing, however, to the memories of Solomon's wisdom and magnificence, legend attributes to him all anonymous works on a great scale that are to be found either in the city (Jerusalem) or in the neighbourhood." (3) Besides, "nothing appeals", so much to the eastern mind as extravagance and splendour, and Solomon practised both." (3)

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- (1) Indeed it has long been a generally accepted assumption that the Bethlehem family Qanawāti, owes its nomenclature to their ancestors being workers in the "Qanāt" (Canal or sluice) - parts of which are still extant, which King Solomon constructed to supply Jerusalem with water from his Pools, south of Bethlehem.
- (2) D.S. Margoliouth, Cairo, Jerusalem and Damascus, p. 179.
- (3) H.V. Morton, Women of the Bible, p. 110.

General theme and literary characteristics of King Solomon's
Stories:

The stories recorded here are short, pithy and often with an obvious moral. The integration of two or more distinct themes in one story seems to be the common practice, while in many stories the main theme and moral recur again and again. It is rather frequently observed that complete portions are amalgamated in diverse stories with the inevitable result of overlapping and dovetailing in the narration.

Plots are naturally very simple and straightforward with no complications or sub-plots or alternative plots running concurrently with the main plot, not only in the short story where there is no scope in development, but even in the longer ones. The vocabulary very well matches the sheer simplicity of incidents, but with no lack of natural forcefulness in the expression. The dialogue is crisp, crystal-clear and singularly characterized by its directness.

Many of these stories attempt to emphasize a certain aspect of Solomon's character or to interpret certain scientific phenomena, natural, biological or botanical, such as the mole's blindness or the reason why lilies grow in rocky cracks.

But of course the general theme remains to show the supernatural power of Solomon and to illustrate his wisdom. The didactic purpose obviously underlies many a story. It will be seen too, that women are almost invariably condemned and seen against the background of inferior creatures, not to be trusted, although there are few examples of female brilliance - an outlook compatible with the general Oriental attitude towards women.

TEXTS OF STORIES

(1)-

The wren's curious custom of jumping constantly on tree branches is interpreted in the following story:-

King Solomon's wife once besought her husband to make her a mattress stuffed with feathers of all birds in the creation, a feather from every bird. Solomon, who ruled all creatures even the Jinns, ordered all birds to come into his presence. All responded to the call except the wren, who failed to attend.

Solomon therefore ordered him to be brought in, and reproached him for his neglect in showing up when he was first summoned, and when the wren tried to find excuses,

Solomon said, "I will ask you three questions, and if you obtain their answers within a month, I shall pardon you, otherwise you will have to face the consequences."

"What are they?" asked the wren.

"The first is, which is longer the day or the night?"

"The second, who are more numerous the living or the dead?"

"The third, who are more numerous, men or women?"

The wren was puzzled, and went to his nest deeply perplexed and desperate. On observing his bewilderment, his wife inquired about its reason, and he informed her; but she consoled him saying that she knew the answers.

On the fixed day the wren accompanied by his wilful wife waited on Solomon and the wife gave the following answers to the King's questions:-

"Which is longer, the day or the night?"

"The day is longer since the moonlit nights are considered days."

"Who are more numerous, the living or the dead?"

"The dead since those who sleep are like dead."

"Who are more numerous, men or women?"

"Women are, since men who are servile to their women are women themselves."

King Solomon was deeply impressed by these answers. Nevertheless he set the poor wren another task.

He stipulated, "I will pardon you if you can find me a branch which is neither long nor short, thick or thin." The wretched creature then went out searching for it, and up till now he is still looking for it, which accounts for his restlessness and incessant jumping among branches of trees as if he were still looking for the required branch. (1)

These questions related in this story are traditionally set questions that recur in a few stories as is seen in the following :-

(2)-

"The ladies of King Solomon's harim, jealous of his favourite for the time being, paid an old woman to make mischief between her and the king. The crone, after praising (1) Heard from Indriya Sabella.

the charms of the favourite till the latter was wax in her hands, declared that the king ought to manifest his love for her by granting some extraordinary request. As Suleyman knew the language of birds, and had power over all things living, it would be easy, the old woman suggested, to build for his love a palace of feathers floating in the air. The favourite took the hint, and when next the king came to her she sulked with him and pouted, as one aggrieved. By dint of coaxing Suleyman learnt her grievance. He at once ordered all the birds to come before him and devise some measure to content his love. All obeyed except the owl, who flatly refused. But Suleyman sent word that if she persisted in disobeying him he would cut off her head; when she changed her mind, and asked forgiveness for her first refusal. The king promised to overlook it, but only on condition on her answering aright some questions he was going to put to her.

"The Hakim asked her why she had not come when he first called her. The reply was, "Because a wicked old hag has turned your fair one's head and egged her on to ask an impossible thing, for who can build a palace without foundations?" Pointing to the thousands of birds there present, the king asked, "Which of all these birds do you think the handsomest?" "My son," replied the owl, "Which are more numerous, the living or the dead?" "The dead," said the

bird. "How do you prove that?" "All who sleep are dead, as far as the business of life is concerned." "What is more abundant day or night?" "Day". "How so?" "Because when the moon shines it is day light and the people travel." "Only one more question," said the king, "Which are more numerous men or women?" "Women," "Prove it." "Count up all the women and then add all the husbands who are governed by their whims," replied the owl. At that the wise King burst out laughing and told the owl that she might go in peace." (1)

(3)-

It is related that a flight of eagles used to resort to their nest on top of a mountain, but one of the company used to precede them always or to be tardy and was never punctual. The other eagles went to King Solomon and complained about that particular eagle's failure to keep in unison with them.

Thus King Solomon summoned the recalcitrant eagle and investigated the matter. The eagle replied that he happened to have an old father who, through old age, was rendered featherless and helpless. And since the eagles entered and

(1) J.E. Hanauer, Folk-Lore of the Holy Land, pp. 252- 254.

"Hākīm" should be read "Hakīm" .

left the nest hurriedly, he was afraid lest some harm might accrue to the old eagle. That was why he always came before, and left after them, - in order to spread his feathers over his father's weakly body so as to protect him.

King Solomon was deeply impressed with this reply and went to the old eagle and inquired his age. He replied that he was three hundred years old. Taken aback, King Solomon asked the old eagle to relate to him the most wondrous thing he had ever encountered in his long life. To this the old eagle replied, "Will your Majesty fly with me upon your Winged Carpet? I will reveal to you the strangest circumstance I have ever met."

They flew up and up until they reached the summit of a high mountain. Then they descended and beheld the remnants of a large magnificent mansion along with the corpses of seven men. The eagle asked King Solomon to call up the one-thousand year old snake lurking far below.

He called her up and asked for the reason of all the apparent desolation; and the snake answered that the corpses were those of seven brothers, who had built the mansion, and who were reputed hunters. She used to live by the morsels that fell off their table. She got married and had a baby-snake.

Once they were sunning themselves, when one of the brothers killed her baby. She mourned for him for a hundred years; on another occasion her husband was killed in a similar manner and she mourned for him for two hundred years. Then she poisoned the brothers' food who consequently died, and those were the corpses ~~strewn~~ strewn about on the remains of their once magnificent mansion.

On hearing this, King Solomon let her go, and she once again slipped down to the bowels of the earth.

This same story is related with many variations in Jerusalem where it has a totally different ending.

(4)-

"The first of all birds to go to prayer is the eagle, and he also is the first to leave. They once said to him, 'O eagle, you must appear, before the court; it is King Solomon's order.' The king asked him, 'Why is it, that of all birds of prey, you are the first to come to prayer and the first to leave?' He said, 'O king, promise me that you will not kill me and I will tell you the truth.' The king promised. The eagle began, 'My father is more than a thousand years old. He is very aged and all his feathers have fallen out.

Therefore I am afraid that the other birds will attack him and bite him. That is why I come early to prayer and leave early. The king ordered the eagle to go and fetch his father. But the old bird refused to come; he had no feathers and was ashamed. So the son said to his father, 'I will cover you with my wings.' So they went to the court.

"The king put his hand on the old bird's head, but the eagle fearing that the king might hurt him, lowered his head. Then the king passed his hand gently all over the body of the old eagle, and lo, new feathers appeared; but his head, which was not touched by the magical hands of Solomon, remained bald. When the king had given the feathers he said; 'You will become a bird of fourteen years old.' So now the eagle never grows old because of the word of King Solomon. The king then said to the eagle, 'I want to benefit from your long experience and knowledge. Tell me about the wondrous things you have seen during your long life.' The old eagle said, 'I know of a town which is entirely made from brass, the mosques are brass, the minarets are brass, the markets are brass, the streets are brass; in short everything is brass.' And the king asked, 'Do you still know where it is?' The eagle answered, 'Come, I will carry you there.' When they were far from the spot the eagle said, 'The town has been swallowed up by a huge snake.' They descended to

the ground on a big dung-hill. The eagle said to King Solomon, 'We are over the town. But do not kill the snake, though in the middle of her back is a speck on her skin, which is her vulnerable point. For the time being order the winds to blow.' The king first ordered the West wind, then the Egyptian(South) wind, and then the Northern wind, but all in vain. They they said, 'Give way to (Umm 'Awad)', which is the East-wind. And it approached with such a force that King Solomon and all the hosts of birds which had accompanied him were frightened, and he rose suddenly to his feet. After the wind had blown for but two hours from the East, the town shone like a yellow light. Then King Solomon said to the big snake, 'Come out of your cave.' And she said, 'Alas my lord, promise me that you will not kill me.' The king promised, and the snake crept along for three days and one third of a day, when the white spot on her back appeared. And the King struck her a fatal blow on that spot. The big snake said, 'O king, you have betrayed me, my lord.' He answered, 'I did not hit you on your head.' The snake died and the king ordered her to be burnt. They burnt her there and threw her ashes in all directions. And all the gnats, which you see coming to life about Pentecost, come from the ashes of that huge snake. Therefore they say that gnats are

poisonous (because they sting and infect the body.)" (1)

This story which has a wide dispersal has many local variations, the most significant of which is the Artās version which has the same prolegomena. Here is where it diverges from the one already recorded:

(5)-

After hearing the young ~~gir~~ eagle's defence for his lack of punctuality, Solomon said, "No, I must see him (the old eagle.) If he cannot come to me, I will go to him. How wise he must be! How much of the world and of life must such an old eagle have seen!"

"Then they went to the ~~nearest~~ nest of the old eagle. ~~Sh~~ The king spoke kindly to the old one and was deeply interested in all that he could relate. When the conversation was finished, the king blessed him. And turning to the young eagle he said, 'As thou hast so faithfully and nobly sacrificed thyself for, and taken care of thy father, thy reward shall be that thou shalt remain young for all time. Thou shalt never need to lose thy feathers.'

(1) St. H. Stephan, "Palestinian Animal Stories ^{and} Fables,"

JPOS, Vol. 3, No.4, pp. 187-188.

"Ever since then an eagle always remains young and does not lose its feathers. Only on the top of its head there are two bare spots. It is the place where King Solomon laid his hands in blessing the young eagle." (1)

(6)-

A certain village complained to King Solomon about the mysterious blocking up of their water spring on which they entirely depended for their living. King Solomon then summoned his eagles and made enquiries about the reason for this unusual blockade. After a thorough investigation by the eagles, an elderly one said that he had spied on top of a mountain close-by the head of a tremendously large snake whose body blocked the spring. He added, however, that the head was half white and half black, and that it was invulnerable except to lead.

King Solomon then made instantly for the location described by the eagle, and called up the snake which was deeply hidden, and which being frightened and awed by his presence, refused to appear except after obtaining his promise that he would not injure her. King Solomon promised

(1) Hilma Granqvist, "Child Problems Among the Arabs", p. 191.

not to strike her with a stick or with a sword. When she imprudently revealed her head, the King shot a leaden arrow that pierced her head. When she accused him of violating his promise, he explained that he had conscientiously kept the terms of the agreement by not using a stick or a sword. Thus the snake was got rid of and the villagers rested from her terrific threat through the endeavours of King Solomon.

(7)-

Once when Solomon the ~~the~~wise was in Bethlehem, the mole (khlund) came over to him and complained, "Why have you singled me out of all animals to be blind?"

Solomon replied, "Meet me in Jerusalem where I will answer your question." Having performed his business in Bethlehem, Solomon went to Jerusalem where he found that the mole had already overtaken him by travelling underground.

Solomon then said to him, "Forasmuch as he who arrived by the underground route has overtaken him who arrived by the surface route, (that is overtaken me) what would you have done if you were endowed with two eyes? You surely,

would have spread havoc and corruption far and wide in the world. Thence it will be better for the general good of humanity if you remain blind." (1)

This story bears a close similarity to a story, with much the same theme recorded in the village of Artās, on the approaches of Bethlehem;

(8)-

"Solomon the Ruler (2) went to visit Syria, for a change of air (yishimm il hawa.) The mole heard that Solomon was in Syria. She came to lay a complaint, "Why, O Ruler, have I no eyes like other creatures?"

"Solomon replied saying, 'This is not the place of judgment, the judgment seat is in Jerusalem the Noble (El Quds El-Sherif), there is my throne.'

"Afterwards the snake learnt that the famous Ruler was in Syria, She came and complained, 'O Ruler of the age, (Hakim ez-zamn) Why have I not feet like other creatures?'

(1) A proverb says, لو بشوف الخلد لغرب الدنيا - If the mole sees he will destroy the world. (Dr. Can'an)

(2) Not Ruler (Ḥākīm) but Wise (Ḥakīm); as the former is not locally used.

the one
"He gave an answer like unto^h he gave to the mole. 'O snake, O mole, meet me in Jerusalem, there is my throne.'

"Now Solomon had a noble steed, one with four kidneys, as the saying is. He rode like the wind, he reached his throne. He found the mole and the snake waiting there for him. No need to send back for them. They were rested and pleased (mitraipIn wu mkeifin). Solomon said to the mole, 'You arrived before my horse could, If you had eyes you would ruin the world. God preserve us from your evil.' So also he said to the snake, ' You arrived before my horse could. If God had created you with feet you would ruin the world. God preserve us from your evil.' And he drove them from the judgment seat." (1)

(9)-

"The owl sent an old woman to the wife of King Solomon to say, 'Why are you content with this house of yours? Why do you not ask the king to build you a fine palace out of the feathers of the ostrich which shall be neither on the earth nor in the heaven?' And Lady Barqis (sitt Barqis - classical Bilqis) (2) remembered it and when King Solomon returned

(1) Grace M. Crowfoot, "Journal of Palestine Exploration Fund", 1951, No. 83, p. 167.

(2) See later.

home she did not look at him nor did she go home to welcome him. He marked her indifference and said, 'O, the Merciful One, the Provider of all, the Helper of the weak. What has happened?' And his queen said to him, 'Thou art a mighty king, obeyed by all; all is thine that thou desirest, yet am I allowed to sit here in a house like this! Why dost thou not give me a house built out of the feathers of the ostrich, since I see nobody and nothing?' And the king said, 'Is that all thou desirest? That is easy.'

"Then sent he for all the birds. They came all to him. He asked (Umma-Ysliman) the owl, saying, 'Tell me, who is the best and finest bird among these assembled here?' And he mentioned all the most comely birds. But the owl said, 'None of them is fair save my own son.' And he said to her, 'Hadst thou answered differently, I would have surely cut off thy head.' Then he continued to ask her, 'Which are more numerous, the dead or the living?' She answered, 'The dead, for they who sleep are also dead.' Then he asked, 'What is longer, day or night?' And she said, 'Surely the day, because a moonlit night is also day.' The third question was, 'Which are more numerous, men or women?' And she said, 'Surely the women, for every man who follows his wife is also a woman. Now you, O King, have ~~have~~ you obeyed your lady Barqis and intend to build her a house between heaven and earth.'

And who is the cause of all this trouble? Surely that cursed old woman, who is nothing but a fox's skin turned into a bag, and likes to sow dissension. When you build your lady a palace to walk in, surely you will fall and break your neck and all your splendour and kingdom will vanish.' And he asked her, 'What then am I to do?' She said, 'Burn that old woman and put her ashes at the foundation of the new place and everything will be straightened.' And he ordered her to be burned. Then he turned to the owl and said to her, 'O owl, your daily provision will come to you regularly, one bird in the morning, another in the noon and the third in the evening.' Don't you notice how the small birds fly to and fro, and give no peace till they become the prey of the owl?" (1)

(10)-

A story which is similar in its introduction to that of the last one, and to the conclusion of the first story recorded in this chapter, but yet quite different in its theme is this:-

It is said that King Solomon's wife once requested her husband to build her a palace composed of birds' feathers

(1) St. H. Stephan, op.cit. , pp. 189 - 190.

and insisted on his doing that. Thereupon our Lord Solomon gathered together all birds, and commanded them to shed down their plumage from their bodies so as to construct the palace, and they all complied with the order with the sole exception of the sparrow.

This bird refused persistently and wilfully to shed his feathers, adding threateningly, however, "If your design is impelling me to acquiesce in your decision, I will go and soil myself in the earth of religious endowments, and then return and shake it off on the feather palace which you propose to build whereupon it will crumble."

Thereupon King Solomon let him go but not without invoking an imprecation against him that he should be unable to walk, and this is why the bird is seen, when on the ground, jumping always, whence the saying children often use: "Safaja' Safaja' mnēin atīh wu mnēin aqa' " : (Sparrow, sparrow, where shall I descend and where fall?)

(11)-

It is interesting to see how the following story having as its main theme the sanctity of religious endowments, may be correlated with the first story recorded in this chapter in possessing the same type of conclusion:-

The sparrow came once to King Solomon and venture^d with, "O King of Time, (ya malik az-zamān), you collect God's wealth and procure people's money, while no one else but you benefits from it. Therefore may it be well-known to you that the yield of religious endowments, which belongs to God and your people, demolishes the ceiling if misused." (1)

The sparrow then left him and made for Solomon's house where it flapped its wings, with the ensuing result that it crumbled down. The king then cursed the sparrow, invoking, "You shall never walk like the rest of your species, but must go on jumping." That explains why we see the sparrow not walking on the ground as the rest of the birds, but jumping continually from one place to another.

(12)-

The owl, however, appears in a disobedient guise in the following anecdote:-

"King Solomon once said to the owl, 'Go tell the woodcutter woman, to cut wood and ride on it. And tell the girl at the spring to fill her jar and to ride on it. And tell the woman at the mill to fill the basin with flour at once.' The owl went to the woodcutter woman and said to her, 'It is the will of my lord the king, that you carry the wood on

(1) Cf. Chapter 2 , p.142.

your back.' Then the owl went to the girl at the spring and told her to fill her jar and carry it on her head. Then the owl went to the woman at the mill and said, 'My lord wishes you to grind the corn as slow as possible.' The king soon found out that his orders had not been given correctly and he cursed the owl and said, 'May God revite you from among all birds, because you pervert everything, thus worrying the women.' Then the beak of the owl became very small, so that its face is now like the face of a cat; whereas beforetime she was called 'Um Ghaliūn (mother of the pipe), i.e. the owl at first had a long beak.' (1)

(13)-

King Solomon, who had the Winged Carpet, used to fly high up in the air. He once espied a palace built of emerald, frankincense and myrrh. He ordered the carpet to be lowered and to be spread on the palace roof. And there then alighted the eagle. When the King perceived him, he inquired of him his name, and he replied that he was the eagle. He asked him his age and he answered that he was a hundred years old. Then he asked him about the palace owner, but he said, "I do not know, O Prophet of God."

The King then encountered another bird of the same species, and similarly asked him about his name, and he

(1) Stephan, op. cit. pp. 188 - 189.

answered, "Al-ghabr" - the hawk. He asked him his age and he replied that he was ⁶ hundred and fifty. The king noted that he had new feathers. The bird answered that his son perched on him once a year and consequently new feathers grow on him yearly.

Then suddenly the King heard a terrifically disturbing commotion and tumult in the cells far underneath. He commanded loudly, "O you who disturb me, come up here, and disclose your identity." A snake with horns then instantly made her appearance. The King asked her her name, and she replied, "Al Fāsleh, and what do you want O Solomon, the Prophet of God?"

He said, "I understand the language of birds, beasts and animals and all other creatures." He then inquired about the palace and she answered that it used to belong to Ma'mar Ibn Shaddād. Puzzled, the King asked to be further enlightened, "Did he really construct it?"

She said, "Yes, O Prophet of God. I was then as yet a young "daughter" when he ordered the construction of the palace. I then married and had three "children". There was a powerful army and a glorious kingdom. They were considerate and benevolent to me, and fed me as well as my

"husband" and "children". But a war was launched against them with the result that they were completely wiped out. And then, O Prophet of God, there came King Bargis and his government, who all resided in this palace. When they saw my "children" they ominously sought them and killed the three of them. Then they persistently sought him, and killed him. They followed me, too, and seized my tail and severed it, and I thus became terribly dejected and weak. But when I recovered my health, I breathed poison in their food, and they, in consequence, died. Then by the elapse of time dust accumulated blocking the doors and windows, and a species of eagle called rakham -Egyptian vulture; Pharoah's chicken - came in and built their nests in them; and that is what had happened, O Prophet of God."

When King Solomon heard this he ordered the wind to blow the accumulated dust away from the palace without causing any damage to it. The strong wind having performed the King's command, the palace golden doors appeared as black as burnt leaves owing to the immense length of time they were submerged by dust.

The King then departed to lead his soldiers away, and the snake beheld the ants and advised them to get out of the way, and resort to one place lest Solomon and his soldiers should tread upon them. But the King who had heard this exclaimed, "How can I tread on them while I am sitting on my couch of state and they are on the ground?" (1)

Thereupon he addressed one of them saying, "Have you ever seen anyone like me who governs the earth, animals, beasts and birds?"

The ant impudently replied, "None the less I am still better than you."

Incredulously he exclaimed, "You!"

She said, "Will you hold me in the palm of your hand, and place me in front of your face so that I may inform you?"

And the King did as he was requested. The ant triumphantly said, "You do employ all God's creatures for your service; but God has employed you to carry me up in your palm, and to

(1) Cf. Qur'ān, the Chapter of the Ant, Verse 17.

place me in front of your face so that I could converse with you."

On hearing this King Solomon became exceedingly indignant, and cut her off in two halves - which explains why the ant is so thin in the middle of her body.

(14)-

The following story, comprising three anecdotes, strives to explain why the hoopoe is called the bird of Sulaiman the Hakim (the Wise). It also contains an attack on women. It is interesting to notice how al-Khadr (St. George) is included.

"When King Solomon went abroad, the birds of the air, by his command hovered in flocks over his head like a vast canopy. On the occasion of his marriage, he commanded his feathered slaves to pay the like honour to his bride. All obeyed but the Hoopoe (Upupa epops) who, rather than flatter a woman, went and hid himself.

"The King, on his wedding day, missing his favourite bird, ordered the rest to go and find the hoopoe. The birds flew north, south, east and west; and at length after many months the fugitive was discovered crouching in a hole in a rock on an island in the most distant of the seven seas.

"You are many, and I but one," said the hoopoe, "there is no escape now you've found me. I go with you against my will to Suleyman, whose folly in asking us to do homage to the most worthless of creatures exasperates and disgusts me. But before we start, let me tell you three true storás of the nature of woman, that you may judge in your minds between the King and me.

(a) "A certain man had for a wife a most beautiful woman of whom he was consumedly fond; and she was even fonder of him, for he was very rich,

" 'Were I to die,' she would sometimes sigh in his ear, 'you would soon dry your eyes and take a better wife; whereas, if you died first, I should end my days in grief.' 'Nay, by Allah,' replied the man fiercely. 'Were you to die, I would renounce my business and weep on your grave seven years.' 'Would you?' she cried, enraptured. 'Oh, I would do more than that for your sweet memory.'

"The woman, as it was decreed, died first, and the man, true to his vow, gave up his business and mourned at her graveside night and day for seven years, subsisting upon scraps of broken meat thrown to him by the charitable. His clothes turned to rags; his hair and beard hung about him

like the fronds of maiden hair; his nails grew as long as eagle's talons, and his body became as emaciated as that of the leaf insect (*Mantis religiosa*, called by the natives of the Jerusalem district "St. George's mare" or the Jew's mare.)

"At the end of the seven years al-Khadr, being sent that way, saw the strange mourner, and inquired his story.

"The saint asked him whether he really believed that his wife, had she outlived him, would have done as much, 'Of course,' was the reply. 'Do you think that, if she were now alive, she would still love you?' 'Of course I do,' 'Well,' said al-Khadr, 'We shall see.' He struck the grave with his Moses' rod and bade it open. When the woman arose in her shroud young and lovely as ever - al-Khadr having hidden behind a monument, - the woman saw only her husband. Horrified by his appearance, she cried, 'Who are you, dreadful creature, more like a beast than a man? Why am I here in the graveyard? If you are a ghūl, I pray you not to eat me.'

"She shuddered still more when she learnt that the frightful creature was her faithful husband, and deferred going home with him till nighfall, saying that people would talk if she went through the streets in her grave-clothes.

He sat down beside her, laid his head in her lap, and in the relief of again possessing her, fell sound asleep.

"A sultan, journeying by that way, saw the couple near the open grave, and, struck by the woman's beauty in her shroud, he invited her to be his love. She laid her husband's head on the ground, and stepped into a litter that was in readiness.

"When the cavalcade was gone, al-Khadr came and woke the husband, telling him how his wife had been carried off; and suggesting that they should follow her. They started in pursuit, and reached the place soon after the sultan's arrival there. Al-Khadr proclaimed the identity of his companion, while the woman vehemently declared that the old fright had never been her husband. The saint offered to settle the question, and commanded that the woman should resume her shroud and be taken back to the graveyard. The sultan, in awe of al-Khadr was bound to submit, and the woman was brought to the brink of her former grave. She suddenly fell into it, a lifeless corpse; some say in consequence of a withering look from al-Khadr, and others, as the result of a blow from the Claws of a great eagle, which suddenly swooped down out of heaven.

"Al-Khadr then closed the grave with a stroke of his rod; and by the command of Allah, her husband regained the seven which he had lost. He was thus enabled to marry again and live long and happily with another wife, having lost his illusions, he was wise enough to keep in her face.

(b) "Two good friends, who were merchants, went into partnership. The one, a fat man, had a wife who loved him; the other, a lean one, was tethered to a shrew who made life wretched for him. When the fat man asked his partner to go home with him and spend the evening, his wife, though not a party to the invitation, made them heartily welcome; but when the lean man ventured to return ^{the} hospitality, he was met with abuse and driven forth with his guest. The fat man simply laughed and carried off the hen-pecked husband to his own house, saying, 'Now I know the cause of your thinness and your sad looks; and I think I know a remedy. Take my advice, and travel with our merchandise for, say, six months, then send me a report that you are dead. Your wife will then realise the good fortune she has lost and repent of her ill-treatment of you. When I and my wife perceive that she is really humbled, I will let you know and you can return.' The lean man approved of the plan, and in due time started on his travels. Six months later his partner received the letter

announcing his death. The fat man then informed the widow that the shop and all the merchandise were his alone. He further seized all her belongings under pretext of some debt or other, leaving her destitute. As a well-known virago she could find no employment, and was at last compelled to ask the man's help. He reminded her coldly of the rudeness she had formerly shown to him and reprehended her ill-treatment of his friend, her late husband. It was purely out of respect for the husband's memory that he finally prevailed upon his wife to employ her as a servant. The excellent couple continued to make her life with them so wretched that she thought of ^{her} former life as paradise, of her husband as an angel of light. When therefore, the lean man reappeared she fell at his feet and thence forth to the end of her life was submissive.

(c) "There was once a merchant who knew the language of beasts. But this knowledge had been granted him only upon condition that, if he told the secrets learnt by its means, he should die instantly. No one, even his wife, was aware that he was gifted beyond the common.

"One evening, standing near his stables, he heard an ox which had just returned from ploughing, complaining bitterly of his hard labour, and asking the ass on which the merchant rode to business how he might lighten it. The ass advised him

to be very ill, to leave his food untouched and roll on the ground in pain, when the ploughman came to take him to the field. The ox took this advice, and next day his master was told he was too ill to work. The merchant prescribed rest and extra food for the ox, and ordered that the donkey, which was strong and fat should be yoked to the plough in his place.

"That evening the merchant stood again by the stable listening. When the ass came in from ploughing, the ox thanked him for his advice, and expressed his intention to act upon it again next morning. 'I don't advise you to do that,' said the ass, 'if you value your life. To-day, while I was ploughing our master came into the field and told the ploughman to take you to the butcher's tomorrow, as you seemed ailing, and have you killed to save your life; for should you sicken and die, he would lose the value of your carcass.' 'What shall I do?' cried the ox in terror. 'Be well and strong tomorrow morning,' said the ass. At that the merchant unaware that his wife stood near him, laughed aloud, and excited her curiosity. His evasive answers only made her more inquisitive, and when he absolutely refused to satisfy her, she lost her temper, and went to complain of him to her relations, who soon threatened with a divorce. The poor man, who really loved his wife, in despair resolved to tell her all and die,

so he put his affairs in order, made his will, and promised to content her on the morrow.

"Next morning, at a window overlooking the stable yard, where a cock was gallanting with a number of hens, he heard his watch-dog reprove the bird for such light conduct on a day of grief. 'Why! What is the matter?' inquired the cock. The dog told the story of their master's trouble, when the cock explained, 'Our master is a fool. He cannot keep one wife in order while I have no trouble with twenty. He has only to take a stick and give the mistress a sound thrashing to make her amiable.' These words came as light to the merchant's gloom. Forthwith he called his wife into an inner room, and there chastised her within an inch of her life. And from that hour she gave him no more trouble. (This will be recognised as the identical story in which the wazir, her father delicately conveyed a threat to Sheherezad when she persisted in asking to give her to the murderous Shahriar - v. Arabian Nights).

"You see from these true stories," concluded the hoopoe, what silly, vain and tiresome creatures women are, and how wrong it was of Suleyman to ask us to do homage to ~~do homage to~~ one of them. When you find a good woman, like

the fat man's wife, you may be sure that her virtues are the fruit of the stick.'

"The assembled birds acquiesced in the soundness of the hoopoe's remark. They considered that, if these valuable facts were known to Suleyman he would mend his ways with the sex, and perhaps reward the hoopoe for having dared, from such humane motives, to disokey him. They all returned to the King, who, when he had listened to the hoopoe's three stories, took the crown off his head and placed it on that of the bird whose descendants wear it to this day. (For this reason the hoopoe is called by the fellahin 'The wise man's bird,' or 'The bird of Suleyman al-Hakim.')

(1)

(15) The strong sense of justice for which King Solomon is renowned is illustrated in this anecdote:-

The hoopoe came once to an ant-hill in which the ants stored their wheat grains. He intrudingly availed himself of one grain, and tried to eat it, but it stuck in his throat to ~~elicit~~ ~~hi~~ and he was about to choke. He forthwith

(1) J.E. Hanauer, "Folk-Lore of the Holy Land", pp.254-261.

resorted to King Solomon to solicit his assistance in extricating the grain which had blocked his windpipe. But the King severely upbraided him for unlawfully eating from the toil of others, and warned him sternly that unless he replaced the stolen property, and asked forgiveness from the ants, he would not extend to him a helping hand at all. The hoopoe promised to follow Solomon's instructions to the letter. Then the King removed the blocking grain.

(16)-

Solomon's wisdom is shown in this little anecdote:

Queen Balqis of Saba' who had long heard about Solomon's reputed wisdom considered putting his wisdom to the test. She accordingly invited him to her magnificent palace where after welcoming him she exhibited two flower bouquets, ~~one~~ one of natural flowers and the other of artificial ones, both of which looked perfectly identical. She then inquired which was the natural one. The King, however, far from being put out by this ingenious device, instantaneously called in a swarm of bees which no sooner had entered the palace-hall when they settled on the natural flowers. Wherefore Solomon was able to find easily a solution to what seemed an impossible problem.

(17)-

God the Almighty had granted our Lord Solomon wisdom and authority over all animals and birds, as well as the ability to speak their language.

It is said that Solomon once summoned all the world's birds. When they assembled he asked whether anyone was absent. They replied that the eagle had not shown up. When he asked for the reason they replied that since the eagle was the king of birds, he was too proud to answer the summons, which he considered derogatory to his dignity. Then our Lord Solomon asked for some volunteer to call him, and the hoopoe volunteered to carry out the King's order.

The hoopoe went to the eagle and warned him that unless he attended the meeting the King would smite him with imaginary sickness (fancy : al wahm). Despite that the eagle refused to come. But scarcely had two or three days elapsed when the eagle came in submissively to Solomon in a most pitiful condition, having shed most of his feathers, and terribly enfeebled in consequence of his dread of the "fancy". When King Solomon asked him about the reason of his plight and apparent decrepitude and indisposition he replied, "Because you intend to inflict upon me the "fancy"; and I hope you will forgive me and save me being racked by it.

King Solomon forgave him and set him free.

Three days afterwards the eagle returned to Solomon having regained his strength and feathers by the power of God. When Solomon perceived him to be so strong and healthy, he asked him to fly him up to the highest skies. And so Solomon mounted the eagle's back, and it flew with him to the first, then to the second heaven, until they reached the seventh heaven.

Solomon then asked the eagle if he could descry any object on the surface of the earth. After directing his eyes towards the earth he said he could see a ploughman wearing a black overcloak on whose edge hung a black bead, and that the earth he was ploughing was black and the buffalo he employed in his ploughing was black.

Our Lord Solomon was greatly impressed with the eagle's sharpness of sight, since despite the blackness of all objects he could still descry and discriminate them. Thereupon he asked the eagle to descend and alight on that plough. On touching ground he realized that everything the eagle said was true, and thence released him.

The eagle then prepared to take to flight again, but being hungry and exhausted from his previous flight, started to look around for food, and saw at a few yards' distance a large piece of meat. So he leapt on it, but unfortunately for him it was a trap laid there by the ploughman. The eagle then sought Solomon's assistance, and Solomon went over to him and expressed his astonishment that he could make out objects from a distance of thousands of miles, and yet fail to catch sight of a trap so near-by. The eagle philosophically replied, "When one's destiny approaches the eyes become blinded." Upon which Solomon rescued him from the trap and let him go. (1)

(18)-

Once upon a time the hoopoe invited King Solomon together with his retinue for a luncheon. When the guests had taken their seats and all were ready to start with their meal, the hoopoe served lunch which consisted solely of a single grasshopper duly cooked. When the hoopoe perceived signs of deep astonishment on the faces of those present he recited to the King the following verse which then became proverbial:-

(1) Solomon's supposed belief in predestination, is naturally emphasized in - Tha'labiy's "Qisṣa al-Anbiya", p.167.

(She modestly speaking for herself, said that the presents are according to the worth of those who present them).

"Lau kāna yuhda ila-l-insān qīmatuhu lakāna yuhda ilaika ad-dunyā wa mā fīha."

"If the man should be presented with what is his worth, the whole world and all that is in it should be presented to you."

(19)-

According to another variant of this story, after the hoopoe's invitation to Solomon and his retinue they all reached a river-bank. The hoopoe brought a grasshopper and threw it into the river saying, "Illī mā binūbu il-laḥm, bitnūby il-maraqā." (He who cannot obtain meat will be able to obtain the sauce) - which ran into a proverb.

(20)-

Another variant of this story is that current in Tha'labiy (1). Because Solomon ordered his procession not to harm the lark's eggs that lay on his way, the lark

(1) Op. cit. p. 164.

presented Solomon with a date and a grasshopper prostrating themselves in front of Solomon who stroked their heads. It is related that the skin on the lark's head is due to Solomon's stroke.

(21)-

Solomon the Wise had a beautiful daughter. When she grew up he told her fortune in the sand and discovered that she would get married to a poor man. Being very fond of her, he naturally was seized by a grievous apprehensions. He built a magnificent palace specially for her and invited her to reside in it. And so she did.

By coincidence, at this time a certain poor man and his son were having a violent row between themselves. The son went on roaming aimlessly fleeing from his father's wrath. Away he went and passed over distant places, until exhausted by fatigue, he lay down to sleep on a rock by the road-side.

An enormous bird then appeared and miraculously bore away the young man, surreptitiously placing him inside the princess's castle. When, however, she caught sight of him, she was greatly surprised, though not unimpressed, but said nothing. None the less she took good care of him, and

meanwhile she ordered her servant to prepare food for two instead of the usual one.

It so happened that the two young people liked each other's company, and fell in love with each other, and consequently they got married.

After a while the princess asked her servant to prepare food for three. The servant, who had no notion that a man was living with the princess, went and informed King Solomon about his order to prepare meals for three. Solomon then came to find out what was going on. His daughter then disclosed to her father her matrimonial document which was a celestial one since an angel had secretly married the couple; and she too revealed that she had a son by him. When Solomon saw the document he said to his daughter, "That which is written "destined" to you shall befall you." Then he blessed the marriage.

(22)-

One of the most widely circulated stories is the story of the two women who came to Solomon in a dispute about a son; each claiming him to be hers. Two sisters-in-law had a male child each, who very strikingly resembled each other

and were also dressed alike. The mothers were wont to go out in the evenings. On a certain night when one of them returned home she heard her son crying, and when she over-hastily gave him her breast to suck, her milk choked him and he died. Thereupon she immediately exchanged him with her sister-in-law's son. When the latter came unsuspectingly, she found her son "sleeping" quietly, so she did not bother or take much notice.

The next morning having discovered the death of the child she accused her sister-in-law of having diabolically exchanged their sons. A great row followed, but finally both agreed to go to King Solomon and ask him to resolve their dispute, and to arbitrate between them. As a test for real motherhood the King suggested in mock seriousness that the son should be divided in two halves, so that each may get a half. The guilty mother instantly consented, while the real mother, frightfully alarmed by the suggestion, agreed to give up her son to her rival to have his life spared. By this attitude the King perceived that she was the real mother and gave judgment in her favour. (1)

(1) Also referred to by Sir James George Frazer, "Folklore in the Old Testament", Vol. II, p. 570; originally found in 1 Kings 3: 16-28.

(23)-

This sense of justice was early perceived in Solomon as is seen in this story:-

It is said that two shepherds quarrelled together because one of them had grazed his flock in the other's field. Not having reached a satisfactory solution they both went to King David, the father of Solomon who was then no more than twelve years old. The two shepherds presented their cases to David in Solomon's presence; but David failed to give a right judgment owing to his disinterestedness in the case.

On hearing his father's judgment Solomon was not satisfied and addressed his father saying, "Oh Father, you have not been just in your decision. I have a solution to this problem, namely that the shepherd whose field was trespassed upon should have the right to graze his own flock in the culprit's field." This was one of the early signs of his maturity and wisdom.

(24)-

The famous interview described in the Qur'ān between Solomon and Balqis the Queen of Sheba(1) is the source of

(1) The Chapter of the Ant, 17 - 46.

many variant stories. In their fundamental outline they all bear a close similarity to Mujir-ud-Din al-Hanbaliy's episode (1) sometimes identically agreeing with some Qur'anic phrases:-

"In the 25th year of his reign, Balqis the Queen of Yemen, as well as those who were with her came to him... . When our Lord Solomon, may peace be upon him, finished building his Temple in Jerusalem, he decided to go on a pilgrimage to Macca. He equipped himself for the journey and was accompanied by so many jinns, human beings, devils, birds and beasts that the length of his camp was about a hundred leagues. (2) The wind bore them, and after reaching the haram, he resided in it for as long as God willed. He used to slaughter every day throughout his stay at Macca

(1) Al-Uns al-Jalil Bitarikh al-Quds wal-Khalil, pp. 114-129.

The same story is related at greater length in Tha'labiy's Stories of Prophets, pp. 170 - 176.

(2) For a vivid and detailed description of the marvellous city of Solomon in which he used to travel in the air as well as for other Solomonic stories, see Abu Ishāq Tha'labiy's Qisas-ul-Anbiya', p. 257.

five thousand she-camels, five thousand bulls and twenty thousand sheep. He addressed those chiefs of his folk present saying, 'This is the place from which an Arab prophet shall appear... who will be rendered victorious against those who oppose him..' And they asked him how long was the time that had to elapse before the Prophet's coming, and he answered, ' A thousand years.'

"He then stayed in Macca until he finished his pilgrimage. Then he departed in the morning and made for Yemen reaching Şan'ā' at noon - a month's riding distance, where he discerned a beautiful land whose greenward glittered. He desired to alight there to dine and pray.

"The hoopoe was Solomon's water-guide, since he could detect water-places underground as if reflected in a mirror.

"The hoopoe (1) on seeing Solomon alighting.. flew aloft in the sky until he could see the whole length and breadth of the world, and espied a garden belonging to Balqis and he descended on it and saw another hoopoe. Solomon's hoopoe was

(1) In another version, it is the dove. See Joseph Meyohnes, Bible Tales in Arab Folk-lore , p. 180 ff.

called Ya'fūr and al-Yemen's hoopoe 'Neifer'.

(Solomon's hoopoe told his "species-mate" all about his sire, while the Yemenite hoopoe informed his friend about Queen Balqīs and how she had under her command twelve thousand commanders, every one having a hundred thousand warriors under his command. Solomon's hoopoe was then persuaded to have a look at Balqīs and her kingdom, despite Solomon's hoopoe's reluctance due to his apprehension of the consequences of Solomon's missing him at prayer-time.)

" 'But', the Yemenite hoopoe said, 'Your master will be delighted if you bring him the news of this Queen'... Solomon's hoopoe could not return to his master except in the mid-afternoon.. Meanwhile Solomon had missed water and his absence was noticed. Solomon summoned the bird's prefect, the eagle, and inquired about the hoopoe, but he answered that ~~he~~ he neither knew where he was nor had he sent him anywhere.

"Solomon was furious and threatened to torture him severely.. unless he brought 'obvious authority'... Then he summoned the vulture, the bird's master and ordered , 'Bring me the hoopoe now.' The vulture rose up and up till he reached (a place) under heaven, and hovering in the air

looked down at the world as someone among you might look at a trencher, and then looked right and left and saw the hoopoe coming from the direction of Yemen. He right away swooped down upon him... and when the hoopoe saw this he replied that punishment was waiting for him...(and he was told of the threat lying in store for him by the eagle and birds unless he produced 'obvious authority', which pacified him.)

"They both then came to Solomon who was sitting on his chair. When the bird approached him he lifted his head and bent his tail and wings dragging them on the ground in modesty to Solomon.

"When he approached near enough to the King, the King took him by the head and said, 'I will severely torture you...what has delayed you from me?' The hoopoe said, ' I have come to know more than you do... and I have arrived at the knowledge that neither you nor your soldiers have reached. I have brought you from Saba' a true piece of news...' "

(25)-

The variants especially multiply after this point in the story. The Qur'ānic story, widely circulated relates, "...and it was said to her (Queen of Sheba), 'Enter the court';

and when she saw it, she reckoned it to be an abyss of water, and she uncovered her legs. Said he, "verily it is a court paved with glass." Said she, "My lord, verily I have wronged myself but I am resigned with Solomon to God the Lord of the Worlds." (1)

(26)-

But according to a local variant she had never married because of a physical deformity, namely one of her feet was hairy and formed like that of a goat, which caused her to be exceedingly sensitive. (2) Now Solomon, having heard of this, and wanting to ascertain for himself the extent of its truth devised the ruse of inviting her to his palace whose crystal floor identically looked like water. (3) Thinking it was water,

(1) The Chapter of the Ants 14-46.

(2) According to one tradition her father was a human being, Yashrih-Ibn-ul-Harith, and her mother was a Jan, from whom she had inherited her hairy leg. See also, Can'an,

'Aberglaube und Volksmedizin im Lande der Bibel', p. 13.

(3) Also referred to by Sir James George Frazer, Folklore in the Old Testament, vol. II, p. 567-8.

she had to raise her dress uncovering her legs and Solomon saw her deformity. (1)

(27)-

According to an Abyssinian legend, (2) however, when the queen came through the water towards Solomon's throne, both her feet became perfect, because she had stepped, without realizing it, on a piece of wood from Paradise.

(28)-

The well-known biblical account of the interview, (3) in which the queen "heard of the fame of Solomon" and

(1) Dr. Can'En has informed me about a Jerusalem tradition saying that following this interview, the King sent her to Hammām Sitna Maryam (Our lady's Bathroom) in Jerusalem with some powder and ointments which she applied to her hairy leg after taking a bath, and was consequently healed. It is also interesting to notice that it is believed that Virgin Mary had cleansed herself in the same bathroom after giving birth to Jesus Christ.

(2) Quoted by H.V. Morton, Women of the Bible, p. 112.

(3) 1 Kings 10 : 1-10.

determined to go and "prove him with hard questions," is most popular. Though immensely rich she realizes the emptiness of life without knowledge, and travels far and wide to satisfy her hunger for truth.

Certain Qur'anic allusions indicate how God subjected the devils to Solomon's bidding. (1)

(29)-

In the Bethlehem District it is believed that King Solomon had power over the geni(or jinns), and that with their assistance he built the walls of Jerusalem, Baalbec (in Lebanon) and other places (2) especially great buildings constructed of huge stones.(3) Thus the big stones of the ruin called Haram-Rāmat-il-Khalīl, which lies at a distance of 32.7 kilometres from Jerusalem, on the Jerusalem-Hebron highway, to the left(officially known Mambre), are believed

(1) Chapter of the Prophets: 81; Chapter of S.: 35.

(2) See Philip Baldensperger, "Palestine Exploration Fund Quarterly Statement," July 1903, p. 216. Baldensperger, a native of Palestine, of European extraction lived a long time in the Bethlehem Area.

(3) Yāqūt, Mu'jam il-Buldān, vol. I, p. 828 when speaking about the palace of Tadmur refers to the story that its marble columns were transported by Solomon's jinns.

to have been built by the jinns of Solomon. (1)

(30)-

In general Arab mythology it is said about the jinns that they were the inhabitants of the world before its habitation by human beings, and that they consisted of forty regiments, every regiment consisting of six hundred thousands... they were driven away by angels to the ends of the islands. They seemed not to have been recalled except for Solomon when Gabriel summoned them, and they came driven by angels from caves, mountains, mounds, valleys, open spaces, and woods, and saying, "We hear and obey." They all stood in front of Solomon and in full obedience to his orders. Then Solomon stood with the seal in his hand, and all jinns and devils prostrated themselves and ordered the giants to do hard labour. (2)

(1) This ruin is believed to mark the site where Abraham's she-camel first stopped, after he had received instructions to ride his she-camel and proceed and build a temple to the Lord where she happens to halt. But when Abraham started the work, the camel got up, so Abraham mounted her and she proceeded without stopping till she reached Hebron where Abraham built his sanctuary.

(2) M.S. Hüt, An introduction to Arab Mythology, (Arabic), p. 40.

(31)-

Once a king ordered many loads of wheat, barley, millet, maize and lentils to be haphazardly mixed together, until they formed a tremendous heap. He then asked the Prophet Solomon to sort out every kind of cereal and collect it together by next dawn.

Unruffled, however, Prophet Solomon summoned the swarms of ants, and asked them to do the job for him in the assigned time. The ants started their work forthwith, and were able to perform the job wonderfully before the fixed time-limit. When the king saw the heaps of cereals duly sorted out separately, he addressed Solomon saying, "In reality you are the true ruler of the jinns."

(32)-

When Solomon intended to build the Temple, he was told that the large trees of Lebanon were the best suited for his purpose. But Solomon wondered how to transport the wood required for his project. He thought it best to summon the spirits and the jinns. Having called them he ordered them to bring from Lebanon all the specified quantities of wood needed to construct God's house.

When God saw that He became very angry and said to him, "You ought to be ashamed of yourself for trying to do this. Your ancestor Adam had committed the great sin of pride, and I have punished all the people after him including yourself. How then dare you repeat his sin? Had you not intended to build me a house I would have very severely inflicted punishment on you. For the next seven long years, your men will carry the wood on their backs of animals, which will be your punishment for your sin." Hence Solomon repented of his deed, and sent away all the spirits from his presence telling them, "No human being will ever employ you after now."

(33)-

It was related that the lilies in the olden times used to grow and cover the ploughed land only, and never grew in rocky cracks as is the case at present. There is, however, a reason for this:-

Solomon used to walk in the fields and once his attention was drawn by two voices arguing and blaming each other. On turning round he saw an olive tree and a large lily. The lily was saying to the olive, "Your friends have offended you, and your beloved have not esteemed you since I have noticed that they have gathered your green and black tears merrily

and greedily. Where is your self-esteem O great tree which has been watered?"

The olive tree became angry at the lily's reproach and said, "O the daughter of to-day, you must realize that my green and black tears are the mother's tears shed when her beloved son returns to her; and the branches broken off my body are like the misfortunes that befall such a mother; but nevertheless she is sure of her son's return. That is why she bears all misfortunes for the sake of the son who will return soon."

When Solomon heard this speech he addressed the olive thus, "You will be eternal to time; your large branches will extend, and will shelter the tired from the rays of the sun. But you O lily, you will grow among the rocks in search of protection from the winds, and in between cracks will hide."

(34)-

It was related that Solomon the Wise married forty-nine women, and purposed to marry one more to make them fifty, provided that the fiftieth woman should be the prettiest of all. It came to his knowledge that the Pharaoh of Egypt had a daughter who was a reputed beauty. Hence he asked for her

hand in marriage, and she agreed provided he brought to her all birds' feathers. Solomon asked the jinns to do so, and they brought him all kinds of birds, and the jinns started to pluck off the bat's feathers, ~~Solomon~~ When they finished with him they were about to start doing the same with the peacock. The peacock looked around and asked to be delayed until he spoke to Solomon the Wise. He thus went to Solomon and said to him, "Oh our Lord Solomon, you are the best of those who know. How then do you humour a woman's wish, and leave us all in the cold. Don't you know that he who obeys a woman is a woman too?" (1)

Then Solomon woke up from his enticement and nodded thoughtfully, then said, "You are right and I wonder how I obeyed that woman." He thus exempted all the other birds from being shorn of their feathers. Thus the only one to suffer was the poor bat and it is still with few feathers.

With his wisdom Solomon was then able to persuade Pharoah's daughter to marry him without complying with her wish. Since that time the bat has become proverbial for the one who does not defend his right.

(1) A very common popular saying.

(35)-

The following story dealing with the death of King Solomon has a wide circulation among the Muslim population of the Bethlehem District and in particular in the rural areas. Undoubtedly it has its origin in the Qur'anic reference to Solomon's death, "And when we decreed for his death, naught guided them to his death save a reptile of the earth that ate his staff; and when he fell down it was made manifest to the jinns that, had they but known the unseen, they need not have tarried in the shameful torment. (1)

(36)-

The Muhammadan legend is that Solomon had employed the jinns to construct the temple of Jerusalem for him and perceiving that he must die before it was completed, he prayed to God to conceal his death from them lest they should relinquish the work when no longer compelled to keep to it by fear of his presence. This prayer was heard, and Solomon, who died while resting on his staff remained in this position for a year without his death being suspected, until his staff having been eaten away by a worm broke, and the corpse fell to the ground, thus revealing the fact of his death. The

(1) The Qur'ān, the Chapter of Seba', 13.

shameful torment which the jinns might have avoided is their forced labour in building the temple. (1)

And owing to the many variations in the details of the story, the present writer had seen it fit to relate it as it is found in the Book of Al-Uns al-Jalil Bitārikh il Quds wal-Khalil, by Chief Justice Abul-Yumn Mujir-ud-Din al-Hanbaliy (2), which in many ways serves as the prototype of local relations on the subject of the death of Solomon:-

(37)-

"It was related concerning the death of Solomon, may peace be upon him.... that he worshipped in Jerusalem a year or two, and a month or two (at a time) or more or less, while his food and water used to be brought to him. Every day he woke up a tree grew in his niche in Bait-ul-Maqdis whose name he inquired from it, and it would answer, 'I am So-and-So', and he would say, 'For what purpose are you used?' and it would answer that it was used for such and such purposes. He would then order it to be felled; and if it grew in order to be planted he would plant it, and if it

(1) The Qur'an translated by E.H. Palmer , pp. 368 -9 n.

(2) Arabic, p. 129.

grew to be used in medicinal purposes he would shake it off.

“This continued until the carrob tree grew, And he asked it for what purpose it could be used and it answered, “To destroy your temple.” Solomon said, ‘God will never have it destroyed while I live; you are the one who is threatening my death and the destruction of Bait-ul-Maqdis.’ He then plucked it up and planted it in a wall saying, ‘O God conceal my death from the jinns, so that human beings may know that the jinns do not know the unknown.’ The jinns used to inform the human beings that they possessed knowledge of many things about the unknown, and know what will happen the next day.

“Then Solomon entered the niche to pray leaning on his staff, said to have been carved out of carrob wood, and he died while standing up. The niche had windows in front of him and behind him. The jinns used to perform their hard labour during his lifetime and look at him thinking him to be alive, and not finding his seclusion from people strange because of his wont of long periods of worship.

“Thus they remained toiling for him after his death for a whole year, until a reptile ate up his staff, and he fell

down dead, and they discovered his death. So the jinns thanked the reptile, and that is why they bring her water and clay in the heart of wood... thus the jinns were assured of the fact that had they known the unknown they would not have remained in their degrading toil... slaving for Solomon while he was dead." (1)

(1) According to one tradition, when King Solomon died, one of the afrits (devils) went to inform the jinns at the bottom of Lake Tiberias whose duty was to heat the waters of the Lake, and who were deaf. He said to them, " الملك سليمان مات (King Solomon died)." Being deaf, they replied, " اخضر يابس مسك (Bring in green stiff branches)." - Dr. Can'an.

MISCELLANEOUS

Solomon's name is mentioned or invoked in a very wide range of diverse situations and occasions. The present writer has not been able to collect any evidence in support of J.E. Hanauer's relation which, he says, he has heard of a fellah of Bethlehem, namely, "If a cat drinks out of a can containing milk or drinking matter, what remains after she has quenched her thirst is not unclean, and may be used by human beings." (1)

Hanauer, however, attributes this to the belief that the cat is a clean beast, and has the blessing and seal of Solomon set upon it. It is true, any way, that the cat is considered by the Muslim population cleaner than the dog, and a vessel from which the latter has drunk is polluted.

Now Solomon figures rather prominently in certain oath formulas, such as this one which is commonly employed in Bethlehem's rural areas:-

"By the life of this stick, and God who is worshipped, and Solomon, the son of David, and Muhammadan direction for prayer."

(1) Folklore of the Holy Land, p. 262.

King Solomon's name appears frequently, too, in formulas and sayings related to combat the effect of the evil eye. This is only natural to expect for the great and wise King should also possess the power to nullify the evil eye's effect, as is obtained in this Artāshir anti-evil eye formula:-

"The eye has disappeared and runs swiftly in the darkness of the night. The Lord Solomon, son of David, came and found the black eye in the dark night.

"He said to it, 'Whither goest thou, O eye?'

"It replied: 'I will take the young men, and put them in the grave.'

" 'I will take the camel from its burden; I will take the baby from its bed.'

"He said: 'Turn back, O eye.'

" 'And divide thyself into two parts.'

" 'I will put thee in a copper box, and throw thee in the sea, for fear that thou wilt hurt the

children.' " (1)

His name appears sometimes in talismans against the evil eye and "qarīneh", as a means of combating their evil unwholesome influences which could prove fatal. (2)

The mule's barrenness has several explanations, and according to one (very little known nowadays), his barrenness is due to his carrying Solomon's rebellious brother when waging war against King David... Another

(1) H. Granqvist, Child Problems, p. 106. Also cf. E. Lane, The Arabian Nights I, p. 36:- An afrite, one of the heretical genii, related how Solomon son of David, called for a bottle, "and confined me in it, and closed it upon me with the leaden stopper, which he stamped with the most Great Name; he then gave orders to the genii who carried me away, and threw me into the midst of the sea." Idem in Modern Egyptians I, p. 344, refers also to Solomon depriving the evil eye of its influence.

(2) See Chapter 3, p. 168. See also H. Winkler, Solomon und die Karina, p. 135; and see also Can'an, Aberglaube und Volksmedizin im Lande der Bibel, (1914) p. 122 ff.

interpretation is that the mule disobeyed King Solomon, when all other animals did not dare to do so. Therefore it can neither impregnate nor become pregnant (la bi'ashshir wala bit'ashshar). (1)

A very widespread proverb is : Our Lord Solomon said to the owl, "Fetch me the best of birds", she rose and went and returned with her daughter - which clearly illustrates maternal preference.

Certain superstitions attributed to the mandrake claim that King Solomon carried a mandrake in his signet-ring.

(1) Referred to by St. H. Stephan, "Animals in Palestinian Folklore," JPOS, No. 2-3, p. 139. Can'ān told me that some traditions relate that the mule was the only animal who had agreed to carry wood to burn Abraham - others say Muhammad - when all other animals refused, therefore God punished it with this deficiency. The mule was once asked who his father was, and he answered, "My mother is the mare", not "My father is the ass."

whereby the jinns were subject to him. (1) (Alexander the Great was supposed to have employed it, too, in his conquest of the East).

It is worth mentioning that the Dead Sea itself is believed by the Arab bedouins to belong to Prophet Solomon, and that it is haunted by spirits. The tributaries that flow into the Dead Sea from both east and west are also called by the Arab bedouins the "Rivers of Prophet Solomon". (2)

It was customary for people frequenting the Marqa Bath on the eastern bank of the Dead Sea to bathe in its mineral waters, to offer the sacrifice of a sheep to Solomon the Wise, the patron of this place. (3), (4)

(1) Sir James George Frazer, Folklore in the Old Testament, Vol. II, p. 390.

(2) The Rev. Būlus Salmān, Five Years in Transjordan, (Arabic), p. 183.

(3) Do: , p. 254.

(4) For the supposed link between the spring of 'Eṭam, very near to Solomon's Pools, and the Euphrates, see Chapter One, p. 26.

According to a story King Solomon married a woman every day (1) and "foreign" women bewitched him particularly in his old age. In this time he was supposed to have persecuted and maltreated his people whom he described as ignorant and stupid. Thus from among the sayings attributed to him are:- "The Persians should be treated with the whip, the ass with the bridle, and the backs of the ignorant with the stick," "Do not answer the ignorant man according to his insolence lest you become his like," and "He who respects the ignorant is as the one who casts pearls before swine." (2)

(1) Reminiscent of Schah-riah and "A Thousand and One Nights."

(2) These sayings, as such are not found in the Old Testament.

THE SOLOMONIC FIGURE IN THE PUBLIC MIND.

And now after this review of the Solomon folklore in the Bethlehem District, let us examine the general characteristics of the personality of King Solomon as it emerges from this review. What, in other words, are the main features of the King's portrait, that still linger in the mind and imagination of the typical Bethlehemite? What picture of the King's temperament and individuality is thus revealed in these stories?

It does appear in the first place that Solomon is endowed with supernatural powers and undisputed authority over all living creatures, jinns and devils; and he does not hesitate to employ them when the opportunity arises on countless occasions. Perhaps to emphasize this phase of his character he is ^{rarely} made to address men.

He is a domineering figure with a quick presence of mind, and never at a loss for an answer, accustomed to command and to be unconditionally and promptly obeyed; even though his orders often appear arbitrary and unwarranted.

He himself attempts the supernatural as a matter of fact, and seems to relish it, just as much as he relishes

~~It, just as much as he relishes~~ listening to wonderful tales of extraordinary feats and prowess, as well as to tales of the past; and does not flinch from asking about old happenings, as when he asked the old eagle to inform him about the most remarkable events which he had witnessed in his long life.

He also appears as being divinely endowed with the power to predict, as is shown in the narrative of his death when he realized the carob tree was to be the cause of his death.

Then of course he is "Slūman il-Hakīm", Solomon the Wise; and this quality together with the previous one and his reputed strong sense of justice, is definitely the most emphasized in the popular imagination. He is shrewd, penetrating and sagacious, invested with a master-mind, all combined with a strong sense of justice. These qualities as well as his presence of mind are clearly indicated in his commissioning of the right agents to solve for him his dālemmas in which he suddenly finds himself, such as in the story where he is asked to sort out a huge heap of cereals to its constituents within an impossibly short time; and when he summons the bees to discover which are the genuine flowers;

and when he decrees that the disputed son should be divided into two halves, in order to find out the real mother who will naturally appear frightfully concerned; and when he refused^{to} help the robbing hoopoe until he restored the stolen property, be it ever so petty. Besides, he possessed the widespread reputation of solving worldly and theological enigmas, as is illustrated by the Queen of Sheba who had come from afar to visit him to inquire about certain problems, concerning the mystery of life.

Not only does he appreciate wise sayings; but he is also known as the one who had given utterance to numerous maxims. In fact he seems to enjoy puzzling creatures under his command by asking them questions of a nature of baffling perplexity such as, "Which are more numerous men or women?" and by setting them impossible commissions such as finding a branch which should be neither long nor short, thick or thin. His strong common sense and logical mind are indicated in his refusal to accede to the snake and the mole's requests of acquiring feet and eyes respectively, quickly perceiving the harms that will accrue thereby.

He is of course traditionally well-known for his love of splendour and magnificence, pomp and glory, and in this

respect the District specifically shares in the traditional view. One has only to review the description of his pilgrimage procession to realize the truth of this. (Possibly this fabulous description was influenced by the descriptions of certain caliphs' glittering pilgrimage processions which so much abound in Arabic Literature). This is also inherent in the description of his palace and throne that have come down to us (1). Of course his magnificent Pools themselves, and their romantic setting have afforded sufficient testimony to his love of pomp and glory.

He generally possesses an excellent command over his patience and is as a rule very dignified and awe-inspiring, with the jinns and devils prostrating themselves in front of him. When his authority is occasionally challenged he can be tolerant to a certain degree such as when the eagle, considering himself the King of birds, rejected Solomon's call to attend a meeting. The King's sheer threat to inflict him with "the fancy" was enough to humiliate him. But at other times he can be most irritable, either menacing the infliction of the most severe retribution when his hoopoe had been delayed from coming into his presence, or actually inflicting punishment. Solomon's punishment could be most extraordinary (of course in keeping with the uncanny framework of

(1) A portion of which is found in Tha'labiy's, Qisṣat-al-Anbiya.

of the unusual) such as when he ordains that the wren should always be jumping from one branch to another, or that the sparrow should not be able to walk on the ground but to keep jumping once he is on it; or when he inflicts thinness on all ants' bodies in the middle, because one of the species was impudent to him.

But he is impressionable especially by the exploits of others, as he was in the case of the eagle who could discriminate objects from thousands of miles. He also rewards the worthy for what good they perform.

Now what about Solomon's attitude towards women? What light does local folklore throw on him in this aspect? It is worth mentioning that not too much stress is laid on Solomon's supposed indulgence in the physical pleasures of the harem, though it is commonly admitted that he had hundreds of wives. This is perhaps due to the people's veneration of the Christian doctrine of monogamy, and also, possibly, to the esteemed place that Solomon occupies in the popular image, since he is too sublime a figure to be involved in any indecency or what may be considered debauchery according to the moral code and modern scale of values. Yet there are certain

situations in his dealings with the other sex, in which there appear serious weaknesses in this side of his remarkable character, especially when he momentarily gives way to the demand of his wife "Lady Barqis" to build her a house out of ostrich feathers; or on another occasion when it was suggested to him to build his favourite lady a palace of feathers floating in the air.

Very little is known, however, about Solomon's attitude towards women who are not connected cunnubially with him. We only get to know from one rare story that he cherished a very tender and sympathetic feeling to his daughter when it was decreed that she should marry a very poor person. On the whole there is a general denunciation of women as is found in the hoopoe's story comprising three anecdotes in all containing bitter attacks on women.

The Islamic influence is detected in Solomon's belief in predestination revealed in the story of Solomon's eagle who could see from a distance of thousands of miles, but who failed to see the trap laid near him, where Solomon expresses his belief categorically; and he does the same thing in the story where his daughter was to marry a poor man. In the same story Solomon is supposed to tell his daughter's fortune in the sand.

He is the hero to whom communities resort to deliver them from an impending danger, such as when he was asked to solve the vital problem of the blocking of the village spring, in which case he appears the champion of the weak against the oppressor.

Nevertheless his weak points appear every now and then. He is not hesitant in resorting to verbal loopholes when he promises not to kill the snake with a stick or lead. He can also device ruses as the one he organized in his interview with the Queen of Sheba Saba⁹ to ascertain for himself whether she had a hairy leg.

CHAPTER SIX

RELIGIOUS CUSTOMS AND BELIEFS

Religious customs differ from religious rites and ceremonies which abound in ecclesiastical liturgies and which are, as such, out of the scope of this thesis. Keeping within the general framework of folkloristic tendencies, these ~~are~~ religious customs and beliefs are quickly dying out and disappearing before our own eyes.

Some of these customs and beliefs have already been referred to, but not adequately dealt with hitherto in the course of our study; others have been explained and need not therefore be repeated here. To the simple, the observance of religious customs and rites remains on the whole one of the chief elements of their creed, and a manifestation of their religion.

The Bethlehemite is not an exception to the Arab in general in being religious, at least externally. He does not start eating without mentioning God's name; all his salutations are nothing but blessings; even his imprecations as we have seen in Chapter Three are nothing but a request from God the Almighty to inflict a certain harm on the enemy.

So were his ancestors from the olden times.

(a) Feasts:-

There were many people I knew, and there are some even now, really intelligent and enlightened^{en} folk, Christians and Muslims, at the furthest remove from practising religious duties and ceremonies, who always marked the dates of important happenings, general or private, not according to calendar temporal demarcations, but according to religious feasts, fasts, and occasions in general. This inherited custom goes on to indicate the deep-rooted religious outlook which characterized the District inhabitants. The Christian feasts in particular play an important part in the Palestinian peasants' calendar because of their fixed character, while the Muslim feasts vary. (1)

Lazarus' Saturday, the day before Palm Sunday, starts the long chain of traditions^{ti} pertaining to Easter. Boys still visit private homes on this occasion, and sing Lazarus' Song (2), dramatising the Gospel episode of Lazarus, and receiving at its conclusion a meagre financial fee and a present of dried figs and eggs.

(1) See Can'an, "Der Kalender de Palastinensischen Fellachen"

ZDPV. 1912, pp. 266-300.

(2) See Chapter Four, p. 280.

Starting on Maunday Thursday, boys are seen in streets holding red ^{hard-boiled} eggs and competing in breaking each other's eggs. The egg is held in a closed fist with only the uppermost part disclosed, while the antagonist hits it with the top of his egg. Then the same thing is done with the bottoms, and the broken egg is appropriated by the winner. Eggs are dyed in various colours with red predominating, and may be covered with scriptural drawings such as the Resurrection. In the absence of aniline dyes, eggs were dyed by boiling them with anemones, onion peels and soft oak bark.

The story behind the red eggs tradition is that when Virgin Mary and Mary Magdalene were returning from Christ's Sepulchre after His rising from the dead on the third day after His crucifixion, they were met by a woman selling eggs, who inquired about the reason of their speedy return. "Because He had arisen from the grave" was their reply. The woman incredulously answered, "I will not believe that unless these fresh eggs turn boiled and red in colour." And instantly all the eggs turned suddenly boiled and red.

According to another tradition Mary Magdalene went to Rome to complain to Caesar against the injustice of Pilate Pontus, and carried with her red eggs as a token of Christ's blood, and in protest against Pilate's judgment. Another

X

explanation is this: as in the case of an egg, life issues from lifeless objects, so has Christ's Tomb issued forth a spirit from the body of Christ.

It is worth mentioning that the Muslims of the District dye eggs on the Thursday of the Dead (on April 19th), which answers to the Christian "All Souls Day", and which falls on the week previous to the Greek Passion Week known as the Nabi Musa Week renowned for its celebrations. (1) Women take with them dyed eggs and cooked food to cemeteries to visit their dead, which they distribute to the poor who gather on such a day, a deed considered an "ajir" (recompense). But this custom is by no means restricted to the Bethlehem area.

On Maunday Thursday the formal crucifixion ceremony is held in churches, chiefly in the Church of the Nativity. During this ceremony held in Greek Orthodox churches, twelve chapters from the Gospel are read, and it is customary for

(1) Instituted by the Sultan Salāh-ud-Dīn the Fatimid, (some say Baybars) to counterbalance the large number of Christian pilgrims in Jerusalem. See also Can'an, "Mohammedan Saints and Sanctuaries in Palestine", JPOS, Vol VI, No. 3, pp. 9-139.

the congregation, especially women, to bring threads with them. At the beginning of every chapter, a knot is loosely tied, and ~~the~~ at the conclusion of every chapter the knot is tightly bound. The ensuing thread with its twelve knots is thus believed to ward off evil, and is borne by children to repel the evil eye.

Just after midnight on Easter Eve, at the conclusion of the church ceremony, and the start of the Easter Mass, people who have been fasting the long Easter Lent, break their fast now in the church by eating an egg brought for this purpose. (In the Orthodox Church all fats are proscribed in lents).

When people exchange^d congratulatory visits in this feast, the guest had to start his greetings by saying, "Il-Masīh qām" (Christ has arisen) to which the host was expected to say, "Ḥaqq innu qām" (He is arisen indeed). This was a very widespread custom among Christians in the Arab countries. (1)

On the Saturday of the Dead preceding Whit Sunday, it is believed that God forgives the sins of the dead who rise to heaven. The loaves of bread which are presented to the

(1) A certain lazy sluggish woman discovered (cont. p.369)

(cont.) a ready excuse for not performing any work in the following formula:-

"Il-ḥad ḥad Allah, wil-ithnā'in yijrī warāh, with-thalātha bint 'ammuh, wil-arba'ā arba'at il-ālām, wil-khamīs khamīs il-qurbān, wil jum'a jum'it il-ḥazīneh, wis-sabt sabbt in-nūr, wil ḥad ḥad il-hanā wis-surūr."

(Sunday is God's Sunday, Monday comes after it, Tuesday is its cousin, Wednesday is the Wednesday of pain - of Christ -, Thursday is the Thursday of the Eucharist - Maunday Thursday-, Friday is the Sad Friday - Good Friday - , Saturday is the Saturday of Light, and Sunday is the Sunday of happiness and pleasure.)

No wonder then she became impoverished, and found no clothes to put on. She placed herself in a jar and rolled with it to the priest to complain. The priest exhorted her, "Rūhi ishtighli ḥad Allah wa 'Id Allah wa lā tijjini tiqra'i fil jarrah." (Go and work on God's Sunday and on God's feast day, but do not come to me tinkling in a jar.)

church to be prayed upon in memory of this Saturday differ from the ordinary ones which are generally made of two round unseparated layers, called the Body and Soul.

On the feast of the Beheading of St. John the Baptist on 29th August (Julian calendar) it is believed that the sun dances, which is taken as a symbol of the dance of Salome, daughter of Herodia, who had asked King Herod for St. John's head after her dance to the King.

There is the custom among the inhabitants (common more or less in all Palestine) of piling small heaps of salt on flat roofs on the eve of the annual feast of the Cross which falls early in the autumn; every heap is supposed to indicate a certain month of the rainy season. The next day's early frost or dew will melt those heaps, but the melting takes shape in various proportions - the rule deducted is that the more a heap shows indications of melting, the more rain will fall during the month which that particular heap symbolises.

It is in this feast that people send bunches of

basil (1) to the church to be blessed in the service. (2)
At mid-day on the Feast of the Cross they scoop out a handful of earth and sprinkle it. If it is thus seen that the wind is westerly or so^utherly then it is believed that the winter season will be rainy; if the wind is northerly or easterly then there will be a drought. (3)

On another feast, the Feast of the Transfiguration, August 6th, (Julian calendar) it is also customary for people to send their first fruits to the church to be blessed. On the eve of this feast they place water under the sky so as to acquire a curative power. On this feast the sun is believed to shine with unnatural brilliance.

On the feast of Epiphany Orthodox and Catholic priests too visit the homes of their congregation to sprinkle them.

(1) *Ocimum indicum* - a most popular aromatic herb cultivated and kept in pots in the houses for its fragrance.

(2) In Nazareth there is a custom for every family to offer a "rīhānit il- 'Adhra", (Our Lady's sweet basil) which is offered to her in the church at the feast of her Assumption. See Can'En, "Plantlore in Palestinian Superstition", JPOS, Vol. VIII, No.3, p. 161.

(3) Heard From Butrus 'Asfūra.

with holy water. This sprinkling is generally done with a bunch of basil surrounding the cross.

Sweet basil is closely connected with the Cross. There is a tradition that St. Helen ordered the labourers to dig deep into the ground to find the missing Cross, tempting them to work by hiding money in the layers of the earth, and that three crosses were finally found, the genuine one being enclosed in sweet basil which had preserved it when it was cast in a dunghill. On smelling its fragrance the labourers cried, "rīḥa hān" (fragrance here), an expression which was changed to "rīḥān"- basil. To single out the genuine cross the three crosses were placed on a sick woman with the genuine one placed last, and when it touched her she immediately recovered.

The common Muslim belief that the gates of Heaven (abwāb is-sama) open on the night of 27th Ramadan (1) (lailat-ul-qadr)- the Night of Power, and that prayers are answered, finds a corresponding equivalent among Christians. On the eves of the Feasts of the Cross and Epiphany (September

(1) The date is supposed to have been fixed by counting the number of letters in ((لَيْلَةُ الْقَدْرِ)) multiplied by three.

13 and January 6th) it is believed that requests are responded to. (1) A rare tradition pertaining to the eve of Epiphany is that olive trees only kneel during that night(2). The olive tree has always been considered a symbol of peace and mercy.

According to Muslim tradition trees shed their leaves in winter in sorrow for the death of Muhammad. Thus the trees tried the olive tree for not shedding its leaves, and it made the following answer, "One half of my leaf is dark throughout the year, my trunk is covered with a dark crust, and the inside of my "belly" is dark due to sorrow. Hence the trees were silenced and left it.

It is also believed by Muslims that trees kneel down

(1) See also Can'ān, "The Palestinian Arab House: Its Architecture and Folklore", JPOS Vol. XI, No.4, p.165; and Chapter 2 p. 6.

(2) In Egypt Muslims and Christians believe that bathing at Epiphany is a preventive and cure of sickness. (A.S. Tritton, "Folklore in Arabic Literature" - a paper read before the Society at University College, London, on October 20th 1948.

on the night of 27th Ramadan. "Then it may happen that a person sees the heaven open and the trees bow to earth. If he who sees this mystery at once asks for a special blessing it will be granted. But it is necessary to have the presence of mind to see and use the favourable opportunity which only lasts some moments." (1)

On the first week of the Virgin Mary Lent which extends to her feast on August 15th (Julian calendar), the weather is closely studied. Every day of this week is divided into four equal parts of six hours each, each part corresponding to a week of the winter semester starting from the first week of November. The dew obtained in every part is supposed to indicate directly proportionally the amount of rainfall on the week which that part corresponds to in the winter semester.

Many customs and beliefs pertain to the feast of the Burbāra (Barbara) which falls on December 9th. The folk story of the martyred girl saint called Burbāra, does not enjoy a widespread circulation, but is based, with various modifications, on the official story taught by the Orthodox Church.

(1) Hilma Granqvist, Child Problems Among the Arabs, p. 70.

A certain king had a daughter who had recently been converted to Christianity. When this was disclosed to her father he became utterly indignant, and imprisoned her in a lonely house having two windows. But all ways and means employed to dissuade her from her purpose of adhering to her new faith failed utterly. Hence the king ordered her to be deprived of all food except boiled wheat grains, and to be given no liquid except ~~boiled~~ the succulent wheat soup. But this, too, was of no avail. When her father visited her once, he found that she had opened a third window in the wall. When he inquired from her the meaning of that, she answered that she implied her windows to symbolise the Holy Trinity numerically; whereupon he ordered her execution.

Up to now almost every Christian family boils wheat grains on the eve of the Burbāra Feast, and spreads them out in heaps over straw trays uncovered throughout the night. It is believed that the martyred saint visits the houses nocturnally and avails herself of a handful of grains from the tray, thus blessing the heap and the house.

It is believed that in the feast of the Forty Martyrs housewives must not sweep their homes, or otherwise will find centipedes. Again if a house is swept and cleaned on the

Friday before Christmas, serpents are expected to be found.(1)
And the person who laughs and gets happy on a Friday will
meet some troubles on Sunday to make him sad.

(b) Weddings.

The state of bachelorhood in men and spinsterhood in women is disapproved of in general in the District as well as in all the country. There is a very common saying advising fathers to look for husbands for their daughters before their sons, "Fattish la bintak qabil ibnak." Young men as well as confirmed bachelors are continually urged to matrimony; the young man ever since starting to work, is indeed prompted to save for his marriage, "hawwish lajiztak". One of the most widely current invocations is "Inshallah fi fariztak" (If God wills, when you become glad, by getting married) - an invocation employed ever since the birth of a boy.

During the betrothal period the fiancé has to present his prospective bride with a feast-present, "'Idiyye" on Christmas-eve and Easter-eve, consisting generally of a golden piece of jewellery such as a cross or necklace, and articles of dress, and, in addition, at Easter, a hundred dyed eggs. Muslims, too, observe this custom in the Adha and

(1) Beit Jala.

Ramaḍān Feasts. In the former feast sheep are slaughtered and presented wholly or partly, and in the latter a money-present, or a piece of jewellery is presented. In both communities the non-observance of this custom on the part of the fiancé may be considered the breaking off of the engagement. The gift presentation is rather a formal occasion in which quite a few women from the fiancé's side partake.

The first duty incumbent on the bridegroom's relatives before celebrating the wedding is visiting the neighbouring houses of mourning, if any, as well as the homes of bereaved relatives, and ask their permission for celebrating the wedding, which tradition is called, "akhdit-il-khātir" (consideration of the feeling). It was customary for the bridegroom's relatives "ahl-il-farah" to take with them on this occasion cylindrical moulds of sugar "rūs sukkar" - that used to be common but have now disappeared - and ground coffee as a present to the bereaved. It is still now customary for the wedding procession to refrain from singing or any other jubilant demonstration when passing by the house of the bereaved, out of respect to their feelings. Indeed the same tradition is observed before celebrating a happy occasion such as baptisms or circumcisions.

The Christian marriages take place as a rule on Sundays. On the previous Thursday or Saturday the "formal request" for the bride's hand "ṭalbe" is made in her father's house in the presence of a great number of people. It is customary for the bridegroom, besides paying the bride's money "fšid" - which has become now merely a nominal routine, as it is automatically returned to him by the bride's next-of-kin, to pay a few pounds called "lawā'ih" - a pound each - to the bride's nearest relatives, as parents, uncle, aunt, grandparents, as propitiation. He also pays 475 fils (equivalent to 9s. 6d) with which sum candles are bought and lit in a church, or for Virgin Mary.

We have seen how the wedding procession is assumed to be exposed to the malicious effects of the evil-eye and evil wishes. (1) Friendly families en route therefore, throw salt on the passing procession to blind the eyes of the malicious. Enemies may wreak vengeance on this occasion in other forms of sinister ways: they may scatter flour at the church door, or even cereals (and talismans to mar the couple's happiness), to cause an inconvenience for the couple, which they hope to last throughout their married life. During the ceremony the

(1) Chapter 3, p. 179.

binding of knots in a thread is believed to render the bridegroom impotent. (1)

Now to counter-balance these tactics, contrary or nullifying measures are resorted to. A shilling or any other silver coin is placed in the bride's shoe, throughout the ecclesiastical ceremony, so that the bride's foot may bring a silvery luck to her husband and in-laws. (2) Together with the silver coin, a small pair of scissors is also placed either in the bride's shoe, or tied to her brassière, which is supposed to cancel, or "cut the magic" (*biquṣṣ is-sihr*). Throughout the ceremony, a near woman relative keeps assiduously sewing the bride's wedding gown to the bridegroom's suit with a threadless needle, to neutralize adverse malice and machinations; or with a needle and a thread unknotted at its end, so that enemies' machinations may not avail, "*misallat il-'aduwwīn ma tkhayyīṭīsh*" (lit. the enemies' packing-needle may not sew.)

In the Haurān District in the north of the East Bank

(1) See also Can'ān, "Additional Matter for Dalman's Arbeit und Sitte", Vol. V, JPOS Vol. XIX, nos. 3-4, p. 218.

(2) Cf. green foot, Chapter 3, p. 191.

of Jordan wanton youths prick the couple, and even the priest, with needles during the ceremony, asserting it is for the good and welfare of the couple, so that they may not be carried away with their pleasure "farḥa", and be struck with misfortune.(1).

At the conclusion of the church ceremony, the god-father lifts the bridegroom up and down several times to remove any possible fear.

The bride's procession must not return to the bride's new home using the same route whence it came to the church, as that is ominous of something bad befalling her or her husband. An old custom possibly dating back to pre-Islamic days, and which was occasionally practised till fairly recently, was loosening a pair of young pigeons over the couple's heads, in case of the existence of a prophecy foretelling the bridegroom's death after his wedding, propitiating the evil spirit, addressing it thus, "in k̄ān za'lāneh khudhi za'alik, wu in farḥāneh khudhi faraḥek", (if you are angry take a pigeon for your anger, and if you are glad take a pigeon for

(1) The Rev. Būlus Sayyūr il-Būlusi, 'Awā'id-ul-'Arab',
(Arabic), p. 70-71.

your gladness. (1)

Before entering her new home the bride had to place her palm on some dough decorated by olive branches. The bridegroom would then strike her palm, and the ensuing figure of a palm with five fingers was taken to represent God's palm. It used to be the custom of inscribing the figure of a palm on the front door of Christian houses.

Can'Ān has related to me how in certain parts it used to be the custom of the bridegroom before consummating marriage to pray on the bride's gown spread out. In Beit Jala and smaller villages an old Biblical custom was observed. The young man used to wait for the consummation of the marriage, and when the bloody handkerchief, the sign of the rupture of the hymen, was displayed, shots were fired amidst other exuberant demonstrations of joy, for the bride's virginity was thus confirmed. Otherwise she was summarily dismissed to her father's house, for "il mara malāhitha la jōzha wu 'atāhitha la shilha", (the bride's goodness belongs to her husband and her shame to her family.)

The honey-moon institution was not introduced into the

(1) Beit Jala.

District until lately. So in the previous days the bride's mother used to send her newly-wed daughter on the morning following the wedding her breakfast called "ṣubḥiyye" (morning food).

And the bride was not supposed to leave her new home except on the Sunday following her wedding day. Her first visit must invariably be to the Church, after which she has to visit with her husband and closest relatives her parents' home for a traditional luncheon, and receives a piece of gold as a present from her parents. This tradition of visiting the bride's home called "fardat il-'arūs" still survives to the present day and is observed most conscientiously.

(c) Pregnancy, Birth and Teknonymy.

As the state of celibacy is disapproved of, so is a childless marriage even more highly disapproved of and deplored. Barrenness, especially among women, is not at all credited with any degree of approbation, least of all advocated. A barren woman is not esteemed; indeed in certain conservative circles barrenness is considered a heavenly curse, and regarded as a ruin of the house.

This outlook is probably inherited from Biblical times as there are many instances in the Old Testament to show the truth of this as in Genesis 30:1, where Rachel beseeches God, "Give me children or else I will die." Such an attitude is, naturally, not limited to the Bethlehem area, but is universally found throughout the country. Almost in the first days following the marriage ceremony, the young wife is repeatedly wished to bear children, "Allah yiṭ'amik iṣ-subyān", (May God grant you-lit. feed you-boys.)

In Muslim areas, when a man wishes to have connection with his wife... he says, "I seek refuge in God, from the accursed Satan. In the name of God the Beneficent, the

Merciful. (1) These words are uttered in order that Satan shall retire and God be present. (2) If God's name is not mentioned in the circumstances, the woman will be exposed to danger, and the jinn may take the place of the father, and the coming baby will have a demonic character.

It is of course firmly believed that it is from God that the spark of life is lit. (3) "Because a woman does not conceive every time a man and a woman cohabit, The Arabs, like so many ~~people~~ other people, have concluded that God himself has some interest in the matter. Only if God allows it, can the spark of life be blown upon and become a new human being." (4)

(1) But God's name must not be mentioned in unclean places or when committing unclean or illegal actions, or else a jinn may be present.

(2) Hilma Granqvist, Birth and Childhood Among the Arabs, p.30.

(3) Cf. C. Matthews, Mishkat, II, p. 97 : It is told that the Prophet said, "A child is not produced by every emission; but when God wishes to create anything, nothing can prevent it."

(4) Hilma Granqvist, *op. cit.* ,

A woman who is so unlucky as not to bear children may resort to certain ways and means: she pours on herself water from "ṭāsīt ir-rajjeh", (lit. the mug of trembling. King Solomon is supposed to have used it in drinking.) The original mug was available in the Mosque of 'Umar in Jerusalem. It had the name of God inscribed on it together with Qur'anic verses. Copies are available elsewhere. It also is prescribed as an antidote against shocks of fright. (1)

When the young wife does bear a child, it is said, "Bārak Allah, ḥibla" (God be blessed, she is pregnant.) Compare Elizabeth's words to Mary, "Blessed art thou among women and blessed is the fruit of thy womb." (2) And again she is constantly wished a safe delivery, "Allah yiḳīmik bissalā-meh," and similar expressions such as, "Allah yiṭ'amik iṣ-ṣub-yān," (May God feed you with boys - not girls,) and "qiyāneh bis-salāneh wu khilqa tāmeh," (safe recovery and sound body.) From the time of labour to her fortieth day one of her legs is in the grave. And with some Muslims she is directed southwards as if on her deathbed.

(1) For further information concerning "ṭāsīt ir-rajjeh", see Can'ān, JPOS, vol. XVI, nos. 2-3, p.79; also Can'ān Aberglaube, pp. 66 ff. and JPOS III, p. 122 ff.; also H.H. Spoer, "Arabic Magic Bowls," JAOS, LV, p.237 ff.

(2) St. Luke, 1:42 ; also 1 :28 and 48.

In the rural areas of the District such as Arṭās and al-Khadṛ villages it is believed that heaven's gate opens during the pain of childbirth and all present make their requests to God, and angels walk up and down. (1) Prophet Noah is generally invoked in Muslim as well as Christian environments, "Ya sīdna Nūḥ ifṣil rūḥ min rūḥ," (Oh our Lord Noah divide one spirit from another.)

Among Christian communities when the midwife is summoned to the expectant mother's side when her time comes, the first thing the midwife says is, "Il-Adhra tḥūt qabl ma afūt, ya Allah wu jīret Allah," (May the Virgin enter before I enter, I beseech God and His help.) The Virgin is constantly invoked and her help besought, so that we may rightly consider her the patroness of lying-in women. An icon of the Virgin Mary is placed usually at the head of the lying-in woman.

On occasions when massaging, or cautery or other similar treatments are applied, the "Arab physician" repeats, " 'Īd Allah qabl 'Īdi," (God's hand before my hand.)

The door of heaven is open at the time of birth. "He who wants to curse, curses (i.e. uses the opportunity to curse.) He who wants to bless, blesses.... The angels go up and down.... When her labour is difficult the angels tell God

(1) Hilma Granqvist, op. cit., pp. 62-63.

about her. Heaven is open." (1)

What hastens a difficult labour?

In Muslim communities, too, the parturient woman is given a Maecan rosary, or a rosary taken from a maqām and spread over her abdomen, to bear in her hand. When labour becomes exceedingly difficult, the parturient woman is given the hand of a child to hold, as if to seek his aid. On such an occasion the evil eye and evil spirits are feared. The censuring rite is resorted to as an effective check. Even after birth there is considerable apprehension that the parturient woman may be rendered incapable of re-conceiving through the sinister influence of the evil eye; such incapability is called "kabs" (2) (lit. pressing) which signifies incapability of conception by being pressed by evil spirits. Thus if a menstruating woman, or to a lesser extent, a woman wearing golden jewellery enters into the presence of a parturient woman, the latter becomes "pressed".

Hence to counterbalance or forestall such a mishap, the new mother, after recovering, will have to visit the houses of seven relatives and friends, making straight to the sacks

(1) Supra, p. 65.

(2) See also Can'an, Aberglaube p. 37.

of flour, and drawing out from them handfuls of flour - all this without uttering a word or salutation-. She will then knead the flour without yeast, bake and eat it. Such bread is called "qurs ikbās" (flat "pressing" loaf). She will have to visit the tomb of a murdered man early in the morning, cross and recross it, take a handful of the soil near-by with which she should sprinkle herself after taking a bath. She may, though very rarely, even have a bath on the tomb itself. (1)

The barren woman is made to step over the birth-pit used lately by a parturient woman in child-birth. This sort of insinuation is supposed to create jealousy in the barren woman which will make her bear children.

An old custom connected with the birth-pit is called "'aṭiyet il-jōrah" (the Bounty of the Pit). Almost immediately after child-birth, and if the child was a girl, her mother nominated her the prospective wife of a certain boy. No one would afterwards ask her hand, except if the boy withdraws.

Neither must the new mother nor her newly-born baby

(1) Beit Jala.

touch the plant called henna, which though supposedly was one of the plants of Paradise, yet our Lady Virgin Mary has cursed it. Therefore if the baby touches it, it will leave the Virgin's lap, and if it chanced to fall she will not receive it. (1)

Can'ān relates an old custom that used to be prevalent in Beit Jala, pertaining to the cutting of the navel cord by the midwife. Relatives and friends were invited and every one was given a candle. After a short prayer the midwife cut the cord and let a drop of paraffin from her candle fall on the cut surface, while others followed suit. (2)

The cutting of the navel cord of a female child was a proper occasion for nominating the child the future wife of a certain boy, "qata'n surretha 'ala ismih" (they cut her navel cord on his name); on such an occasion the child was presented with a present of dried figs (quṭṭā'in) festooned in the form of a necklace.

In Arṭās , "I was told that... the midwife goes with

(1) Beit Jala.

(2) Can'ān , "The Child in Palestinian Arab Superstition",
vol. VII, No. 4 , p. 165.

the child and the mother three times to and fro over the threshold and it was said that each time the following words were repeated, 'In the name of God, the Beneficent, the Merciful.' " (1)

When a child is born his parents are congratulated, "Mabrūk il-'arīs" (blessed be the bridegroom) or "Mabrūk il 'arūs" (blessed be the bride), and "inshallah walad lalhayāh" (May it please God that he will live), and "inshallah bi'Ishlak wu btūkil min ta'abuh", (May it please God that he will live for you, and that you will eat from his toil.)

Messengers compete in carrying the good tidings (bishāra) of the birth of a male child (not a female) to the father so as to receive a reward. While ~~the mother~~ to the mother it is said, "Himdilla bis-salāmeḥ" (Thank God for your safety), and in consolation, "Illi bitjīb il-bint bitjīb iṣ-ṣabi", (She who brings forth a female child will bring forth a male child), and " 'Uqbāl iṣ-ṣubyān" (May you bring forth male children in future.)

It used to be the custom in the District to give the child a bath by using water that has been standing out all

(1) Granqvist, op. cit. p. 89.

night, possibly to receive some effect from star-light. It used to be generally believed too, that unless a child was rubbed with salt after birth it will become corrupt. This custom may perhaps have been perpetuated from Scriptural days. (1)

Poor parents need not worry or be unduly apprehensive how to bring up an unwanted child(or children) born to them; it is indeed a very common belief that every child born brings his sustenance with him, "Il walad bijīb riziqtuh ma'āh".

The child cries when born because it comes from heaven to the world which is compared to hell. (2) It is also believed that when a baby smiles in its sleep it is because he has seen, or conversed with his angel called "ghazāltuh"

(1) See Ezekiel 16:4, and Luke, 2:7.

(2) Beit Jala, Cf. Encyclopaedia der Islam, III, p. 369:

The first cry of the child after birth is because the devil touches it. Only Christ and His mother Mary were not touched by the devil.

(his deer) (1) , or because his angel pinches him; and that when he chatters he talks with his angel.

Among Christians the new mother must not leave her home except after the elapse of forty days when she stops being impure. And she must pay her first visit to the church after taking a bath, and the priest prays over her and her child's head.

It will be going beyond the scope of this thesis to examine the general principles governing the choice of a name for the newcomer,(2). But it will be useful to analyse a few concepts involving a religious significance, large or small. To start with there is no special ceremonial in connection with the naming of the child, in which custom

(1) Compare this with the belief common in Egypt: "This is the explanation of the baby's occasional smiles, as well as cries. He smiles because the angels have told him that his father is alive, and cries when they inform him that his father has died." Ḥāmid 'Ammār, Growing up In An Egyptian Village , p. 93.

(2) See Hilma Granqvist's admirable analysis concerning teknonymy, Child Problems Among the Arabs , p. 11 sq.

the District conforms with the rest of the country. (1)

In most cases the name would have been agreed upon in advance. "Either the name reflects a situation at the birth of a child or, the child is called after a certain person. In both cases the name often has a religious character also. In the first case it expresses a person's attitude or relation to God. In the latter case this is expressed by giving the name of the Prophet, of a saint or of some other historical religious person. But when a boy is called Mhammad or a girl Fatme it need not always be directly after the Prophet or after his most beloved daughter. In the first place it can be after a near relative, but this of course does not exclude the possibility that there is a thought of the Prophet, or of his daughter, which gives special importance." (2)

I cannot agree with this last statement. My experience is that relatives who give such names to a boy or a girl are most strongly aware of the religious background of these

(1) See R. Lees, "The Witness of the Wilderness", p. 93 ;
also C. Wilson, "Peasant Life", p. 91.

(2) Hilma Granqvist, *op. cit.* p. 12.

names. A boy or a girl is named after a relative in very rare cases.

It is believed that a name exercises a definite effect on its bearer. Thus in Muslim communities a person born on Friday may be called Jum'a (Friday); on a feast 'Īd (Feast); in the month of Ramaḍān, Ramaḍān. Among Christians, it was generally the custom (and still is to a lesser extent) that a child born at the eve of a saint's feast, or on the day itself, was named after the saint. Thus a child born on St. George's Day will be called George or Jiryis (and rather rarely, in the case of a girl, Khadra); on St. Nichola's Day, he will be called Nichola; St. Elias, Elias; and so on the feasts of St. Basil, Basil; St. Anthony, Antōn; St. Demetrius, Mitri; St. Sabas, Saba, etc.; on the Feast of the Cross ('Īd iṣ-ṣalīb) Ṣalība; on Christmas Day, 'Īsa - for a boy - and Mīlādeh (lit. birth) for a girl; on the Feast of the Transfiguration ('Īd -il-Jillī) Julia. (1) The background

(1) It is a long-established custom that on the day following the Orthodox Christmas, a Patriarch Deputy heads a special afternoon service held at the Shepherdā' Field Chapel, with his procession passing through Beit Saḥūr. On a certain year, the Patriarchal Deputy's name happened to be Gerasimus. Consequently some Beit Saḥūr children born at that time were named Gerasimus.

to this concept, in the Christian context, is that the saint after whom the child is named is believed to act as his mediator or helper to his, or her namesake.

If a mother chances to lose many children in their infancy, then she may give the new baby such names as 'Ata or 'Aṭallah (Bounty or God's Bounty), or 'Awad or 'Awadallah (Recompense or God's Recompense) or 'Odeh (lit. Return i.e. God returned His Bounty). On the other hand, but on rare occasions, a boy may be named such repulsive names as Khrayyān (He who excretes) so as to repel the devil or jinn; or dhīb (wolf), as it is believed that the wolf's eye spots the jinn everywhere; hence the wolf's tooth or skin is employed in amulets. (1)

In general the first boy bears the name of his father's father, (and to a lesser degree, the first girl is named after her father's mother) provided he (or she) is dead. Otherwise it is apprehended that the newcomer will "drive away" the grandfather from the world. It is ominous to give a dead brother's name to other members of the same family. A childless husband, or a bachelor, to disguise his childlessness is

(1) I owe this information to the courtesy of Dr. Can'ān.

often called the father of So-and-So, after his father's name, to add to his dignity, for it is honourable for a man to have children, and if he had a son he would be called after him. (1)

We have seen in Chapter Three how if a Muslim woman constantly loses her children especially boys, she may vow to give her new-born a Christian name such as Eliās or Jiryis in the hope that it will thereby live. (2) On the other hand the custom of preceding a Muslim boy's name, whatever it may be, by Mhammad is not quite widely used.

A Christian may have a "baptismal name" (ism ma'mūdiyyeh) differing from the name he is called. The explanation is that

(1) A custom which is now disappearing, except in rural areas, is to call one by one's first name followed by the father's name.

(2) P. 182. In Egypt such a woman "asks a Coptic woman to give her (barakeh: blessing, good luck,) in order that the newly born child may live." The "barakeh...~~is~~ is a part of a dress... (she) to ensure that the newly born infant will live... goes from house to house begging for 'ḥasaneh' (charity) for the child. She will do this however rich she may be, behaving as if she were a very poor woman." W. Blackman, The FellāhIn of Upper Egypt, p. 65.

ecclesiastical authorities discourage non-Christian names to be given at baptism. Thus if a father wishes his son to be called, say Marwān, or Nāji, or Salīm, he may be persuaded to give his son a saint's name such as George or Elias or Saba in the church records. In the Orthodox Church when a man is ordained priest he is given a purely Christian name if he has not one.

After a close examination of the Bethlehem Health Department records, the present writer has arrived at the following conclusions regarding people's (Christian) tendencies towards names:-

The percentage of Christian men names to non-Christian names in 1920 in the city of Bethlehem was around 70 %; but it dropped down in 1945 to less than 50%. Among women the percentage of Christian names in 1920 was around 48%, but it, too, dropped down to about 22% in 1945.

And lastly, just as changing one's religion is regarded as ominous, so is the change of one's name (with the exception of changing for ordination) considered unlucky bringing in ~~wake~~ ill results.

(d) Baptism and Circumcision.

Surprisingly very little has been written about customs and traditions pertaining to baptism by the doyens of folklore. It is true that they are comparatively few, but are none the less interesting from the point of view of religious folklore.

In the same way that Muslim families vow to give their offsprings Christian names (1), in case of severe illness, or when deprived of children, so do they too vow likewise to baptise their children under the same circumstances, considering baptism a magical means of gaining life on earth. (2)

Latin children are generally baptised when they are forty days, but Orthodox children are baptised later, owing to the varying baptism rites, the former being sprinkled while the latter are immersed three times in water. Nevertheless it is considered wise to baptise a weakly child as early as possible. The christening occasion can be a grand affair especially for the first-born. And a luncheon for the god-parents is given.

(1) See also Hima Granqvist, Child Problems Among the Arabs, p. 129.

(2) Chapter 3, p. 182.

The relationship between the child's parents and the child's god-parents must be one of deep sincerity and of unmarred affection. It is believed that the least misunderstanding between them will have its effect reflected on the child. Nothing in the past history of the two families must give rise to unfavourable reminiscences, and they should venture not to spoil the sanctity and the purity of their new relationship. This unmitigated stress on such a sort of relationship necessitates extreme care in choosing the right god-parents, a stress reflected at the end of the christening service when the child's mother kneels in front of the god-mother carrying the child, and asks her permission to carry it.

In the Greek Orthodox Church the god-parents themselves must not be a married couple. And there must exist between them, too, an amicable understanding and a purity of relation.

The baptism water is disposed of in a special cistern in the church. It is the duty of the god-mother herself to wash the child on the three successive days following the christening. Very great care is taken in seeing that the water is not thrown carelessly away, as it carries the traces of the holy ointment which is placed on the child's face and limbs after his immersion in the water. The wash-water is

usually collected safely in a basin and disposed of in a garden, or some clean unfrequented place.

It used to be the custom - now very little observed - that the god-father when passing by the door of his god-son, must greet it though it may be locked; and so must the god-mother too; - she should never pass by it without greeting it - thus revealing the very dear and sacred feeling towards their god-child.

Circumcision had a greater variety of traditions and practices than baptism. Circumcision was till the near past a grand affair, not only to the Muslim boy but to his family, as well, not paralleled in the events of the boy's life except by his wedding, which it resembled. It was preceded by evenings of joy often lasting a whole week. Men and women danced and sang, amidst trilling and clapping; even a reciter (shā'ir) was summoned as in weddings; animals were slaughtered and feasts prepared. Henna was kneaded and presented to those far and near relatives; new outfits were supplied. The boy riding a horse was led in procession with his new outfit, and was decorated with leaves and flowers and various amulets, to keep away the evil eye. The procession culminated in the ceremony itself.

The songs sung on this occasion were either identical or very much alike to those sung in weddings. Indeed the very name applied to a wedding, "fariḥ" (merriment) is also applied to the circumcision. In the same way that it was ominous for a bridal procession to return the same way whence it came, similarly the circumcision ceremony had not to do so. Mourning relatives who abstain from participating in weddings, also abstain from participating in circumcision. And as in weddings, the near relatives of a deceased person are asked for their pardon and sanction for the festivities soon to be started, and sugar and coffee are presented to them.

Nor does the similarity end here, but in fact it extends more. Just as the bride is supplied with amulets against the evil eye on her wedding day, so is the boy supplied with amulets throughout the procession. (1)

The men form a close circle round the circumciser who is ready with his tools. The singing and clapping reach their climax. ^{No} ritually ~~as~~ unclean woman may be present, which would mar the sanctity of the occasion. The foreskin was well-wrapped and buried lest dogs eat it.

(1) See Chapter 3, p. 179.

The similarity, however, between marriage and circumcision ceremonies is further linked. Among the Ta'āmre bedouins who live to the east of Bethlehem, there used to be the custom for the boy's uncle to promise his daughter in marriage to the boy when on the point of circumcision. The boy's father accepted and no bride price was given. I have heard that in certain districts in Transjordan the youth who is circumcised, marries the girl when the wound is healed. "In this example can be traced a certain connection between circumcision and marriage. It is not impossible ~~betwee~~ that circumcision ~~was~~ originally a kind of preparation, an initiative rite for marriage. That such an idea was not quite strange to the Muhammadan Arab in Palestine appears also from the fact that it is not considered proper for a man to marry if he has not been circumcised,"(1) In general circumcision varies as to age, but ought to be done before a boy grows up, and certainly before marriage.

Actually a circumcision celebration may be combined with a wedding, to save expense. The circumcision of several boys together may also be combined to save expense. Spring is the favourite time for circumcision, because of the

(1) Granqvist, "Birth and Childhood", p. 201. Cf. Genesis XXXIV: 14 Jacob's son said, "We cannot give our sister to one that is uncircumcised; and they demanded circumcision of the bridegroom before the marriage."

suitability of the weather. The circumcision may be combined with the Great Feast (Al-Adha), or the Nebi Musa Feast. The religious character is emphasized when the ceremony is carried out in a sanctuary, though this is rather rare in the Bethlehem District. The most popular sanctuaries for the purpose were Nebi Musa and Nebi Rubin, respectively near the Dead Sea and Jaffa. Occasionally, too, a rich man's son was circumcised ~~with~~ with a poor man's child, with all expenses defrayed by the rich man, to gain God's blessing.

(e) Death.

When announcing the news of someone's death it is generally said, "Fulān a'tāk 'umruk" (So-and -So has given you his life). If the deceased is abroad, the news is sent to some near relatives - not the nearest relatives - to spare them the shock. These will then summon all the relatives of the deceased to their house and break the news by reading the letter or cable containing the news, thus initiating the official mourning rites (biftaḥu 'azāh), whose non-observance will bring about a great disgrace to the relatives.

Among the most traditional sayings and invocations associated with death are: "Inshallah biḍallu ulādku",

(May God grant that your sons may remain alive); or "Salāmit rāsak" (May God grant your head - i.e. your life - to remain intact); and "Il baqiyyeh fi ḥayātak" (May God grant - the remainder of the deceased's life - to be added to yours). And in the case of the deceased leaving children behind, it is said, "Illi khallaf ma māṭ" (He who has left children behind has not died), as his memory is perpetuated by his children. And "Inshallah sdādit ish-sharr" (May God grant that this - death - will be the end of the evil) ; as death, as well as disease is considered evil. One may observe that when visiting a patient one often concludes his visit by wishing, "Inshallah birūḥ ish-sharr" (May God grant that evil will go away). Other sayings are, "Il-ḥayā ilha ḥad wu hādha ḥad 'umaruh" (Life has its limit, and this is the limit of his life); "Il mōt ma bōkhidh illa il-khēil il-aṣāiel" (Death does not take away except the noble horses) (1) ; "Il mōt ḥaqq" (Death is - rightly - due) ; "Ma khalla min 'umaruh wala yōm" - or "wala sā'a" (He has not left from his life a single day or a single hour) ; "Il mōt ḥaqq wu malik il mōt māṭ" (Death is rightly due, and the King of Death i.e. Jesus Christ, died) ; "Qandil wu khalas zeituh" (There is no more oil in the lamp)(the oil is finished and the life has run out); "Hadhi udā'it Allah biddu yistaridha" (God

(1) Meaning the best people.

demands what He has given as a trust). Other sayings are, "Everything is pre-destined", "What is pre-destined cannot be evaded" , "God has written with His finger on the sutures of every child, while in his mother's womb, all his life, his vices and virtues and when he dies", "Death is nearer to man than the lid to the eye", and "What is predestined blinds the eye."

When a dying man is asked what debts he owes and is owed he should tell the truth.(1). It is believed that after death his soul will be imprisoned if he is indebted and will not be released except when his debts are fulfilled. If the dying man is old he may ask that no mourning rites or ceremonies be observed. Indeed there are cases among Christians when the old man "illi shibi' min 'umaruh" (who has been satiated with his life) had asked that alcoholic drinks should be offered after his death, which is ordinarily

(1) Dr. H. Granqvist in: Muslim Death Burial Customs in a Bethlehem Village, reprinted from the Muslim World, Hartford, Germany Foundation, Vol. XLIX, 4, October 1959, p. 288, says, "They ask the dying one: 'What is in thy mind? Hast thou any debts?!.. He who has something and he who has nothing alike says: 'I owe nothing, nor does anyone owe me anything!..'", on which she was misinformed.

done on festive occasions. (1)

Now whereas Christians are turned eastwards when dying, Muálims are turned southwards to face the Prophet's burial place at Madina. Water is dropped into the throat of the dying person, an action considered "ḥalāl" (good), and in Muslim communities this is believed to smooth his throat so that he may be able to utter the two creeds, or his last will. In Christian communities the dropping of water is accompanied, besides prayers, by such sayings as, "Allah yi'inak 'ala has-sā'ah", (May God help you in this hour) and "La ḥuḍn il-'Adhra", or "La ḥuḍn Sīdna Ibrāhīm", (To the Virgin's lap) or (To our Lord Abraham's lap). A dying man's invocation or blessing is responded to and carries very much weight.

It is thought that death is rendered more or less difficult depending upon how the dying behaved in life. "He who yields up his spirit in stillness, his angels are merciful. And if the angels are bad, he is furious... As he has troubled the people in this world, so the angels now trouble

(1) In certain parts of Trans-Jordan women are known to trill when an old man dies.

him and disquiet his soul. (1)

But some times the dying is prolonged not because of mundane evil deeds but because it is believed that the soul of the dying man is "suspended" (mit'alqa) by a very dear person or object, such as a far-away son, or a newly-built house. In such cases, a trace of the dear person or object, is melted in water, and when the dying person drinks it his soul is comforted and he soon dies.

As soon as someone dies, neighbours compete in inviting the deceased's men relatives, until a certain neighbour succeeds in taking them over to his house (akhadh il 'azīmah) (took the invitation). Then men come to console the deceased's relatives in the neighbour's house. Food presented on this occasion is called "fwāleh" or "khurūj". It is noteworthy that women, who remain by the side of the deceased in his home, do not eat anything until after the funeral.

The sheikh generally exhorts women not to shriek or to rend their clothes but to weep in silence. Violent demonstrations of grief trouble the departed who are being taken by

(1) Granqvist, op. cit. p.290.

the angels. (1) The Muslim dead are generally washed in their homes, and in exceptional cases at the mosque. Women are washed at home. In villages, sometimes the door is taken from its hinges and they wash the dead on the door laid on four stones. The washing of the loved ones precedes the washing of the professional washer. In the villages cotton wool is placed behind the ears, not in the ears, so that the deceased may hear the prayer. In these villages, too, the deceased is dressed in two or three shrouds if he is married to two or three wives. (2)

After the deceased's washing there are some tabu rules observed. His wife may not touch him. Only those women forbidden to marry him (*il mahramāt 'alših*) can do so, such as his mother, daughters, fraternal and maternal aunts, his nieces, his mother-in-law and grand-daughters. Similarly the dead woman's relatives who can touch her are those forbidden to marry her. Pregnant and menstruating women, and persons

(1) Cf. The Ḥadīth:-

ليس منا من لطم الخدود وشق الجيوب ودعا بدعوى الجاهلية

and

ان العين لتدمع وان القلب ليحزن
when the Prophet's son Ibrāhīm died.

(2) Not washed twice if he is married to two wives, as Dr. Granqvist says. See supra p. 290.

impure after sexual intercourse must not come near the dead, or sew or even touch the shroud.

Before carrying the deceased away, it is customary among Christians and Muslims alike, for relatives to bid him farewell, and to forward greetings with him to their nearest and dearest who had died before. They repeat, "Ma' is-salāmeḥ, fi ḥirāset Allah", (Go in peace protected by God), and similar expressions.

The carrying of the dead over the threshold is accompanied by shrill cries. A woman is covered with mantles, and nothing of her is visible. Christians, too, cover the coffin which is uncovered only during the funeral church service. Muslims believe that angels follow the dead in the funeral procession, and all must be ceremonially clean at the burial. Accompanying the funeral procession by complete strangers is a praiseworthy act, if not for the whole way, for part of it. This custom seems to be a very old one as it is referred to by Josephus, (1)

If the dead is a girl of marriageable age, or a bride, then when she is carried through the door over the threshold

(1) See also Mrs. A.H. Finn, Palestine Peasantry , p. 79.

they trill as they do at weddings. (1) If the deceased is a young man, or is killed, they may dance in front of the coffin, and even wear silk clothes, which they tear.

"Palm branches are carried in front of every Muhammadan funeral procession and later laid over the grave. Four such branches are put into the ground, one at each of the four corners of the tomb, in such a way that their tops touch each other. Often these branches are interwoven with flowers. It is a common belief that as long as they remain green the deceased is able to thank and praise God, thus partly or wholly atoning for his misdeeds in life." (2) The reason why the palm is used is because it was created from the earth remaining after the creation of Adam, thus it is said,

"^m 'Antak in-nakhleh" (Your aunt the palm-tree). انرموا عنك النخل

As is often the case folklore is mixed with Muslim Orthodox rites. It is generally the custom that the Muslim

(1) But they do not trill for all women, young and old, as Dr. Granqvist says, supra p. 294.

(2) Can'En, "Plant-lore in Palestinian Superstition", JPOS, Vol. VIII, No. 3, p. 153.

burials take place in a shorter time after death than Christian burials. This is accounted for folklorically in this way: the two angels Nākīr and Nkīr will judge him. If he is sinful they will beat him and his cries will be consequently overheard. Thus he is hurriedly buried lest his cries should be audible. (1) The grave is made high enough for the dead person to sit when answering Nākīr and Nkīr's questions.

Before the burial takes place they ask what people witness for that dead man or woman. They answer, "We witness only good," (khēir). But when the deceased is evil, or a fallen woman, all keep silent, and say, "Bury him and be silent." (2)

Women wearing amulets must not be present at the burial, and must not partake of the funeral meats, otherwise the effect of the amulets is completely neutralized. Women may carry amulets for many reasons, such as to be loved by their husbands, or to bear children.

(1) It is known according to Sunna that the two angels do not beat the dead, but come in a pleasant way to the pious, and in a frightful way to the sinful, and they ask the dead about his God and creed.

(2) See Chapter 2, p. 141.

"One of the village men goes into the grave with the dead. He supports the body between the shoulders with a stone, and a stone at the girdle, and one at the feet. This they do lest the body should roll over on the back. The face must always be towards the south. If the dead man is a woman, her father or brother or one who has made brotherhood with her goes down with her. The male relatives cover the front of the grave with their mantles as protection." (1)

A very old custom which has now almost practically ceased was, when the deceased's widow was of a marriageable age, then a suitor cast his mantle over her nearest relation, which was considered an indication of his asking her hand in marriage. Up to now if the widow (among Muslims and Christians alike) is newly pregnant then she stands under the bier so that everyone may perceive that she is pregnant, for obvious purposes. (2)

(1) Granqvist, op. cit. , p. 294.

(2) A Beit Jala man, after the burial of his wife, heard another volunteer^{offering} to marry him to his daughter saying, "Jamal barakh m^atrah^h jamal", (A camel kneels instead of another).

Those who bury sprinkle a handful of earth on the face of the deceased. (1) On loosening the shroud bands at the head they say, "How much you have seen and walked, and all what you have from the world is this handful of earth."

Women whom the deceased could have married must not, on their death, be buried with him. Those whom he could not have married are allowed to be buried with him.

"When they plaster the grave they say, "The Beneficent, the Merciful, Thou forgiver of great sins." And to the dead, "May God illuminate thy grave on thee, and bring thy affairs in order. And may ~~God~~ thy angels be merciful and make the dust light on thee," (2) The grave stone is supposed, in some villages, to say, "Sleep - how many others have slept."

In all cases, immediately after the burial, the near relatives of the deceased stand in a row so that people may pass by them and shake hands with them saying, "Salāmit rāsak" or "salāmit 'umrak" (May your head be preserved), or (May your life be preserved) or "salāmit ulādak" (May your children be preserved).

(1) Not "Everyone from the youngest to the eldest" as Dr. Granqvist says, supra p.294.

(2) Supra p. 295.

Among Muslims, a sheep is slaughtered after the burial, of which the deceased's relations may not partake. It is called (unīsa): lit. entertainer, and it is believed that the deceased is entertained by it on the first night of his death. The Qur'ān may be recited and they pray for the dead, a substitution for omitted prayers (taqsīṭ or isqāṭ is-ṣalāh). This ceremony is generally held for those who have not prayed, while it is considered a greater blessing for those who have prayed. A saying warns, "Illī biṣallīsh fi ḥayātuh yiqdi is-ṣalāh 'ala balāṭ jihannam", (He who does not pray in his lifetime performs the prayer on the tiles of hell.)

People going to console the deceased's relatives in their homes should not then go to visit other people, on the way back as they will then be transferring evil to them. In answer to invitations from people whose houses lie on the same route, they reply, "Yikfik sharr it-tamyīleh," (May God protect you from the evil of our passing by you.)

He who is martyred (killed in defence of his religion or country) or is killed in defence of his womanly honour, is buried in the same clothes he was wearing, without washing or shrouds. It is said that the martyr's body does not wear out since on Resurrection Day he will be resurrected with his

clothes on, and with his wounds bleeding as they were in this world. On this question of wearing out Muslim and Christian folklores seem to contradict each other. Whereas Muslims believe that the pious man does not wear out, Christians say that he who does not wear out is under a curse^{or} spell.

It used to be the custom for mourning women wearing native costumes to put ~~black~~ on black head sheets instead of the ordinary white ones. If they could not remove their ear-rings for fear of headaches, they then had to be black too. In the past, the nearest relatives refrained from taking a bath or combing their hair or putting on any jewellery for forty days. They ceased washing their clothes or hanging them out on the line. Even if their neighbours did so, it was considered rejoicing at their misfortune - no wonder that women's head-dress became very dirty indeed. To emphasize their sorrow they applied cauldron soot on themselves.

Christian women, nearest in blood to the deceased, following the example of the Marys in visiting Christ's Tomb after His ~~own~~ crucifixion, still go to visit the deceased's grave on the second and third days before dawn to moan. Muslim women do likewise, and they also visit cemeteries in

the two main feasts of al-Aḏḥā and Ramaḏān, and distribute sweetmeat, food and money to the poor. It is believed that if they omit doing so, their deceased will appear to them in visions or dreams.

Christians hold special funeral masses for the soul of the departed on the third and seventh days after death, though now these two masses held in the cemetery or church, are now almost always combined to one held on the third day and called "thālith wu sābi' " (third and seventh); also on the fortieth day, at the elapse of six months, and at the end of the year.

On the eves of these occasions relatives (if Greek Orthodox) gather together at the deceased's home to attend the mixing and decoration of the Sīniyyeh (lit. tray). Boiled wheat is placed in a large tray, covered with roast flour and sprinkled over by ground sugar, slightly bulging in the centre. A cross is drawn in the middle round which is written, "Remember O Lord thy slave So-and-So (deceased's name). The tray is decorated on the four sides by pictures of vine leaves (as symbols of life, probably referring to the Gospel's, "I am the true vine and my Father is the husbandman." (1)

(1) St. John 15 : 1-6.

The tray-surface is coloured and interspersed with bonbons and sugar plums. The tray is prayed upon in the service, and its contents distributed to those present on leaving, so as to invoke God's mercy on the deceased. Now the tray is being substituted by a simpler device, a kind of crisp bread called "qarshalleh" . A custom that has now ceased was when the deceased was old, chains of boiled wheat were made and hung round children's necks to prolong their lives.

Sweeping the floor after the passing by of the funeral procession is not praiseworthy; and this is still widely observed since it is feared that the people of the house will soon be swept away. (1)

To die on holy days such as Fridays or in the month of Ramaḍān , among Muslims, and on Maunday Thursday, when Christ was crucified, and on Good Friday, among Christians,

(1) Sweeping by night is also , as a rule not praiseworthy since it is believed that the sustenance of the house (rizq id-dār) will be swept away. At least the dust may be accumulated in a corner, but not removed except next morning. Similarly it is unpraiseworthy to sweep the house after the departure of a person on a long journey; but pouring boiled coffee on the threshold on such an occasion is auspicious.

is a sign of God's blessing. (1) Notions connected with life after death, are on the whole, based on religious conceptions.

When a widow married there used to be a custom of placing an egg and a jug of water at the head of the tomb, the assumption being that the deceased's soul will explode at the new marriage. Hence, to spare the deceased such an explosion, the egg will be exploded instead. (2)

(1) See also Dr. Ḥāmid 'Ammār, Growing Up in an Egyptian Village, p. 74.

(2) Dr. Can'Ān.

(f) Censing, the Evil Eye and the Supernatural.

In Chapter Three censing and the evil eye have been treated in connection with sickness, and especially in the case of children. The evil eye superstition remains widely circulaed in the Bethlehem District, the country at large and the whole Orient. The inhabitants believe in it almost universally, and they believe, too, in its ability to affect injuriously everybody and everything that may come within its line of sight. (1)

When someone has had a bad fall or accident then censing the place of accident is believed to be propitious. The censer picks some flour by the thumb, forefinger and middle finger, seven times, and picks some salt in the same way, repeating "In the name of God, the Son and the Holy Spirit", adds seven barleyes and seven wheats and seven olive branches together with a portion of a palm tree consecrated on Palm Sunday, a blue and a white cloth, all of which are placed on fire during the censing prayer. The place of accident is censed three times: firstly before the going out of sheep to graze, secondly at the sheep's returning at noon to drink, and thirdly at the sheep's return by night. The following formula generally concludes the censing rite for the evil eye:-

(1) See also G. Robinson Lees, Village Life in Palestine, p.213.

" Intfi ya 'wēina kama intafat Nwēira
Il 'ēin trūḥ bṣāhibha wil 'āfie t'āwid matrahha "

(Be extinguished O small eye; as Nwēira was extinguished.

May the eye go to its owner; and may good health return
to its place.)

But if the accident is not a grave one, it will be sufficient to sprinkle water in the form of a cross three times on the place of accident, mentioning God's name. This may be accounted for by the assumption that the accident has offended the jinn, but the mentioning of God's name will put him to shame, rendering him incapable of inflicting any harm on the victim.

Mr. Philip Baldensperger, who lived a long time in Artās, and made Palestinian folklore his special study, gave the following account about the jinns or Jān, which will summarize local rural notions on the subject:⁽¹⁾

"The Jān live underground. They have a Sultan (who is dead, so that there is now a kind of interregnum), and

(1) "Palestine Exploration Fund", Quarterly Statement, July 1903,
p. 204.

governors, courts, etc. just as on the earth. But their courts are just, and their judges take no bribes, owing to the holiness of Palestine. They do not appear often... The principal difference between them and us is that they neither plough nor sow, they must take their victuals from human creatures. All food places are guarded by them, but they can only take wheat from threshing floors, or bread from the oven when men move it without saying the first sentence of the Koran. They are most active at sunset. Whistling attracts them. The oven and the fire are their favourite abode, therefore a person quenching the fire without saying the above-mentioned words is beaten by them, either lame or simply stunned.

"They live below the threshold of every house, and men may never sit there. During the month of Ramadan they are bridled and put behind a mount in Jebel el Kaf, but soon as the morning prayer of the Wakfe is said, they get loose, and rush to the houses in search of food after their thirty days' fast, and salt is strewed before the houses to prevent them from rushing in. Salt is holy."

The impression given of the jinns by Qur'anic concepts and by classical Arab mythology varies in some respects from local notions. In Arabic annals they are said to be the

inhabitants of the world before Adam. They have spread havoc and corruption and rebelled against the divine power, which resulted in their expulsion by the angels who chased them and dispersed them. (1)

It is vaguely believed that some of the jinns are the souls of some people who were extraordinarily sinful during their lives and after death they became jinns; or that when Satan was expelled from Heaven, he and his regiments expelled with him became jinns.

(1) Notice the similarity with "Paradise Lost". See also Maḥmūd Salīm il-Hūt, "An Introduction to Arab Mythology", p. 210; and also Tafsīr it-Ṭabari, vol. I, p. 368, and 'Umar Shiblī, "Ākām il-Marjūn fi Akhbār il-Jān", pp. 9-10; and S. H. Langdon, "Semitic Mythology", p. 352. A Jerusalem version is that Eve used to give birth to twenty children every time; but she used to cancel half of them. Adam, however, disbelieving his wife's assertions of giving birth to twelve children, implored from God to preserve the other half, and those became the jinns.

Another story strives to interpret their existence in this way: God first created Adam and Eve in one person, half male and half female. But later He separated them, and Eve became Adam's wife. On her refusal to submit to him, Adam complained to God and He created for him an Eve from his side, and dismissed the first Eve from Paradise. She then married Satan and brought forth the jinns.

Women, much more than men, are wont to mention the name of God, or the Virgin Mary, or a prophet, or the Cross, before almost any activity, such as uncovering the oil jar or the lid of the oven (ṭābūn) or drawing out flour from the sack (after mixing the dough a woman crosses it three times), or when crossing the threshold, to drive away the jinns. Hence even the placing of bread loaves in the bread basin (bāṭīeh) takes the shape of a cross. After sunset the oil jar must not be opened for fear of the jinns taking from it. "But there is in the mental makeup of nearly all the Muslim peoples a strong infusion of what we may call the 'raw material of pantheism', I mean the heritage of primitive animism, the belief in spirits, in jinns, in afrits..."⁽¹⁾

(1) H.A.R. Gibb, Modern Trend In Islam.

The jinns are believe^d to possess many human attributes. But they cannot utter the word "Cross" which is an athema to them, so they substitute "the word" (il kilme) instead.

The jinns once had a bet among themselves to steal something from a woman who had made it impossible for them to steal anything from her because of her constant use of the phrase, "In the name of the Great Cross". A jinn, however, succeeded once in overturning her over the threshold, and she exclaimed, "The name of the Great Cross on every loaf, a cross on the flour container (qub'a), a cross on the bread basin; but she forgot to name the cross over the little round loaf, colloquially called (da'būb), which was consequently missed.

Whistling at night, and the sprinkling of water on the threshold at night bring the jinns unless accompanied by the mentioning of the name of Allah or the Cross etc. A child must not be frightened by such expressions as, "Come and take him O chair", or "Come and take him O table", as a jinn's name may be "chair" or "table". (1)

It is related that a certain woman from Bothlehem had

(1) I owe this last statement to the courtesy of Dr. Can'ān.

not the habit of mentioning God's name or the Great Cross. So once she sprinkled water at the threshold by night and she was seized by the jinn (iltam'at), and lost consciousness, and ate absolutely nothing for many days. At last the pious Rev. Hanna (1) was resorted to, who prayed "on her head" and she recovered. On being asked how she sustained herself without food, she revealed that the jinns used to bring her daily all kinds of food from the cooking-pots of those housewives who neglected to utter holy names on any occasion.

According to another story, a certain jinn once visited a friend of his, but found him in a very destitute and miserable state, thin and weakly. He inquired about his apparent languor, and the weakly jinn informed him that his home inhabitants were very meticulous in mentioning holy names, which deprived him of the opportunity of snatching any food for himself. The visitor, who was well-off and in an exuberant condition, exclaimed then how happy he was amidst his surroundings where mentioning holy names was not habitual, and how happy he was to eat whatever he wished, and invited his colleague to reside with him, where they could have plenty of everything.

(1) See Chapter One, p, 9.

The jinns must be somehow employed when making their appearance when summoned, otherwise the summoner may be exposed to their extraordinary agile activities including their chastising him by beating or mutilating him. Once a man who was quixotic enough to summon them, was too shocked to think quickly enough what to ask them to do. Just in time to escape injury he mentioned "natsh" (thornbush). Simultaneously the mountain thornbushes began to be flung sky-high.

There are many spirits besides the jinns. The place where someone was murdered is avoided nocturnally as much as possible by the individual pedestrian as it is feared that the murdered man's "mārid" ~~thauat~~ or "rasad" (ghost) will appear. The place becomes "marsūd" (haunted.) The "mārid" is believed to be a tall spirit. It appears on the day in which a person was killed and also in winter.

The kharrūb tree, (carrob : *Ceratonia Siliqua*) and the sycamore are a perch for demons of various kinds. Certain crossroads are also believed to be favourite encampments of jinns, notably among them, there is the place where the Jerusalem-Hebron road crosses that from Bethlehem to Beit Jala, known as "Bāb Izzqāq" (the lane entrance.) (1)

(1) Also see J.S. Hanauer, Tales Told in Palestine, p. 217.

water places seem to be, too, the favourite abode of spirits. Thus Bīr 'Ōnah (1) is believed to be inhabited at times by a bad spirit besides Virgin Mary. 'Ein Farrūjeh near Solomon's Pools is believed to be inhabited by a young woman, and so is 'Ein Battīr. 'Ein Arṭās in Arṭās is believed to be inhabited by white and black sheep. (2)

(g) Vows and Offerings

Vows are made when one faces a dire difficulty such as grave sickness, hard child-birth, or unfair litigation, or when one most ardently desires something such as a safe return from a voyage, or passing an examination. If one overcomes the danger or achieves his desire, then one must fulfil the vow, though the fulfilment may be procrastinated for years. The most popular saints in the District to whom vows are made are St. George, St. Eliās, and Virgin Mary and other local wells. As long as one has the intention of fulfilment, it does not matter. But if one chances to forget, then one is reminded by a dream. On neglecting to perform the vow, one is believed to be exposed to severe catastrophes till one completes his "debt."

(1) See Chapter One, p. 57 sq.

(2) See the admirable article by Dr. Can'ān, "Haunted Springs and Water Demons in Palestine," JPOS, Vol. I, pp. 153-170.

Vows are made and offerings presented on a very great number of situations, and in a variety of forms. Before filling the foundations of a new house a sheep, or a hen must be slaughtered, and the blood must run through the foundations; silver coins must be placed in them so that the house will always shine. A sheep is slaughtered when roofing the house, otherwise the jinns may haunt it, or else the house will take its toll of human lives, and an inmate will surely meet a mishap. Even when entering the house for the first time to live in it, the owners have to a sheep slaughtered, and from its blood a cross is drawn on the threshold. Muslims, as is the usual custom, slaughter a sheep at the Adha Feast, when a "sacrificial animal should be killed on the threshold of a new home for which they believe a human life would be spared." (1)

The most popular vows are sheep, olive oil, candles, jewellery and money, presented to shrines or to the poor. It may be part of the vow to walk all the way to the shrine or even to walk barefooted. One may vow to fast a number of days or vow to present an olive tree, say to St. George or St. Eliās. The abbot will then draw the sign of the cross on its trunk,

(1) H. Granqvist, Birth and Childhood Among the Arabs, p. 153.

Cf. Père A. Jaussen, Coutumes des Arabes au Pays de Moab, p. 363, "Iḥ-dhbīḥa tintah ish-sharr wu trudduh," (the sacrifice butts evil and drives it away.)

and will have its crops gathered, and it becomes the property of the convent. None except authorised people, will gather any of its fruit, or cut off a branch in dread of the saint's wrath. There used to be an old custom of a public crier asking who have olive trees to the convents, so that their crops may be picked.

When a sheep is presented standing as offering (i.e. not slaughtered), the abbot seizes it at the church door and slits its ear on the name of the person on whose behalf the vow was made. With the ensuing blood the abbot makes the sign of the cross on both sides of the church door. But when the sheep is presented slaughtered, the abbot normally takes one quarter of it, its skin, head and intestines. (1)

One of the most popular forms of vow is the "ghurubaiyeh" of the Orthodox Christians, (2) which consists of baked loaves, one of which must have two layers since Christ has two natures, the divine and the human. These loaves are presented to the

(1) For more information about the sacrifice in the desert and Transjordan see, the Rev. Būlus Salmān, Five Years in Transjordan, (Arabic) pp. 159-160 ; 232-258.

(2) Possibly from the Greek "agripnia"; sleeplessness, since it is offered towards the end of the long Orthodox service, which - in certain convents and churches - takes place at night lasting to the small hours of the morning.

church to be prayed upon on certain occasions. Before baking, the loaves are stamped on the surface with a heavy stone or a heavy wooden stamp inscribed with a saint's figure, called "rāshim". It is from the two-layer loaf that bread for the Holy Eucharist is taken. The other loaves are returned to the offerer who distributes them to relatives, friends and neighbours as a blessing.

The occasions on which a "ghurubniyeh" is presented are during the long Easter Lent, and the saints' feasts. It is worth mentioning that to satisfy all clans in Bethlehem, an age-long custom still prevails of offering the "ghurubniyeh" according to a rigid quota. Thus the Najājre (the largest clan in the town) offer the ghurubniyeh on the first Saturday of the Easter Lent; the Hrēizāt on the second Saturday, the Marāzqa on the third, the Ghathābra on the fourth, the 'Anātre on the fifth, and the Farahiyeh on the Saturday of Light. And the clans see to it that their long-established rights are not interfered with.

Another form of vows takes the shape of a white flag hung on roof-tops when a certain wish is fulfilled - especially after the encountering of many hardships, opposition or ill-luck. The flag which is taken to be a symbol of gratification to God may bear a cross or a crescent, and must stand out until the sun and the wind and rain wear it out.

(h) Litigation : "Qaḍa wu Masha" (lit. Litigation and Seeking Justice) (1)

Though tribal judicial courts are rapidly disappearing, yet bedouin forms of justice still obtain particularly among the Bethlehem rural and the semi-nomadic communities, such as the Ta'Amre tribe. As we have been mainly concerned in this thesis with religious folklore, there is no point in dwelling on the legal aspects of tribal courts with their complicated machinery. (2)

But the tribal legal phraseology is closely interwoven with religious modes of expression and references from which I have selected as a fair sample the preamble of the litigant's written allegation presented to the tribal judge.

Such preambles differ from one geographical location to another, but have many set phrases in common. Here is the customary preamble employed on such occasions in the Bethlehem District:

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- (1) Implying how judicial contestants sought justice by resorting to far-away judges.
 - (2) Attention is drawn to 'Umar il-Barghūthi's admirable article, "Judicial Courts Among the Bedouins of Palestine," JPOS, Vol. II, No. 1, pp. 34-65.

"I have come to you with the help of God, and supporting my back on God seeking shelter in seventy-two prophets, (1) starting with 'Īsa, the Christ, and ending with our Lord 'Alī, from injustice, and the oppressive way, and the sinister evil." The allegation is generally concluded in the following admonitory manner: "If you do not judge rightly may you face disaster in your successful sons and your grazing flocks," (Fil-walad il-fāliḥ wil-māl is-sārīḥ.)

(h) Miscellaneous

When a goat or cow is lost, Psalm 23 is read while a pen-knife is closed. The pen-knife must remain closed till the lost animal is found; otherwise it will be eaten by wild beasts. (2)

If any one looks up at the sky and counts some of the stars, he will have an equal number of warts on his hands or on other parts of his body. To remove such warts (and warts in general) from the body of the patient, someone brings lentils and asks the patient who holds each wart, "In the

(1) "Forty-four prophets", according to a bedouin preamble from Transjordan. See the Rev. Būlus Sayyūr il-Būlusī, 'Awā'id il-'Arab, p. 140.

(2) See C.T. Wilson, Peasant Life in the Holy Land, p. 48.

name of God and the name of this wart, shall I divide (the lentil)?" and he repeats the question three times, to which the patient answers in the affirmative. Then he divides the lentil in the form of the cross. This process is repeated for every wart. The lentils are then enclosed in a blue rag, and placed in a cave to wear out, whence the warts disappear. (1)

It is customary for one when wanting to thank God for a favour, to touch the ground with the tips of his fingers, kiss them, (and at times to cross oneself) repeating, " Ya Rabbi ma binṭūl samāk, binṭūl waṭāk," (O God since we cannot reach Your heaven we reach Your land.)

Water or boiled fennel that has stayed seven nights out in the open under the light of the stars (manajjam) - provided neither has seen the sun - is a cure for such illnesses as Angina Pectoris; the water or the boiled fennel is drunk, and the fennel dregs are used as compresses. But it is ominous for the washing to be spread out under the stars for fear of a star shooting down on the washing.

(1) Heard from Indriya Sabella.

APPENDIX -A -

T H E M I R I A M I Y A

In view of the great importance attached to the plant called Miriamiya (colloquially called Meramiyye) and its relationship to Virgin Mary, being called after her, I have found it convenient to append the following extract:- (1)

"But why is the Miriamiya so blessed? This is the story of the Miriamiya. What time our Lady Miriam fled from King Herod into Egypt with our Lord Jesus and was yet a little child, she sat down, weary, under the shade of a shrub. And she broke a sprig from the shrub and wiped the sweat from her face with the leaves until she found refreshment because of its fragrance. Then she said to the plant, "Be thou blessed for ever" and since that day the plant is called Miriamiya in her memory, and truly it is blessed.

"So the women of Palestine value and love the plant, believing it full of healthful virtue. The leaves are sometimes

(1) Grace M. Crowfoot, Louis Boldensperger, "From Cedar to Hyssop", pp. 79-81.

used in an infusion with sugar or honey, but more usually they are chewed while fresh. Sometimes the leaves are thrown on red hot charcoal to cense a room "to keep illness away" a most reasonable disinfection, occasionally the plant is used as one of the ingredients in the ceremonial fumigation called "rakweh" and practised by wise women for recovery of a child upon whom it is believed "the eye has fallen". (1) But on the whole the feeling about the plant is not so much that it is curative as that it has great power to give and preserve good health, especially in women. The belief in the value of this Sage is of peculiar interest because here the modern peasant lore agrees with the wisdom of the ancients. There is an old proverb, said to have come from the Arabs, "How can a man die who has Sage in his garden?" The very name "Salvia" from Salus (Health), shows in what esteem the family was held; sometimes it was used punningly, Salvia Salvatrix, i.e. Sage the Saviour. John Evelyn says of Sage, " 'tis a plant indeed with so many and wonderful properties as that the assiduous use of it is said to render men immortal" (2). But above all its promises of "quickened mind" and

(1) Dr. E.W.G. Masterman, "Hygiene and Disease in Palestine"
p. 25.

(2) John Evelyn, "Acetaria" 1699.

"length of days" was reckoned its more ancient promise of health and strength to women. "Agrippa and likewise Aetius called it the Holie Herbe" and gave much praise to it, promising to those women who drank of its juice "store of children, which are the blessing of God, thus saith Agrippa." (1)

"But of which Sage were the writers speaking? The English herbalists no doubt especially of *Salvia officinalis*, the Sage of English herb gardens, though they also ascribed the same virtues to minor sages, such as the Sage of vertue, with the three lobed leaves (leaves with little eares) which is by some botanists identified with our *S. tribola*. But it is quite possible that the older herbalists were actually speaking of *S. tribola*, that it may be even the 'Elelisphakos' of Dioscorides and followers itself, for *S. officinalis* is not common in Greece.

"Another 'property' of the Miriamiya also links it with the Saggs of the herbalists. Occasionally balls are found on the plant caused by some fly, probably *Aulax* sp. These, coming on the top of the plant and being in shape like little apples, are mistaken by the people for its fruit. The name

(1) Gerarde (Ed. of 1597), ch. 252.

given to them is Habb el Miriamiya (Berry of Miriamiya); they are picked while still soft, peeled and eaten, and are considered to be both delicious and beneficial having all the virtues of the plant itself.

"Now in the English herbals Apple Bearing Sage of Candy (*Salvia cretica pomifera*) is often mentioned. (1) Parkinson, speaking of Sages of Candy, says, "These kindes likewise beare in the hot countie of Egypt, Candy, etc., at the joynts and sometimes between, certain excrescences like unto small apples or berryes bigger than Pistock Nuts, of an inch thickness at the least and covered with much down cotton,... of a taste not so hot, but more binding than the Sage and not unpleasant, which the people usually eat with bread, but in other colder countries it never beareth any." Gerarde also mentions these apples and in his descriptions of the plant bearing says, (2) "The leaves also have sometimes little eares or appendices as in the smaller or Pig Sage, and in Candy (the place of the natural growth of the plant) it beareth excrescences or Apples (if we may so term them) of the bigness of large Galls or Oke Apples whence Clusius hath

(1) John Parkinson, "Theatrum Botanicum".

(2) Gerarde, "Herbal " (ed. of 1636), p. 766.

given you two figures by the same titles as I here present the same to your view.

"Now the *Salvia pomifera* L. of botanists is indeed an Apple-Bearing Sage of Candy, for it is found in Crete and is there often afflicted with galls, of which Sibthorp says, 'These preserved with sugar are regarded as delicacies by the Cretans.' It is a beautiful tall Sage, with larger flowers than *S. Triloba* and has simple leaves, much curled at the edges. Sibthorp also notes that *S. Triloba* also often has galls and considers it to be the *Salvia pomifera* of some herbalists, e.g. of Clusius, rather than our *Salvia pomifera* L. and this becomes very convincing as one reads Gerarde's description given above and looks at his illustration, taken from Clusius, of a Sage, with three lobed leaves. His Apple Bearing Sage for certain is our *Miriamiya*.

"Our Palestinian Sage seems thus much linked with these precious herbs of olden days. A later, but also interesting link comes with the days of the Crusaders, for they took notice of the plants of the Holy Land. Burchard of Mount

Zion says, "The soil yields many herbs. Fennel, Sage and Rue and Roses grow everywhere of their own accord on the plains." (1) The Sage he saw must have been *S. triloba*, as there is no other wild sage in the country that would have been likely to be so named by him.

"So far as we know, no other Sage in Palestine is credited with such virtues as *S. triloba*, it is certainly our 'Holie Herve', and the Blessed one, "Miriamiya el Mubarak". Such herbs in olden days in Europe were not to be picked without a rune or charm being said, - later on, a prayer. Perhaps the "Holie Herbe" for which this very beautiful 14th century (or earlier) prayer was to be used was a Sage of like virtue to our Miriamiya,

"Haile be thou holie herbe
Growing on the ground,
All in the mount of Calvarie
First wert thou found.
Thou art good for manie a sore
And healest manie a wound;
In the name of sweets Jesus
I take thee from the ground " (2)

(1) Burchard of Mt. Zion. Pal. Pilg. Texts, p.99, c. 1283.

(2) R. Rohde, "A garden of Herbs", p. 219.

APPENDIX (B)

THE SHATWEH

The "Shatweh" remains perhaps the only article of native dress, whose source and linguistic derivation remains a puzzle. It is the heavily-built saddle cap high head-dress worn by the married women of Bethlehem. It is covered with a flowing veil which is pinned under the chin and falls back and over the shoulders. On the "Shatweh" the whole of a woman's fortune in gold or silver coins dhakhira (i.e. dhakhira : treasure) is sewn, looking like a crown. At present it is only used in Bethlehem proper, having died out completely in the District - the last woman to wear it in Beit Jala died in 1908 - and is rapidly passing out. The term "Shatweh" is not used at present anywhere in Jordan except in Bethlehem(1).

(1) Barthelemy in his Dictionary of the dialect of Syria does not attempt to give a derivation. He does not give it as peculiar to Bethlehem but implies that it is used elsewhere,

The problem of establishing the origin of the "Shatweh" is very difficult. Some assert that its origin is Crusader; others say that it is Oriental. Having made a special study of the subject I would like to present the following theories:-

I:- The word could be borrowed, possibly in Crusader times from Europeans. I have tried to find something in Old French but could find nothing helpful. There is a similar head-dress worn at least as far back as the 15th century (and which can still be seen in Brittany) called "Hennin", which looks much like the "Shatweh"(1) of Bethlehem. (2)

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- (1) The "hennin" appeared in France in 1428 from which it came to England about 1450. A picture in the National Gallery, London, (Card No. 1196) shows it in "The Portrait of a Lady" (1433) by Van Der Weyden. The "Shatweh" can be clearly seen in a reproduction of a Venetian embassy to the Middle East (12635 Venezia - Fatti della vita di S. Marco (Mansueti) R. Accad.
- (2) See also the French Journal "Bible Et Terre Sainte's" special issue Bethléem, No. 42 - Decembre 1961.

There is, however, in Middle High German the word "Schatewe" meaning shade and produces the Germanic words: schaduw (Dutch); schatte (German); shadow(English). There is in Middle High German the form "schatehuot" ("huot" meaning hat, headpiece) which may possibly be the linguistic origin of "Shatweh". Furthermore, the modern German word "schatz" means "treasure", and Bethlehem women still call their "SHatweh" dhkhire ; treasure - but this similarity may be purely accidental. It is interesting to note, however, in corroboration of this theory that it is a well-established fact that some Bethlehem families are known to be of German origin such as the Jaqaman (Jackman) family. Besides, the German influence in Jerusalem has always been strongly felt.

II:- G.M. Crowfoot (3) quotes Canon Tristram saying in his study of Bethlehem (4) "..... But their (Bethlehem women) dress is certainly not Western, and was probably adopted by the settlers (i.e. Crusaders)". Many scholars are inclined to this view. We do get, however, the adjective "shatawiyy"

(1) "Embroidery" , The Journal of the Embroiderers' Guild, December 1936 , p. 114.

(2) "Picturesque Palestine", pp. 133, 134, written about 1850.

from the town Shatā , in the Arabic Classics. Ibn Hanqal refers to Shatā in his section on Egypt, adding that it is famous for manufacturing a kind of precious thin linen; and so does also Abu Bakr ar-Rāzi. In Arabic Literature we also have, "Jā'at tashab thiyāban shatawiya " (She came dragging her Shatawiya dress) signifying her richness and luxury. Yāqūt also mentions Shatā (1) saying it is a small town in Egypt to which the shatawi garments are attributed. Thus as "damasc" comes from Damascus, "muslin" from Mosul, it could be said by analogy that "Shatwe"- slightly altered, for shatawiyy - could be attributed to Shatā , which could then be taken to mean a kind of linen made in Shatā.

I am more inclined to support this second theory pertaining to the linguistic derivation in view of two indications that point to this direction. Firstly up to the days of the British Mandate the little town of al-Majdal, to the North of Gaza, near the Mediterranean coast, was the only town in Palestine, besides Bethlehem and its district, where the "Shatweh" was worn and called so. It is interesting to observe that al-Majdal has always been on the direct commercial caravan route from Egypt to Palestine. Secondly Egyptian textiles have always been imported and very popular

(1) Mu'jam il-Buldān , Vol. III , p.288.

among natives in various parts of Palestine. Up to now peasants of the Nablus district wear what is called "khirqa mfaddada" still imported from Egypt. In Bethlehem the Egyptian cubit (around twenty inches) is still employed in selling Egyptian cloths used in native costumes. Such cloths include a kind called "hirimzi", consisting generally of three colours: orange, dark red and green, used on the sides, sleeves and collar of the Bethlehem women; and women's belts made of smooth coloured pure wool, and silk pieces called "miqta'" from which the native dress was cut out. Even men's "kafafi" (head-dress), their fezes and the cloth wound round them, and Bethlehem's men's outer cloaks called "shālāt" made of pure silk - all came from Egypt.

The Crusaders might have taken this form of head-dress with them when they went back, and given it a name of their own; but it seems to me that the name is possibly (with its purely Arabic rhythm) Oriental.

(Professor Philip Hitti in a letter to the present writer (1) believes the "Shatwe" to be the one called "Tantūr" in Lebanon to which he has referred in his 'Lebanon in History.')

(1) dated 18th March 1951.

APPENDIX - C -

I N F O R M A N T S

Owing to my long residence in the District it is not possible for me to recollect the source of every piece of information or the names of all informants from whom I have collected this material. But I would like to give here character sketches of only the most prominent among them:-

1. Dr. Tawfiq Can'ān:-

He was born in Beit Jala, son of a Protestant minister, but lived mostly in Jerusalem. Though a renowned Doctor of Medicine who is now retired, yet he is undoubtedly the doyen of Palestinian folklorists. He was formerly an active member in the Executive Board of the Journal of the Palestine Oriental Society. He has written voluminously in German, English and Arabic; and though in his eighties he is still at work on folklore. He has been of great help throughout the thesis.

2. Musuf Ishāq il-Massou:-

He is a renowned tribal judge who took his profession from his father. He comes from Beit Jala, and is the oldest man there. Through his long experience in arbitration; and as a blood-judge (qādi id-dam) he possesses a valuable store of

folkloric material. He has almost completely retired now. He is a Greek Orthodox, but not bigoted. He has memorized a lot of folk-poetry of a non-religious nature. He was helpful in "Stories", "Proverbs" and "Customs and Traditions."

3. The Rev. 'Āzar Qunṣiyyeh:-

He is the oldest of the Greek Orthodox priests in the whole of the Bethlehem District, being in his nineties. He comes from Beit Sāhūr, but had officiated in Bethlehem for many years. He possesses a wealth of stories and anecdotes which I made use of especially in Chapter One.

4. Mr. Maṣṣūr Lūqa:-

He is a retired building foreman in his seventies, who hails from Beit Jala. He is a zealous Greek Orthodox who sometimes preaches in the Church of the Virgin Mary in Beit Jala. His fanaticism has led him to an unswerving belief in the truth of many myths and legends. His material, mostly included in Chapter One, had to be carefully selected and checked.

5. Mr. Buṭrus 'Aṣṣūra:-

He is a middle-aged Greek Orthodox Bethlehemite belonging to one of the oldest families in Bethlehem. He is a retired mother-of-pearl labourer, who possesses a remarkable sense of

humour. He is still called upon to decorate the surface of the "ṣīniyyeh" (1) when the occasion arises. He was of great help in "Imprecations and Invocations" , "King Solomon" , "Proverbs" , and "Customs and Traditions".

6. Mr. Indriya (Andrew) Sabella:-

He is a retired barber from Bethlehem. For many years his shop had been a meeting-centre for people of various social background; no wonder then that the proprietor had acquired an immense store of information about local folklore. He is now in his Fifties and a very pious Roman Catholic. He was of great value in "King Solomon" , and "Customs and Traditions."

7. Mr. 'Īsa Aḥmad Jubrān:-

He is a middle-aged well-educated teacher of Arabic and Islamic theology, of a Ta'mari origin. He has informed me a great deal about Muslim "Customs and Traditions" and "Proverbs and Proverbial Sayings". He is a very pious Muslim and most cooperative.

8. Mrs. Jamīleh Abu-Sa'ādeh:-

She is a Bethlehemite typical of the old stock of Bethlehem who are conservative and pious, and who is genuinely

(1) See p. 416.

convinced of the veracity of the stories she recounts, and the propriety of traditions. A staunch Greek Orthodox woman, she condemns the youth of today for their laxity in observing their religious duties.

9. Mrs. Maryam Handal:-

She is an old, staunchly Catholic lady from Bethlehem, and one of the very few women still wearing the "Shatwah". She is one of the very few remaining women who have still retained the native songs of all kinds and especially religious songs. Her knowledge of "Invocations" and "King Solomon" stories and "Songs" was very valuable. Her power of memory is certainly outstanding.

10. Mrs. Ni'meh Fagguseh:-

She is the youngest of my chief informants, and daughter of a famous family chief (wajēh) of Bethlehem. She has kept from her father a wealth of anecdotes, customs and proverbs on which I drew copiously. She belongs to a Greek Orthodox family, a branch of the Khamasa (i.e. the Five Clans) said to be the purest and oldest Bethlehem stock. At present she owns a souvenir shop and specializes in manufacturing dolls portraying various native costumes.

11. Mrs. Fātmeḥ 'Abid Mustafā:-

She is a part-time washerwoman in her sixties, who comes from Arḡās. She, as well as her husband, is illiterate. Her information, supplemented by her husband was useful in "Invocations and Imprecations", "King Solomon", and "Customs and Traditions". She and her husband work in their Arḡās orchards and sell their fruit in Bethlehem markets. The couple's outlook on life is typical of the Muslim fellahēen of the District.

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