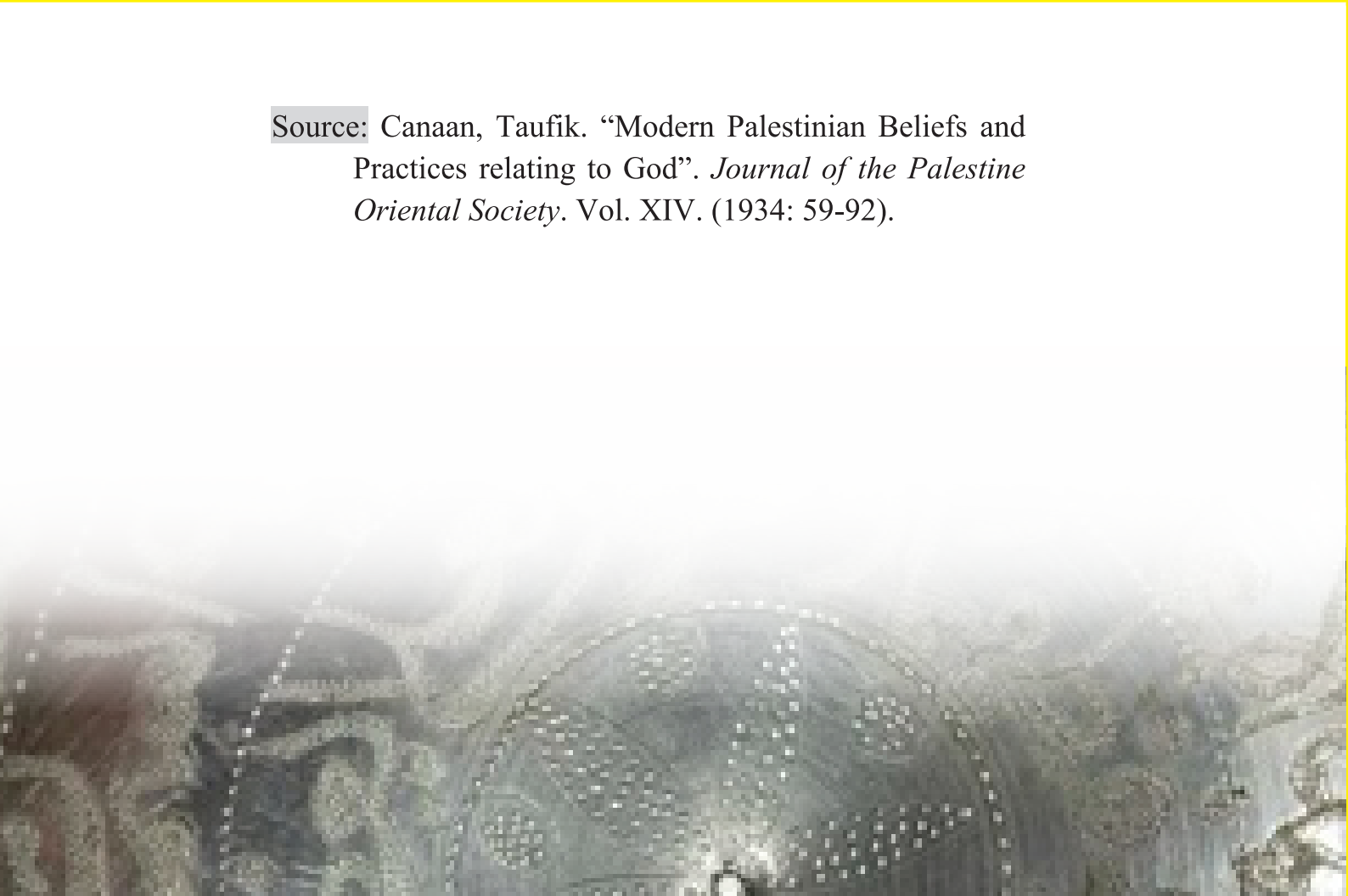


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MODERN PALESTINIAN BELIEFS AND PRACTICES
RELATING TO GOD

T. CANAAN

JERUSALEM

It is a difficult task to investigate the religious beliefs of any simple people and to give a correct picture of the true condition. The difficulty lies in the fact that most religious beliefs and practices are matters of internal conviction and are exercised in private. The external and apparent religious practices of the present inhabitants of Palestine are mostly based on one of the three monotheistic religions. Those practices which have nothing in common with these religions are practiced mostly in private and are therefore more difficult to study. Although a *fellāh* woman may talk to her neighbour about things which have affected her mental life or about her acts she will hesitate to say a single word to a strange person. One has therefore to gather all idioms, greetings, curses, oaths, songs, stories, and practices which are in any way connected with a religious idea or act, and try, after sifting, to form them into a correct picture. Even this is not alone sufficient. A thorough study of every phase in the life of a Palestinian, not yet influenced by Western spiritual and religious ideas, is required. Disease and death bring the members of every simple folk back to their religious beliefs and make them unintentionally say things and perform acts which disclose something more of their fundamental beliefs. A person who has the opportunity to study such acts and sayings will understand a little more of the underlying religious ideas.

It is true that the three monotheistic religions – Christianity, Mohammedanism and Judaism – have left deep imprints in the life of the Palestinian. Mohammedan teachings have penetrated more deeply into the consciousness of the people than the two others, for most of the inhabitants of the Holy Land are Moslems. Yet there are many beliefs which are older than Islam, though they

may at intervals be harmonized with its teachings and there are practices which, though contrary to the tenets of any of three religions, are still widely practiced. In the following pages we simply try to give an analysis of the material which we have been able to gather, leaving the more important and more difficult task of explanation and derivation to students of comparative religions.

The Palestinians believe in one God. *ʾAllāh wāḥid māluḥ ṭānī*, "God is one; there is no second (God) beside him!" are the words used instead of the numbers "one", and "two"¹ when counting measures of grain.² It is widely believed that even nature proclaims the unity of God: *et-ṭiūr bitwaḥhid rabbhā*, "The birds proclaim the unity of their god", through their morning song. A species of doves is said to repeat continually in its warbling *waḥḥdū rabbikum*, "Proclaim the unity of your Lord!"³ This belief in the unity of God is based on fundamental Mohammedan teachings.

Sometimes the Almighty is disregarded completely and the different members of the "Mohammedan Holy Family"⁴ are asked for help. When one loses something he climbs on the roof of his house late in the afternoon when all the inhabitants of the village have returned from their work⁵ and calls:⁶

O, you who hear this call,
Pray in the name of the Prophet.
Your first is Mohammed,
Your second is ʿAlī,
The third is Fāṭmeh, the daughter of the prophet!
O you who may have seen . . . (the name of the lost object)
O you who may know anything about . . .
O you who may know anything about . . . "7

¹ CANAAN, *Plant-lore in Palestinian Superstition*, JPOS, VIII, 155, n. 6. This *sāʿ* is dedicated by many to Abraham; see DALMAN, *Arbeit und Sitte*, 1, 2, 583.

² Peasants usually begin their morning work with the exclamation *yā wāḥid yā ʾaḥad*.

³ Even the camel is believed to utter the name "ʾallāh".

⁴ This expression was coined by the author, *Aberglaube und Volksmedizin im Lande der Bibel*, p. 66.

⁵ Heard in Dēr Ghassāneh.

⁶ *Yā sāmʿin eṣ-ṣōt ṣallū ʿan-nabi auwālikum Muḥammad ṭānikum ʿAlī et-ṭāleḥ Fāṭmeh bint en-nabi yā mīn sāf yā mīn yiʿlam yā mīn yidri*.

⁷ In the Arabic text the wording of the last line differs from that of the line preceding, but the meaning is the same.

It is a fact that, despite their monotheistic belief, the Palestinians, like many other simple peoples, honour many saints besides God. This practice is contrary to the orders of all the holy books. According to the teachings of Islam every Mohammedan should be a fatalist, whose life cannot be prolonged, nor any difficulty removed by prayers, tears, vows, sacrifices or even by the help of any *wali*.¹ The following sayings which correspond to canonic teachings show this clearly: "With predestination all dispositions (cares) are worthless (lit. lost)"²; "Fate makes (mankind) blind"³; "There is no escape from the fate that is written"⁴; "The person whose fate has not yet come will not be killed by difficulty"⁵; "Give me life and throw me into the sea (I shall not die)"⁶; "Death will only attack one whose life has come to an end"⁷; "A spear destined to hit you, will not fail even if you hide yourself."⁸

Saints, who are more easily reached when wanted than God, who usually leave men pretty much to themselves, and who at the same time respond when called upon, have always been more acceptable to Palestinians than One whose ever watchful eyes can neither be avoided nor deceived.⁹ It will take us too far to give detailed reasons for the belief in these *awliā* and for the honour paid to them; the reader is referred to the author's *Mohammedan Saints and Sanctuaries in Palestine*. It may be said that the present inhabitants of the Holy Land make more vows in the name of the saints and bring more offerings to them than to God, and more help is asked from them than from the Almighty: This is also true of the Bedouin. I do not know any Bedouin tribe which does not possess several *awliā*¹⁰ of its own.¹¹

A thorough study of Palestinian demonology shows how the

¹ L. BAUER, *Volksleben im Lande der Bibel*, p. 15; CANAAN, *Mohammedan Saints and Sanctuaries*, p. 279.

² 'Ynd et-taqādir rāḥat et-tadābir.

³ *El-qadar bi'ami-l-baṣar.*

⁴ *El-maktūb mā minnuh mahrūb.*

⁵ *Illī iluh 'umr mā btuḡtluh siddeh.*

⁶ 'Umr 'a'ṣīnī ubil-baḥr irmīnī.

⁷ *Mā bidjī-l-fand illū lallī 'umruh danā.*

⁸ *Rumḥ ṣāybak in (i)ḡvārēl mā 'aḥṭāk.*

⁹ See also W. R. SMITH, *Lectures on the Religion of the Semites*, p. 64.

¹⁰ This is true of the districts of Beer-Sheba, Gaza, Ramleh, Bisān, Wādī Mūsā, Kerak and 'Ammān.

¹¹ Contrast CURTISS, *Ursemitische Religion*, p. 65; JAUSSEN, *Coutumes des Arabes*, p. 292.

present inhabitants of this country still adhere to some practices which clearly show belief in the supernatural powers of the *djinn*. Some of these, one would think, should be connected only with a good-natured power, a deity.¹ Thus offerings are brought to the demons, as is the case with the saints and God. A comparison between sacrifices offered to saints and God and those brought to the *djinn* exhibits the same idea in different stages of development.² Doubtless this is a remnant of the old Semitic identification of demons with gods.³ Such identifications are met with in the Old⁴ as well as in the New Testament.⁵

The Palestinian believes that God sees what we do,⁶ hears what we say, understands our thoughts even before we utter them, feels with the suffering believer and punishes the wicked. Hence such terms as; "The lord of the blue tent (the sky) sees you"⁷; "God hears"⁸; "O God, look upon me with your eye that never sleeps"⁹; "You are present and you see"¹⁰. A line of a favorite song runs: "In honour of the One who does not slumber nor sleep"¹¹.

A stanza heard from a Christian in Jerusalem is:

nāmat 'iūn lakum w'ēn el-ḥaqq mā nāmāt
ulēš hal-qlūb il-qāsieh illi mā lānat

Your eyes have gone asleep

But the eye of the True One has not slept.

Why are these (your) hearts so pitiless?

and why have they not become tender?

Many oaths speak of the "life" of God¹². *Wiḥyāt 'allāh*, "By the life of God!" *wiḥyāt rabbnā*, "By the life of our Lord!" One of the

¹ CANAAN, *Dämonenglaube im Lande der Bibel*, p. 2.

² In *Mohammedan Saints*, p. 186, this subject is dealt with.

³ P. FAIRBRAIN, *The Imperial Bible Dictionary*, 11, 143.

⁴ Deut. 32¹⁷; I Chr. 10²⁰; Ps. 106⁸⁷; Jes. 65⁹, 11.

⁵ Ephes. 2².

⁶ Prov. 15⁸; Hab. 1¹⁸.

⁷ *Bišūfak 'abū l-ḥēmeh ez-zarqd.*

⁸ *'Allāh sāmi'.*

⁹ *'Allāhunma 'unzur li bi'ēnak 'illi mā bitnām.*

¹⁰ *'Inti ḥāzer unāzer.*

¹¹ The whole song is:

subhān man qāl lā tikšif ilnā ḥāl
bidjāh illi mā biḥfal walā binām
el-'ašū wil-'āfseh usitr ed-dumyā wisitr el-ḥāreh
satart 'ald mā maqd tistir 'alli baqd

¹² In condoling we often hear the expression *hua l-ḥaiy*, "He is the (only) living One"; *hua l-bāqi*, "He is the (only) everlasting One".

oath formulas of the Bedouin of Beer-Sheba speaks of God's spirit (breath) producing the wind, *wallāh wiḥyāt har-rīḥ ʔilli min rūḥ ʔallāh*, "By God and the life of this wind which is (produced) by the spirit of God!"¹.

The same attributes are even more characteristic of saints. This is well illustrated in the following song in praise of *el-qutb er-Rifāʕ*:

yā ʕalim bikuli l-ʕulūm yā sāmiʕ duʕā l-mazlūm
lā tidʕal fi ḥaḍratnā ṣāqīyan walā maḥrūm.

O, thou who knowest everything (every science)!

O, thou who hearest the invocation of the oppressed!

Do not allow any wretched (sinner) to be in our company,

Nor any one who is excommunicated!

Every time the sailors pass the shrine of *ʕṣ-ṣṣḥ* Ḥamid, which lies on the eastern shore of the Red Sea, south of ʕAqabah, they boil a pot (*bakradj*) of coffee and pour it into the sea with the words "This is your coffee, O *ṣḥ* Ḥamid"².

As in ancient times God still appears to some people, to guide and help them. But the saints appear more frequently to reproach, protect and to assist them. Even the demons possess this quality, as is shown by many stories. Places where a good or bad supernatural power appears are known to the people of Palestine, and are honoured in one case and avoided in the other.

The above expressions indicate that in the mind of the Palestinian the Almighty has a real personality and is a living being who thinks, feels, and wills. This idea of God possessing all the characteristics of human personality is also a distinctive feature of the Old Testament.

But in addition this Being was and is still believed to be spiritual in the sense of being invisible to mortal eyes and above and beyond all apprehension by the senses.³ This idea is well expressed in the saying "O, Thou who seest me and whom I do not see" (*yā man tarānī wana lā ʔarāk*). He is superhuman and unique not only in power, but also in wisdom, goodness, truth⁴ and holiness, as

¹ ʕĀRIF EL-ʕĀRIF, *al-qaḍāʔu bain al-badū*, p. 73.

² ʕĀRIF EL-ʕĀRIF, l. c., p. 262. The Bedouin of the Negeb honour this well.

³ HASTING'S *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics*, vol. VI, pp. 254 ff.

⁴ Ex. 34⁶; Ps. 31⁷; 78⁶²; 80¹; 103¹⁸; Jes. 40¹¹; Jer. 31¹⁰; Ez. 34¹¹⁻¹⁹.

also in wrath¹ and vengeance². According to the Palestinian He is "the giver of all good things" as well as the great punisher³. These two antagonistic characteristics and conceptions of the Almighty naturally result in their regarding ʾAllāh as a compassionate God, and at the same time as an awful avenger and strict judge.⁴ There are numerous sayings, proverbs, songs, and stories portraying these two antagonistic characteristics. It is, therefore, a mistake to suppose with Curtiss⁵ that the Palestinians think of God only with fear and trembling and that they do not regard him also as good and gracious.⁶ The expressions "Be with God and do not mind (anything which may happen)"⁷; "God is with the weak to make the rich think and consider"⁸ and "Be born: I shall be the supporter of your father"⁹, are typical of their attitude. The last is believed to be said by the Almighty at the birth of a girl, who, knowing the pitiful prospect awaiting her, tries not to be born. It is just here that the great difference lies between the attributes of God and those of the other minor supernatural powers. Demons are dreaded because they only injure the human race. The spirits of the saints occupy an intermediate place between God and the demons. They are feared but they are also honoured. They are not so compassionate as the Creator, but neither are they so malevolent as the *djinn*. Saints themselves are divided into *uḥmadiyah* (forebearing) and *ʾaʿdjām* (irritable). The former are nearer to God. The latter share characteristics with the demons. There is a proverb which teaches, *es-šakwā laḡhēr ʾallāh maḍalleh*, "Complaint to any one but God is weakness". Some nomads such as the Bdūl of

¹ Gen. 28¹⁰ ff; Ex. 19¹⁵⁻¹⁶; 1 Sam. 21⁶; Qorān 11¹⁸⁸.

² Contrast CURTISS (German edition): „Der heutige Semit hat keine sittliche Anschauung von Gott als den Heiligen, den Gerechten“.

³ Ex. 4²¹; 9¹²; 10^{20,27}; 1 Sam. 16¹⁴⁻¹⁶; 18¹⁰; 2 Sam. 24¹; Jes. 6⁹ ff; Amos 3⁶.

⁴ Fear of God is witnessed in Gen. 28¹⁶ ff., Ex. 19¹⁶; 1 Sam. 21⁶; God as a compassionate father and a good shepherd is portrayed in Ps. 23; 78⁶⁸; 80¹; Jes. 40¹; Jer. 31¹⁰; Ez. 34¹¹⁻¹⁹; etc. ⁵ l. c. pp. 63 ff.

⁶ See also DALMAN, *Der palästinische Islam*, PJ, XIII, 15 ff.

⁷ *Kūn maʿ ʾallāh walā thālī*. Another proverb is *kūn maʿ ʾallāh tarā ʾallāh maʿāk*, "Be with God and you will see that God is with you."

⁸ *ʾAllāh maʿ el-faqīr tayiʿtibir el-ghani*.

⁹ *ʾInzālī ʾand muʿīn abūki*. At the birth of a boy God is supposed to say *inzal int muʿīn abūki*, "Descend: you must be your father's helper"; CANAAN, *The Child in Palestinian Arab Superstition*, JPOS; vol. VII, 163.

Petra¹, who know very little of religion fear Him much more than they love Him.² This is also more or less true of all Bedouin. Thus, for example, the Bedouin of the Beer-Sheba district, who are Moslems, do not even know the first *sūreh* of the Qorān. ʿĀRIF EL-ʿĀRIF³ has mentioned the following formulae which the Bedouin believe to be *sūret el-fātiḥah*: *fātiḥah tihlik fātiḥah tiblik ufātiḥah tziḥ ʿannak djannāt en-naʿim*, "There is a *fātiḥah* which condemns, a *fātiḥah* which ruins and a *fātiḥah* which takes away from you the gardens of happiness (the paradise)"; *el-fātiḥah laz-zād waṣḥābuh ulan-nabī waḥbābuh*, "the *fātiḥah* is for food and its owners and for the prophet and his friends."

It is important to call attention to the fact that Moslem peasants do not address God as "father".⁴ This is a distinct characteristic of the Christian conception. But God is greater and higher than father, ruler, or king. A saint, on the other hand, is regarded and treated as father, leader, neighbour, ruler, or king. I have found one proverb, well-known to city dwellers and villagers, in which God is called "shepherd". Although there may be others which remain unknown to me, it is characteristic how seldom God is given this appellation. The proverb runs, *awlādak warāk urabbak yrʿāk*, "your children are (walking) behind you; may your Lord lead you (as a shepherd)".

Although most Christian and Mohammedan peasants may cite verses of the Bible or the Qorʾān, which describe the Almighty as king, there are only a few characteristic present-day folk sayings which make this comparison. The most important are the proper names *ʿAbd el-mālek* (the slave of the ruler) and *ʿAbd el-malek* (the servant of the king), where God is called directly "king." But there are several customs and Arabic terms which point indirectly to this old idea. As we shall see later the Palestinians still use, as the ancient Semitic nations used to do,⁵ many theophorous proper names, compounds with *ʿabd*. Such theophorous names, in which the word *ʿabd* precedes some name of God, are in themselves sufficient proof that the old idea of "God=King" is still known.

¹ CANAAN, *Studies in the Topographie and Folklore of Petra*, pp. 71ff.

² NIELSEN, JPOS, XIII, 207.

³ *Al-qaḍāʾu bain al-ʿarab*, p. 252.

⁴ DALMAN, *Der palästinische Islam*, PJ, XIII, 32, comes to the same conclusion.

⁵ W. R. SMITH, *Lectures on the Religion of the Semites*, 1927, p. 68.

This is especially clear in the proper names *ʿAbdallāh*¹ (the slave of God) and, *ʿAbdrabbūh* (the servant of his Lord). In many folksongs the Palestinians call themselves "God's servants." The following is one example:

yā rabbī lēs hal-ghēbeh ʾakalnā ʿrūq el-hullēbeh
yā rabbī bill eš-šammū! ihnā ʿabīdak bidnā nmū!²

O Lord, why this Thy absence? we have eaten the roots of the spurge!
 O Lord wet the spadix (of the plants); we thy servants are on the verge of dying!

The Palestinian still speaks of God as *rabb*, "Lord", a use which points also to the conception of God as king.³ His worshippers are spoken of as his slaves, servants, *ʿabīd* (pl. of *ʿabd*) and *ʿibād*. But God is not only the Lord of men; He is the Lord of the whole universe. Oaths and wide-spread sayings make trees, animals and stones speak of God as their *rabb*.

A beautiful song⁴ in which the use of *rabb* plays an important rôle is:

nimt ʿa-djanbī l-yamīn *twakkalt ʿa-rabbī r-raḥīm*
nimt ʿa-djanbī š-šamāl *twakkalt ʿa-rabbī r-raḥmān*
nimt ʿal-farš *twakkalt ʿa-rabb el-ʿarš*
nimt ʿa-zahrī *twakkalt ʿalēk yā rabbī.*

I slept on my right side and trusted in my compassionate Lord!
 I slept on my left side and trusted in my merciful Lord!
 I slept on the bedding and trusted on the Lord of the throne!
 I slept on my back and trusted in Thee, O my Lord!

Another custom pointing to the idea of God as king is the offering of the first-fruits of the fields and vineyards⁵ to God.⁶ It is the same custom as the paying of royal tithes,⁷ which were always regarded in the East as the sovereign's dues.

The Palestinians regard themselves also as the servants (*ʿabīd*, *ḥadam*, *maḥāsīb*) of their saints. The clearest example is the proper

¹ Many Christians use the name *ʿAbd el-Masīḥ*, the servant of Christ. In Abyssinia we meet with the name *ʿAbd Maryam*.

² The complete song is given in *Mohammedan Saints and Sanctuaries*, p. 221.

³ W. R. SMITH, l. c. p. 68. *ʿibād* comes from the same root as *ʿabd*.

⁴ Heard in Jerusalem.

⁵ CANAAN, *Plant-lore in Palestinian Superstition*, JPOS, VIII, 138. Cf. Ex. 23^{16,19}; Lev. 2¹⁴; 23²⁰; Numb. 13²⁰; 18¹⁸; Deut. 26².

⁶ W. R. SMITH, l. c., p. 67.

⁷ I Sam. 8^{15,17}.

hundred beautiful names, *asmā* ›*allāh el-ḥusnā*¹ of which however only 99 are known by men. The hundredth name is known only to God himself.² First and foremost the present inhabitants of Palestine address the Almighty as ›*Allāh*.³ The early perambulating vendors of cakes, for instance, preface the praise of their goods by reciting some of the names of God. They are heard saying: "O Opener (giver of sustenance), O Omniscient, O Sustainer, O Merciful! Warm cakes with sesame seeds".⁴

The majority of the names of God constitute an important part of the compound names of persons and are used in connexion with the term *ʿabd*. Such names were used by Arabs of old. I will refer only to such appellations as are still in vogue. From the 39 proper names of this category 22 connect the word *ʿabd* with names of God which indicate attributes of help, love and mercy. Twelve describe divine attributes and only 5 point to power and revenge. This shows clearly the attitude of the Oriental towards his Creator. He is to the modern Oriental a compassionate and loving rather than an awful and revengeful god.

Like all his Semitic ancestors the Palestinian believes in the omnipotence of God. Everything comes from God, *kull šī min* ›*Allāh*. Hardships like disease, lack of rain, death of a beloved person, and loss of riches are the chastisements of God. This idea is well expressed in the proverb ›*Allāh ḥalaq el-balā*, "God created disease";⁵ *iftiqād* ›*Allāh raḥmeh*,⁶ "God's chastisements are a mercy"; ›*Allāh byudrub biʿid u-biitlaqqā biʿid*, "God beats with one hand but

¹ In *Aberglaube und Volksmedizin im Lande der Bibel*, p. 107, the number 19 is wrongly given instead of 99.

² In ›*Arṭās* it is said that the camel knows the hundredth name, but he will not say it.

³ The two names *ar-raḥīm* and *ar-raḥmān* are never used in slaughtering; as supposed by DALMAN (PJ XIII, 20), for the adjective "most merciful" is contradictory to the act of killing.

⁴ *yā fallāḥ yā karīm yā razzāq yā raḥīm*. Those selling cactus figs shout *ʿala l-lḥ edj-djabr yā ṣabr*, "Restoration (of our daily income depends upon) God, O cactus figs." (D. DUHM, *Der Gemüsemarkt von Jerusalem*, PJ, XVII, 63 ff.).

⁵ The whole of the proverb is ›*Allāh ḥalaq el-balā wil-tibb wid-dawād*, "God created disease but also medicine and drugs". Cf. John 5¹⁴; 9^{2,84}.

⁶ The literal translation is, "The visitation of God is a mercy". An oath runs "By the truth of the One who has allowed (lit. put) this difficulty and is able to remove it", *uḥaqq man waḍaʿ haš-tiddeh uqādir yrfaʿhd*, (Bēt Djālā).

helps with the other"; *ʾAllāh mā biyblī ḥattā ʾiṣn*, "God will not inflict (on any person) any difficulty without also helping (him)".¹ Therefore the Palestinian adds to any promises he makes, *in šāʾ ʾAllāh*, "If God permits"; and to his expectations *miṣl mā birid ʾAllāh*, "as God wishes". Some even believe that a person is not to be blamed for his immoral character, for this also was decreed by God and nobody can change God's decisions. A proverb teaches, *ʾAllāh ḥalaq eš-šarr umā riḍiṣṣeh*,² "God created the evil, but he does not like it". The decisions of God have been decreed from the beginning of the world and no person can escape his fate. Even the earth is said to declare in years of dearth, "God has not given me (any crops)".³

The whole life of a person, his success, his failure, his work, his joys, his worries and his misfortunes have been written by the finger of God on the skull of that person before his birth. This writing is represented by the zigzag sutures. An expression pointing to this idea is *maktūb bēn ʿēnēh*, "It is written between his eyes". This idea is also expressed in the words of a peasant who has suffered a heavy blow, *ḥādi ktābī*, "this is my fate (lit. this is what my writing predicts)". In speaking of any impending danger the Palestinian prays *ʾAllāh lā ysmāh*, "My God not allow it!" *ʾAllāh lā yqadder*, "May God not decree it". The idea of God writing something with his own finger is an old Semitic one.⁴

God's radical decrees are unchangeable by any human being, but the Almighty may in His kindness and mercy efface the fate of a person, *ʾAllāh yimḥī l-qadr bil-lutf*,⁵ "May God in His kindness efface the decreed fate!" The following proverbs express God's power to do what He wishes, as He wishes, and at any time He

¹ Other sayings are: *illi bitkil ʿalā maulāh mā ḥāb radjāh*, "The person who depends on his Master will not be disappointed"; *illi ʾAllāh maʿuh lā ḥyāf ʿalēh*, "Do not be concerned about the person who is cared for by God."

² Heard in Dēr Ghassāneh.

³ The whole proverb is *el-ard in aʿamat bitqūl ʾand djibt win amḥalat bitqūl ʾAllāh mā ʾaʿfānīs*, "The earth says when it yields a good harvest, 'I produced (all) these fruits', but if it is smitten with dearth it says, 'God has not given!'" JPOS, VIII, 137, 138. This saying characterizes people who boast of the few good deeds they pretend to have done.

⁴ In Deut. 9¹⁰; Ex. 31¹⁸; 32¹⁶.

⁵ This short prayer is ejaculated at time of difficulty.

chooses: *ʾAllāh mahūl byāḥud ʿatūl*, "God is awful; He punishes all the way through"; *in aʿtā mā biminn win ʾaḥad mā biḥinn*, "If He gives He does not reproach (for the gifts given) and if He takes he does not have mercy"; *in aʿtā bidhiš win aḥad bifattiš*, "If He gives He bewilders (i. e. His gifts are overwhelming) but if He takes He searchès (one for the last thing he has)".¹

God's decrees can often not be understood. Thus He may give many gifts to the wicked or to those who do not need any help, while He withholds everything from the good who deserve more. Or in punishing the wicked God may afflict at the same time the pious and innocent. This idea is well expressed in the proverb, *in saḥaṭ*² (*ghidib*) *ʾAllāh ʿalā qōm djaʿal waliyhum qird*, "If God gets angry with a nation He changes even their saint into a devil"³ (Jerusalem); *ʾAllāh be-yaʿtī l-qarʿah wimm kabbās ubiḥallī banāi en-nās balās*, "God gives the bald-headed woman and that with a bush of dishevelled hair, but leaves the daughters of better classes without any gift (hair)". Bald-headed women and those with dishevelled hair are despised by the Palestinian. *ʾAllāh bi-yaʿtī dī-djōz lallī malōš snān*,⁴ "God gives the nuts to those who have no teeth"; *ʾAllāh bi-yaʿtī l-ḥalāweh lallī malōš snān yākulhā*, "God gives sweet(s) to those who have no teeth to eat it". *ʾAllāh byōḥid et-tāy ʿ fī danb el-ʿāšī*,⁵ God takes (punishes) the obedient servant for the transgression of the rebel"⁶.

Despite this fatalistic belief in one's own future and destiny, the Palestinian – Mohammedan and Christian – tries to overcome these difficulties. As no one knows "his hour" of death (*sāʿtuh*) duty obliges him to do all he can to escape his decreed fate. He asks the saints to help him escape a difficulty, cure a sick member of

¹ Another expression is *in aʿam biʿam min baqarah win aḥram biḥrim min ʿasarah*, "If He feeds He feeds from one cow (i. e. He makes the milk of one cow to suffice for all needs) but if He withholds ten cows will not suffice".

² *Saḥaṭ* (to curse) is used often in the sense of changing a person or an animal to an inferior object.

³ For the explanation of *qird*, "devil" see CANAAN, *Dämonenglaube im Lande der Bibel*, p. 15.

⁴ BAUMANN, *Volksweisheit aus Palästina*, ZDPV, XXXIX, No. 125.

⁵ A variation is *idjir et-tāy ʿ maʿ idjir el-ʿāšī*. Another proverb with the same meaning is *ʾallāh biyaʿtī rizquh laʾandjas ḥalquh*, "God gives His goods to the worst of His creation", ZDPV, XXXIX, No. 126.

⁶ Dēr Ghassāneh.

the family, bring an absent son back well, cause an undertaking to prosper, etc. He vows to the holy man one or several offerings. The Palestinian is sure that the *awliā* will intercede for him.¹

The omnipresence of the Almighty is another fundamental belief of every Palestinian. Therefore His name is called in every place and at every time. God is always ready to answer. His name drives away evil spirits,² helps in time of difficulty and strengthens when worries oppress one.³

The Palestinian will begin no work, however unimportant it may be, without stating first that it is in the name of God, *bisammī*.⁴ In the name of God the peasant begins the ploughing of his fields, the sowing of the seed, the putting of the sickle to the ripe harvest, the loading of the animals with sheaves, the disposal of the latter on the threshing floor and the threshing and winnowing. And in the name of God his wife grinds grain, measures flour, kneads dough, divides it into loaves, bakes bread, plants vegetables, washes her children, cooks food and serves it to her family.⁵ Christians use, besides *bism illāh*, the following invocations:

<i>bism el-ʿaḍrā</i> ,	"In the name of the Virgin!"
<i>bism sittnā Mariam</i> ,	"In the name of our lady Mary!"
<i>bism eṣ-ṣalīb el-haiy</i> ,	"In the name of the living cross!"
<i>yā ʿaḍrā</i>	"O Virgin!"
<i>yāmm en-nūr</i> ,	"O Mother of Light!"

The Mohammedans inscribe the name of God, *Allāh*, that of the prophet or a verse of the Qorʾān over the door-lintel.⁶ Christians make use of the sign of the cross. The sign of the cross is made every evening on the top of the heap of threshed and winnowed

¹ CANAAN, *Mohammedan Saints*, p. 279.

² *Aberglaube und Volksmedizin*, pp. 8, 47, 50.

³ Gen. 4²⁶; 4²⁸; Ps. 105¹; Jes. 12⁴; Acts 4¹²; Rev. 3¹²; Job 14¹⁵; Ps. 4¹; 50¹⁸; Jes. 58⁹; Joel 2⁸².

⁴ CANAAN, *Plant-lore in Palestinian Superstition*, JPOS, VIII, 155; L. EINSLER, *Mosaik*, p. 1. According to ʿABD EL-MEDJĪD ʿALĪ, *at-tuḥfah al-marḍīyah fil-ahbār al-quḍsiyah wal-aḥādīṯ an-nabawīyah wal-ʿaqāid at-tawḥīdīyah wal-hikāyāt as-sāmiyah wal-ʿaṣʿār el-marḍīyah*, p. 6, the prophet Mohammed opened the closed doors of paradise with the words "*bism allāh er-raḥmān er-raḥīm*". This sentence is said to be inscribed on the source of each of the four rivers of paradise.

⁵ A. M. RIHBANY, *The Syrian Christ*, pp. 197-198.

⁶ CANAAN, *The Palestinian Arab House*, p. 87.

corn as long as it remains on the threshing floor. Such a heap is called *ṣalībī*. The sign of the cross is also made over the flour and the dough. It is painted or engraved over the door-lintel. SONNEN describes the custom of making on a heap of corn the impression of a seal bearing the words *barket ʿallāh*, "The blessing of God."¹

Thus we see that the blessing of God, of His name, or that of a holy symbol, assures success and the absence of all the powers of the inferior world. But the holy name should never be uttered in unclean places (like privies)² or during the performance of unclean actions (urination or defecation).³ The Tarābīn Bedouin of the Sinai peninsula tell the following story to prove the blessing following the invocation of the name of God. Two Bedouin who sowed a large piece of land in company came at the end of the work to divide the grain which was heaped on the threshing floor into two equal parts. While the first heap was divided into two equal parts without invoking first the name of God, the second was divided in the same way after this important precaution was taken. Behold, the part of each one of them in the second heap was decidedly greater than the respective part of the first heap, although both heaps were equally large and each one of them was harvested from a piece of land as large as that of the other.⁴

The many exclamations connected with the name of God and used in so many phases of the daily life of the Palestinian were originally in no way intended to be a misuse of the name of the Almighty, but a continuous invocation for help, protection, and support.⁵ In all his difficulties the Oriental always calls upon his heavenly Father and generally also upon his earthly father and mother.⁶ It is true that with time this beautiful custom has lost much of its

¹ *Biblica*, 1927, p. 201.

² SNOUCK HURGRONJE, *Mekka* II, p. 40 (after J. PEDERSON, 72).

³ Conjugal life is regarded as a holy performance, and the name of God should therefore be uttered before it is done. Some even believe that a bridegroom should say a prayer before he approaches his bride (ʿĒn Kārim). Should a person neglect this precaution a male *djinn* may precede him, and the born child becomes a *ṣaḡī* (rogue). ⁴ Heard in Beer-Sheba.

⁵ CANAAN, *Mohammedan Saints*, p. 279; *Aberglaube und Volksmedizin*, pp. 8, 106; DALMAN, *Der palästinische Islam*, PJ, XIII, 21 ff.

⁶ Under such conditions the Palestinian — even the aged one — is heard calling *yā baiyi, ydmmd!* See also Math. 26⁸⁷⁻⁸⁸; Luk. 22⁴⁴.

lofty meaning and the name of the Almighty is often used very carelessly.

Let us now examine the different exclamations connected with the name of God for their real and original intentions. While the European expresses his good wishes with the words "I hope you will succeed, recover, have a good time"¹ and the like, the Palestinian knows that his hopes and wishes can attain nothing. He therefore implores the Almighty to grant prosperity, recovery or a good time. The first emphasizes "I hope", the second on the other hand "May God grant". On enquiring about the health of a person one receives the answer ›*Allāh ysallmak ʿaḥsan*, "May God keep you healthy he is better"; ›*el-ḥamdu lil-lāh inšallāh ʿaḥsan*, "Thanks be to God, if God wills, he is better".

The same is true of greetings. The Oriental asks the Almighty to grant the greeted person peace, health, a prosperous day (morning, evening, night), etc. Often the name of the Almighty is omitted in the formula, but it is always understood.²

The most important and most beautiful greeting is that already used by all Semitic nations and which is often mentioned in the Bible, namely, ›*es-salām ʿalēkum*, "Peace be with you!" The answer is ›*wʿalēkum es-salām waraḥimat ʿAllāh wabarakātuh*, "And peace be with you, as well as God's blessings and His mercy!"³ After enjoying the hospitality of the host the guest says ›*Allāh yḥlif ʿalēk*, "May God repay it to you (i.e., increase your riches and thus your hospitality)"! The host answers ›*ṣaḥḥtēn wʿāfiyeh*, "(May it be to you) twice health and wellbeing"! After drinking coffee the guest says, ›*dāymeh*, "May it (your coffee, i.e. your hospitality) continue!"⁴ Those who go to their work before sunrise⁵ are heard singing:⁶

¹ RIHBANY, l.c. Ex. 20⁷; Math. 7²¹; Luk. 6⁴⁶.

² Some greetings are: ›*Allāh ysabbihkum bil-ḥēr*, "May God give you a prosperous morning". The answer is ›*yā ṣabāḥ el-ḥēr*, "O prosperous morning that has come!" ›*Allāh ysʿid ṣabāḥkum*, "May God render your morning to be prosperous"! ›*Allāh yaʿfiḥum e-ʿāfiyeh*, "May God give you-health (and strength)!" This is said in greeting workers. The answer is ›*wil-qāyl*, "And to the greeter (lit. sayer)!"
³ 1 Sam. 25⁶; Jes. 57¹⁹; Luk. 2¹⁴; 10⁵; 24³⁶.

⁴ ›*Dāymeh* should not be said in visits of condolence.

⁵ This song is not only used when the peasants go to the harvest (DALMAN, ›*Arbeit und Sitte*, 1, 2, p. 572) but also in the case of any work which is begun before sunrise.
⁶ ʿEn Kārim.

yā ṣabbāḥ el-ḥēr dāym *ṣabbih lī mīn kān nāym*
ṣabbih lī ʿĪsā u Mūsā *fi zalāl el-Qudsi nāym*¹

O morning of blessing! May you always remain!

Give my morning greetings to those who are yet sleeping;

Give my morning greetings to Jesus and Moses,

Who are² sleeping in the shadow of Jerusalem!

All Oriental salutations are in fact short prayers.³ A person thanking another for any service received says ›*Allāh ikattir ḥērak*!⁴ If a person has nothing to give a beggar he sends him away with the words ›*ala ʿAllāh*, "(May your sustenance be) on God"; ›*Allāh yaʿṣik*, "May God give you".⁵

In time of need the Palestinian begs the Almighty in the most persuasive ways to grant his requests.⁶ Thus a mother asking God to cure her sick child implores, *ṣaḥḥidnī yāh*, "I beseech Thee to grant me my son as alms!" A barren woman whose prayers have been answered and is blessed with a son calls him "The begged one" (*ṣḥādeh, ṣiḥdeh*),⁷ "The restored one" (*djāber, djabr, djubrān*),⁸ "Bounty (= bestowed by God, *djūdeh*). When a person is maltreated by a tyrant or robber,⁹ and he can neither protect nor defend himself, he implores them with the words *daḥīl ʿAllāh*, *daḥīl rabbak* or *daḥīl dīnak*, "I take refuge in God", "I take refuge in your Lord", or "I take refuge in your religion". God and their religion being perhaps the only things which those people still respect. The following morning prayer is a beautiful example of submission to the Almighty:

¹ DALMAN, l.c., gives a variation.

² Singular in Arabic.

³ Whenever one passes the house of his godfather he greets it with the words, "Peace be upon you, O house of my godfather!" (*as-salām ʿalēk yā bēl ṣbīni*). Some Mohammedans formerly refused to greet a Christian with *as-salām ʿalēkum*, thinking that peace should be wished only to believers.

⁴ The new expression of thanking, ›*aṣkurak*, is a literal translation of the European expression "I thank you".

⁵ It is said that this consoling phrase should only then be used when one has really nothing to give (*Qalōniā*).
⁶ Luke 18.

⁷ CANAAN, *Die Neugeborenen in der palästinischen Volksitte, Neueste Nachrichten aus dem Morgenlande*, vol. 71, pp. 151 ff.

⁸ *Djibrin* comes from جبرائيل.

⁹ The proverb says about such people: *mā barḥamak wald baḥalli ḥad yirḥamak walā baḥalli raḥmet ʿAllāh tinzal ʿalēk*, "I shall not pity you nor shall I allow anybody to have pity with you, nor shall I allow God's pity to descend upon you".

*aṣbaḥ es-ṣabāḥ aṣbaḥ nūr saiḥdnā Moḥammed ulāḥ
yā rabbi tidʿal lal-qalb el-ḥazīn muftāḥ*

The morning has begun

The light of our lord Mohammed has appeared and shone!

O my Lord (I beseech thee), give to the broken heart a key
(of comfort and help)!

Swearing by the name of God has always been considered as the most sacred and solemn affirmation of a statement. While using such language the peasant never intends to misuse the name of the Almighty. He simply calls God to witness that what has been said is the whole truth.¹ The use of such a solemn affirmation is a very old custom.² Swearing, however, has now lost a great deal of its sacred character, so much so, that a proverb says *ḥudlak hal-yamīn miḥl waraq el-tīn iṣī mšarram wiṣī balā tašrīm*, "Take this oath, which is like the leaves of a fig tree, some are torn (in pieces) and others are without tears".³

The formulae used belong to one of the following categories:⁴

1. The name or an appellation of God, that of a *welī* or of a sanctuary are connected with the oath.
2. The *yamīn* or *qasam* (oath) mentions some natural phenomenon or a part of the human body.

As the second category does not concern us at present we shall only examine those of the first kind. Some formulae with the name of God are *wallāḥ*, "By God"; *wiḥyāt ʾAllāḥ*, "By the life of God"; *wallāḥ el-ʿazīm*, "By God the Great"; *wallāḥ umā aʿazz min ʾAllāḥ*, "By God and there is no one more powerful than He"; *urabb el-ʿizz*, "By the Lord of power"; *urabb ʿIsā u Mūsā*, "By the Lord of Jesus and Moses"; *urabb el-kaʿbeh*, "By the Lord of the Kaʿbeh"; *urabb el-ins widj-djinn*, "By the Lord of men and demons"; *urabb es-samā wil-ard*, "By the Lord of heaven and

¹ RIHBANY, l.c., 167.

² Gen. 21²⁸; 22¹⁶; Rom. 9¹; 12¹.

³ These conditions prevailed in Biblical times and led to the injunction of Jesus: "I say unto you swear not at all, neither by heaven, for it is God's throne, nor by the earth, for it is His footstool; neither by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great King. Neither shall thou swear by thy head, because thou canst not make one hair white or black". Math. 5,³⁴⁻³⁶ Jam. 5¹², Ex. 20⁷; Lev. 19¹².

⁴ *Mohammedan Saints and Sanctuaries*, p. 126.

earth"; *wiḥyāt hal-ʿūd wir-rabb el-maʿbūd*,¹ "By the life of this stick and the adored God"; *wallāh wiḥyāt hal-ghēt ed-dāridj min es-samā*, "By God and the life of this rain which pours from heaven";² *udīnī wīmānī*, "By my religion and belief"; *udīnī umaʿbūdī*, "By my religion and my adored One (God)".

The saints play an important rôle in oaths. In some districts, especially among the Bedouin, *awliā* are even more often mentioned than God. Only a few characteristic oaths of this category will be mentioned:³ *uḥaqq el-Ḥaḍr el-aḥḍar*, "By the truth of St. George"; *wallāh wiḥyāt ibn Saʿīd*, "By God and the life of *Ibn Saʿīd*";⁴ *udjāh en-nabī Mūsā*, "By the honour of the prophet Moses"; *uḥyāt Ḥimēd fakkāk el-ʿabid*⁵ *min el-ḥadīd*,⁶ "By the life of Ḥimēd, the releaser of slaves from iron (fetter)".⁷ When a Bedouin brings his case to a Bedouin judge, he addresses him with the words *wēš ʿindak yā qādī l-ʿarab yā fakkāk en-našab*⁸ *djītak šaddī*⁹ *baḥkī djaddī ḥazzī uḥazzak yudḥul ʿarbaʿh warbʿin nabī in kāmēt*¹⁰ *(i)tdurrak win ḥakēt (i)tsirrak*....,¹¹ "What do you have (to say), O judge of the Arabs, O you who (judge and) reveal (the truth) in a case of money. I have come to you, speaking very earnestly. My luck and your luck

¹ Many add, *wis-saiyd Dāhūd*, "And the lord David". When a Bedouin gives a witness before a Bedouin judge he addresses him, *wiḥyāt hal-ʿūd wir-rabb el-maʿbūd will-kādīb māluḥ malūd (= maulūd) lā tamaʿ rādjih walā ghēz šāfih illa ḥaqq ʿAllāh min raqbatī maddih (= muʿaddih) in ḥādū r-rādjl*...., "By the life of this stick and the adored God—and the liar shall have no children—(I give this witness) not driven by any ambition, nor to satisfy any grudge, but I give only the truth (which I owe to God), this man..." See also BÜLUS SAIYÜR EL-BÖLUSİ, *ʿawāʿidul-ʿarab*, p. 143; JAUSSEN, *Coutumes des Arabes*, p. 191.

² The last three oaths combine the name of the Almighty with some natural phenomena.

³ For further description of oaths see CANAAN, *Mohammedan Saints and Sanctuaries*, pp. 125 ff.

⁴ Ibn Saʿīd is Msallam ibn Saʿīd of the ʿAzāzmeh Bedouin.

⁵ Ḥimēd has his sanctuary to the south of ʿAqabah, on the seashore. He is said to have once released the prisoners of ʿAqabah. Ḥimēd is honoured by most Bedouin of the Negeb.

⁶ Another oath describes this saint as the protector of raids (*ghazū*): *wiḥyāt Ḥimēd ʿādīd el-moḥramāt*, "By the life of Ḥimēd, protector in raids".

⁷ Some of these oaths are taken from ʿARIF EL-ʿARIF, l.c., p. 72.

⁸ See *Muḥīṭ*, p. 2073. It is explained as *التاداو المال الاصيل من التاطق والصامت*

⁹ *Muḥīṭ*, p. 1173.

¹⁰ *Muḥīṭ*, p. 1844.

¹¹ The rest of the text is of no importance for our subject.

lie under the protection of forty-four prophets. If you hide (the truth) they (the 44 prophets) will injure you and if you speak the truth they will repay you with joy....,"¹ No mention of God whatever is made in this speech.

Among vows connected with a holy object or a sanctuary we may mention: *wil-maṣḥaf*, "By the Qorʾān"; *wil-indjil eṭ-ṭāher*, "By the pure New Testament"; *wil-kaʿbeh*, "By the Kaʿbeh"; *uqabr el-ḥalās*, "By the tomb of Salvation"; *wiṣ-ṣaḥrah eš-šarīfeh*, "By the holy rock (of the Mosque of Omar)"; *wiḥyāt has-sēf wil-maṣḥaf* (Bedouin), "By the life of this sword and the Qorʾān".

The same considerations are true of curses:² Every Oriental likes to avenge himself for every injustice he receives. But if he is too weak to take his own *tār*, he turns to his almighty Creator, who is the greatest avenger.³ He implores him to punish his enemies, whom he regards at the same time as God's enemies. The formulae used are nearly the same as those once used by his forefathers, the ancient Semites.⁴

All these usages illustrate the fact that the manner of speech of the Oriental is that of a simple person who has not yet been spoiled by so-called civilization. Life with all its activities, its joys, and its cares revolves around one center and one only, namely God, who has always been and still is regarded as the all in all, *min ʾAllāh*, *ʿalā ʾAllāh*, *la ʾAllāh*, "from God, to God, for God!".

Thus the name of God, *ʾAllāh*, is invoked in every place and on every occasion. Therefore, the Mohammedans recite their prayers not only in a mosque or sanctuary, but wherever they happen to be. Nevertheless there are certain places and days or parts of days which are considered more acceptable to God when prayers are made. Prayer in the sanctuary of an important *welī* is thought to be more quickly answered. A request made in *lēlatu l-qadr*⁵ is better heard, since the doors of heaven are believed to be open on that night.⁶

¹ BÜLUS SAIYÜR EL-BÜLUSİ, l.c., p. 140. See also JAUSSEN, *Coutumes des Arabes*, p. 190.

² The present writer expects to write a special paper on this subject.

³ Deut. 32⁸⁹; 1 Sam. 2⁶; Job 5¹⁸; Rom. 12¹⁹.

⁴ Ps. 59¹⁵; 69^{22-25, 28}.

⁵ *Lēlatu l-qadr* is supposed to be the 27th of Ramaḍān.

⁶ Whenever a person dies the doors of heaven are also supposed to open, while the angels descend and ascend.

Other favourable days for prayer are,¹ the month of Ramaḍān,² the day of ʿArāfāt, the fourteenth of Šaʿbān, and the eve of Friday, i.e. the night between Thursday and Friday. Favourable hours of the day are midnight, the time for calling the morning³ and noon prayers, especially the Friday midday prayer.⁴ A mother whose child is dangerously ill will go up at midnight to the roof of her house and implore the Almighty for the recovery of her son. Then her prayer will be carried quickly by the angels, who fill the air at this hour.⁵

This characteristic—omnipresence—is also an attribute of the important *awliā*, the *anbiā* and the *ʿaqlāb*. Thus it is believed that whenever and wherever they are invoked they answer the call. A person in Jerusalem may call upon Abraham, who is buried in Hebron. *En-nabī* Dāhūd, whose tomb is in Jerusalem, helps a person calling upon him from Nāblus and *en-nabī* Mūsā, whose shrine lies southwest of Jericho, responds to prayers of the *ʿIdwān* Bedouin of Transjordan. Nevertheless, experience has shown that these *awliā* will answer more promptly if the person calling upon one of them goes to their sanctuary or calls upon them during the *mōsam*. An exception to this rule is made by el-Ḥaḍr, the prophet Mohammed, *sittnā* Mariam. *mār* Miḥāyil⁶ and, to a certain extent, the four *ʿaqlāb*,

¹ See MOḤAMMED ES-SAFĀRĪNĪ, *kitāb ghidāʾu-l-ʿalbāb lišarḥ manzūmati-l-ʿādāb*, vol. II, p. 424.

² There is, according to es-SAMARQANDĪ, around the throne of the Almighty a plain, *mardj*, called *ḥaḍīratu-l-quds*, which is full of angels who are continually praying. On the first day of Ramaḍān they ask God to descend to earth to pray the *taḥāwīṭ* with the multitude of believers. Every one who happens to touch or who is touched by any one of them becomes lucky and prosperous all his life.

³ Mohammedans of Syria believe that God sends his angels every morning to distribute human necessities and to bless what they have. Such a blessing is granted only to those who rise early to work (ZDPV, VII, 100). For a similar belief connected with the time of sunset see below.

⁴ Such a time is specially favourable for making amulets (*Aberglaube und Volksmedizin*, p. 51), performing magic acts (i.e., p. 67) and for children receiving the blessing of the angels which fill the air at such an hour. Syrian mothers will at such an hour not carry their children but place them on the ground in order to assure the blessing (ZDPV, VII, 89).

⁵ CANAAN, *Mohammedan Saints and Sanctuaries*, pp. 138, 139.

⁶ This belief in *mār* Miḥāyil is not wide spread.

who are omnipresent. A saying compares a person seen within a short time at different places with el-Ḥaḍr and *mār Miḥāyil*: *intī miḥl el-Ḥaḍr fi kull maṭraḥi ḥādir*, "You are like St. George, who is present in every place"¹; *intī miḥl mār Miḥāyil ḥāder nāzer*, "You are like St. Michael, who is (always) present and sees everything". The minor *awliā* are believed, on the other hand, to have and practice their authority, and influence at their residence, where their followers live.

In this connexion we often meet with a practice which is surely a vestige of the primitive religion of the Semites.² A peasant on a journey or living in a strange country will in time of need invoke one of the different *awliā* of his own village or of his own district, for such a saint is his own saint, his protector, who is responsible for his own welfare. The saints of the foreign country do not know him and will not recognize him as one of their clients. The writer knows of several cases where Palestinians, living in America, when severely sick invoked a *welī* of their own village, vowing at the same time a sum of money for the repair of the shrine or for distribution in his name to the poor.

This deeply rooted belief in the saints is carried to extremes in certain cases. When heaven withholds its blessing (*rahmeh*) the peasants arrange for rain processions in which God and the saints are asked to help. Some processions are composed only of children. A bird is released in order to carry the prayers of the multitude to heaven.³ The saints are also called upon to bless, protect, and help. Thus brush-wood, lime, grain, straw, etc. may be safely deposited in or around their shrines. Nobody dares to steal anything, for the saints protect the object entrusted to their care. Children are often circumcised in a sanctuary. A part of the bridegroom's festival procession must visit a shrine in many villages.⁴ The *ḍbiḥet el-aqd*, in some places also *ḍbiḥet el-asās*,⁵ as well as the animal killed on finishing the harvest, are killed in the name of Abraham. The protector of the threshing floor is thought in some villages to be

¹ See also HANAUER, *Tales told in Palestine*, pp. 82 ff.

² W. R. SMITH, *Lectures on the Religion of the Semites*, pp. 28 ff.

³ DALMAN, PJ, XIII, 17.

⁴ Seen in 'Anātā.

⁵ 'En Kārim, Qalōniā, and Šarāfāt. In most places it is for the *djinn* inhabiting the place, see CANAAN, *The Palestinian Arab House*, p. 86.

Abû Hureirah.¹ A man who has a large flock of sheep or goats cuts the ear of the first-born lamb in the name of Abraham, hoping that this man of God will protect the whole flock. If he is very rich he may also dedicate the last-born lamb of that year to this saint. In measuring grain, the eleventh *ṣā'*² is dedicated to the prophet Mohammed, *el-hādi lan-nabi*, and the last measure belongs to Abraham. This is also distributed among the poor. More vows are made to the saints than to God.³

Another fundamental religious belief of the Oriental is the boundless mercy of God. *Aiy intī aḥann 'alēh min illī ḥalaquh*, "Are you more compassionate with him (i.e., your son) than God, who created him?" is a widely known saying. When a mother nurses her sick child day and night her neighbours reproach her for not trusting sufficiently in God and say: "I came (i.e. God) to pity him, but found his parents embracing him (continually)"⁴. A beautiful saying teaches that *illī ḥaḥḥ biṣīl willī balā biṣīn*,⁵ "The one who has imposed (these difficulties) will remove (them); and the one who has afflicted will help!" In years of lack of rain people comfort themselves with the words, "God is more kind to his people (than they are to themselves)".⁶

A man who tries to bear not only his own burdens but also those of others is reproached with the words, "Leave something for God (to care for)",⁷ and "God is with his broken-hearted worshippers."⁸ A proverb teaches, "I propose (lit. think) and God disposes (arranges), for God is able to do everything."⁹ Another saying is "Purify your intentions and (have no fear to) sleep in

¹ DALMAN, PJ, XIII, p. 18. A peasant of 'Ēn Kārim assured me that the workers will call upon Abû Hureirah if there is no wind during the winnowing.

² Not *sā'*, as wrongly printed in JPOS, VIII, 155, N. 6.

³ Most of these items were fully described in *Mohammedan Saints and Sanctuaries in Palestine*.

⁴ *Djīt la-ḥasfaq 'alēh laqēṭuh fī ḥuẓn wāldēh*.

⁵ A variation of this proverb was mentioned above.

⁶ *ḌAllāh alḥaf fī 'ibāduh*.

⁷ The complete proverb is *lēs ḥāmīl es-sullam bil-'arḍ ḥallī la-'Allāh sī*, "Why are you carrying the ladder transversely (i.e. carrying all the difficulties in the wrong way), leave something to God (to care for)!"

⁸ *ḌAllāh ma' 'ibāduh el-munkisrīn*.

⁹ *And bit-tafkīr wallāh bit-tadbīr inn ḌAllāh 'ald kull šay'in qadīr*.

the wilderness, for God's resolution is stronger than any other one".¹

Several proper names which are much used refer directly to the mercy, the goodness, and the love of God.² The names of God inscribed on the talisman, known as the *māskeh*,³ ascribe the same attributes to the heavenly Father. These are *yā hāfīz*, O Protector; *yā sāfi*, O Healer; *yā kāfi*, O Sufficient One; *yā ʾamin*, O Faithful. The mother does not know a better way of protecting her child when it falls, is frightened, or has any ailment, than by asking the Almighty to "surround" it with his mercy. "I encircle you with God ('s name and mercy)."⁴ Many Palestinians will not fail to put themselves under the protection of the Almighty every evening before going to bed, with the words⁵ "We have closed (the doors of) our house and God is our (protecting) talisman. May God have mercy on our mother and father."⁶ A few lines of an evening prayer run:⁷

*yā rabbī ṭhannan ʿalaiy wiḍʿal bēni waʿdāi ḥḍjāb
ubahr nadjjāb*⁸ *wisyūf tilmaʿ wiḥḍjār tišqaʿ*⁹

"O my Lord have mercy upon me and place between me and my enemies a talisman and a large sea and glittering swords and violently thrown stones." A proverb describing the charms of a short wife is *ḥawaṭṭik birabb el-ʿarṣ yā lūlū malān el-farṣ*, "I encircle you with the Lord of the Throne, O pearls filling my bed." The following prayer repeated by Mohamedans before retiring at night conveys the same idea:

¹ *Ṣaffi-n-niyeh unām fil-barrīyeh uniyet ʾAllāh biḥlib kull niyeh.*

² Such are *Raḥmetallāh*, The mercy of God; *Djādallāh*, God's generosity; *Hērallāh*, God's goodness; *Ḥabīballāh*, The one beloved by God; *ʿAṭṭallāh*, The gift of God; *ʿŌnallāh*, The help of God; *Niʿmetallāh*, The grace of God; *Saʿdallāh*, Fortune given by God; *Rizqallāh*, Sustenance given by God; *Lufṣallāh*, Kindness of God; *Nūrallāh*, Light of God; *Djārallāh*, The neighbour of God; *ʿŌṭallāh*, (contracted by the Bedouin into *ʿŌṭallāh*), The gift (lit. the returned child) of God; *Ḥamdallāh*, The praise of God; *Faradjallāh*, The comfort (relief) of God; *ʿAwaḍallāh*, The compensation of God.

³ *Aberglaube und Volksmedizin*, pp. 52, 91.

⁴ *Ḥawaṭṭak bal-llah.*

⁵ CANAAN, *The Palestinian Arab House*, p. 96.

⁶ *Sakkarnā ḍarnā wallāh ḥḍjābnā uraḥmet ʾAllāh ʿalli ḍjābatnā udjābnā.*

⁷ Said generally in the eve of Friday. Heard in Jerusalem.

⁸ *Muḥīṭ*, (p. 2040) does not know this word, but *mandjūb* means *الآنم الواسع الجوف*.
⁹ *Muḥīṭ*, p. 1106, says *تشق الرجلان تشاماً* *الآنم الواسع الجوف*.
In Lebanon it is used of throwing stones. In Palestine it means "to chatter".

I have encircled our house and family
with the tablet¹ and the pen,²
with the throne and what it bore,
with the seven words said on the mountain by our master
Mohammed.

(I beg Thee), do not allow any creeping animal to fall
upon us,

nor a strange foot (= stranger),

nor a drinker of *‘araq*,

nor a drinker of wine,

until the sun rises³

and sings to the One, the Victorious, the Beloved.⁴

Besides God saints are also asked to "surround" children
Thus a verse of a Christian cradle song runs:

yā djiret ḡAllāh yā mēmti
witdjiri ḡasāmihum
umiyeḡ warbaḡtaḡḡer qaddis
yitfattalū ḡawalēhum.

"O neighbourhood of God—O my mother,

¹ Qorḡān, LXXXV, 12: "the original whereof is written on a tablet kept in heaven". This tablet—called the preserved table—has been kept since the beginning of the world near the throne of God. In it are also recorded the divine decrees past and future; G. SALE, *The Qoran*, p. 50.

² The 68th Sūreh is called "The Pen". Many think that the pen with which God's decrees were written is to be understood.

³ As soon as the sun rises it drives away the spirits of the lower world; CANAAN, *Light and Darkness*, JPOS, XI, p. 34.

⁴ The Arabic text is:

ḡawwaḡḡ bētnḡ udārnd
bil-lōḡ wil-qalam
ubil-ḡarḡ umḡ ḡamal
ubi-ḡsabiḡ kalimāt illi ḡāḡhd saiḡyand Muḡammad ḡadj-djabal
lā tnazzil dabibeh
walā idḡr ḡharibeh
walā ḡarrāb ḡaraq
walā ḡarrāb nabīḡi
illḡ mā ḡilḡat es-ḡams
unḡḡht-el-wāḡhid el-ḡahḡūr el-ḡabībi.

Another version says "ten words" instead of "seven" and makes the last line "and salutes the beloved prophet." The first version was heard in Jerusalem, the second in Haifa.

mayest thou surround (lit. be the neighbour of) their names,

and may one hundred and fourteen saints be (continually) turning around them.¹

God's mercy extends so far that He cares for all He has created. This idea is beautifully expressed in the words of the sower, *yā ṭā'im ed-dūd fil-ḥadjar edj-djalmūd*. "He leadeth the birds in the darkness of the night," *yā msaiyer eṭ-ṭēr fi zalām el-lēl*. His mercy goes still further. He allows animals, trees and stones to witness on the day of judgement in favour of human souls, in order that they may be saved.² Thus stones piled up by the pilgrim on his way to a sanctuary will remind the holy man in whose honour the *zyārah* (visit) was made to help and to intercede for the pilgrim.³ The idea of stones bearing witness was known in the ancient Orient.⁴ On the 10th of Muḥarram many peasants offer a hen or a cock as a ransom for their soul. Nobody should eat of this offering, which is called *ueṣīreh*, except the person on whose behalf it was offered. On the day of judgement this bird will flutter above his head, thus helping to protect his soul.⁵

God has created the whole universe and knows everything about the mountains, the sea, all plants, and all animals. This idea has suggested many Arabic idioms and proverbs. Thus the moon is called "God's moon"; *hall hlālak*, "Your new moon has appeared". Another expression has it, "The new moon of God has appeared and His majesty has appeared."⁶ The same is true of standing corn. A song begins *yā zrē' ḌAllāh*, "O standing corn of God!"⁷ Proverbial expressions make plants praise God: *mā ṣā' ḌAllāh ez-zar' bisabbih rabbuh*, "O how beautiful the standing corn praises its lord";⁸ *subḥān ḥāliqḥā*, "May its Creator be praised". A tree is supposed to say "I drink through my trunk and praise my lord" (*baṣrab min*

¹ Heard in Jerusalem.

² The Tarābin Bedouin of the Negeb believe that even animals and vegetables must appear on the day of judgement before the throne of the Almighty. One plant may then accuse another, saying "it bent me so severely that I was hurt."

³ For the description of such stone-heaps see CANAAN, *Mohammedan Saints and Sanctuaries*, pp. 74 ff.

⁴ Cf. Luke 19⁴⁰, Gen. 31⁴⁵ ff; Heb. 3¹¹.

⁵ Heard in Sarris. In other parts of Palestine all the members of the family may eat of the offering.

⁶ *Hall hlāl ḌAllāh uhall djalāluh*.

⁷ DALMAN, *Haupt-Festschrift*, p. 387.

⁸ JPOS, VIII, 164.

‘*irqī ubasabbih rabbī*). On another occasion it proclaims “I am sustained by the grace of my lord!” — *anā min ni‘met rabbī ‘āyš*. An oath runs *uḥaqq man ya‘lam kam waraqah ‘ahaš-šadjarah ukam ša‘rah fi hal-ḥaiwān*, “By the truth of the One who knows how many leaves are on this tree and how many hairs on this animal.” The person uttering this oath points to a tree and to an animal.¹ Another oath says, *uḥaqq ‘uwēnet eš-šams el-mgharrbeh laṭā‘et rabbhā*, “By the truth of the disk² of the sun which is setting³ in obedience to (the rules of) its Lord!”⁴

Only proud and foolish people forget this holy duty. They are compared to the stiff handles of a clay brazier, *kull šī larabbuh byusdjūd illa qrūn el-mōqadeh*, “Everything bows down to its lord except the handles of the clay brazier.” *Ed-djādjuh btišrab ubtuškur rabbhā*, “The hen drinks and (in lifting up her head to heaven) thanks her lord;” *eṭ-tyūr bišabbih rabbhā bil-lghāhin*, “The birds praise their lord by their chirping.” The warbling of some birds is believed to be a continuous repetition of one of God’s names. Thus some doves coo continually, *yā ra‘ūf yā ra‘ūf*, “O Merciful, O Merciful!”, others *yā karīm yā karīm*, “O Gracious, O Gracious!” The cock is said to perform his devotions in the early morning while people are still asleep.

The deep-rooted belief in the relation between the Creator and His creation goes so far as to make the peasants think that the name of God, *‘Allāh* or rather the first letter of the same, the *l*, is inscribed on some fruits. Thus the longitudinal grooves on all

¹ *Mohammedan Saints and Sanctuaries*, p. 126.

² Lit. “small eye”.

³ *El-mgharrbeh* may also be translated “going to the west”. The last two oaths are used by Mohammedans and Christians.

⁴ Other oaths describing the Almighty’s care for his creation as well as some of his activities are: *uḥaqq illi rafa‘ es-samā ubasaṭ el-ard*, “By the truth of the One who elevated heaven, and stretched the earth”; *uḥaqq man katab ‘alēh (‘alal-ḥaṭab) bil-ḥariq*, “By the truth of the One who decreed that this wood is for burning”; *uḥaqq man dār el-ḥalāweh fi haš-šadjarah*, “By the truth of the One who put sweetness into (the fruits of) this tree”; *uḥaqq man djama‘nā min ghēr mī‘ād*, “By the truth of the One who decreed that we should come together without any previous agreement (on our part)”; *wiḥyāt man qasam lak našīb fi haz-zād*, “By the life of the One who allotted you a share in this food”; *wiḥyāt illi šabagh el-‘abd ulaiyan el-ḥadīd*, “By the life of the One who coloured the negro and made iron malleable”.

grains of wheat¹ are said to be the ! of $\text{!}Allāh$. Due to the holy name of God corn and bread enjoy a mystic sacred significance in Palestinian superstition. *Bēnmā* $\text{!}ēš$ *umilh*, "there is bread and salt between us"² means "there is a solemn covenant between us".³ It is further believed that wheat was the tree chosen by God to be the tree of knowledge of good and evil. Therefore corn and bread are highly respected by the peasants, being the greatest gift of God to mankind. One may even take an oath by bread, *wihyāt hal-ēš*, "By the life of this bread!"⁴

Even this does not represent the climax of the peasants' piety. Not only do the plants praise God, they even bow down in veneration before the throne of the Creator. On the night of *lālatur-l-qadr* the trees kneel in reverence because they may not look on the face of the Almighty. The Mohammedans believe that the gates of heaven open on this night, and the waters of the sea become sweet.⁵ Christians hold the same belief in regard to the olive tree on the feast of the Holy Cross (September 13th) and on Epiphany (January 6th). They also believe that unleavened dough will ferment without aid in this night.⁶ This is why some Christians believe that some mulberry wood must be burnt in the night of Epiphany, for this tree was the only plant which, owing to its pride, did not kneel down in veneration of the day.⁷ It is difficult to imagine a more poetic and pious conception.

The veneration of the Palestinian peasant and his gratitude to his Creator is beautifully expressed in the saying *mā binūl samāh binhibb waṭāh*,⁸ "We cannot reach His heaven (to thank Him) there-

¹ I heard the following story about corn in $\text{!}En$ Kārim. It seems to be known in the whole district of Jerusalem. As long as Adam was in paradise he was as pure as the angels and he did not need to defecate. Satan tempted him and gave him corn to eat. Through committing this sin he became in every way human. With this new unclean state he could not remain in paradise.

² RIHBANY, l. c., p. 191.

³ A proverb says *mā fī ṭaṣām illa ba'd el-kalām*, "No food can be taken, except after finishing our conversation", i. e. we can not partake of your food (of your bread and salt) and thus become bound in a covenant before settling our affairs (Gen. 24⁸⁵).

⁴ For further material on this subject see JPOS, VIII, 155 ff.

⁵ ZDPV, VII, 86.

⁶ Heard in Bēt Djālā, Bethlehem, $\text{!}En$ Kārim.

⁷ In Northern Palestine and Syria. JPOS, XIII, 177.

⁸ Heard in Transjordan, known also in Palestine.

fore we kiss the earth (which is His footstool)."¹ Complete resignation to God could not be better expressed than in the words of a sick person, "They asked me: Shall we bring you a physician? I said it would not do. My God has wounded me and He will cure me. This is better and more profitable."² Another proverb describing God as physician is, "God touches the pulse (lit. the joint) and gives the proper medicine".³

Saints are also regarded as healing physicians. Thus the following stanza of a hymn of praise sung to the prophet calls Mohammed "physician":⁴

‛Allāh ‛Allāh ‛Allāh ‛Allāh
yā Muhammad yā ḥabībī
kun ṭabībī
waʿadjirni min laḥībī
inna ‛awzārī ṭiqāl.⁵

"God, God, God, God, O Mohammed! O my beloved! Be my physician and save me from the fire. My sins are very heavy."

Although the present inhabitants of Palestine do not worship the heavenly bodies there are few practices and sayings which may point to this ancient custom.⁶ A song said at sunrise by the inhabitants of the villages south of Bethlehem is:

subḥān man saiyarek
" " daiyarek (or dauwarak)
" " ṣauwarek
" " rafasek ‛an el-ḥibād uʿanwarek

¹ I Chr. 28²; Ps. 99⁵; 132⁷; Math. 5⁸⁵.

² *Qālū indjiblak imdāwi qult mā (i)ṣlah rabbi djarahni urabbi ʿidāwini ʿaḥyar waṣlah.* Other proverbs of the same sublime type are: *lā tikkal hamm fōq rāsak rabb*, "Do not mind any anxiety for there is above your head a Lord"; *ʿAllāh mā biḥalli l-ḥarīḥ maṭrūḥ wala r-rāʿi bald ṣbūl*, "God does not leave the sick forsaken, nor the shepherd without a breakfast".

³ *Rabbnd biḥiss el-maṣṣal ubyaʿti ed-dawd.*

⁴ Heard in Nāblus.

⁵ The continuation of this song is:

kun ḡhadan yauma l-qaṣāṣi *yauma yuʿaḥḥadu bin-nawāṣi*
sāʿian fi ḥalāṣi *min ḥisābin wasuʿāl.*

"Be tomorrow on the day of punishment, the day when (people) are taken by the hairs of the forelock, working for my salvation, from all my accounts and (the process of) enquiry!"

⁶ II Kg. 11¹²; 21^{8, 5}; 23⁵; Jer. 14¹⁸; Zeph. 1⁵.

May He be exalted who made you go!

" " " " " " " turn (from one direction to the
 " " " " " shaped you! [other]!
 " " " " " lifted you above his servants and made
 you shine!

Another song runs:

eš-sams ummnā wil-qamar abūnā
unidjmet Shēl itdillna 'alā drūbnā,

The sun is our mother, and the moon is our father-
 And the star Canopus shows us our ways.

A prayer uttered by the inhabitants of 'Arṭās in the forenoon, when
 the sun is already high in the sky is:

ed-ḏuḥā umīn ḏahāha wiš-sams umīn djalāha
wil-qamar umīn 'alāha² wil-maiy umīn djarrāha.

The forenoon—who made it? The sun (disk)—who polished it?
 The moon—who lifted it? The water—who made it run?³

A married woman who lives far from her parents welcomes the
 rising moon with the words: *ahlan usahlan bimwannis⁴ el-gharībeh⁵,*
 "Welcome O you who keeps company with the stranger".⁶

Every child is advised by his friends to throw a fallen tooth
 from between his legs towards the sun-disk with the words "Take,
 O sun, this donkey's tooth and give me a tooth of a gazelle".⁷

In welcoming the new moon Palestinians say *ihill ihlālak widjil-
 djalālak widj'alak 'alēnā šahr imbāarak,* "May your New Moon appear
 (like a crescent) and your might be high and may you be made a
 blessed month for us".⁸

Flowers and trees should be planted only while the moon is
 growing, else they will not prosper. It is widely believed that the
 sun drives away with its heavenly power all the powers of the
 lower world. This is why demons perform most of their actions

¹ "Sun" الشمس is feminine and "moon" القمر is masculine, in the Arabic
 language.

² As *el-qamar* is masc. the line should really be *wil-qamar umīn djalāh.*

³ The conjunction *wa* "and" has been left in the translation.

⁴ *Wannasa* is unknown to Muḥīṭ.

⁵ Heard in 'Arṭās.

⁶ A proverb says *inti miṭl el-qamar bitwannes mā btinfa,* "You are like the
 moon, you keep company but you are of no other help."

⁷ CANAAN, *The Child in Palestinian Arab Superstition*, JPOS, VII, 175.

⁸ CANAAN, *Light and Darkness in Palestine Folklore*, JPOS, XI, p. 26.

in the darkness of the night. During daytime they can unfold their action only in places where the rays of the sun do not penetrate.¹

Several sayings known widely over the country illustrate how the Palestinians regard the heavenly bodies as living beings of supernatural powers. An oath runs *wiḥyāt 'uwēnit eš-šams*, "By the life of the sun-disk." The Bedouin of Bisān hold that the hour when Conopus (*suhēl*) appears is the most acceptable time for prayers (blessings, curses and oaths). Such an hour is called *sā'it suhēl*. An oath heard from a Ṣaqr Bedouin runs "By the life of the arising *suhēl*".

By no means do these examples point to a direct worship of the heavenly bodies. But they contain several points which may have had their origin in the ancient custom of solar worship.

Every human being is given at birth a protecting angel, *malāk² ḥāris*,³ who continually accompanies and protects him.⁴ When enquiry after the well-being of the children of a friend is made the following formula is used: "How are the protected ones?"⁵ i.e., those protected by their angels. Even every organ of the human body has its protecting angel.⁶ If we did not have those heavenly spirits the human race would have perished long ago. The angel accompanying man not only protects his body, but also his soul. Every human being has, according to Mohammedan belief, in addition to this guardian angel two spirits who continually accompany him. One sits on his right shoulder and the other on his left. One records his good deeds, the other his evil ones.⁷ Whenever a person commits an evil action the spirit recording his good acts requests the other to postpone the recording of the evil deed until the day is over, for thus argues the heavenly spirit: "This person may still ask God for forgiveness before the close of the day". This idea is

¹ See *Aberglaube, Dämonenglaube and Light and Darkness*.

² The description of the angels is given here only to show the relation of the different supernatural powers to each other.

³ CANAAN, *The Child in Palestinian Arab Superstition*, JPOS, VII, 166 ff.

⁴ CANAAN, *Palestinian Demonology*, *The Parents Review*, vol. XXXVII, p. 718. Math. 18¹⁰; Heb. 1¹⁴; Ps. 34⁸; 91¹¹.

⁵ *Kif el-mahrūsīn*. This expression resembles that used in Ps. 127⁸. Other expressions with the same idea are, *'Allāh iḥallīlak el-mahrūsīn; kull mahrūs maqrūs*.

⁶ CANAAN, *The Child in Palestinian Folklore*, JPOS, VII, 166.

⁷ The angel who records the good deeds sits on the right shoulder, the other on the left one.

poetically expressed in the beautiful evening prayer: "Sunset has taken place. Death draws nearer and the earth is closed over what it contains (the dead). O thou who writest down my misdeeds! O God, O my Lord, (I beseech thee), to efface them!"¹

The following invocation has the same idea. It shows at the same time that the saints are asked to intercede by the Almighty for us sinners:

My sins have increased, and I am confused by them!

By the life of our lady *Fāṭmeh*, her mother, and her father,
(I beseech Thee, O my God), to efface all my sins!

(As well as) every time the pencil records (one of) them!²

These two angels are believed to say for every action the person commits, "for ever" (*dāiman*), i.e., "May it (your action) continue to be done in this way for ever." Therefore old women advise young girls and especially brides to be always cheerful and kind and to utter nothing but good words.³

It is a well known fact that Mohammedans believe that angels do not enter a house where dogs, pigs, bells, human pictures, or statues are found.⁴ No angel will enter a privy. Even the two angels⁵ accompanying continually a person will await him outside the door whenever he enters such a place. Should he speak while he is in this unclean place, the angels have to enter to keep record of all that he has said. They will curse him for having forced them to enter the unholy place.

As soon as a person dies angels descend from heaven to see what sins he has performed. They examine every organ separately to find out what misdeeds each organ has committed. This is plainly expressed in the prayer:⁶

*Yā sūrati-l-anʿām*⁷ *iḥḍarī lēlat wiḥdatī*
wil-malāʾikah lāʿah unāzleh *titqallab fī djittatī*
uṣṣiffatī wil-lsāni *hum asāsu lbalā.*

¹ *El-ghrūb gharrabat wil-mōt qarrabat wil-arḍ qaffalat ʿala mā fihā yā kātib ʾisāʾātī ʾilāhi yā rabbi timḥihā.* ² *kitrat dnuḇi wiḥtart anā fihā biḥyāt sittnd Fāṭmeh wimmhā wabūhā timḥa dnuḇi kullhā kullma ḥaṭṭ el-qalam fihā.*

³ See also ZDPV, VII, 101.

⁴ This belief is dying out.

⁵ During the conjugal act the "angel of mercy", *malāk er-raḥmeh*, who is probably the recorder of the good deeds, leaves the room and reenters only after the person has washed himself ritually (ʿEn *Kārim*, *Qalōniā*).

⁶ Heard in Jerusalem.

⁷ "The Cattle". See for explanation Sale, *The Qurʾān*, p. 89.

"O sixth sūreh, be present at the night of my solitude (death)! While the angels are ascending and descending and are entering into my body, my lips and my tongue, Which are the source of (my) destruction."

At sunset the angels are supposed to go around distributing to every person his supplies for the next day. Every person has therefore to stop working¹ for a short time in order not to be neglected by the angels.²

The demons are the cause of all the woes and diseases of the human race, "which are more numerous than the plants of the earth".³

The persistent ignorance of the Palestinian on the subject of medicine, its causes and symptoms accounts for their deeply rooted belief that sickness is attributable to the action of evil spirits. The only cure consists in their expulsion.⁴ As in olden times it is "not the most educated man who is competent for this work, but the most religious",⁵ or the one who is apparently most religious: priests,⁶ *ṣēhs*, and *darāwīs*.⁷

The devil and his host are never divided against themselves.⁸ This is well expressed in the saying "The devil never ruins his own house".⁹ The demons use many persons for their habitation or as instruments of their activity. Hence such expressions as

¹ Heard in Jerusalem. This custom is now nearly extinguished.

² Another belief is that in the night of the 10th of Moḥarram (‘*Asūrah*) a horse (or a mare) loaded with a saddle-bag (*ḥurdj*), filled with gold and carrying on its saddle (or on its neck) a bloody human head goes through the streets of every city and village. Most of the people who happen to see it are frightened and run away. A brave man will however take the horse by its bridle, lead it to his house and empty the contents of the saddle-bag. He has to fill the same with whatever he happens to have at home, preferably with cereals (lentils, peas, beans, corn, barley, etc). If he fails to do so the whole gold disappears (*dahab ed-dahab*). Some believe that the horse (it may also be a mule) comes to every house and knocks on the door. Such a horse is called *faras ‘asūrah*. ³ *Maṣā’ib ed-dahr aḵṭar min nabāt el-‘ard*.

⁴ Matth. 9^{32, 33}; 12²²; Luk. 13^{11, 16}.

⁵ L. STAPPER, *Palestine in the Time of Christ*, p. 252.

⁶ Adjazmāṭārī, pp. 209, 217.

⁷ In the time of Christ and in the Talmudic era rabbis, scribes and doctors of the law undertook the casting out of demons. ⁸ Math. 12²⁶.

⁹ *Iblīs md biḡrib bētuh*.

"Idleness is the workshop of Satan";¹ "The sleep of the unjust is devotion";² "The lazy hand is unholy (lit. filthy, impure)".³

An important feature in the religious beliefs of the Palestinian is the dwelling-place of the good and evil superhuman powers. The first live with God in heaven and the latter in the lower world and on earth. A great number of the angels descend continually to the earth to execute the orders of the Almighty. A large number of the *djinn* spend the greater part of their life on earth. The souls of the *welīs* are more bound⁴ to the earth than the angels. This is especially true of saints who are ancestors of living families. The souls of the dead are still more restricted in their movements. They visit from time to time their tombs where their relatives may deposit offerings for them several times a year⁵. The nearness of heaven to hell has been described by the author in his article *Water and the Water of Life*, JPOS, IX, 64.⁶

The human race is the most perfect creation. An oath speaks directly of God who creates and shapes a person: *wiḥyāt illī ḥalaqak uṣauwarak*, "By the life of the One who created and shaped you!"⁷ But man has to die. "Death is (at last) a blessing" (*el-mōt rahmeh*), and "the only condition in which God made all men alike".⁸ Death which "is nearer to man than his teeth to the tongue"⁹ is only a transitory state, for it is followed by resurrection. The whole of the

¹ *El-baṭāleh karaḥānet es-sīlān*. A classical proverb runs راس الكسلان محل الشيطان .

² *Nōm ez-zālmīn 'ibādeh*.

³ *El-ʿūd el-baṭāleh nidjseh*.

⁴ CANAAN, *Mohammedan Saints and Sanctuaries*, p. 248.

⁵ *Dāmonenglaube*, p. 16. *Mohammedan Saints*, pp. 263 ff.

⁶ Some new material to illustrate this idea is: all the souls of the righteous dead meet twice a week in the pit below the holy cave of the *Ṣaḥrah* (*bīr el-ʿarwāḥ*) to adore ʿAllāh and to await the day of judgement. The explainers of the Qorʿān quote the 13th verse of the 37th sūreh in support of this theory. The verse runs "And a high wall shall be set betwixt them, wherein shall be a gate, within which shall be mercy, and without it over against the same the torment of Hell". They say the eastern wall of the Temple area is the wall referred to in this verse, as it separates the holy area from the valley of hell.

⁷ Therefore He will not neglect us, *illī ḥalaqak mā byutirkak*. An oath used by Mohammedans and Christians is *uḥaqq man ʿaināt uqāder ʿimītnī*, "By the truth of the One who has ordered the death of many (before me) and who is able to kill me".

⁸ *Rabbnā ma sāwāna illa fil-mōt*.

⁹ *El-mōt aqrab lal-insān min es-snān lal-lsān*. Another proverb with the same meaning is *el-mōt aqrab min el-ḥādjib lal-ʿayn*, "Death is nearer (to man) than the eyebrow is to the eye".

human body changes into dust, and dust has not the power of resurrection. But in the lower part of the vertebral column there is a small round and hard piece of bone, which never changes into dust. From this *bizreh* or *'uqdeh* the whole body regenerates and rises up on the day of judgement. Every human person has therefore to think continually of death. The following saying beautifully expresses this idea; "O my God, give me the ability of being always content and let me think every hour of death".¹ The following invocation describes the feelings of a human being towards his Creator in respect of death and the day of judgement:

I beg the almighty God to forgive (me) the (great) number of past sins |
I beg the almighty God to forgive (me) the (great) number of future
sins (which I am afraid I shall commit)|

I beg the almighty God to forgive (me) when I die!

I beg the almighty God to forgive (me) on the day of meeting (him)!²

¹ *yā rabbi l-qanā'ah wiflikār el-mōt kull sā'ah.*

² *Astaghfir 'Alldh el-'azīm min 'adad ma maḏū,*

" " " " " baḡd,

" " " " " 'ind !lū' er-rūḥ

" " " " " el-multaḡd.