

## THE IMMOVABLE EAST.

By PHILIP J. BALDENSPERGER.

*(Continued from Q.S., 1909, p. 252.)*

CURSES are pronounced almost universally, from the babe beginning to mutter a few incomprehensible words, to the dying man. It is not considered so bad a habit as it is thought in Europe, and some curses at least mean nothing at all. *Yen'al abūk* (يذعل أبوك), "Cursed be your father," is the standard curse, so to speak, and is known by almost every European in the Orient, from hearing it at every turning of the street. In spite of the negligence in pronouncing curses, it is believed that a curse will fall on the person on whom it is invoked; if the person be alive it may easily be called away, but not so on a dead person, where the curse remains. A Jew is twice accursed, whilst the dead of the Christians alone are accursed, that is to say, a Jew may become a Christian, and a Christian may be converted to Mohammedanism, therefore, he is accursed as long as he lives. Curses may be divided into four classes, according as they affect persons, their possessions, their ancestors, or are quite general.

I. Personal curses and imprecations are generally considered as ineffectual, with but few exceptions. The gravest of all personal ones is *yen'al* (يذعل) *dīnak*, "Cursed be your religion," which, jokingly, is turned into *yen'al tīnak*, "Cursed be your figs"; *yen'alak*, "Cursed be you"; *yen'al heyātak*, "Cursed be your life"; *yen'al miltak* (*eymānak*), "Cursed be your sect ('belief')." Also, *ta'an*, "pestilence"; *dāhiet*, "calamity"; *teḳala'*, "be uprooted"; *huwe[t]* (هوينة), "deep (to fall into the)"; *huwey*, "tingling of the ear"; *ehwah* (اهوا), "stroke"; *ladgha[t]*, "a sting"; *muktat*, "epilepsy"; *latshet*, "a blow (with the hand)"; *ḳal'a[t]*, "a big rock (or uprooting)"; *abū znate* (أبو زنيت), "changer of forms." Among the Bedawy tribe of the Zenates settled in Tunis, are *Allah ye'mik*, "God strike you blind"; *Allah yekhfik*, "God hide you (make you disappear)"; and many others.

II. The more comprehensive curses in common use are: *yekhreb bēthak*, "destroyed be your house" (this is only effectual for married people: house means wife and children); *yekhreb dyārak*, "Destroyed be your settling"; *yekta' mālak wa'eyalak* (يقتع مالك وعيالك), "Destroyed be your wealth and your family."

III. Ancestral curses are only effective when those ancestors are dead; they are generally pronounced against relatives of the father, and mothers and their relatives are not taken into consideration; *yen'al immak*, "Cursed be your mother," which is heard in Algeria, is not used at all in Palestine. Here may be quoted: *yen'al abūk*, "Cursed be your father"; *yen'al waldak wa-shāhetak*, "Cursed be your parents and your martyrs (killed in battle or so)"; *yen'al sīdak*, "Cursed be your grandfather." The fellahin do not use the word *yen'al*, but say: *Allah lā yerham terāb abūk*, "God be not merciful on the dust of your father"; or with the words, *illi katlato marā* (إلى قتلته مرا), "who was killed by a woman." This last illustrates the words of Abimelech, "lest they say a 'woman slew him'" (Judges ix, 54).

IV. General imprecations touching the village or the whole tribe: *yen'al abū sheikh baladak*, "Cursed be the father of the sheikh of your village"; *yen'al abū il-surbet il-hamelek*, "Cursed be the father of that unworthy troop"; *yen'al abū l-mīliha*[f] *fi baladak*, "Cursed be the father of the fair one of your village"; *yej'al il-būmi tez'ak fi dār il-barīd*, "May the owl call in the house of the remote (despised)." The cursing of a father or mother was punishable by death, according to the law of Moses (Leviticus xxvi, 9). It may be a cause of murder amongst the fellahin or Bedū, that is to say, it may be followed by just vengeance on behalf of the soul of one's father.

Jotham calls down a general imprecation upon the inhabitants of Shechem (Judges ix, 20), and after the destruction of Thebez and death of Abimelech "the curse came on the Shechemites as pronounced by Jathom" (Judges ix, 57).

The sober and solemn language of the morning flies away with the mist, and becomes foul in the extreme, even with acquaintances and in a joking way; and, as with curses, so oaths are varied.

Oaths also may be divided into four different classes in so far as they are connected with persons, relatives, sacred things, or sacred beings.

I. Among the personal oaths are : *waḥyāti*, “by my life”; *‘alla ‘ēneyi*, “by my eyes”; *waḥyāt rāsī*, “by the life of my head”; and so by every essential part of one’s self. Oaths are uttered with ease, and are not thought of any consequence. These oaths have entered into general conversation, and are not taken as solemn affirmations of the truth; they must then be emphasized by stronger terms as *Allah ye‘mēnā*, “God strike me with blindness,” and so forth.

These oaths have different names : *aliyet*, *ḵism*, *yamīn*, and *ḥalf*. The *ḥalf* is only used in the verb “to swear”; “to swear an oath” is *ḥalaf yamīn*. Swearing was very common among the Jews and their Israelite ancestors. Jesus says (Matthew v, 36), “swear not by thy head,” and the patriarch swore to Abimelech (Genesis xxi, 23). Only false oaths are forbidden (Leviticus xix, 12). Even the austere reformer (Nehemiah xiii, 25) curses the people and makes them swear by God. The Apostle Peter also had forgotten the lesson, and curses and swears in an hour of darkness (Matthew xxvi, 74). On the other hand, the Apostle James repeats the good lesson received by Jesus, and forbids swearing for any cause (James v, 12).

II. Oaths on relatives are less emphatic if the person alluded to be still alive. They are : *waḥyāt*, “by the life of,” followed by “my father,” “my father’s ashes (if dead),” or “my little children.”

III. Among the oaths on sacred objects, visible or invisible, are : “by the life of the bread and salt” (*el-‘esheḥ walmaḥ*, العيش والملح); “of the (fire) composed of seven” (هل مسبعة); or “by my religion” (وديني). There is also the oath, “my hand below thy girdle” (*yedī taḥt ḥezāmak*, يدي تحت حزامك), which reminds us of the oath which Abraham made Eleazar take (Genesis xxiv, 2).

IV. Of a more serious character are the oaths taken by God, the prophets, the saints, or the temples; *wallah* (والله), “by God,” however, is used for anything, no matter how trifling; *waḥyāt Allah*, “by the life of God,” is more serious. The formula to use at the tomb of a saint or prophet is :

(*wallahi il-aẓīm, billahi il-karīm, in yā nābi Rūbine*),

والله العظيم بالله الكريم أن يا نبي روبين.

“By God the mighty, by God the bountiful, O prophet Reuben,”

Then follows the occasion of the oath, either to swear that a crime was not committed by the person, or that he has not even seen anything concerning it. This oath is very solemn, and both the swearer and receiver are accompanied by armed friends and relatives, and bloody scenes might ensue, especially if the oath is forced upon a person. If he has sworn falsely, he fears the consequences of the oath, and may take vengeance immediately; or else, if he has really sworn truly, he may be seized with dread at the solemnity of a performance which, if properly carried out, is looked upon as rather impious.

"By the life of our prophet Mohammed," is said very easily, in fact more readily than the oath by the patron saints, as it is believed that God and Mohammed are very forgiving, whereas most prophets and saints do not want to be troubled; and punish those who interfere with them. May one compare 1 Sam. xxviii, 15: "Why hast thou disquieted me, to bring me up?" says Samuel to Saul at Endor.

To swear "by the beard of Mohammed," as has been so often repeated by different writers, rests on some error. The veneration of the beard, in Islam especially, is great, but not to the extent of swearing by it: at least, I have never heard any Arab swear by the beard of the prophet. Another oath is "by the life of the rock (of the temple) and the temple" (*waheîüt es-şakhrat wal-haram*). Native Christians swear by the Sepulchre and by Christian saints, but with more discretion and sincerity.

Sun, moon, and stars are also objects by which the natives swear. No doubt this is a relic of ancient Canaanite religion, although the heathen gods were still venerated in the days of Jeremiah (Jeremiah xix, 13). Children will swear by their eyes or their fathers, and so forth, for the sake of a couple of marbles, and the custom is so common that it has become quite meaningless.

Exclamations of all kinds are uttered from time to time, to request favour, to ask pardon, etc.; they lose their force and become simply a habit. I may mention the following: *yâ Allah*, *yâ latîf* ("O benevolent one"), *yâ karîm* ("O generous one"), *yâ मौजूद* ("O omnipresent"), *yâ gheiyûr* ("O jealous"), *yâ kâder* 'alla kul shey' ("O Almighty"), and *istaghfar Allah* (استغفر الله), "Forgiveness, or pardon, God," may also be used as a strong negative "not at all." Native Christians use the same expressions, with others more closely

connected with their religion (*e.g.*, the name of the Virgin, of a Christian saint, and so on).

To give more emphasis to their devotions, they repeat the same formula of prayer or words a certain number of times, and there is an expression for every quality of God. To repeat the praises of God is called *mashahat*; praising God is called *tasbīḥ*; mentioning God is *tazkīr*; acknowledging God to be *one*, or to be the living God, is *tawḥīd*; to glorify God by praise is *takmīd*; to call God one is *takhlīl*; to magnify God is called *takbīr*. We read in 1 Chronicles xvi, 4, that David appoints the Levites to make mention of God, to thank Him, and to praise Him. Compare the duties of the Levites in Ezra iii, 10 *sq.*

These various appeals and exclamations are made either individually or in the gatherings on Thursday evenings by the dervishes and candidates.

To show disgust or disdain for anything or anybody, they say *tfū* which suggests the act of spitting. A stronger term, *akhs*, which is addressed to a dog, may be prompted on witnessing any very vile act. A common expression is *yā laṭīf*, "O benevolent one," which may merely correspond to "Is it possible?" or the like.

Charity (*ehsān*, احسان; *ṣadākat*, صدقة) is obligatory by the law of Mohammed. The Koran bids a tenth to be given to the poor, but this may be considered as unknown. At assemblies, feasts, and marriages, the poor, or rather the mendicants, receive either food or coppers, and they seem to be proud of the *rôle* they have to take in order to allow others to fulfil the law. Subscriptions for public disasters are virtually unknown, and, if charity is done at all, it is not brought before the public in the ordinary Western way, by publishing it in newspapers, simply because these do not circulate, and also because the obligations of the different classes towards each other are not developed in the same way as in the West. The beggars generally lean on a long stick—for they must feign some infirmity—and carry a tin or wooden bowl dangling on their arm—their trade-mark as it were—and they assemble at the doors of mosques or churches, where they receive a few coppers. The Jerusalem corporation of mendicants is certainly well supplied with cripples, blind, and feigning beggars, for they have here every opportunity for asking alms of the pilgrims of all nations who meet here, and liberally give to the miserable-looking people.

On the other hand, the differences in fortunes are not so great in the East. Luxury is not excessive, neither is misery so profound, as in the West. All classes meet in the mosques, without luxury and without apportioned places, and thus they feel more equal in the place of worship than in the more splendidly decorated Christian churches. Moreover, special toilets are unknown, as the women wear the *izâr*—a long white sheet or cloth.

The feigning of poverty is a policy inherited from the days now gone by, when every wealthy-looking person was forced to contribute by the passing governor, whose residence was at Acca or Damascus, and who only levied taxes once a year, and then took them where best they could. The inhabitants, in their turn, "plucked" the visitors, and always feigned poverty in order to enlist the pity of the opulent pilgrims. This secular policy has bred a race perhaps not met with in other countries, and it gave the people an inventive turn of mind for sacred spots so plentiful in Palestine that they do not inspire the awe which is generally associated with them.

*Sabil*, or public fountains, are dedicated to the wayfaring and thirsty wanderers in the dry regions, by charitable rich proprietors, or, in some places, by the government. The *sabils* are very expensive charity funds, and the government exempts the owner of these fountains from all taxes, provided they promise to have water in them at all times. The public fountain is sometimes simply a trough to water the animals, but those erected by the government are more monumental. The most renowned is the *sabil abū Nabūt*, a mile from Jaffa, with monumental cupolas and ornamentation, erected by the Governor of that name who lived at Acca in the beginning of the nineteenth century. Other *sabils* on the Gaza road have long ago ceased to exist. Jaffa has many of them in different quarters, fed by the water-wheel wells. In Ramleh is the *Muristan sabil*. On the road to Jerusalem is the *sabil* of Abū Ghōsh, erected for the soul of the late Haj Mustapha; but it has long ago been neglected by the lazy descendants.

The towns of Hebron and Nāblus, where water is not scarce, have no lack of *sabils* scattered throughout them. Jerusalem did not know this luxury for centuries. The monumental *sabil* of the lower Pool of Gihon (Birket es-Sultan), as well as many others, are empty. A new *sabil* has been built near the Jaffa Gate at Jerusalem, in memory of the twenty-first anniversary of the Sultan, on the 1st of September, 1900, and another one at Jaffa Harbour.

The *sabil* of the Convent of Mar Elias, between Jerusalem and Bethlehem, is fed from the Greek Convent. This *sabil* was for more than fifty years the only one in all Judaea, and has been a great boon to the thirsty fellahin passing that way. The Greek convents have generally *sabils* near them.

Hospitality in the towns is practised collectively. Travellers go to the khan (خان)—the Oriental hotel—where men and beast, for a small sum, find shelter. They can have an empty room for the night and to store their luggage, and they pay a fee of a beshlik or so for “the use of the key” if they keep it with them. Food is not provided, every traveller must buy for his wants and either eat it cold or prepare his dinner himself. Those who have no more luggage than they can carry lodge either in the porches of the mosque or in the mosque itself where mats are provided, and food is distributed towards sunset by a servant of the mosque, to any one who may be present. It is said that a traveller once came to the mosque and received no food, he then wrote above the door the following :

*jame' balla 'esh buni lësh*

جامع بلا عيش بني ليش

“What was a mosque without victuals built for ?”

He found on his next journey this answer written :

*buni la-salât ya kabil il-heiat*

بني للصلاة يا قليل الحياة

“It was built for prayer, Oh impudent fellow !”

And again he wrote a justification :

*il-salah heia fil-fallâ, waj-jame' yenhad 'alla räs illi banâ*

الصلاة حيا في الفلاة والجماع ينهد على رأس الي بناء

“The prayer can be said in the field, and let the mosque fall on the head of its builder.”

Every Oriental has some kind of cloak, the *'abâ* (عبا), which is at the same time his cover, not only on the journey but also at home. The Mosaic law forbids a man to hold back the Simlah (or *'abâ*) as a pledge: “For that is his only covering, it is his garment for his skin: wherein shall he sleep ?” (Exod. xxii, 27).

Christians go to their respective convents, where they almost always find the necessary food and lodgings for a night or two.

As the convents have more space and accommodation, better rooms are reserved for such travellers as can pay a small sum. Since the great change of the second part of the nineteenth century, when hotels have sprung up everywhere, and means of travelling have been improved and multiplied, the *khāns* and convents of the Jaffa-Jerusalem district have been neglected; but they are very handy in out-of-the-way places, and are used by Europeans as well. An ignorant Italian monk travelling in the eighteenth century passed a town where he found no other accommodation than the *khān*. He was told to go to the *khān*—the place of such travellers as himself. In his description of the *khān*, he says: "This is a place where the Moslems put Christian-dogs, as the name indicates—*Cane*, the Italian for dog—they have no more respect for Christians than for the dogs."

As indicated, some travellers take rooms, but the less wealthy sit down in the coffee-room and, having taken a cup and a pipe, lie down where they have been sitting and chatting for hours, often taking the small stool as a pillow; a stone is not so high and is often used. Some smooth stones are always seen lying about; they are usually from the valley, where the waters flowing over them for centuries have washed away the sharp edges. When Jacob was on his journey to Haran, he arrived at Luz and tarried all night in that *maqōm* "place" (or sanctuary, as a mosque is also called *maqōm*), and he took a stone of the "place" for his pillow (Gen. xxviii, 11). And when he awoke after his dream he said: "Surely Jehovah is in this 'place'" (v. 16), and he called the name of the place Bethel (v. 19), "House of God." Mosques and khans are the meeting-place of nations, and during the quiet evenings news is here exchanged about wars and rumours of wars. Besides the coffee-houses there are Greek or Jewish drinking-shops where *rakī*, 'arāḳ (عرق) is sold. Christians and Jews frequent these, and if a Moslem goes there he does not do it in public, though he can drink more than others. The majority even of Christians of the country are very sober and do not indulge in strong drinks in the drinking-shops, called *khamārat*, and all Moslems may be considered as true followers of the Rechabites, who drank no wine (Jer. xxxv, 8), whereas the Israelites in general abused it.

After work all the workmen and many shopkeepers gather in some spacious coffee-shop, where divers amusements are brought before the public. Among the most favourite amusements are the



wrestlers called *tabbanet* (تبانة), who wear only leather pantaloons, and are otherwise quite naked. They wrestle on tan strewed on the ground, and receive a few coppers at the end of the performance. *Karākōz* (كراكوز), dolls, are worked by a man behind a curtain, who changes his voice for every puppet, and puts into their mouths some funny and often very indecent things. Sometimes the shadows of the dolls projected by light are only seen. Jugglers or conjurers, *sahārīn*, also show many tricks which are known in Europe, and are not especially remarkable. Stories of heroes are read and listened to with an almost religious zeal: the most popular are those of 'Antar, Abu-Zaid, and of the Thousand and One Nights.

Egyptian singers sit on an elevated platform and play on the *kanūn*, an instrument resembling a harp, but which is played lying flat on the knees of the musician. Very probably this is the *kinnōr*, the harp of David (1 Sam. xvi, 23). In private houses, women accompany the *kanūn* with songs; these singers are very expensive and generally sing at weddings or at family-feasts. Ecclesiastes mentions them as among the luxuries: "I gat me men-singers and women-singers, and the delights of the sons of men, musical instruments, and that of all sorts" (Eccles. ii, 8).

Among the games the most common is to toss a coin and guess whether it be head or tail—*turrat* or *naḳshat*—cards, *shaddet*, and divers other games of European origin are often played at home. The serpent-charmer, *ḥāwy*, performs only in the day-time in the market-place. He is a dervish of the Erfai order, and only presents harmless snakes, thus being much more prudent than his Egyptian brother.

The Hebrews in their travels lived much the same way as the Arabs. Jacob slept in the *makōm* (see above), the sons of Jacob going to Egypt, and Moses on his journey stopped at the *mālōn* (Gen. xlii, 27, and Ex. iv, 24), the *khān* of the Arabs. Serpent-charmers like those of modern Palestine were also known. The deadly *Daboia Xanthina*, the largest Palestine viper, is never seen in the charmer's bag: it is called *ṭarshat*, "the deaf." The Israelites feared it, and knew that this kind cannot be charmed. "They are like the deaf adder that stoppeth her ear, which will not hearken to the charmers, charming never so wisely, but break their teeth, O God, in their mouth" (Ps. lviii, 4-6). In those days, too, they gathered together to hear news, and to listen to the song and musical instruments (Ezek. xxxiii, 31, 32).

Some thirty years ago the *jarid* was played at Mamilla near Jerusalem, but owing to the want of space and the rise of new buildings, this beautiful sport on horseback is now unknown. Nevertheless, at the feasts of Rubine the horsemen of Jaffa, Ramleh, and Gaza indulge in it. The race-course, called *midān*, no longer exists, though the Arab may be called a born horseman, and no sooner is he old enough to get on a horse than he will gallop away and try to throw the palm-stick or any other stick that he can get hold of.

(*To be continued.*)

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## THE GALILEE OF JOSEPHUS. THE POSITIONS OF GABARA, JOTAPATA AND TARICHEAE.

By Dr. E. W. G. MASTERMAN.

THE majority of the places in Galilee mentioned in the *Life* and the *Wars* of Josephus are now identified. The great cities of Ptolemais (*Akka*), Sepphoris (*Suffuriyeh*), and Tiberias (*Tabariya*), are known to everybody. Cana (*Kh. Kānā*), Chabolo (*Kabul*), Gischala (*el-Jish*), Japha (*Yāfā*), the plain of Asochis (*el-Battauf*), Sogane (*Sukhnān*), Salamis (*Kh. es-Salāmeh*), and several other less important places are fixed beyond any likelihood of reasonable dispute. It is possible through our knowledge of the situation of these places to know with exactitude the particular area of what is popularly known as "Galilee," in which occurred the stirring events of the rebellion, and the subsequent campaign of the Romans.

Three important places, each the site of stirring events, are still the subject of some dispute, viz., Gabara, Jotapata, and Taricheae.

The conduct of the campaign was as follows:—Vespasian marched out of Ptolemais and came to "the bounds of Galilee" and there pitched his camp. This must have been somewhere in the direction of Sepphoris, for the followers of Josephus, who were camped, with their leader, at Garis (an unknown site) "not far from Sepphoris," when they caught sight of the Roman army took immediately to flight, Josephus himself going to Tiberias—where he was by no means welcomed (*Wars*, III, vi, 2, and .vii, 2). Vespasian