

used for the pillar, dome, pavilion, or tent, which stood in the center of a circle of sacred stones; and such graves enjoyed the immunity of the family tent and were an asylum in blood-feuds even from the tribe of the ancestor.⁴⁰ The poet Ḥammād sought protection at the grave of his enemy's father and was not deceived in his trust; and the Shī'ī poet, al-Kumait, outlawed by the Umayyad Caliph of his day for an anti-Umayyad lampoon, and driven from pillar to post like a hunted beast, took refuge at the grave of a prince of the ruling family; and the Caliph's grand-children tied their clothes to his and cried to the Caliph: "Shame us not through him who seeks refuge with the departed one." "To shame the dead is a blot on the living."⁴¹

The Israelites seem to have had a sort of organized cult of ancestors. For even in historical times great importance was attached to being buried in the grave of the father; and the motive was the same probably as with the Babylonians, to which a text of Assurbanipal bears witness, saying, "To be removed from the grave of the fathers is to be deprived of sacrifices and libations." The family tomb was the sanctuary evidently at which the ancestors received the cult of their descendants; and a stēle, or pillar (*maṣṣēbhā*), was erected at the tomb of an ancestor, not only to represent the defunct with the living, but also to receive the libations made to him. The Israelites rendered this cult apparently to the ancestors of the clan as well as to those of the family, for they paid religious homage even at a late date to the graves of those who were thought to be the ancestors of a clan, or even of the whole people of Israel, such as Abraham and Sarah, Joseph and Rachel.⁴²

Goldziher remarks in his *Muhammedanische Studien* that Arab traditions and poetry offer more positive data for a cult of the dead than for a cult of ancestors;⁴³ but some of the evidence which he adduces seems to point rather to a cult of heroes. For the Arabs, he informs us, used to erect stones, or pillars, such as were set up in sacred places and the worship of which is forbidden in the Qur'ān, at the graves of especially honored warriors, and they used to slaughter a riding beast, whenever they passed by the grave of a man fa-

⁴⁰ cf. Goldziher, "Le culte des ancêtres chez les Arabes," (*Rev. de l'hist. des religions*, X, 333ff.); Quatremère, "Les Asyles chez les Arabes," (*Mém. de l'acad. d. Inscriptions et d. belles Lettres*, XV (1845); R. Boucher, *op. cit.*, CLXXXIV, p. 519 (transl.), text, p. 172, 7 from the bottom; cf. XLIII and pp. 411 ff.

⁴¹ See *al-Aghānī* XV. pp. 117, 121.

⁴² cf. Gen. 35:8 and 14 (E):19-20; Isa. 63:16. F. Macler, *Correspondence Epistolaire avec le ciel* (Paris, 1915), pp. 8-15, observes that even in quite recent times Jews wrote letters to their ancestors and inserted them in cracks in the walls of the sepulchral cave at Hebron.

⁴³ cf. Goldziher, *Muh. Studien*, II, p. 235. Littmann has shown that the Safaitic custom of RGM meant originally worship of the dead. (cf. H. Grimme, "Safaitic Inscriptions," p. 150).

mous for generosity and nobility. When 'Amīr ibn al-Ṭufail, a rival of Muhammad, died, the Arabs raised stones, it is related, in a circle of a square mile around his grave to indicate that it was a sacred place, or temenos, a *himā*; and at the grave of Ḥātim Tayyī, renowned for his lavish generosity, his grateful contemporaries set up stones which looked like mourning women; and a legend tells us that Arabs, when they passed by the grave, expected hospitality there.⁴⁴ The grave of a hero was also an asylum.

Sacrifices at the graves of ancestors and heroes are recorded; but more frequently mentioned is the sacrifice of one or several beasts immediately after the burial of the dead. In the Romance of 'Antar such sacrifices are often described. Whenever a hero dies, camels are slaughtered in hecatombs.⁴⁵ Islam has retained the rite, but explains the sacrifice as an expiation for little sins, whence its name, al-Kiffāra, the sin offering.⁴⁶ Bertram Thomas writes in his *Arabia Felix* that it was the rule in the Qara mountains to slaughter half of a man's cows as a sacrifice after his death;⁴⁷ and Burckhardt relates that the Bedouins of his day slaughtered as many camels at the 'Id al-Qurbān, as there had died grown-up members of the family of either sex during the year which had just passed away.⁴⁸ Islam has also instituted the offering of a sacrifice at this festival, but it has connected it with a biblical memory, Abraham's sacrifice, and named it "al-Fidā," the Redemption.

Hair offerings also were often brought in honor of the departed. The poet, Labid, a contemporary of the Prophet, who accepted Islam, charged his daughters that "When the day comes, and your father dies, scratch not a face, and cut not your hair." But when the greatest warrior of the early conquests of Islam, Khālid ibn al-Walīd, died, his wives of the Banu Mughīra tribe shaved their heads and laid their hair on his tomb. It was still usage also in the earliest days of Islam to put up a tent over the grave of an honored person and to dwell therein for some time after the burial. The poet, Arṭaṭ (ob. 8th cent. A.H.), mourned his son for a whole year in a tent erected beside the grave. But 'Amr ibn al-'Ās, the conqueror of Egypt, forbade in his last testimony, or so it is related, to set up a wooden, or stone, memorial on his grave and requested that his people should remain at his grave only so long as it took to slaughter a camel and divide its flesh, so that he should enjoy their company for that length of time.⁴⁹

⁴⁴ See Goldziher, *op. cit.*, pp. 232-241.

⁴⁵ *ibid.*, pp. 242 ff.

⁴⁶ cf. E. W. Lane, *Arabian Society in the Middle Ages*, ed. Stanley Lane Poole, p. 261; *Manners and Customs of the Modern Egyptians* (London, 1871) p. 268.

⁴⁷ p. 55.

⁴⁸ *Voyages en Arabie* I, p. 73; cf. Doughty, *Arabia Deserta* I, pp. 137, 293,

⁴⁹ cf. Goldziher, *op. cit.*, II, 247-248, 255-256; cf. Robertson Smith, *Religion of*

Goldziher observes that this practice, borrowed probably from paganism, and the favorite cry of women mourners and of the writers of "Lamentations," the *marāthī* poetry, namely, *Lā tab 'ad*, "Depart not," do not bear out Fraser's thesis that mourning rites and customs express the absolute renunciation of the dead.⁵⁰ The dead, as Wellhausen remarks, are still thought of as present, witness the frequent visits to graves, the dwelling there in tents and the greeting of the dead in passing. Present day Arabs, he also points out, bring offerings to a grave until the third generation.⁵¹ Jacob in his *Studien in altarabischen Dichtern* maintains that these customs sought through the fiction that the dead are still alive to sublimate the sorrow of living.⁵² The complete renunciation did not occur, at any rate, with the Arabs in the mourning rites, but in the breaking-off of these rites. In Jewish law purification was prescribed for anyone, who had entered, or had been in, the tent in which a man had died, or had touched a dead man, or a bone of a man, or a grave, on the seventh day thereafter, to break off contact definitely, it would seem, with the spirit of the dead.⁵³

Around the second century B.C., the Israelites, or Jews, seem to have felt that death was followed by almost complete annihilation; for they gave to the dead a very vague, shadowy existence in Sheol, and Ecclesiastes declared that "A living dog is better than a dead lion; for the living know that they will die, but the dead know nothing."⁵⁴ But before the Exile the Israelites evidently believed in a real survival of the person after death and endowed the dead with superhuman powers and knowledge, even considering some of them divine.⁵⁵

Israelite burial customs and beliefs, for example, can only be explained if we presume that the defunct person was thought of as still subsisting with his consciousness and sensibility. In the days of the Monarchy, and even later, the Israelites imagined apparently, like most of the peoples still in the animistic stage of culture, that there was in man, as in everything that lived, a being, or double, that caused him to live, act and think, and which could separate itself from a person even in life, in ecstasy, for instance, or through fear, or in a dream, and that his double subsisted after death and

the Semites (New York, 1889) pp. 305 ff., and Wellhausen, *Reste d. arab. Heidentums*, pp. 178-183.

⁵⁰ cf. Goldziher, *op. cit.*, II, p. 255.

⁵¹ *Reste etc.*, pp. 178-183.

⁵² pp. 142 ff.

⁵³ cf. Num. 19:14-19; cf. Wellhausen, *Reste etc.*, p. 178, for Arab custom of mourning lasting usually seven days.

⁵⁴ ch. 9:4-5; cf. Nöldeke *Beiträge z. Kenntniss d. Poesie d. alten Araber*, p. 106, l. 28; the defunct "has become dust covered with dust."

⁵⁵ cf. II Sam. 21:11-14; Gen. 4:11-12; also Isa. 8:19 and the dying predictions of Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Moses and Joshua.

preserved the traits which the person had at the moment of his decease.

When Saul grew afraid in the face of the host of the Philistines⁵⁶ and enquired of Jehovah, and "Jehovah answered him not, neither by dreams, nor by urim, nor by prophets," he sought out a woman of En-dor, who had a familiar spirit, to enquire of her. "And he said, Divine unto me, I pray thee, by the familiar spirit, and bring up whomsoever I shall name unto thee." And after he had sworn that no punishment should befall her, he asked her to bring up Samuel. And when Samuel appeared to the woman, Saul said to her, "What seest thou?" And the woman said unto Saul, "I see a god coming up out of the earth." And he said unto her, "What form is he of?" And she said, "An old man cometh up, and he is covered with a robe."

Samuel has forgotten nothing and has preserved all the clairvoyance of a prophet in Sheol. For life in Sheol is a continuance of this earthly existence. Its inhabitants are weak (Rephaim), but they still have power to move and to speak and to follow with a passionate interest events in the world of the living.⁵⁷ When the King of Babylon descended among them, they greeted him with an ironic funebrial chant: "Sheol from beneath is moved for thee to meet thee at thy coming; it stirreth up the dead for thee, even all the chief ones of the earth; it hath raised up from their thrones all the kings of the nations. All they shall answer and say to thee, Art thou also become weak as we? Art thou become like unto us?"⁵⁸

Kings keep their thrones in Sheol. Old men are known by their white hair, the afflicted by the marks of their mourning and the murdered by their wounds.⁵⁹ Families and nations lie together there in their familiar terrestrial groupings.⁶⁰ Perhaps Sheol was originally the world of the Chthonian gods. But beliefs concerning Mother Earth suggest that man is born of the earth, and that the dead enter its breast to find new life.⁶¹

The supreme misfortune which could happen to man, was not to receive burial, or to be taken from the tomb. The prophets of Israel threatened the enemies of Yahwe with this fate; and Tobias risked his life to bury his compatriots, who had been executed by the Assyrian king.⁶² The unburied dead were vagabonds without a home. Their souls, or doubles, hovered around the corpse and had the power to do all sorts of evil to the living; for which reason even the corpse of the crucified might not be left on the tree after sundown, and murderers have been known to attend to the burial of

⁵⁶ See I. Sam. 28.

⁵⁸ Isa. 14:9ff.

⁶⁰ cf. Ez. 32:18.

⁶² 1:17 ff.

⁵⁷ cf. Jer. 31:15.

⁵⁹ cf. I Ki. 2:6, 9; Gen. 37:35 and 42:38.

⁶¹ Ps. 139:13-15; Job 1:21; Sir. 40:1 and Isa. 26:19.

their victims.⁶³ On the other hand every indignity inflicted on a corpse was also suffered by the soul, or double, of the dead; and so it was customary to mutilate dead enemies and animals.⁶⁴ To burn a corpse was a frightful punishment.

Dirges and eulogies were sung over the dead, to be deprived of which was a dire mischance; a lock of hair, or a tuft of the beard, was cut off, or gashes cut in the body, in honor of the dead,⁶⁵ even as out of reverence for the gods; and sacrifices were offered to them apparently, either in the form of a funerary meal, of which the dead received a share,⁶⁶ or as offerings deposited in the tomb, or as libations poured over it,⁶⁷ or as blood-offerings designed to appease the irritated souls of the dead who had not yet been avenged.⁶⁸ Into the tomb also was put everything which might conceivably be found useful by the departed. Their most beautiful garments were interred with them. Warriors were buried with their swords and bucklers.⁶⁹

Two satisfactory explanations have been offered for the burial rites of the Israelites, which are very ancient and not peculiar to them in the Semitic world.⁷⁰ Some scholars recognize in those rites truly religious, propitiatory acts, designed to dispose the dead to favor the living. Others see in them preservative gestures to shield the living from the evil which the soul of the dead could do to them.

Fraser connects such rites in his *Golden Bough* with the observances imposed upon kings and sorcerers, warriors and avengers, youths during initiation, women with child and those who enter, or approach a sanctuary. Like these observances the burial rites were, he maintains, defensive taboos, measures taken against the spiritual powers with which these classes of individuals happened to be in a special relation, in this case the souls of the dead, or some influence emanating from them. And for this reason the eyes of the dead were closed to prevent his soul from leaving the body and haunting the house; clothes were cast off and sack cloth put on to keep the influence of the dead from attaching itself to the clothes and so causing their loss; sandals were taken off, the face was veiled, or the face of the dead was covered; the hand was laid upon the head to guard it, the mustache was enwrapped to defend the mouth and nostrils against the entrance of the soul of the dead; the mourners rolled in the dust, or in cinders, or threw dirt, or cinders, on their heads, to disguise themselves, or sat, or lay, on the earth naked. A Semite entering a sacred place also doffed, it should be observed,

⁶³ cf. Deut. 21:22-23; Josh. 8:29; 19:26-27; II Ki. 9:34.

⁶⁴ cf. I Sam. 17:54; 31:9-10.

⁶⁶ Cf. Deut. 26:13-14.

⁶⁸ cf. Deut. 21:1-9.

⁶⁹ cf. Ez. 32:27; cf. also Josephus, *Ant. Jud.*, XIII, 8, 4ff.

⁷⁰ Most of them are found also with the Canaanites and with the Arabs.

⁶⁵ cf. Deut. 14:1-2.
⁶⁷ cf. Tob. 4:17; Sir. 7:33; Gen. 35:8, 14.