An Abstract of the thesis.

The development of 'ghazal' in Arabic Literature.

Though the characteristics of pre-Islamic ghazal have often been summarily discussed, its development and evolution in the early period of Islam and the Umayyad age have not hitherto received the attention they deserve and it is hoped that this thesis will form a contribution to the subject and to the study of Arabic literature generally.

It is claimed, despite objections which have been raised, that pre-Islamic poetry is authentic. This study shows that pagan ghazal reflected the life of its composers, their environment and the social life of the time. It was composed by people whose personality was not divided by religion into soul and body; who understood love as youthful dalliance, who did not separate it from pleasure, and who enjoyed it as much as their desert, tribal life, and lack of culture allowed.

Islam brought about great changes. As far as emotional life was concerned, it became richer, deeper, and more intense. Conversely it brought about a strict morality which stopped the development of ghazal for a while.

Thereafter ghazal could not begin developing again before the Omayyad period when the grasp of religion relaxed somewhat. Then the traditional ghazal flourished again over the Arabian country, except in Hijaz where wealth, idleness, and particular political and social conditions gave birth to the Oamarit ghazal which sacrificed true love for pleasure, and united music to poetry.

As a reaction against this tendency and as a compromise between love and religion, the 'Udhri ghazal came to life. Its authors took a sacrificial pleasure in unrequited love. These and other features are illustrated and discussed.

This study, in a way, shows the development of women's status before and after Islam and the development of the emotional life of the Arabs during the three early periods of their history.
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LOAN COPY
THE DEVELOPMENT OF GHAZAL IN ARABIC LITERATURE

(Pre-Islamic and early Islamic periods)

A. Kh. M.Z. Kanani (Kinany)
INTRODUCTION.

The study of man's emotional life has been gaining importance in recent years, both as regards Psychology and literature. The psychologists have already shown that 'emotions' should not be discarded and suppressed as the stoics once taught, nor should they be unduly exalted in the romantic fashion, but they should be an integral part of the indivisible human personality, and should moreover be educated and developed in common with the other psychological functions. Literary men, in their turn, found in emotional life, not merely the subject matter of the romantic novel, but the proof that individuals and nations, however they may differ in race, traditions and culture, are remarkably alike in the nature and manifestations of their passions and emotions. Like the psychologists, they have come to see in man's common emotional experience a sound basis for international understanding.

Those who have translated poetry, and more particularly lyrical poetry - from Eastern tongues into European languages and vice versa, have surely contributed largely to the realisation of this ideal; for through poetry more

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(1) It is rather significant that in the U.N.E.S.C.O. seminar held in Sevres (France) in Summer 1947, where 'international understanding' was the sole subject of study, a sub-committee was set up to study the development of the emotions in both sexes.
than through any other Art, one can feel and understand the soul of a people.

There have been many translations into English of Asiatic poetry - poetry of the Chinese, of the Indians and of the Persians. From the poetry of the Arabs however, translations are less numerous. The reason is perhaps twofold: In the first place the literary study of Arabic lyrical poetry from a modern point of view is still in its infancy. The lectures delivered by Taha Hussain on some of the Umayyad love-poets, and which are the most serious study which has so far been written on the subject, were published in his book 'Hadith al Arbi'a' in 1926.

In the second place, studies - in English of Arabic Literature, written by Arab Students - are few. Translations of Arabic poetry have so far been confined almost entirely to English scholars.

Neither love poetry nor the subject of its development and evolution, especially during the period of paganism, the early period of Islam and the Umayyad era, have hitherto received the attention they deserve, and it is hoped that this thesis may form a contribution to the subject and to the study of Arabic literature generally.

(1) Other studies have been also published such as: Aref-el-Aref: Bedouin love, law and legend, Jerusalem 1944, and Hassan Abu Rihab: Al-Ghazal. Among the Arabs, Cairo 1947, and A.A. Al-Jawari: 'Udri love. Cairo 1947.
It is the object of this thesis to treat of the subject from the literary point of view. Therefore emphasis will be laid on the various forms of love poetry, on the spirit, themes, ideals, imagery, rhyme, metres and style. Special consideration will be paid to the development of the conception of love, and of the lover's attitude towards his beloved, and to the changes which occurred in women's status and to the connection between the development of social life and that of amatory poetry. We shall attempt to show in passing that the authenticity of pre-Islamic poetry which has sometimes been held up to doubt, is in fact a reality, and that, between Arabic poetry before and after Islam, there is a remarkable continuity and an evolutionary relationship.

Two specific points which have not previously been given the attention which they deserve, will be considered in the course of this study. They are the origins of both pre-Islamic poetry and 'Udri love. We shall endeavour to show that the highly finished pagan poetry may have had its origins in the very remote past, and that it was - to a greater or lesser extent - the heir of a very ancient culture which flourished in the Near and Middle-East thousands of years ago, whose origin is lost in the dimness of ancient history.
As for the 'Udri love, we shall try to show that this sort of platonic love had not been well known in heathen Arabia, that it was, to a great extent, the creation of Islam — a compromise between sensual love and religious morality.

The main chapters of the thesis will be followed by illustrative excerpts from love poems. Obviously these excerpts will not be translated literally. However we shall attempt to follow the meaning and imagery as closely as possible, and to reproduce their subtleties whenever the exigencies of translation allow. This will not be very easy; because Arabic poetry — as Prof. R. Nicholson said, in his 'Literary History of the Arabs' — moves in a world apart, and therefore, notwithstanding all its splendid qualities, will never become popular in ours. To produce a typical Arabic ode, in a shape at once intelligible and attractive to English readers, is probably beyond the powers of any translator. Even in those passages which seem best suited for the purpose, we are baffled again and again by the intensely national stamp of the ideas, the strong local character of the imagery and the obstinately idiomatic style.

Moreover, the very act of translation into whatever language, always mars the original. Tráduttori traditori. In fact, in translation, the personal idiom of a poet, the music of his verse and the implications of his imagery are
mostly blurred. What in the original is a bold innovation may sound trite in the literary climate of the other language; what is profoundly traditional in the one, may sound exotic and experimental in the other.

The excerpts as well as the material of this thesis, scattered here and there in the books of Arabic literature, have been called from numerous sources. Of these, however, we shall not mention, in the bibliography any but the important books and the works to which we refer in this study and from which quotations are taken.

I acknowledge with the greatest pleasure the kindly assistance and interest which I have enjoyed from Professor A.J. Arberry who supervised the planning of my work and the preparation of its material; and from Professor A.Guillaume, my supervisor in this current year, to whom I am deeply indebted for his care and thoroughness in reading the thesis, and for advice and guidance most generously given.

To both these gentlemen I wish to make this acknowledgment and to express my sincere thanks both with pride and gratitude.
CHAPTER I.

GENUINENESS OF EARLY ARABIAN POETRY.

The object of this study is to examine the nature and characteristics of 'Gazal' or amatory poetry of the 'Jahiliya' or pagan Arabia, and its new features, if any, during the first century of Islam, in order to study its development during these two early periods of Arabic literature.

The poetry of the first age of Islam, although it has suffered some degree of change through infirmity of 'Rawis', or rhapsodes' memories, before it was committed to writing, has always been considered as authentic as any. Doubts have been cast only upon the poems which have come down to us from the pre-Islamic epoch; these have sometimes been considered in fact, as mere fabrication.

It would therefore be advisable for us, before studying the poetry of the pre-Islamic period, to verify its authenticity.

This question has already been broached by the Moslem scholars of the early Abassid age (i.e. between 750 and 900 A.D.) who suspected the truthfulness of some eminent reciters and antiquarians, particularly Hammad el Rawiya (95 - 155 A.H, 714-772 A.D.) and Khalaf el Ahmar (? - 130 A.H, ? - 796 A.D.) who, the scholars admitted, circulated forgeries of their own as ancient poems. Moreover, Al Mu Faddal Al Dabbi

1) The summary of all their critics is to be found in Muzhir. p.171.
(؟ - 168 A.H, 734 A.D.) who was the author of one of the first and most important anthologies of Arabic verse, declared that Hammad had corrupted poetry beyond the hope of recovery.

Yet, in spite of all the fabrication, interpolation, and dislocation which admittedly occurred in the process of transmission of heathen poetry, and of which all Moslem scholars did not go so far as to reject that poetry as basically spurious. They were fairly certain that eminent antiquarians and literary men were always capable of distinguishing between genuine poetry and forgery.

In Europe, the genuineness of pre-Islamic poetry was discussed first by Hengstenberg, Noldeke, Ahlwart, and Rene Basset, sustained by Sir Charles J. Lyall but discarded.

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(1) Aghani V. 172.
(2) In the Prolegomena to his edition of the Mu'allaqa of Imru'ul Qais (Bonn 1823)
(4) In a monograph called 'Bemerkungen über die Aechtheit der alten Arabischen Gesonichte, Greifswald 1872.
by D.S. Margoliouth. The most exciting controversy it aroused has had strong repercussions in the Arab countries where it was subjected to similar controversial discussions which were by no means less stimulating, and in which Taha Hussain took part with M. Sedic el Rafi, M. Gumrawi, M. Khidr Hussein, F. Wajdi, M. L. Jum'a, and M. al-Khudari.


(2) In his Fi'Ladeb al Jehili, on pre-Islamic literature, 1926.

(3) In his Taht Reyet al Quran, under the banner of Koran.

(4) In: Fi Naqd al-Tahlili. Cairo 1929.

(5) In: Naqd Kitab al Shi'r al Jehili.

(6) In: Naqd Kitab Fil Shi'r al Jehili.

(7) In: al Shihab al Rased.

(8) In: al Rad 'Ala al Dr. Taha Hussein.
In their discussions, almost all the points of contention set forth by the European scholars were examined, but with much more stress on the details.

Let us now turn to these disputed points which were admirably summed up by D.S. Margoliouth, in his article on the Origins of Arabian poetry, and look them through one by one.

The first point brought up is that "If by poetry the same be meant as in the later literature we are," D.S. Margoliouth said, "Confronted with a slight puzzle: Mohammed who was not acquainted with the art, was aware that his revelations were not in verse, whereas the Meccans, who presumably knew poetry when they heard or saw it, thought they were. We should have expected the converse."

Prof. Margoliouth is referring here to some verses of the Koran in which the Meccans were related to have taken the verses of the Holy book for poetry. As a matter of fact the word "Shi'r, or poetry is mentioned only once in the Koran, in a verse that runs as follows: "And we have not taught him poetry, nor is it meet for him; it is nothing but a reminder and a plain Koran" (36 - 69). As regards the words 'Sha'ir', and 'Shu'ara', or poet and poets, they occur only in the five following verses:

21 - 5: Nay! say they: Medleys of dreams; nay! he has forged it; nay! he is a poet.
26 - 224: And as to the poets, those who go astray follow them. Do you not see that they wander about bewildered in every valley? And that they say that which they do not do.

37 - 36: What! say they. Shall we indeed give up our Gods for the sake of a mad poet?

52 - 30: Or do they say: A poet, we wait for him the evil accidents of time.

69 - 40 - 41: Most surely, it is the word of an honoured Apostle, and it is not the word of a poet, little is it that you believe, Nor the word of a soothsayer.

A close examination of all these verses shows that the Meccans never took the style of the Koran for poetry, and that the verse (36 - 69) is only meant to convey the seriousness of the prophecies of the Koran. It also shows that when the Meccans accuse the Prophet of being a poet they often add another epithet to a poet, such as "reciter of medleys of dreams", "mad" and "soothsayers" just to show that they used the word in rather a contemptuous meaning as though to say that Mohammed was poet, soothsayer, day dreamer, mad, anything but "Apostle".

Moreover this first argument put forward by Prof. Margoliouth implies that poetry, whatever its quality or form, was known by the Arabs before the Flash of Islam.

The second argument mentioned by Prof. Margoliouth is that in the very considerable mass of pre-Islamic inscriptions which we now possess in a variety of dialects, there is nothing
whatever in verse; a fact which is especially noteworthy in the case of funeral inscriptions, since most literary nations introduce verse into compositions of this sort.

This argument would lose much of its weight if we bore in mind the fact that almost all the pre-Islamic inscriptions which we now possess came from Western and Southern Arabia and none from Central Arabia where most of the well-known poets lived or died. Yet, the absence of poetry, in the South, is admittedly a puzzle. Could it ever be explained by the fact - historically admissible so far - that during the period of pre-Islamic poetry there was no flourishing poetry anywhere in all the Middle-East, even in non-Semitic countries like Egypt and Persia, and that the same causes which prevented its florescence outside Central and Northern Arabia, led probably to its disappearance in the South? Or shall we venture another hypothesis and say that all the inscriptions we now possess of Ancient Arabia were written in so abbreviated a way as to make it too difficult for archaeologists to restore the right vowels and stresses, and subsequently the right intonations of its words and sentences, in order to tell whether they were verse or prose.

In any event, inscriptions of the post-Islamic period show little or no tendency to record the buildings and the benefactions of Kings and notables in verse so that the absence of poetry in pre-Islamic inscriptions has no significance and
cannot be used as an argument that the Arabs of that time were ignorant of verse. Hezekiah's inscription in the Siloem tunnel was written in prose; but none would dare to say that Isaiah who lived while the masons chipped the inscriptions was ignorant of poetry, even though the metre be hard to recover partly for the reasons just given. It can be taken as certain that some verses in the Old Testament are metrically Arabian in form.

The third point advanced by Prof. Margoliouth to impugn the authenticity of Ancient Arabian poetry is that the poets, according to Abu Tammam, are the recorders of events which their talent enables them to immortalize, and this view is maintained by Abu Tammam's contemporary, the polygraph Jahiz of Basra. It is not very easy to reconcile this theory with the statements and indeed the general attitude of the Koran.

Reference has just been made to all the Koranic verses relative to poets and poetry. Probably the verse 26 - 224 is the one that Prof. Margoliouth had in mind. It runs as follows: "And as to the poets, those who go astray follow them. Do you not see that they wander about bewildered in every valley? And that they say that which they do not do."

It would seem that in order to shed more light on the real meaning of this verse we have to recall - at least
briefly, the general attitude of the Koran, and Islam in general, towards poets and poetry at the time of Mohammed. This attitude was characterised by three main points.

First, the puritan tendency of the new religion made Moslems rather hostile to poets chiefly because the latter, in the beginning of their poems, indulged in descriptions of the joys of the pagan life and praised the physical beauty of women often in a licentious way.

Secondly, poets, before Islam, had dealt with most things connected with the material and spiritual sides of their personal life and also of their tribes, whereas Moslems believed that preaching, philosophising, moralizing and talking about all important subjects of this kind was too serious a matter to be treated, with unbecoming levity, by poets accustomed to talk about anything and everything.

The third and last trait which indicates the attitude of Islam towards poets and poetry is the striving of Mohammed to draw the attention of the Arabs to their inside world, to teach them introspection, to develop their individuality — formerly absorbed by their tribes — and to bring out, at the same time, their sense of responsibility, for all their deeds, for all their speeches, even for the minute words they utter. "Since I have been converted to Islam" said 'Ubada ibn El Samet, the Prophet's companion, "all my words have been tightly muzzled."

Naturally in such a strict and exacting atmosphere poets were looked upon as careless storytellers given to vainglorious boasts and exaggerations while they portrayed their illustrious deeds. It was because of this, presumably, that the Koran said of poets that "they say that which they do not do." This accusation, though justified, obviously does not invalidate the pre-Islamic poets' descriptions of the glory of their tribes. They undoubtedly did portray, if with some exaggeration, their victorious battles, remembered proudly their genealogies and depicted almost every detail of their heathen life. Hence, ancient poets were, as Abu Tammam called them, the "recorders of events", and hence indeed the general beliefs that *poetry was the public register of the Arab people. As Gibbon puts the case: 'The Arabian poets were the historians and moralists of the age, and if they sympathised with the prejudices, they inspired and crowned the virtues of their countrymen: the indissoluble union of generosity and valour was the darling theme of their songs."

The fourth point brought up by Prof. Margoliouth is that the poets of most nations leave no doubt at all about their religion, whereas the pre-Islamic poets showed little interest in this subject and not only did they refer to it very infrequently but they showed themselves strict monotheists,
and, furthermore, quite familiar with matters which the Koran asserts were unknown to the Arabs prior to its revelations.

Let us begin by studying the first part of this twofold argument: why did the ancient poets show little concern about religion? Of course, the most obvious answer to this question is that the primitive Arabs were materialists, they were busy seeking and fighting for food and water for themselves and their animals in their very arid and unfertile country. The hardships of their life in the barren desert did not leave them enough time for a contemplative repose nor did it give them the opportunity of reasoning very seriously upon things of religion: on the first causes of things or the ultimate destiny of human beings. This opportunity was only the appanage of their descendents, and also of the peoples who enjoyed the security and leisure of the great civilisations. So if the ancient poets referred to religion only rarely it is because their minds were more absorbed by the stress and strain of their present life, their tribal interests and security than by that what might happen to them hereafter.

There is another argument that we can bring in here. It is as true as it is curious. It is the historical fact that not only the Nomadic Arabs, but even the religious nomadic Jews showed little concern with religion in their ancient poems. "In the early poetry of Israel —" said George Adam Smith — is reflected the nomad's strange silence —

(1) George Adam Smith: The Early poetry of Israel. London 1912. p.30
even in the moments of mourning when the heart is most vocal on the virtues of the dead—about another life for them."

There were so few references to religion and deities in the ancient poems that some collectors, impelled by irrelevant religious zest, did not find it at all difficult to substitute Moslem ideas and terminology for the pagan deities and creeds, in the poems they handed down to posterity. So we come straight to the second part of Prof. Margoliouth's argument, but in admitting that some "tempering" has obviously affected the pre-Islamic poetry, we only see in it an awkward attempt to adjust an old pattern to the new conditions of life and not evidence that all the ancient poetry was "mere fabrication".

The fifth argument of Prof. Margoliouth is concerned with the collectors of the Early poetry. This, also, is a two-fold argument. On the one hand, there were, in Prof. Margoliouth's view, two strong reasons for forgetting the pre-Islamic poetry, if any existed: Firstly, that the poets and reciters who had been converted from paganism were either killed or had died a natural death, before poems were committed to writing; so most of the poetry had perished, and only a little survived. Secondly, the Koran states that those who follow the poets are misguided, and its language about them is harsh and contemptuous. On the other hand, Prof. Margoliouth reminds us that the early collectors of poetry were persons whose scruples in the matter of forgery were slight.
We shall not deal again with the second part of the argument since, as we have seen above, the early scholars and philologists were fully aware of the problem, and the possibility of forgery was so much the less admissible because most of these eminent scholars were contemporaries of the suspected reciters, and have, on the whole, an equal, if not superior knowledge of Arabic language and literature. However, the great care taken by these scholars and their perspicacious criticism must not prevent us from taking the same trouble again, and checking through the Ancient poetry in the light of the new data, theories and discoveries that have been made in this field. Each individual poem has to be carefully scrutinized before we can decide on its claim to authenticity.

As to the first part of the argument we must recognise that the large bulk of ancient poetry, for the reasons mentioned by Professor Margoliouth, was lost for ever. But this does not mean that the remnant which survived and came down to us was spurious. It is true that the attitude of the Koran was not favourable to poetry, but neither was it particularly hostile, and Moslems certainly have stopped looking down at poets since three of the latter became great companions of the Prophet i.e. Hassan ibn Thabit, Ka'b ibn Malik and Abdullah ibn Rawaha, and also since Mohammed on
one occasion, threw his 'Burda' or over-mantle on the poet Ka'b ibn Zuhair and gave it to him as a gift after hearing his eulogy 'Banat Su 'Adu', composed by the poet to praise the Prophet and Moslem religion. This reconciliation of Islam with poetry, which started during the life of the Apostle, has endured to the present day. The poet Al Huṭay'a, allowed himself, a few years afterwards, to make up two Eulogies for the Khalif 'Omar, in order to save himself punishment after he had libelled very unjustly Al Zibriken.

The last point made by Prof. Margoliouth to impugn the genuineness of pre-Islamic poetry is that all the poems are in the dialect of the Koran, and while there were wide differences of dialects in Pagan Arabia the language of verse is unexpectedly the same. Therefore, he believes that all the poems were made up after the advent of Islam that made the dialect of the Koran predominant all over Arabia.

This argument sounds very convincing at first, but it loses much of its value if we remember that it may be used to prove the authenticity of ancient poetry. The common language of the poets, which we may call the dialect of literature instead of the dialect of the Koran, with its elaborate poetic forms and technical perfection, could not be
the work of the first age of Islam. It is, without doubt, the offspring of many long centuries of slow and patient elaboration: the ancient poems with their varied and highly polished meters, with their laws of verse already fixed and generally observed, with their established order of subjects in a 'Qasida' or ode presuppose the existence of a very ancient standard form of poetry. They could not possibly have been produced until the poetical art had been practised for a very long time. "When we consider the vast extent of the Arabian peninsula" - says Sir Charles Lyall - "and the distance which separated tribe from tribe, it seems fair to assume that a very

(1) Professor Paul E. Kahle, in his book "The Cairo Geniza" (London 1947) attempted to show that it was the Masoretes who have added an increasing number of little signs to the Hebrew text of the Bible (which had been, in Kahle's view, only consonantal, originally) in order to fix every detail of pronunciation and cantillation of their Holy text, wanted to prove that the same phenomenon has taken place in the Koran. Although we do not agree with him at all in this supposition, which presupposes that the Koran was transmitted in writing and not orally (which is flatly contradicted by history) we admit that the exhortations made by such prominent Moslems as Abu Bakr, 'Omar and Ibn Has'ud, to read the Koran with 'I'rab (i.e. vocalic endings according to the laws of the grammar of classical Arabic) prove that classical Arabic with 'I'rab, used in Ancient Poetry, and considered to be an ideal form of Arabic, had in fact existed before Islam.

(2) Some Aspects of Ancient Arabic Poetry (Proceedings of the British Academy, 1918.)
long space of time must have been required for the conventions to fix themselves on the national production of verse. The art of verse must have been practised in Arabia for generations before the poems."

So the uniform language of the ancient poems, used by Professor Margoliouth as evidence against their genuineness, may be used equally well to prove their very ancient origins. In other words, instead of saying that this superb pre-Islamic poetry could not be the creation of simple nomads in pagan Arabia but the fabrication of the ingenious rhapsodes and learned scholars of the early Abassid period, we may advance another hypothesis and say that this highly finished poetry is most likely to be the remnant of a very old and great literature that flourished in Arabia and, most probably, in all the surrounding countries, in the very remote past. This hypothesis of a Middle-Eastern common literature and culture in high antiquity, seems to have some colour of truth. To prove the verisimilitude is so important in the assertion of the genuineness of the pre-Islamic poetry that we shall deal with it in a chapter apart. It has been, after all, vaguely presupposed by Prof. Margoliouth who, dealing with the commencement of Arabic versification, said: "If on the question whether Arabic versification, goes back to immemorial antiquity or is later than the Koran, it seems wisest to suspend judgment"
Another hypothesis in favour of the authenticity of ancient Arabian poetry is that some of its metres are sometimes to be found in some verses of the Bible and also in the Early Syriac Poetry. Professor A. Guillaume is now carrying out research on the question. To what extent this attempt will be successful, we cannot foretell at present. At all events, any success achieved in this field will be new evidence in favour of the ancient poetry.

A close examination of the ancient poems does not necessarily lead to internal evidence of their spuriousness as Prof. Margoliouth wanted us to believe when he dealt with the question of the common language of ancient poets, and their strange silence about religion etc. On the contrary, it leads to new proofs of their authenticity: the geographical details, the historical references, the coincidences of treatment of the same subjects (with the same stock of poetic phrases) individuality of character that warrants us to conclude that the poems are, in the main, the work of the authors to whom they are ascribed... All these points furnish a very strong argument in favour of the authenticity of the poems.

(1) A Greek author, Sozonène, who wrote an ecclesiastical history related that an Arab queen named Mania or Mavia defeated the Romans in Poenocy and Palestine in 372 A.C. and that the Arabs celebrated her victory in their songs. R. Basset: La Poesie Arabe ante-islamique. Paris 1880. p. 27.
On the other hand the pre-Islamic poetry abounds in words which were not intelligible to philologists who first subjected them to critical examination. This fact, and the dislocations and lacunas exhibited by ancient poems, which, while natural in pieces transmitted orally by generations of reciters, absolutely excludes the hypothesis of forgery.

Sir Charles Lyall adds to all these arguments a very convincing one. He lays the emphasis on the fact that ancient poetry is presupposed by the poetry of the first age under Islam. The famous poets of the first century carried on without a break the traditions of the poets of the pagan time, and the last class of the former were living and producing while the scholars were at work collecting and recording.

In our present study of the development of 'Ghazel, or amatory poetry, we may examine the similes and metaphors used by ancient poets to describe the charm of their beloved, in order to see whether these similes and metaphors have developed during the epoch of 'Jahiliya, or paganism, or stayed the same without being affected by any change. In the latter case we should have fresh evidence that the pagan poets were not inventing new figures and images but drawing on older and well-known strata of images and poetry.

(1) The same thing has happened in the poems of the Hebrew poets, Homer and probably every ancient poet.
Furthermore, if we succeeded, in this present study, in showing the close connection between pre-Islamic Ghazal and the everyday life of heathen Arabs, we should have obtained further evidence to support the authenticity of the pre-Islamic poetry. Likewise, if we were capable of demonstrating that the new features of Amatory poetry after the advent of the New Religion were the natural and logical development of the ancient 'Ghazal, we should add yet more proof of the authenticity of the Early Arabian Poetry.
CHAPTER II

THE ANCIENT LITERATURE OF THE NEAR AND MIDDLE EAST.

The theory of an ancient culture common to the peoples of the Near and Middle East going back to its origin in the remote past and continuing in some aspects even in the present day is of fundamental importance; for if it can be substantiated it will provide a base for the claim that the pre-Islamic poetry is of the same genre as the ancient poetry of the Near East.

The Eastern part of the Mediterranean with the adjoining countries has been, in fact, since time immemorial a highway between the East and the West. Recorded history and the informations obtained from recent excavations give us only a glimpse of the moving and interwoven scenes of wars, and the cultural and commercial intercourse which have taken place in this part of the world since very ancient times. The peoples of the Levant have been something like sand-dunes in a desert always moving and mingling closely together, always changing place and direction and absorbing each other in an alternate process of rise and fall. The history of the fifteen centuries which preceded the Christian Era tells us a great deal about the Phoenicians and the 'Hyksos' who came probably from Arabia and invaded Egypt, about the Egyptian invasions of Syria, about the Kings of Assyria and Babylonia who swept repeatedly from Mesopotamia down to the Phoenician Coast. It relates also the sustained wars between Greece
and Persia which have taken place mostly in Syria and the Tigris-Euphrates Valley, and the conquest of the Levant by the Greeks and later on by the Romans. It gives also a vivid picture of the great civilisations which flourished and decayed in this part of Western Asia during that long period.

It is yet more eloquent when it describes the glorious reign of the Seleucid in Syria (312 - 64 B.C.) at the time when all the ancient civilisations of the Middle East were moulded into one homogeneous and brilliant whole. Antioch, the capital of the Seleucid was then both a great commercial centre and a town noted for the pleasure-seekers of the time. Its glory and luxury were sung in the very heart of Arabia, and referred to even by poets like 'Zuhair, who had never travelled outside the Peninsula.

Moreover the Ancient cultures of the Middle East have also, without doubt, a common religious background. The studies carried in the field have generally led to the conclusion that behind all the different rituals which had characterized the religion and cult of the Hebrews and Phoenicians, the Aramaeans, the Babylonians and Assyrians and all the other Semitic peoples, lie common myth-patterns which are almost entirely of Sumerian-Babylonian origin.

(1) Rene Grousset: L'Empire du Levant. Paris p.30

Even Islam, which remained entirely outside the circle of culture and theology of Sumer and Accad, did not claim to be a completely new religion. It insisted on the fact that it was the very religion of Ṭabāṭkīm (Abraham, about 16th C.B.C). In the Koran there are a few verses that run like the following:

"Say: Surely (as for) me, my Lord guided me to the right path: to a most right religion, the faith of Abraham, the upright one, and he was not of the polytheists. VI - 162"

We are on sure ground then in asserting that there is abundant evidence of the interchange of many cultural elements throughout the ancient East.

However, to deal with these elements in detail, in order to lay down the characteristics of the old culture - pattern or even more particularly those of the ancient literature, would seem to be - even when it is possible - a digression since the purpose of the present study is simply the examination of the development of Ḥazal, or Arabic amatory poetry during the pagan epoch and the first century of Islam.

Therefore we shall confine our treatment of the subject to the examination only of the poetry of the ancient common literature connected with love. Such a limitation, besides contributing to strengthen our assumption of an ancient common culture will put our study of Arabic love-poetry in better perspective.
The love-poems which came down to us from Heathen Arabia were composed most probably between the last decade of the fifth century A.D. and the Flight of the Prophet to Medina (622 A.D.). It is most remarkable to notice that, during that period of time, no poetry was flourishing anywhere in the adjoining countries. We cannot offer, at the present time, any better explanation of this curious fact than that offered by J.A. Symonds to account for the same phenomena that appeared in the Greek literature at nearly the same epoch. "After the end of the fourth century the iconoclastic zeal and piety of the Christians put an end practically to Greek art and literature. Christianity was at that time, the superior force in the world. New wine cannot be poured into old bottles."(1)

Pursuing this argument it would be admissible to suppose that love-poems in the Ancient Common Literature had become so obscene and lustful that Christianity found it necessary to take a very hostile attitude towards poetry and to fight against it. The consequence was perhaps that poetry was rooted out all over the Middle East and survived only in two places. In Mesopotamia where Syriac poetry was content to draw only on religious themes, and in Arabia which was not within the reach of the fiery zeal of Christians.

However, if we trace the ancient love-poems further back we come across the amatory poetry of Meleager who lived in the first century before the Christian Era. Further back we meet "The Song of Solomon" sometimes thought to have been written during the rule of Antiochus III (223-18 F.B.C.) and sometimes attributed to Solomon himself (10th century B.C.). In the twelfth century B.C. we light upon the "Egyptian songs of Love" written — according to M.G. Maspro — during the reign of the X dynasty (1202 B.C.-1102 B.C.).

It will be extremely instructive to study these three samples of ancient poetry and compare them with the pre-Islamic poems to see which similarity, if any, exists between them.

The Egyptian love-songs are imagined to have been composed by three trees which sing successively the charm of a beautiful woman. The Arab reader will be struck by the similarity they present to the Arabic amatory poetry. This similarity, however, is of that sort which is easier to feel than to express. Nevertheless, the touching simplicity and the sweet freshness of the sentiment of these songs, the vigor and exaltation of their style put the Arab reader in mind of the pre-Islamic poetry. He will even find, in these very

ancient songs, figures of speech that were familiar to the early Arabian poems. He will certainly enjoy reading the following lines:

1) "My heart and my love for you are mingled like water and wine, like honey and milk, like nutmegs and perfume".

2) "I will not listen to the blamers who wish me to stop loving you".

3) "I shall lie on my bed. My sickness will grow worse. My relatives and neighbours will pay me a visit, but if my sister came with them, the Doctor's medicine would be useless, for she only knows why I am ill".

4) "O, my beloved! whose beauty is untarnished, why did you break my heart with your deadly love?"

5) "My beloved's hair is blacker than night. Her cheek is more rosy than red chrysolithe. Her breasts hang full and round on her chest".

All these lines that we have chosen at random from the Egyptians Songs will recall to our minds, similar Arabic lines such as the one of Abu Zu'ayb in which he says that his beloved's conversation is as delicious as milk and honey mingled together, or the line of Nabigha el Zubiany in which he compares his beloved's saliva with wine mingled with

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(1) Diwan el Huzaliyin, p. 18.
(1) Diwan, P. 95.

(2) Diwan P. 73

(3) Hamasa, p. 620.

(4) Mufaddaliyat. P. 887
The way of addressing the beloved as a (sister) in the same quotation is also used by Imru‘ul Qais, and A‘sha who calls himself his beloved’s brother.

The exalted mood of the fourth line of the Songs will remind us of the saying of Imru‘ul Qais to his beloved Fatim:

Do you maltreat me because you know that your love is deadly and that my heart obeys willingly all your orders?

As regards the fifth line, its first simile is very frequent in Arabic verse namely in the verse of Imru‘ul Qais and A‘sha; and the last simile is to be found in a line of A‘sha that runs as follows:

"Her breasts hang full and round whereas her face is bright and clear"

M.G. Maspro who had studied the Egyptian Love-songs and translated them into French came to another conclusion however. At the end of his study he made the following remark:

"Nobody who reads the translations of these Songs can be but struck by the similarity they show with the Song of Solomon.

(1) Diwan, P.123
(2) Diwan, P. 35
(3) Diwan, P.29
(4) Diwan, P.35
(5) Diwan, P. 56
(6) Diwan, P. 104
Both use the word 'sister' to address the heroine, but use the same poetic images, the same comparisons. It would be unwise to attempt to explain these similarities by saying that they are purely and simply borrowed from Egypt. The Hebrew and the Egyptian had almost the same understanding of love and as a result should have spoken the same loving language" (1)

As a matter of fact, resemblance does not only exist between the Egyptian Songs and the Song of Solomon, but also between the latter and pre-Islamic poems.

The stress put on the description of physical charm, in the Song of Solomon, the yearning tone of the pleading singer, the immoderate or lascivious language employed to picture the beauty of the beloved, and many an image and simile make the reader disposed to believe that the author of the Song of Solomon, on the one hand, and the Arab poets on the other, have drunk at the same spring of poetry, particularly when he meets with verses as the following:

1) "Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth. For thy love is better than wine. Because of the savour of thy good ointments thy name is as ointment poured forth, therefore do the virgins love you". Chap: I.

(1) Journal Asiatique Annee 1883. 8 eme Seve.
Tome I. P.47

(2) Unless to give an allegorical meaning to the Song of Solomon - as has been done in fact - one could hardly see how to fit it in with the other parts of the Bible.
2) "By night on my bed I sought him whom my soul loveth: I sought him, but I found him not. I will rise now, and go about the city in the streets, and in the broad ways I will seek him whom my soul loveth: I sought him, but I found him not. The watchmen that go about the city found me: to whom I said, Saw ye him whom my soul loveth?". Chap. III.

3) "Thou hast ravished my heart, my sister, my spouse, thou hast ravished my heart with one of thine eyes, with one chain of thy neck. How fair is thy love, my sister, my spouse. How much better is thy love than wine! and the smell of thine ointments than all spices. Thy lips, 0 my spouse, drop as the honeycomb: honey and milk are under thy tongue. A garden inclosed is my sister, my spouse, a spring shut up, a fountain sealed". Chap. IV.

4) "His legs are as pillars of marble set upon sockets of fine gold". Chap. V.

5) "Who is she that looketh forth as the morning, fair as the moon, clear as the sun and terrible as an army with banners?" Chap. VI.

The mentioning of the beloved's scent, in the verses of Chap. I, is indeed very frequent in Arabian verse (1)

"When they rise -said Imru'ul Qais singing the charm

(1) Diwan. P.33
of two young girls — they diffuse the scent of musk, or rather the gentle breeze of East laden with the scent of carnation.

Also frequent in Arabic poetry is the picture of a person in love who — as portrayed by the verses of Chap. III — being away from his beloved, thinks of her all the time and looks for her unceasingly:

"A land in which you do not dwell — said Abu Zu'ayb (1) to his beloved — is a barren country even if it is productive and watered by rain. My tribe might move to some other place but my eyes — as I realise now — will keep looking at your dwelling-place." (2)

As to calling the beloved, 'a sister' in Chap. IV, and comparing the beloved's saliva with honey mingled with milk we have just seen above that these are figures of speech common to both Egyptian and Arabic love-songs. Besides, there are two other similes, in the verses we mentioned of Chap. IV, that we can also find easily in pre-Islamic poetry. The first is the beloved ravishing her lover's heart by her enchanting glance; in this way, Imru'ul Qais says:

"The glance she threw upon me on the morning of our parting pierced me like an arrow; and I was vanquished." (3)

(1) Ash'ar el Huzaliyin, Vol I. P. 29
(2) Similar lines are to be found in Hamasa, P.
(3) Diwan, P.8.
The second simile is that in which the 'spouse' or 'sister' is compared with an "enclosed garden". It was used rather in the same way by A'asha and Antara. The latter compared his beloved's scent to the fragrance of an untrodden garden.

In the verses that we have chosen from Chap. V., we see the lover (who is here a woman) depicting her beloved's legs as two pillars of marble. The same comparison is to be found in Amr ibn Kulthu'm's "Mu'Allaq", where he described his beloved's legs as two pillars of ivory or marble. As to the verse we have quoted from Chap. IV, it shows that the author of the Song of Solomon, like the Arab poets (4), compares the face of the beloved with the sun.

Besides all these points that the Egyptian love-songs, the Song of Solomon and the pre-Islamic poetry have in common, two other common traits can be observed:

Firstly, all of them are mainly reminiscence; all deal mostly with the past without any hope for the future.

Secondly all borrow their similes almost entirely from the pleasant things of material life: milk, honey, wine, limpid water, gardens, perfume, the sun, gold, marble,

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(1) Diwan, P. 43
(2) Al-i-Qd Althamín P. 45
(3) also in Jamhara. p. 76
(4) namely Tarafa, Al-Iqd Althamina, P. 55 Nabigha, Diwan P. 87 and 254 and Hassan Diwan P. 377
chrysolithe etc. so much so that, but for their simplicity and genuine yearning, they would only appeal to our services.

These two traits which will be developed in later chapters confirm the resemblance that exists between the poems we have been examining so far.

The last poems which we have still to compare— in this chapter— with Early Arabian poetry, are those composed by 'Meleager' in the first century before the Christian Era. Meleager was born at 'Gadara' in Palestine, lived in his youth at Tyre, and in his old age at Cos. Historians say that he flourished in the time of the last Seleucus (before 65 B.C.) and J.A.S. Symonds, describing his merits says: "His voice rings clear and vivid in our ears; because the man was a real poet, feeling intensely, expressing forcibly and beautifully, steeping his style in the fountain of tender sentiment which is eternal".

His 'Fifty Poems' have been translated into English verse by W. Headlam from whom we borrow the following quotations in order to give an idea of Meleager's poetry

I) A plague is Love, a plague! but yet
What profit shall it prove
Again and oft again to fret
And cry: A plague is love?

V) For now thy beauty, now thy wit awakes in me desire
Or else thy grave, or else thine all: I am consumed
in fire.

XVI) Ah tearful soul, why sufferest
Again to be inflamed
The wound of love within thy breast
That was but lately tamed?

XVIII) The sound of love dins ever in mine ears
Silent mine eyes to longing hear sweet tears
Nor night nor dawn allays them: in my breast
Philtres have one familiar form imprest.

XX) It was thine own choice, endure the pain thy
wages thou hast earned.
And sufferest fifty for thy fault, in boiling honey
burned.

XXIII) Fill, to enchantment and to love in Heliodora's
name
Fill, to the sweetly-speaking grace again, again the
same
For, she my only goddess is whose name where on I think.
With my pure draught of offering I mingle ere I drink.

XXX) For by the bow, that has not learnt to aim at other hearts
But without end at mine alone to pour its winged darts
If thou should'st kill me I will leave engraved my
tomb above
A legend saying: Stranger, see the murderousness of love.
XLI) Take, Dorcas, this message; again to her say
     Say again to her all of it, Dorcas, away!

L) Tread softly, stranger: here at rest among pure souls below
     An old man, Meleager, sleeps the sleep that all men owe.

.......

If thou art Syrian, then Salaam! = Naidios! if Phenician
     Prithee to me return the same or Chaere! if a Grecian.

In these quotations we can feel Meleager's tenderness of heart, the sweetness and subtleness of his spirit, and the purity of his genius. Here is at last poetry which rises above the levels of mere sensuality and grasps the reality of moods and emotions. Despite this superb quality that we must admit and which makes it difficult for us to compare Meleager's poems with the other ones mentioned above, because, as far as pre-Islamic poetry is concerned - the pagan poets did not speak much of their emotions and their inner world, we cannot avoid seeing, while reading the 'Fifty Poems', many points which show some likeness to the early Arabic poems. All those who are familiar with the poetry of Jahiliya know very well that the picture of the beloved shooting winged darts at her lover, the arguing

(1) which the poets of the first century of Islam and later periods did very successfully.
of the lover with his own heart to make it responsible for his suffering from love, the description of the lover weeping and shedding tears on his cheeks, the sending of messages by friends to the beloved, are abundant in heathen poetry. Furthermore, figures of speech such as: fire of love, wound of love, sound of love etc. are the very metaphors we find in ancient Arabic verse.

Now after we have examined the Egyptian Love-songs, The Song of Songs and the poems of Meleager, and brought forth the points that, we believe, they have in common with early Arabic poetry we can see that the theory of the existence of an ancient common culture and literature in the remote history of the Middle East is not really hard to uphold. Behind all the poems which we have just studied, and which come from different countries and belong to different civilisations, we can see poets whose hearts were beating in unison, whose emotions were almost alike, and who resemble each other in their approach to life.

It is worth noting that when we talk of an ancient culture - pattern, or common literature we do not mean that this common cultural background had flourished at one particular place in a very remote age and had been afterwards borrowed by the adjoining countries. What we mean is that through the wars, migrations and commercial intercourse which have taken place since the early history of the Levant, an active interchange of many culture-elements has taken place
at the same time and led to the formation of a fairly uniform and common culture that belongs to everybody and to nobody. The countries of the Ancient East were rather like Pascal's vases, having always the same level of culture, and any new addition to one of them being immediately seen in the others.

It goes without saying that the common features of the cultural background do not exclude the claim to originality of the culture and literature of each country. In the following chapters we shall see that Arabic Poetry, in spite of the ancient common substance has had its prominent individuality and its own peculiarly Arabic features.

At this point, it will be appropriate to ask Arabic Poetry, notwithstanding the fact that a great part of it has been irretrievably lost, to bear witness to the existence of a very ancient literature.

In fact, it can quote a line of Imru'ul Qais in which he asked his friends to stop and weep on a ruined dwelling-place as had been done by Ibn Huzam (a poet who is supposed to have lived long before Imru'ul Qais).

It can also produce the first line of Antara's Mu'allaka, which starts as follows: "Did Ancient poets leave us anything to add" (or to improve)?".
Moreover it can show that its highly finished metres, its perfect poetical language and its rather crystalised figures and turns of speech, prove very convincingly that this poetry started at a far earlier chapter in the History of Arabia, and that the poems which came down to us from the pagan period are, like the history remains, not all the civilisation, but a very small fragment of it. And yet, through this tiny fragment we have been able to hear, in the stillness of Arabian desert the distant trumpet calls of an almost forgotten age.
CHAPTER III

HEATHENDOM, DESERT AND LOVE.

Before we set out to study the amatory poetry of the pre-Islamic period, and outline its features and peculiarities and see to what extent it reflects the life of its composers and the environment and society in which they lived, we need, in this chapter, to say a few words about Arabia before Muhammed - particularly about its central and northern parts where almost all the pagan poets lived - and to point out the general character of the Arab in the desert on the one hand, and its bearing on his attitude towards life, love and women, on the other.

The great moulder of the Arab character was the desert. It inured him to hardness and compelled him to spend his life wandering to and fro across his barren country in search of food and water for himself and his horse or camel. No rest was given to him, no time for speculation or philosophy was left him in his daily life; and the leisure of the desert, vast as it was, was the leisure of the sentinel. The nomad had to be on guard at every moment, to watch everything, to form rapid conceptions and make lightning resolutions if he was to protect himself and his tribe against the numerous dangers of his hostile environment. He had to fight continuously against hunger, thirst and the ruthless climate and other hardships of his stern existence; and his tribe had sometimes to wage endless wars against other
tribes to obtain food for its men or some pasture for its animals. Hatred, fury and warlike feelings had to be kept alive, and physical strength, manhood, courage and fortitude had to be held in high regard to make it possible for the tribe to survive and to prevent horrible surprises. All the tribesmen had to live in the present moment and watch every other tribe, everything, every phenomenon because everything that happened was in the nomad's view ominous and fraught with significance.

This life of endurance, terror and suspicion that the heathen Arab was obliged to live in his desert may largely account for his concern with the problem of the moment at the expense of the past and the future. However the past was recalled whenever that it could serve to illustrate the present, to make it clearer or more vivid but never was it recollected to be examined and criticised to become the object of more speculation. As for the future, the Arab has always shown too little concern for it. He was too busy thinking about the problems of his present time or enjoying it, at the least occasion, to consider the veiled and enigmatic future.

The desert may also account for another outstanding quality of the nomad i.e. his practical outlook on things and life. He was not deeply concerned with anything unless it excited his own interest or was of value to his tribe.

The third feature of the pagan Arab is his patent individuality. One would have expected the reverse and thought
that the Arab's personality was wholly absorbed by his tribe which was the only reason of his life and also his paramount interest. This thought, in fact, would not be without foundation. It is always true in the life of all primitive and mechanically-organised societies. If it is not perfectly true as far as the Arabs are concerned, it is again because of the desert. For conditions of life, there, often put the tribesmen, while crossing the desert for trade, or shepherding his tribe's drove, or seeking new pastures (and on other occasions), in very lonely and awkward situations, the solution of which required great personal ability and well-developed initiative. Even inter-tribal wars were of the kind that called forth personal exertion in the highest degree and gave ample opportunity for single-handed feats of heroism.

Nevertheless it is still true that a large part of the nomad's personality was fused with that of his tribe and in as much as the tribe crystallised its moral values, tradition and practical philosophy of life in certain specific ceremonies and customs which the tribesmen learned and performed naturally and spontaneously and took entirely for granted. He never submitted them to criticism because they had already subconsciously moulded his mind, emotion and habits; and adjusted his way of thinking and feeling into the traditional pattern and achieved his communion with his tribe.
So, the nomad was a mere number in the tribe's society only subconsciously, but in his conscious life, he was fully aware of his own personality. This strange combination was particularly a typical quality of the pagan poet. He was both the mouth-piece of his tribe's glorious deeds and also the hero of his own romance.

The desert invested the nomad's character with another paradox. It made it a mixture of grossness and fineness. On the one hand it prevented its detachment from sensual things, since the Arab's mind was mostly engrossed with the impression of things on himself for the moment and their significance and effect on the present situation; on the other hand, the very long hours of loneliness and the long fasts that the Arab endured in his desert land purged his body and lent to his mind a swift detachment from sensual things and made his temperament a combination of opposite qualities: grossness and fineness, extreme hatred and magnanimity, foaming fury and self-control, tenderness and cruelty, glowing sentimentality and apathy.

Like his desert that passes swiftly from freshness to dryness and his weather which changes quickly from cold to warm and vice versa, the Arab temperament was liable to drift suddenly from one extreme to the other. Furthermore, the nomad was even capable of combining the opposite qualities altogether, in the same situation, for instance to slaughter his dearly loved camel and to feed his hungry guest; or to go readily with his tribe to fight if need be against a related tribe, and perhaps kill
his 'very dear' cousins. Al Hossein Al Murry, a pre-Islamic poet, describing one of these wars between related tribes said:

"Our swords cleft the skulls of many whom we used to endear most, but who were then guilty and faithless.

(You would see in that war) only enemy-like faces. As for chests, they were lately filled with affection and friendship which now faded away and disappeared".

We see then, that the Arab's attention was absorbed by the present. His approach to things and life became practical; his individuality was developed and his temperament presented a combination of opposite and excessive feelings. If all these characteristic traits were acquired by the Arab through his constant life in the desert, there were other features of his individual character developed in him by Paganism.

Paganism was a great influence in the moulding of the nomad's personality. It stamped his life with marks very easy to recognise by religious people. It did not split his entity into body and soul, nor did it divide his life into outer and inner worlds. It let him enjoy his individuality as an indivisible whole, and make no difference between things of sense and things of soul. The pagan was capable of enjoying

(1) AL-MUFADDALIYAT, p. 104-105
equally the sensual pleasures of life, and the pure and refined emotions of his inner world; but he was unable to separate them one from another, or to shut himself off from the outside world to examine the deep feelings of his heart or the correctness of his thoughts. Like his horse or camel and the plantations of his land, he was content with his self-development in the present moment and with his adjustment to his surroundings. No worry about death, he believed that he would live in his descendants, exactly like animals and plantations. The perfect life for him was that which allowed him to realise his full-development, to satisfy his senses and instincts and call forth all his capacity. The nomad was not very exacting about the exact nature of happiness. Happiness for him was the harmony of man with nature, with the conditions of his temporal existence. He was, pleased with so little. Therefore, in spite of the fears, anxieties and hardships that surrounded him he went on in his own merry and happy-go-lucky way, savouring every joy within his reach to the full.

The pre-Islamic poetry vividly reflected this pagan attitude towards life, and through it we can hear the broad laughter of its carefree and roystering singers. No gloom, no superstition, no fear of things beyond the grave. All with them was frankly and boldly hedonistic.
So, to the characteristic traits that the heathen Arab acquired through (His long subjection) to the discipline of the desert, we have to add two other distinctive traits that he acquired through his paganism i.e. his unsplit personality and his unexhaustible gaiety.

It is now time to study the effect that these distinct traits had on the pagan poet's attitude towards women and love, and to examine their bearing on the amatory poetry of paganism.

The absorption of the ancient poet with temporal things may be easily traced in his odes. It may also account for many things in his poems, particularly the following point which often puzzles - and sometimes disappoints - the reader of pre-Islamic poetry. The poet usually starts his ode with an amatory prelude in which he sings the charm of his beloved. He recollects the happy and short days spent with her, in the enormous solitude of the desert, in some place for a few happy weeks of Spring and love, then abandoned and left unbeautiful forever. He gives a beautiful picture of his short romance, the freshness and mirth of which are by no means taken away by his passionate longing. Yet, when we expect him to go on with his sentimental outpouring, he suddenly stops to say that all this belongs to the past, to the period of 'Siba, or youthful and foolish conduct, that he must forget all about it, that it is now more fitting to talk about riding or hunting.
This unexpected change of mind is due largely to the spur of the present moment which urges him to occupy himself with the present and actual life and not with an ever-fading past. It is true that this volt-face might be, to some extent, explained by the fact that the poet, becoming old and somewhat jealous of young people sublimates his jealousy by depicting beautifully his own youth and love and showing total disinterest in them now that "he has acquired wisdom and experience". This same point might also be explained by another fact: that the poet - who is, to some extent, the moralist of the tribe - after giving a very attractive picture of love and early youth to attract his listeners' attention, wanted to say something about the folly and vanity of love, in a rather disdainful way, just to draw their attention to the serious part of life which is strife, struggle, war and survival of the tribe.

Yet, even these two facts: the sublimation of a quelled unhappiness and the moralistic attitude show how far the past (= the description of a lost love) is recalled here to help the present moment or to restify to its importance. Life in pagan Arabia was - although in the open desert - like a one-way traffic. The Arab was not allowed to go backward, he was permitted to look behind, but only with a rapid glance to help him to drive forward.
The Arab laid the emphasis on the present moment all the more because he was very practical. He might deal with things with an amazing objectivity but never did he forget to treat them from his subjective point of view and see how far they could be useful to him or to his tribe.

When the ancient poet celebrated the beauty of his beloved he gave a realistic picture of her but he put the stress on the sweetness of her lips, the brightness of her face (in darkness), the charm of her conversation, her fragrance and — to the disapproval of the modest reader — the fullness of her hips and the pleasure that she was able to give her lover in the joy of physical union.

To show how objectiveness and subjectiveness were mixed up in the erotic prelude of the pagan 'Kasida, or ode, we give the two following quotations. The first is an extract from Tarafa’s Mu'allaqa and runs as follows:

"Alas for the dark-lipped one, the maid of the topazes, hardly yet grown a woman, suit fruit-picking loiterer.

I see her mouth-slit smiling, her teeth, — nay, a camomile, white on the white sand booming and moist with the night-showers.

Sun-steeped it is, pure argent, white all but the lips of her, these are too darkly painted to shrink from the sun-burning."
The face of her how joyous, the day's robe enfolding her, clean as a thing fresh fashioned, untouched by sad time-fingers. Enough! new joys now claim me. Ay, mount and away from her! Here on my swift-foot camel I laugh at love's bitterness.

The second quotation is from Antara's Mu'allaq: "Then was it 'Abla, enslaved thee showing her tenderness, white teeth with lips for the kissing. Sweet was the taste of them. Sweet as the vials of odours sold by the musk sellers; fragrant the white teeth she showed thee, fragrant the mouth of her. So is a garden new-planted, fresh in its greenery, watered by soft-falling raindrops, treadless, untenanted."

The heavy pressure of the tribal society did not prevent the pre-Islamic poet from becoming free and independent. He was fully conscious of his prominent individuality. In his long ode, he certainly "sang the history of his own people, recorded their genealogy celebrated their feats of arms and extolled their virtues", yet almost all these topics have been looked upon

through the glasses of his own personality; still more, the poet never forgot in his ode to indulge in the exultation of his personal qualities and his own deeds and experience. He was very proud of himself, proud even when he talked of his lost love and called it "an ignorant, foolish youthful conduct". In the erotic prelude, which was the key-note of his song we sometimes find points which induce us to believe that he was boasting while talking about his love, especially when he celebrated the charm of the women-captives taken off by him and his own people from a defeated enemy tribe or when he bragged of having been able to seduce married women or capture the fancy of naive virgins etc.

Imru'ul Qais, ended the description of a night-visit to his beloved by saying:

"That night, I was very much loved by her, while her husband became disquiet and suspicious". And al'sha said:

"I used to attract inexperienced girls so much that they disregarded all blames who wish them to break with me".

It is worth noting here that such lines could not be taken really as a sign of profligate conduct. Continence and chastity were very much appreciated by the pagan Arab and praised in his poems.

(1) Diwan. P. 67.
(2) Diwan. P. 254.
Only these virtues seemed to have for the heathen Arab a different meaning. To be continent, in his view, was to refrain from trespassing on somebody else's right, namely, a neighbour, a husband, a friend or a kinsman; it was not, by any means, to quell instincts by an abstract virtue of morality. The moral life based on the antithesis between duty and inclination is of religious origin. It was not well known in Ancient Arabia nor in Ancient Greece.

Therefore, it would be rather pointless to put down the pagan poet's reference to married women, or inexperienced young girls to lack of shame or continence. These women are, more often than not, spoken of because of the poet's desire of vaunting and praising himself. To describe his adventures with them was meant, probably, to satisfy - among other inclinations, his ardent lust for power, influence, possession and probably, above all, boasting.

(1) "The really good man, in Aristotle's view," is not tempted. Where we incline to think that 'good thews inforced with pains' are more praiseworthy than mere goodness of disposition Aristotle coolly remarks that the man who is temperate at a cost is profligate; the really temperate man abstains because he likes abstaining; the ease and pleasure with which good acts are done, the absence of moral 'effort' is for him the symptom of virtue. C.S. Lewis: The Allegory of Love. London 1946. p.59

(2) That is why perhaps the Koran said of poets that "They say that which they do not do". 26 - 224.
The pagan poets were so independent and so proud that they could not be good courtiers. Amr ibn Hind, the King of Hira was so annoyed with the poet Tarafa and the poet Al Mutalammis that he plotted their death. Abid Al Abras was killed by the King of Hira and Al Nabiga Alzubiany ran away from the Court of Hira to the Court of Damascus, to save his life.

The pagan amatory poetry was not only a mixture of longing for a lost love and boasting; it is also a queer combination of sensual description and refined emotion. Imru'ul Qais, in his Mu'allaha addressed his beloved as sweetly and sincerely as follows:

"O, Fatim! enough of this ruthless coquetry. If you want to break with me, please do it gently. Do not be reduced to hardness by the fact that my love for you is murdering my heart and that my heart is ready to obey all your desires!".

Then he broke off to describe one of his night adventures and depicted it boldly in a very sensuous and - for some of us - immoral way.

(1) Diwan P. 29.

(2) Some poets referred to another sort of night-visit. Their wives belonging to a tribe which for some reason or other had become their enemies, and having preferred to join their own people, were forbidden to see their husbands. The poets therefore, at the risk of their life, paid them secret night visits - of which they boasted in their odes - and which are to be distinguished from the immoral night-adventures.
"When I asked her", went on Imru'ul Qais - just to give a slight sample of his description - "to let me enjoy her kisses she leaned on me with her thin waist and her plump legs. She was a woman who could lead a wise man astray when she appeared in her night attire".

Al Nabiga started his Mu'allafa by remembering, with a vivid longing, his beloved with whom he had had very happy days "at that period when Time and Life had not yet shown their bitter side, and when we used to take each other in confidence", then he went on to her physical description to say that "her lips were as full and thick as a small hill of sand and that her saliva was, for him who would share her bed, as delicious as neat wine or honey".

Modern readers who disapprove of sensual descriptions and believe that instincts are to be suppressed and refined will condemn a very large part of pagan Ghazal which was composed by poets who did not conceive any duality in a human being, and subsequently did not admit any priority of things of soul over the instincts of the body. Soul and body

(1) Diwan P.33, 38.
(2) Diwan, P.254
(3) Diwan, P.257, 258.
for them were an indivisible whole. They could not talk about one and neglect the other. Spiritual and sensual pleasure were, for them, as we have just seen intermingled very closely. They could not talk about love without talking simultaneously about its sensual pleasure. Love without satisfaction of senses was no love. That is why their love was closely connected with 'youth'. Once youth was over there was no more 'love', only just sweet and tender memories. That is also why they did not conceive love as a god or as a distinct thing or notion, as a 'venus' for instance or as a 'cupid' etc. Having no clear and independent conception of love, the pre-Islamic poets did not talk about it separately, and did not depict the beauty and glory and bliss of being in love. Hence their lack of concern with the description of their inner world, and with the analysis of their hearts' emotions. Furthermore, they were interested only - surprisingly - in their own love. The description of other people's love had no room in their odes. If one read the whole Ghazal of paganism one lights upon very few lines in which ancient poets referred to the love of others. Moreover, when the pagan poets compares the tenderness of their beloved

(1) Tarafa devoted only 7 lines to relating, very vaguely, the love-story of Murakish who died from love. Tqd el-Tawamim. p. 69-70.
with that of a gazelle, they described the gazelle as being with her baby and never with her male. Apart from rare cases in which the poets depicted a pigeon cooing and yearning for her mate, or referred to the longings of their she-camel when she was away from home, there are no real scenes of love and tenderness, in pagan poetry, borrowed from the animal kingdom despite all the sustained interest the Arabs showed towards animals.

So, love, through not being separated from the youthful instincts of pagan poets, could not have been dealt with separately or represented or personified or symbolised or projected into the external world and described objectively in other persons or animals. It could not either have been purified and transformed into heavenly or platonic love,

(1) Yet, love was certainly not mere impression, just passive feeling of sensuality and sentimentality mingled together. The ancient poets put it into action and, to some extent, dramatised it, particularly when they stopped their travelling at a ruined dwelling place of their beloved to weep upon it and mourn their lost love; or when some of them described their love-adventures, namely Imru’ul Qais, Al A’sha, Al Munakhil etc.
because the latter presupposed a duality in the person of human beings on the one hand, and the superiority of the soul to the body on the other, which the pagan was far from admitting.

The intimate connection between love and sexual enjoyment is perhaps the hallmark of pagan love. It invested it with an inspiring cheerfulness. It made the heathen poet regard it as a great pleasure, like riding, hunting and drinking wine, and not to consider it - as the Greek poet Meleager, and the poets of the Omayyad period did - just as a plague. It was just as well for the ancient nomads. Their love's joy would have helped them to stand the dreary, fearful and hard conditions of their lonely life in their ever-silent desert. Three things only made life worth living in Tarafa's eyes: wine, love and war.

However, the high-spirits of pagan love-poetry are always accompanied by a sad and home-sick tune very near to melancholy. The reason, believe, is that the ancient poets always put the picture of their joyous and resounding love in the frame work of a short and happy past, lost for ever, leaving no hope whatsoever for the future. However, this nostalgic

(1) Mu'allaq
tune did not succeed in masking the poet's cheerfulness and delight in talking about the flame of his old love.

The last general feature of pagan love that we want to bring up here is the chivalrous attitude of the Arabs, in general, and the poets, in particular, towards their loved ones. They treated them and addressed them on perfectly equal terms at a time when, women in most countries were treated as mere chattles. On the other hand, the proud pagan poets never talked to their loved ones in pleading or prostrating tones. Just as they did not want to make their "beloveds" their slaves, so they did not want to be their beloveds' slaves.

"If my beloved" - said Abu Zu'aib - "wants to cut the love-ties which link us to each other, and really meant it, I should break with her very kindly, and never should I speak ill of her". (2)
This magnanimous attitude of ancient poets towards their "damzels" has been well appreciated by all those who studied Arabic Literature. W. Blunt, referring to it, said: "There is no part of the earth's surface where love exists under such strenous and endearing conditions as the Arabian desert, where the soul of man and woman are knit as closely by the immense isolation of their lives, where either becomes so dependent on the other by the constant pressure of material dangers. Each little 'house of hair' (= tent) is as a fortress in the wilderness, set up in some far valley against the forces of nature and held there by its dual garrison". 

Likewise, Stendhal, studying carefully the characteristics of love in different nations begins the chapter that he devoted to Arabia as follows:

"Love needs three things to flourish: youth, leisure and a belief that woman is an equal to love, not a devil to avoid. That is why the home and paragon of the purest and most genuine sort of love are to be found in the modest and gloomy tents of Arabia".

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(1) W. Blunt: The Seven Golden Odes. London 1903. P. XIV.
CHAPTER IV

GHAZAL IN THE ANCIENT ODES.

In the previous chapter we considered the pagan character of the pre-Islamic poets, and its effects on their love and passion. In the present chapter we shall examine their 'Ghazal' or, poetic expression of love, and study its connection with the other parts of the ancient poem, trying, at the same time, to identify all the different species that it presents.

The ancient ode - as we all know - does not draw on one subject alone. Being the register of the tribe's genealogy and glory, and expressing the composer's pride in his heritage it deals with a large variety of subjects. It is, more precisely a series of pictures, drawn with skill and confidence, of the life of the heathen poet and his tribe in the desert, of the wild creatures of the wilderness, and of the landscape in the midst of which he and his tribe live. These pictures follow each other in an established and generally well-observed sequence. The poet introduces his subject by depicting himself weeping upon an abandoned dwelling-place of his beloved, mourning his lost love, and after giving a fascinating picture of her beauty he says, "nothing could alleviate my sorrow like riding", then he settles down to the description of his
camel or horse. If the poem is a eulogy the poet next praises his animal because it takes him to the place where the 'praised person' dwells, and in the same breath alludes to his exhausting journey. The ode is not necessarily a eulogy however, it might be a satire or vain-glorious poem, or a mixture of all three subjects. At the end the poet often moralises or philosophises about life and death.

Why should the pagan poet begin his ode with Ghazal? (1)
Ibn Qutayba offers the following explanation:
"I have heard - says Ibn Qutayba - from a man of learning that the composer of Odes began by mentioning the deserted dwelling places and the relics and traces of habitation. Then he wept and complained and addressed the desolate encampment, and begged his companion to make a halt, in order that he might have occasion to speak of those who had once lived there and afterwards departed. For the dwellers in tents were different from townsmen or villagers in respect of coming and going, because they moved from one water spring to another, seeking pasture and searching out the places where rain had fallen. Then to this he linked the erotic prelude (Nasib) and bewailed the violence of his

love and the anguish of separation from his mistress
and the extremity of his passion and desire, so as to win the
hearts of his hearers and divert their eyes towards him and
invite their ears to listen to him, since the song of love
touches men's souls and takes hold of their hearts, God having
put it in the constitution of His creatures to love dalliance and
the society of women in such wise that we find very few but
are attached thereto by some tie or have some share therein,
whether lawful or unpermitted. Now, when the poet had
assured himself of an attentive hearing, he followed up his
advantage and set forth his claim...."

Some modern critics put forward another explanation.
Laying the emphasis on the moralistic role of poetry, they
see in the poet's description of his love and in his way of
disowning it afterwards when "he has acquired the wisdom of
old age" an ingenious trick to deter young people from
indulging themselves in a lazy sentimentality, and to divest
their attention from love-affairs to other subjects more
directly needed for the survival of the tribe, such as toil
and war.

Others reverse the argument of Ibn Qutayba and think
that the composer of Odes did not begin with Ghazal "to win the
hearts of his hearers and divert their eyes towards him and
invite their ears to listen to him" but he did so for his own convenience: to cheer himself up and stir up his genius and put it in the mood of poetry. They back their argument by a story mentioned by Ibn Rashiq, which runs as follows: "Zu-l-Roomma, the Omdyyad poet, was once asked the following question: "What would you do if your genius did not help you to compose poems?" - How could my genius not help me? - answered Zu-l-Roomma - "Since I know an ever-effective means to stir it up?" - "What is it?", he was asked. "It is just to remember your beloved while you are alone", answered the poet.

Other critics refrain from explaining the presence of Ghazal at the beginning of Ancient Odes, simply because the origins of pagan poetry belong to a past long lost and only this ever-fading past holds, in their view, the right answer to this question.

However, large numbers of modern critics share Ibn Qutayba's explanation, and agree that the normad's emotion, although frequently quelled by the urgency of his present problems, and dulled by the hardships of his life in the desert, is sometimes stirred up by different stimuli such as


(2) These critics refuse to accept the tradition which records that Muhalhil ( - 525 A.C.) was the first to put 'nasib' in front of a 'Kasida'.
the sight of his beloved's abandoned encampment, or hearing a crow crying out on a ruined dwelling-place, or listening to a grieved dove cooing desperately on an isolated nest, or the vision of the beloved, which the poet has sometimes in his dreams. Any one of these experiences may be sufficient to stir the poet's passion, make him long for his beloved and incite him to talk about her at the beginning of his ode.

"Weep", says Imru-ul-Qais, right at the beginning of his Mu'allaga, "Ah weep love's losing, love's with its dwelling-place, set where the hills divide 'Dakhouly' and 'Howmily', 'Taudiha' and 'Miqrat'. There the hearth-stones of her stand where the South and North winds cross-wave the sands furrows.

'Tarafa, starts his 'Mu'allaga, as follows:

"The tent lines these of 'Khalfa, in stone-stricken 'Thahmadi, see where the fire has touched them, dyed dark as the hands of her.

It was here thy friends consoled thee that day with thee comforting, cried, not of grief, thou faint-heart! men die not thus easily.

(1) W. Blunt's translation in: The Seven Golden Odes of Pagan Arabia.

(2) W. Blunt's translation.
In 'Nabigha's, Mu'allaqat we come across this line:
"when grey pigeons coo they awake my love for you O, 'um Ammar, though you are now far away".

'A'sha, and 'Hassan, have their love spurred by the "Khawal" or dream-vision of their loved ones:
"O, Jubayra" says Al-A'sha - "if you do not want to quench the thirst of your ever-longing lover, then forbid your vision to come and visit my pillow, however far away you may be"

And 'Hassan says, "what can I do with this vision of 'Sha'tha, which makes me awake, when the beginning of the night is over?"

The picture of abandoned dwelling-places is not the only setting of Ghazal. To it, the poet often adds another picture more vivid and gay. He introduces it by comparing his mistress's charm to it; and then he ceases, for the moment, to sing his beloved's beauty, and sets himself to drawing it up blithely and joyously. Very frequently, the pagan poet compares his beloved with a gazelle grazing with her baby in

(1) Diwan. P.288
(2) Diwan P. 98
(3) Diwan. P.2.
in the bushes of the wilderness, or compares his mistress's saliva with the finest wine imported from famous places. Antara (like Asha later on) compares his beloved's breath with the fragrance of a fresh garden:

"Sweet" - says Antara talking of his beloved - "as the vials of odours sold by the musk sellers, fragrant the white teeth she showed thee, fragrant the mouth of her

So is a garden, new planted, fresh in its greenery, watered by soft-falling raindrops, treadless, untenanted. Lo, on it rain-clouds have lighted, soft showers, no hail in them, leaving each furrow a lakelet bright as a silverling; pattering, plashing they fell there, rains at the sunsetting wide-spreading runlets of water, streams of fertility, mixed with the humming of bees' wings droning the daylight long, never a pause in their chanting, gay drinking-choruses.

Blithe iteration of bees's wings, songs struck in harmony, sharply as steel on flint-stone, light handed

(1) smithy strokes"

Al Nabiga sometimes prefers to compare his mistress with a clear pearl, and then, he draws the picture of the Diver who has picked it up on the bottom of the sea, and of his joy, his awe and prostration at the sight of it.

(1) W. Blunt's translation.
(2) Diwan. p.87. see also Abū Zu'ayb, Diwan. P.17.
'Abu Zu'ayb" always finds a resemblance between his beloved's saliva and honey, and gives a picture of the (1) process of collecting honey from hives.

The description of wine, with which the beloved's saliva is compared, leads the poet to depict the wine and banquets that he has attended in wine shops which he has come across during his travels up and down the country, and more especially in 'Syria' and 'Iraq', in the North; and in 'Yemen, and 'H'adramout', in the South. In these shops, set generally on the main traffic roads, the nomad is provided with wine, and waited on by beautiful women whom he also depicts in his verse. Nevertheless, the pagan poet speaks of these wenches, mainly non-Arab, with more boldness and less jealousy than usual. (2)

"O, sweet is her shirt's neck-slit" says Tarafa - "set wide to the eyes of us. Soft is the thing it hides there. We bade her, now, sing to us. Ay, sing to us; we prayed her and she, with monotony, striking a low note slowly, chanted unchangingly".

Though the attitude of the pagan poet towards the singing wine-girls differs from his attitude towards his Arab beloved,

(1) Diwan. P. 5, 19

it is not always easy to distinguish the lines which he
devoted to the former from those which he devotes to the
latter. Therefore, to divide Ghazal into two sorts:
one addressed by the poet to his Arab mistress, and another
addressed to wine-shop maids, would be extremely difficult.
The lack of information about the private life of the ancient
poets and the dislocations and lacunae which the ancient odes
often exhibit, and which have confused and combined the two
sorts of Ghazal make it rather hard to distinguish between
them.

Besides the Arab beloved and the wine-shop girls, the
ancient poet sometimes celebrates the beauty and serenity
of nuns. The reason is that wine-shops spring up most
frequently near monasteries and convents which provide them
(1) with wine. The nomad, exhausted by his long journey, is
allowed sometimes to spend the night in these religious places.
Thus, he has the opportunity of seeing the nuns and portraying
their charm and dignity in his verse.

"Once on a rainy day" - says Imru-ul-Qais- "I entered
a house of virgins. They were walking in procession round a
fat and lazy woman. They had shapely fingers, noses and
figures, and pretty waists. All in perfect and impeccable

(1) Al- Mashrik, 1938.
beauty. Moreover, they were refined, but love for them would be killing in its intensity, and would fascinate even very wise people. I did not fall in love with them, for fear of death, and we parted as friends."

The heathen poet who sings the beauty of his Arab mistress, the wineshop maids and the nuns refrains from talking of his wife in his amatory prelude. Some historians hold that 'UmJundoub', mentioned by Imru-ul-Qais in one of his poems, is his wife, and that 'Sha'tha' is Hassan's wife. If this remark were true, the two poets must have celebrated their wives' beauty before marrying them. For both Imru-ul-Qais and Hassan address their 'lady' as a 'beloved' and by no means as a 'wife'.

The silence of the pagan poets about their wives' charm is not so remarkable after all; because the Moslem poets and the poets of Mediaeval Europe did exactly the same. If we look for the reason for this silence on the part of the pagan poet we might find it in the fact that the pagan Arab indulges in love-affairs only perhaps when he is young and unmarried. When he gets married he probably stops all new sentimental experience and confines himself, whenever he wants to compose an amatory prelude to drawing on his previous youthful experience.

(1) Diwan. P. 70-71
We can venture here another explanation, equally probably and perhaps more exhaustive. It is related to the development of emotion. Tribal life, to some extent, like family life; it lays the emphasis on the blood-link and makes tribesmen and tribeswomen feel, in many respects that they are rather like brothers and sisters. This feeling has sometimes the disadvantage of splitting the emotional life of the members of the tribe into two parts: a pure sentiment and an erotic emotion. The members of the tribe generally reserve the pure sentimental for his father, mother, sister, brother and, very often, for all his people, whereas he focuses his erotic emotion only on women belonging to other tribes. This attitude becomes, ultimately, so deeply rooted in his subconscious mind that when he marries a stranger whom he has loved, and who becomes by this marriage a member of his family, he ceases to love her as a beloved or stranger. She becomes like other members of his family and he subconsciously could not love her except as a mother or sister. The erotic emotion does not belong to her any longer; it belongs now to any other stranger who can take her husband's fancy and whom he will talk about in the amatory preludes of

(1) We have already seen in the first chapter that lovers used to call their loved ones their "sisters" in the Egyptian love-songs, in the Song of Songs and in some lines of pre-Islamic poetry.
his poems. The stronger the hold of the tribe (or family) over its members the easier the splitting of emotional life. That is why the wife is left unmentioned in the Ghazal of Moslem poets, and that is why perhaps the characteristics of courtly love in Mediaeval Europe were: Humility, courtesy, adultery and the Religion of Love.

A third reason could be advanced here to account for the absence of wives in the pre-Islamic Ghazal. It is that family life itself was not very well established in pagan Arabia. There were, at that time, many causes to weaken family ties, such as: temporary marriage which was then permitted, the possibility for the wife to stay with her tribe even after her marriage, or to join her tribe if it went to war against her husband's tribe, and the fact that women were always liable to be taken off by the victorious tribe as captives or spoils gained from the enemy.

Yet, this reason, though, true in itself, could not fully account for the fact we are discussing, because poets' wives were overlooked in Ghazal even during Islamic ages when family life became firmly established.

(1) As family education necessarily leaves erotic emotion out of family life the best plan to remedy this split of emotion would be to provide adolescents with a form of education which would help them to reintegrate their divided emotion.

(2) C.S. Lewis: The Allegory of Love. P.2.

(3) W. Robertson Smith: Kinship and Marriage in Early Arabia
It is now time to try to point out the chief types of Ghazal during the pre-Islamic epoch. We shall not attempt to study the development of Ghazal during this period. Such an attempt could hardly be successful. Besides the fact that the pre-Islamic period that we are now studying covers, at the most, 150 years only and the fact that we do not know the exact dates of birth and death of pagan poets, so that we cannot always say which is the earlier and which is the later, there are good reasons for believing that there was hardly any development of any kind in poetry during the pre-Islamic period. The monotony of the desert would not allow it. The conservation of the tribal life would nip it in the bud. The tendency of pagan poets to repeat their predecessors' images and ideas, and to copy their style and turns of speech is probably due to these factors.

For these reasons, it would be more advisable to study the great divisions into which we can classify the ancient amatory poetry. So far we have seen that the poet's wife has no room in the erotic prelude of his ode, that the pagan poet sings, in his Ghazal, the beauty of three sorts of women; his Arab beloved, wineshop maids and nuns, and that ancient Ghazal, using this criterion, could be divided, though with only moderate success into three corresponding parts.
From a moral point of view we can classify the ancient Ghazal into two categories: decent and obscene. We have already seen that the pagan nomad did not separate love from sensual pleasure, and that he had a peculiar conception of continence. Therefore we do not mean here by 'decent Ghazal' a platonic love-poetry, but just this sort of verse in which the poet refrains from depicting forcibly and lustfully the charm of his mistress, and also from mentioning things which take place when he is in intimacy with his beloved. In this respect, the bulk of Ghazal of the following poets is decent: Zuhair, Antara, Abid ibn-Al Abras, Abu Zu'ayb Al Huzali.

Naturally the dependence of pagan love on sensual satisfaction makes it difficult for platonic love to strike root in Arabian heathendom. It might be true that the poet Al-Muraquish the senior and other people died of desperate love, (1) as Tarafa and some Arab historians would have us believe but this does not prove that these unfortunate people's love was heavenly or platonic. We have some reason to believe that those 'martyrs' were very sensitive people who were unable to marry their 'dearest beloved' because of their poverty or some other reason. So they were consumed by their burning emotion and buried their hearts somewhere in the arid desert.

(1) Diwan, P. 69.
before being able to quench their thirst for love and life. Besides, the few lines that have come down to us from the verse of Muraquash the senior are not only a sort of fourth rate poetry, but also almost devoid of deep or heavenly passion. This fact induces us to believe that the Martyrs of love, in the pre-Islamic period, besides their extreme - rather fatal - sensitiveness, were exactly like their tribesmen with regard to the nature of their love.

As for obscene Ghazal, we have already seen that it had not been looked upon as such by pagan poets. However, it is still indecent from the viewpoint of most modern readers. This sort of erotic poetry is to be found sometimes in the amatory preludes of Imru-ul-Qais, A'asha, Nubiga, (in his description of Mutajarrida) and Hassan. The latter has used the most indecent descriptions in dealing with the women of enemy tribes. That is why his extremely obscene Ghazal is contained, not in his amatory preludes, but in his satire.

The pagan poets whom we have not mentioned in dealing with either decent or obscene Ghazal are either without distinguishing features in this respect like Tarafa, Amr ibn Kulthum, 'Alqama, Labid, or else the lines which came down to

us from their poems are so few that one could hardly venture to pass any judgment on them like A'sha Nahshah, Muraquish the junior, 'Orwa ibnulward, Amir ibn Tufayj, Khadash ibn Zuhayr, Alna'ir ibn Tawlah, AlMutanakhil al Huzayj, Bashama ibn el Gadir, Al Shanfara, Abda ibn ul Tabib, Souweid ibn Abi Kahil, Adi ibn Zayd, Al Munakhil Al JashKury, Qais ibn ul Khatim etc...

It is obviously easy to divide pagan amatory poetry into decent and obscene lines, but it is often misleading to classify ancient poets according to these lines. For the ancient poet might be decent in some poem and indecent in another. However, we cannot fail to notice that decent Ghazal belongs very often to poets who lived in Central Arabia and did not go out of the Peninsula like Antara and Zuhair, and that obscene poetry belongs either to professional poets who used their erotic preludes to captivate their hearers' attention, like Nabigha and A'sha, or to poets very familiar with wineshop entertainment and Court life, like Nabigha and A'sha, again, and Imru'ul Qais and Hassan.

Yet, however obscene the pagan Ghazal could be, it never had room for homosexual poetry. The homosexual love that appeared in some Arabian countries, during the Abbasid period, was probably taken over from Persia. It had been unknown,
Another respect in which we can divide the pagan Ghazal is to distinguish in it the Ghazal of nomadic poets and that of townsfolk. Though the difference between the two is not great we find the former more sincere, more brief, that its style is more highly finished and sometimes difficult to understand, whereas the latter is more detailed, with more exaggeration - perhaps to mask the poet's lack of sincerity and containing new images connected with life in cities. Hassan ibn Thabit, for instance, mentions the taste of fresh apples when he describes his beloved's saliva, and compares her hips with 'Madak' a sort of marble stone used in his town to grind aromatic ingredients.

As for the style of town poets it is generally very clear and easy to understand, but, sometimes, rather casual, as is the case of the poems of 'Adi ibn Zayd, (who lived in Hira) and some of Hassan (who lived in Yathrib).

(1) Diwan. P.3.

(2) Diwan C. P.362. Qais ibn Al-Khatim, the competitor of Hassan, who lived also in Yathrib compared his beloved's way of walking with a cloud coming over from the sea (Diwan. P.6.)
The pagan Ghazal can also be divided into that composed by young poets like Imru-ul-Qais, Tarafa, Amr-ibn-Kulthoom and 'Antara, and Ghazal composed by aged poets like Nabigha Zuhair, A'sha and 'abî Zu'ayb. Both kinds have similar traits, and in both of them, the pagan poets lament about a lost love. The only difference they show perhaps is that old poets, unlike their young colleagues, end their amatory preludes by blaming and sneering at their youthful dalliance, praising the age of wisdom and experience and sometimes lampooning women and accusing them of being concerned only with young people and money.

11 If you ask me about women - says Alkama - I know a great deal about them. One whose youth is over or who has only little money has no room in their affection.

(1) This point may raise a further question: since this cynicism is preceded by an erotic delight in feminine charms, can we say that the latter is the work of the poet's youth to which later he surely appendes lines describing the effect of his failing powers and his failure to evoke the response of young women to this amatory advances?

(2) Al Iqd-ul-Thamin. P.106.
Ala'sha accuses them of fickleness. They might turn out enemies after being friends.

If we take the metre of the poems as criterion we are able to divide ancient amatory poetry into two main parts: in the first one, the poets use long metres such as Tawil, Basit, Kamil etc. to talk, let us say, more seriously about their lost love and the cherished memories of their beloved, whereas, in the second part, they use short metres such as Majzu' ul Kamil which is: 

\[ \text{^ ^ ^ ^ ^ ^ ^ ^ ^ ^} \quad \text{^ ^ ^ ^ ^ ^ ^ ^ ^ ^} \]

in every hemistich, to talk about light passion and happy love-adventures.

"I entered the tent of my beloved - says Al Munakhal (2) Al-Yashkuri on a rainy day.

She was young and lovely, trailing silky garment
I pushed her gently, she trotted like a sand grouse

trotting towards a lakelet to drink.

I bent on her, she reacted like an inexperienced gazelle.

Then, she kept still for a while, and said afterwards:

You look unwell.

(1) Diwan. P. 98.
(2) Ibn Qutayba: Al shi'r-wal-Shu'ara. P. 238-239.
I said: yes, but only through my love for you.

Stop tormenting me!

I remember I had drunk wine in small and large bowls.

When drunk, I feel as though I possess the two famous palaces, Kawarnak and Sadir.

But when I come to reality I find that I possess nothing but a camel and a small live.

O, Hind, would you be kind to me? I am admittedly your captive.

I love Hind, she loves me; even my he-camel loves her she-camel.

Thus, the pre-Islamic Ghazal contains a number of features and lends itself to classification in different ways. It can be classified according to the sort of women it addresses, it may be considered from the point of view of its decency and obscenity, or according to the age of its authors, or the place (city or desert) in which they lived. Lastly, it can be divided according to its metres.

All these attempts at division and classification to which we have been subjecting ancient Ghazal, in the present chapter, have been with object of helping us to show new aspects of pre-Islamic amatory poetry and, in some cases, to throw into relief minute details which though faint and small,
are not less important for its characterisation.

The pagans put their Ghazal at the head of their odes like a shining crown reflecting their natural emotions and spontaneous responses to genuine love. Their amatory poetry might reflect their conception of beauty and happiness, their ideas about love, youth and life, it might also denote the degree of their cultural development; but it shows, first and foremost, that their barren desert, their austere life, and their continual wars did not keep them from enjoying life, and making their spacious country, dreary and silent though it was, echo with the songs and ringing laughter of their joyous youth.
CHAPTER V
EXCERPTS FROM PRI-ISLAMIC GHAZAL

A large part of pre-Islamic poetry has already been translated into English. In 1877 E.B. Palmer in his book "The Song of the Reed" translated the Moallakat of 'Antaiba. In 1881 W.A. Clouston published at Glasgow an anthology of 'Arabian Poetry' including the Seven Moallakat translated by Sir W. Jones. Four Years later, Sir Charles Lyall published at Edinburgh his 'Translations of Ancient Arabian Poetry', chiefly pre-Islamic. In 1903 the 'Seven Golden Odes of Pagan Arabia' were translated into English by Lady Anne Blunt and put into English verse by W.S. Blunt. R.A. Nicholson in his 'A Literary History of the Arabs' published for the first time in 1907, translated some extracts from ancient poetry into English verse. Sir Charles Lyall edited and translated the 'Diwans of 'Abid ibn Al-Abras, and 'Amir at-Tufail' in 1913, the 'Mufaddaliyat', an anthology of Ancient Arabian Odes' in 1918, and the 'Poems of 'Amr son of Qami'at' in 1919. Lastly, in 1927 F. Krenkow edited and translated the 'Diwan of Tufail Al Ghanawi'.

(1) London 1877 pp 100 et seq.
(2) London, 1903
(3) T. Fisher Unwin.
(4) London, 1913
(5) Oxford, 1918
(6) Cambridge, 1919
(7) London 1927
The English reader may find in these books a fairly large portion of pre-Islamic Ghazal which has been translated, on the whole, with success.

In this chapter we shall quote some excerpts from these translations, and, in order to give more specimens of the Ancient Ghazal and illustrate some of the points made in the previous chapters, we shall translate some other extract from the pre-Islamic amatory poetry, which we believe, are worth quoting.

I - The Erotic prelude of the Moallaka of Imru'ul Qais (W. Jones's translation):

Stay! Let us weep at the remembrance of our beloved, at the sight of the station where her tent was raised, by the edge of yon bending sands between Duhul and Haumel

"Tudah and Mikra; a station, the marks of which are not wholly effaced, though the south wind and the north have woven the twisted sand".

(1) Imru'ul Qais is almost universally held to be the greatest of the pre-Islamic poets. His father descended from the Himyarite Kings of Kinda and was the hereditary prince of the two tribes of Asad and Gharafan. Because of the poet's dissolute life, his father sent him away to a distant desert. When the latter was killed by the tribe of Asad, Imru'ul Qais did his best to revenge his death. He visited many tribes, many countries and even went to Constantinople seeking help and support. On his way back to Arabia he dies at Angora (about 540 A.D.)
Thus I spoke, when my companions stopped their coursers by my side, and said: "Perish not through despair: only be patient".

"A profusion of tears" answered I, "is my sole relief; but what avails it to shed them over the remains of a deserted mansion?"

"Thy condition", they replied, "is not more painful than when thou liftest Howaira, before thy present passion, and her neighbour Um-ul-Rabab, on the hills of Masel".

"Yes" I rejoined, "when those two damsels departed, musk was diffused from their robes, as the eastern gale sheds the scent of clove-gilly flowers:

"Then gushed the tears from my eyes, through excess of regret, and flowed down my neck, till my sword-belt was drenched in the stream".

"Yet hast thou passed many days in sweet converse with the fair: but none so sweet as the day which thou spentest by the pool of Daratjuljul".

On that day I killed my camel, to give the virgins a feast, and oh, how strange was it that they should carry his trappings and furniture!

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(1) rather: when they used to get up, or to stand up.

(2) " breeze.
The damsels continued till evening helping one another to the roasted flesh, and to the delicate fat, like the fringe of white silk finely woven.

On that happy day I entered the carriage, the carriage of Onaiza, who said: "Wo to thee! thou wilt compel me to travel on foot".

She added (while the vehicle was bent aside with our weight), "O Imru'ul Qais, descend, or my beast also will be killed!"

I answered: "Proceed, and loosen his rein; nor withhold from me the fruits of thy love, which again and again may be tasted with rapture"

Many a fair one like thee - though not like thee, a virgin - have I visited by night; and many a lovely mother have I diverted from the care of her yearling infant, adorned with amulets.

"Delightful, too, was the day when Fatim first rejected me on the summit of yon sand-hill, and took an oath, which she declared inviolable.

"O, Fatim" said I, "away with so much coyness; and if thou hadst resolved to abandon me, yet at last relent!"

"If indeed my disposition and manners are unpleasing to thee, rend at once the mantle of my heart, that it may be detached from thy love.

(1) We should add: in Damascus.

(2) An obscene and distasteful line has been omitted here.
"Art thou so haughty, because my passion for thee destroys me; and because whatever thou commandest, my heart performs?

"Thou weepest; yet thy tears flow merely to wound my heart with the shafts of thine eyes - my heart already broken to pieces and agonizing".

Besides these, with many a spotless virgin, whose tent had not yet been frequented, have I held soft dalliance at perfect leisure.

To visit one of them, I passed the guards of her bower, and a hostile tribe, who would have been eager to proclaim my death.

It was the hour when the pleiads appeared in the firmament, like the folds of a silken sash variously decked with gems.

I approached: she stood expecting me by the curtain, and, as if she was preparing for sleep, had put off all her vesture but her night dress.

She said: "By Him who created me", and gave me her lovely hand, "I am unable to refuse thee, for I perceive that the blindness of thy passion is not to be removed".

Then I rose with her; and as we walked she drew over our footsteps the train of her pictured robe.

Soon as we had passed the habitations of her tribe, and come to the bosom of a vale, surrounded with hillocks of spiry sand.
I gently drew her towards me by her curled locks, and she softly inclined to my embrace; - her waist was gracefully slender, but sweetly swelled the part encircled with ornaments of gold.

Delicate was her shape; fair her skin; and her body well proportioned; her bosom was as smooth as a mirror,

Or, like the pure egg of an ostrich, of a yellowish tint blended with white, and nourished by a stream of wholesome water not yet disturbed.

She turned aside, and displayed her soft cheek; she gave a timid glance with languishing eyes, like those of a roe in the groves of Wegera looking tenderly at her young.

Her neck was like that of a milk-white hind, but, when she raised it, exceeded not the justest symmetry; nor was the neck of my beloved so unadorned.

Her long coal black hair decorated her back, thick and diffused, like bunches of dates clustering on the palm-tree.

Her locks were elegantly turned above her head; and the riband which bound them was lost in her tresses, part braided, part dishevelled.

She discovered a waist tapered as a well-twisted cord; and a leg both as white and as smooth as the stem of a young palm, or a fresh reed, bending over the rivulet.
When she sleeps at noon, her bed is besprinkled with musk: she puts on her robe of undress, but leaves the apron to her handmaids.

She dispenses gifts with small, delicate fingers, sweetly glowing at their tips, like the white and crimson worm of Dabia, or dentifrice made of esel-wood.

The brightness of her face illumines the veil of night, like the evening taper of a recluse hermit.

On a girl like her, a girl of a moderate height, between those who wear a frock, and those who wear a gown, the most bashful man must look with an enamoured eye.

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(1) rather: she oversleeps till late in the morning.
(2) " she does not use a belt to hide the looseness of her robe. She is plump and her robe is never too large.
(3) " She shows small, delicate fingers...
(4) " when she shows the full-length of her shapely figure veiled only by her night-robe and morning gown, (even) the wise and strict man would look etc .....
The blind passions of men for common objects of affection are soon dispersed; but from the love of thee my heart cannot be released.

II - The prelude of a poem of 'Alkamah ibn 'Abadah

A heart quick to thrill when touched by beauty has drawn thee far, although youth has sped long since, and grey hairs invade thy brow.

It fills all my thought with Laila, distant though now her home, and matters of weight stand twist us, obstacles manifold. In comfort she dwells - no speech with her is for me to gain: a guard waits before her door, forbidding all visitors.

When as forth her husband fares, no secret of his she tells; and when he again comes home, yea, sweet is his home-coming.

Nay, deem me not scant of wit, untaught in Love's mysteries - on thee may the rain - fraught clouds send down their life-giving streams!

And if ye seek lore of women, verily I am skilled in all their devices, wise to probe to the root their ails

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(1) W. Jones's translation. W.A. Clouston, Arabian poetry. Glasgow, 1881. pp 6-10

(2) Alkama is a contemporary of Imru'ul Qais. The two poets once challenged each other to produce the finest poem describing a camel and a horse. Um Jundub, Imru'ul Qais's wife was the arbitress. She preferred 'Alkama's poem.
When grey grows a man's head, or his substance gets less and less, no share can he hope to win of friendship with womankind.

They long for abundant wealth, and look where they think to find and freshness of youth takes chiefest place in their wondering eyes.

III - The Amatory prelude of Tarafa's Moallakat:
The tent lines these of Khulula in stone - stricken Thakmadi. See where the fire has touched them, dyed dark as the hands of her.
'Twas here thy friends consoled thee that day with thee comforting, cried, not of grief, thou faint-heart! Men die not so easily.

Alas for the dark-lipped one, the maid of the topazes, hardley yet grown a woman, sweet fruit picking loiterer! A girl, a fawn still fawnless, which browses the thorn-bushes, close to the doe-herd feeding, aloof in the long valleys.


(2) Tarafa ibn Al-'Abd is a younger contemporary of Imru'ul Qais, he went to the court of Amr ibn Hind, King of Hira and made verses against the King when he was no longer in favour. The King dissembled his wrath and sent him to his lieutenant in Bahreyn on the Persian Gulf, who killed him. The poet was only twenty six years old.
I see her mouth-slit smiling, her teeth, - nay, a camomile white on the white sand blooming and moist with the night-showers.

Sun-steeped it is, pure argent, white all but the lips of her, these are too darkly painted to shrink from the sun-burning. The face of her how joyous, the day's robe enfolding her, clean as a thing fresh fashioned, untouched by sad time-fingers.

Enough! new joys now claim me. Ay, mount and away from her! Here on my swift-foot camel I laugh at love's bitterness.

IV - The prelude of Antara's Moallakah

Have, the, the poets lift a theme unsung?
Dost thou, then, recognise thy love's abode?

Home of my 'Abla! dear for her sake!

Would that thy stones, Jewa, could speak to me.
Here have I often made my camel kneel,
Whose stately bulk, a very tower of strength,
Shall comfort me in my forlorn estate.

(1) W.S. Blunt's translation. The Seven Golden Odes. London 1903

(2) Antara was of the tribe of 'Abs. Although his mother was an Abyssinian slave, he was accorded his full rights through his chivalrous deeds. Besides his great passion for his cousin, the nobly born 'Abla, he spent his life in raids, battles and reprisals and died about the year 615 A.D. The imagery of the prelude we quote above is rather rude and erratic, dwelling fondly - at one time - on the image of the beloved, conjuring up - at another - with grim delight, the image of a slaughtered foe.
Ah! 'Abla dwells in lone Jewa, our tribe
In hazn and far Saman have pitched their tents
Hail! prince of desert, for since she hath gone
Thy solitude is desolate indeed.

She made her dwelling in the foeman's land
Who roar against me with a lion's rage;
And now 'midst dangers I must seek my love.

I love thee, 'Abla, - by thy father's life
That love has cost me many a bitter pang,
That thou the daughter of a hatred race,
Should'st be my heart's most loved and honoured guest.

But thou hast left me, and thy kinsmen's herds
Feed in Oneizah, and in Gheilam mine,
'Twas then her beauty first enslaved thy heart,
Those glittering pearls and ruby lips, whose kiss
was sweeter far than honey to the taste.

As when the merchant opes a precious box
Of perfume, such an odour from her breath
Came towards thee, harbinger of her approach
Or like an untouched meadow where the rain
Hath fallen freshly on the fragrant herbs,
That carpet all its pure untrodden soil.
A meadow where the frequent rain drops fall, like coins of silver in the quiet pools.
And irrigate it with perpetual streams;
A meadow where the sportive insects hum,
Like listless topers singing o'er their cups
And ply their forelegs like a man who tries with maimed hand to use the flint and steel.

V - The picture of Tufail's beloved.

At al'Uqr an abode erstwhile of Gamila, stirred afresh
longings of past love that brings back pain to thy heart.
Yet when a far distance separated her, thou wert
courageous paying no heed to the words of the mischief maker.

Of noble countenance, she does not wail over one who perished as having perished leaving no (worthy) successor for the marrow.

With smooth cheek and slender waist, she possesses a mouth cool to kiss, and is of tall stature.

(1) More exactly; every small pool becomes like a silver coin.
(3) Tufail Al-Ghanawi lived at the end of the sixth century A.D. He excelled in the description of horses, and he was called al-Mu-habbir (the embroiderer) on account of the excellence of his poetry.
The eyes sees what it loves and in her is superabundance
of bliss whenever she appears, and playfulness responds
to playfulness. (1) (2)

VI - Al-Mutajjarrida portrayed by Al-Nabigha.

Our departure from our encampment is now impending; and,
although we have not yet set off, we have the feeling of
being moving.

And this is indeed through our eagerness to catch up the
fair maiden who, before travelling, darted your heart, right
in the centre, with her shaft, without intending to kill you.

She looked at you with her eyes which were like the black
eyes of a young, elegant, dark green gazelle.

The necklace that adorned her neck was made of gold. It
was glittering like fire.

(1) more exactly: she is good entertainment for he who
looks for entertainment.

(2) F. Krenhow's translation: The Poems of Tufail ibn 'Auf
Al-Ghanawi. London 19271

(3) Al-Nabigha Al-Zubiani spent a large part of his life at
the court of the Kings of Hira. Once, in disgrace, he
left for the Ghassaniya Court in Syria. He wrote
beautiful poems in which he pleaded for himself and
sang the glory of No'man, King of Hira who ultimately
allowed him to come back to his court. Nabigha died
about the year 604 A.D. Al-Mutajjarrida was a favourite
lady in the Court of No'man. Al-Nabigha - said the
historians - was ordered by the King to portray fully
all her charms.
The colour of her skin was pearlish white; her beauty was perfect, and her figure was as supple and lithesome as a green twig.

Her abdomen had charming wrinkles, and her well-rounded breasts were beautifully set beneath her neck.

Her back was well-proportioned. Excepting her hips, she was not very fat. In the nude she had a very fresh appearance.

When I looked at her walking behind the curtains, she was like the sun in full glory.

Or rather like a newly gathered pearl which would put the diver in high spirit, and the very sight of it would make him prostrate.

Or rather like a marble statue set on a stone pedestal.

She dropped her veil inadvertently and quickly she collected it, hiding herself from us with her hand.

Her hand was red tinted, and her fingers were as tender as the red fruit of 'Anam.

She glanced at you as if she had something to say; like a sick man looking at the faces of his visitors.

She used to clean her teeth, white like hail-stones, and her gum tinted with antimony, with two feathers taken from pigeon wings.

Her teeth were like the white flowers of camomile when it was drenched with rain: dry on top and wet underneath.

(1) 'Anam is a tree of Hedjaz bearing a red fruit.
The Magnanimous King said that her mouth was cool and delicious; he who kissed it once wanted to do it again and again.

The Magnanimous King claimed that her saliva - which I never tasted - was capable of quenching the strongest thirst.

Her necklace was strung by virgin girls who chose for it the best and most fitting pearls.

If she made herself seen (even) by a gray-haired hermit who lived only in devotion,

He would gaze at her charm, and would be tempted by her tender converse and would take it for a fair and wise talk even if it were not so.

VII - 'Abid's adventure

Look forth! Oh friend, canst thou see aught of ladies camel-borne, that take their way through Ghumair, with hollows between us and them?

And riding on the light-coloured camels are girls with swelling breasts, slender of waist, virgin, friendly in their manners, white.

Yea, many the tent of maidens who toss the curtain to and fro, have I entered, when within was a woman unwed and sick with love.

(1) We left out here 4 lines extremely obscene.
(2) Diwan, pp. 87-88
(3) 'Abid ibn Al-Abras Al-Asadi was a contemporary of Hujr the Prince of Kinda and Imru'ul Qais's father. We have not much information about his life. He was put to death by the King Al-Mundhir grandfather of Al-No'man about the year 554 A.D.
And I lent her my love that I might be paid it in turn; in sooth the incurring of debt hangs heavy on the hands of decent folk.

And my young camel uttered her yearning cry when a third of the night was spent - her longing was stirred by the distant gleam of lightning in the Hijaz:

I said to her - "Grumble not thus: for verily an abode where Hind is far away is nought but hateful to me."

VIII - 'Abid, His wife and his Reminiscence

This my wife, in her wrath she seeks to be rid of me: is it that she desires divorce, or is feigning?

If thy mind be on feigning coyness, why didst thou jest not thus in time past, the nights long vanished?

Fair wast thou as an oryx then, I thy bondsman, drunk with love, trailing skirts, I sought thy bower.

So now leave off thy frowning, live with me peaceably - hope remains with us yet; yet may we be happy.

But if severance by thy desire, then what more needs it than to turn elsewhere the breasts of thy camel?

She will have it that I am old and decrepid, reft of wealth, and my cousins too stingy to help me,

(1) Sir Charles Lyall's translation. The Diwan of 'Abid.
London 1913. P. 32.
Youth's lightness all soured, my hair gone hoary,
not a fit mate for her, the young and mirthful.

If she found me now pale, youth's colour vanished
greyness spread over brow and cheek and temple
Time was when I entered a tent to find there
one slender of waist, soft of skin, a gazelle.
Round her neck went my arms, and toward me she
bent her, as the sandhill slopes down to the sands below it.
Then said she - "My soul be ransom for thy soul!
All my wealth be a gift from me to thy people!"

Leave the censures then, and get thee some wisdom:
let not them weigh against me in thy affection.

IX - 'Amr ibn Kulthoom and women.

O fair maiden, wait a little while before you go away;
let us tell each other the truth!
Let me ask you: Is it because you are now moving that you
want to break with me and disappoint me despite my
faithfulness?


(2) 'Amr ibn Kulthoom belonged to the tribe of Taghlib. He
killed 'Amr ibn Hind, the King of Hira, to avenge an
insult to his mother. Feared warrior, self-reliant
chief and boastful poet, he united in himself - from his
bedouin followers' point of view - the ideal qualities
of manhood. He died about the year 584 A.D.
If you stepped in her tent and she was sure that the place was empty, that the haters' eyes could not see her then, she would let you see her arms which were like the arms of a young, white and beautiful she-camel which had fed on the best grass on the hills and sandy plains.

She would let you also see her neck which was as bright as the shining of a full moon beheld by people travelling by night.

And her supple and tall back overloaded with her hips and her hips which were so thick that they made her difficult for her to get through the door; and her waist which drove me mad;

And also the sides of her neck: smooth and white, like marble; their jewels were rustling.

She reminded me of my youthful dalliance and made me long for it, when I heard the rider of her departing caravan singing to cheer up his camels.

Then I felt more miserable and more in grief than a she-camel that loses her young foal and unceasingly moans for it.

Even more in grief than an elderly woman whose ill fortune makes her lose eight sons and leave her only one baby alive ........

In the battlefield, white and beautiful women follow our footsteps. We are very anxious to prevent them being spoiled or debased by the enemy.
They exact a promise from their chivalrous husbands that, even if they meet the distinguished riders of the foe, they shall do nothing but kill the enemy, taking off their white swords and making prisoners and binding them together with iron fetters.

Our women then go back proud and walking slowly like drunken people.

And while feeding our horses they say: "You will not be our husbands if you do not protect us".

Nay, if we do not protect them, may we never live in prosperity and may quick death come to us! (1)

X - A'sha's beloved

I used to see her surrounded by her companions; when gay life in our dwelling place was in full swing, and when numbers of people stayed up late in the evening to talk and play.

She was like a statue set in a gilt niche of fine marble. Or like the pure egg of an ostrich, hidden in a sandy hillock, or else like a pearl exhibited by a jeweller.

(1) Jamhara. Cairo. 1308 A.H. pp. 75-83

(2) A'sha Qais was a professional troubadour who represented all the elements of culture then current in Arabia. In his amatory preludes, he sometimes imitated Imru-ul Qais; but more frequently used short metres. He died about the year 629 A.D.
If she entertained a man, she would be able to quench his soul's thirst. She was fair and black-eyed, capable of fascinating whoever looked at her.

She was not black or insolent; nor was she a woman with base virtue, in quest of a profligate man.

She was tall, with pleasant features, and spotless nature.

I remember when I saw her the first time she put on the attire of a grown woman. She had a slender waist like a graceful filly.

Her breasts were set in relief below her neck, and her face was clear and radiant.

If she placed a dead man on her neck he would come to life again. There would be then no need to carry him to a cemetery.

And people would say: "What a miracle! a dead man has been recalled to life!"

Let me talk about her no more now, and let us deal with the shameful acts of the perverted Alkama!

XI - A'sha Nahshal's dalliance

Although you see that I am becoming decrepit, tarnished with all the infirmities which affect my sight and energy

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(1) This Ghazal is the erotic prelude of a satire. Diwan. P.104

(2) A'sha bani Nahshal was a pre-Islamic poet, well known for his poem full of wisdom, which starts as follows: "My carefree friend slept, but I could not; because all my worries were then there, close by my pillow". The Ghazal quoted above is the amatory prelude of this poem.
I used - in my sweet youth - to indulge in drinking wine mingled with the water of morning rain.

And to enjoy the company of white maidens who were like full-moons or like statues; and of tender girls who carried our huge tankards.

Tender they were, and they used to speak gently. Their faces were white and clear, and their hearts were kind.

They used to whisper when they talked, and to understand one another without any need for loud speech.

XII Al-Shanfara's Damsel

She won me because she is unlike maidens who let fall their veil, and who glance behind as they walk.

Late in the evening, she carries her supper to her neighbours who have need, when such gifts become rare.

Slander would find no way to her home, even if it pervades other homes.

Her eyes seek the ground as though she looks for a thing lost there. Straight she walks. If thou spoke to her, short is her answer.

(1) Ash - Shanfara of Azd is the author of the great Lamiyah or L - poem. He left his tribe and lived in that of Fahm where he made friends with Ta'abata Sharra, with whom he carried out his daring expeditions on foot.
Gossip about Ummaymah never brings shame to her husband, pure and unstained is she, when people mention women.

At eve, her husband comes home glad, to his eyes delight. He needs not to ask her where she passed the day.

XIII Qais ibn Al-Khatim’s maiden

The tribe, dwelling in the neighbourhood of our encampment gathered their camels and parted; what harm would there be if they stopped a little while?

Just to let us talk with them. So they would have given their forerunners enough time to let their camels feed and enjoy the sun of mid-morning.

Among them was a smiling, friendly maiden who liked evening enjoyments and disliked to disappoint her lover.

Compared with other women, she was well-proportioned; neither thick nor thin.

She captivated the look of her admirers though she looked unconcerned. Her face was pearlish - white, pale, but gracefully so.

(1) Mufaddaliyat. pp. 200-201

(2) Qais ibn Al-Khatim was the great poet of his tribe: Al-Aus. He was also a bold warrior. He lived in Yathrib (-Madina) with his people and saw the rising of Islam, but was killed before being converted. (about 620 A.D.)
She was a real pearl created by God who did not want her to be hidden in a shell.

Her dignity entitled her to sit down and sleep as long as she wanted, so when she wanted to stand up she looked as though she was about to fall down.

Black-eyed, long-necked, radiant faced like a lamp; she resembled a sap-laden green twig of a Ben-tree.

She walked slowly, like a white oryx in the smooth sandy plain near the edge of a vale.

Her talk was always interesting, even if it was long. Words indeed had a fresh sweetness when they were uttered by her lips.

I do not lie when I say that I do love thee. Thy love's fire is still burning my heart and bowels.

VIX - Abu Zu'Ayb's Love

O abode of my beloved Dahma, I shun thee now. My youth verily slipped away but my love is abiding. I wonder why I yearn for thee when I see thy camels gathered and ready to depart, whereas I avoid thee when thou art close by me?


(2) Abu Zu'Ayb belonged to the tribe of Huzail. He lived into the Islamic Age and died in 'Madina, during the rule of Othman, the third great Calif. His best known poem is the elegy he composed when he lost his five sons all in the same year.
Pigeons cooing their yearnings make me long for thee and bring back all my eager desires.

A country in which thou dost not live is barren in mine eyes even if it is fertile and drenched with rain. And when my people move to a new encampment, mine eyes keep looking in the direction of thine abode.

I sometimes flatter the calumniators who talk about thee, merely to show patience and courtesy; I put up with their persistence though I know that they hate us very much.

I like all people who like thee, even my enemies, no matter whether they be thy relatives or not.

(1) Ashfar Al Huzaliyin, pp. 29-30.

(2) Al-Namir ibn Tawlab lived in the pre-Islamic and Islamic ages and accepted the new religion. He died during the rule of Abi Bakr, the First Calif. In his poetry there is no eulogy or satire.
The beautiful women call me "their uncle" now. I remember I had my own name. They do not use it now, though I used to be called by it formerly.

XVI - 'Abdah ibn Al Tabib in a wine shop.

In the morning I drank real wine, clear, fresh and delicious.

Now neat, now diluted. This was my pleasant pastime. Sometimes I listened to a poem as valued and well-known as golden coins.

To this poem, a long-necked songstress added sweetness. She sang it melodiously whilst the drinkers listened attentively.

She came, then, near us, we threw upon her - as gifts - our embroidered mantles and even our shirts.

XVII - The Picture of Suwaid's Lady.

Rabi'a extended the tie of affection to us, and we, for our part, remained as attached to her as we were able.


(2) 'Abdah ibn Al Tabib is of the tribe of Tamin. Very few of his verse have survived to us. He lived into the Rise of Islam and was converted to the new religion late in life.

(3) Al Mufaddaliyat, pp 292-293.

(4) Suwaid ibn Abi Kamil is of the tribe of Yashkur. He lived far into the Islamic age. He celebrated the exploit of his tribe at the famous battle of Dhu Qar, fought probably in A.D. 610.
This free-born maiden shows - when she smiles - a row of white teeth, very well set, like the rays of the sun breaking forth from the midst of cloud.

She has polished them with a fragrant green twig of Arak until they became white and lustrous.

White is their colour, delicious in their taste. Their moisture is exquisite, when the moisture of others is disappointing.

She presents to her mirror a shining face like the sun on a cloudless day.

Very clear is her face, and her long-lashed eyes are calm and composed.

Long are the locks of her hair; they always smell with the perfume of abundant and fragrant musk.

My longing for her is now stirred by a vision of her, that I saw in my dream. She looked then shy and reserved.

From a remote distance this vision passed to our encampment, having traversed the hard roads of thickets without any fear.

Familiar to me is this phantom. Yet, when it visits me it takes away all my sleep.

And I spend the night awake, seeing the rising of every star.

Thus is love. How bold it is! It faces dangers and pays no heed to censurers.
The love of Salma called me after the prime and freshness of youth had passed away from me.

I love Salma madly, but she does not want to cure me; so my heart is distracted, torn this way and that.

To her listeners she says only fair and sweet words; no other sort of words can they expect from her.

XVIII - 'Hassan ibn Thabit's remembrance.

Our abode at 'Azeb is now completely effaced, no one is now seen travelling there, neither towards the place nor away from it.

Gusty winds and thunderstorms followed always by heavy rain, both contributed towards its disappearance.

A well-proportioned, soft young girl used to dwell in it (with her people)

This girl, gave my heart the task of remembering her unceasingly. My love for her overloads my heart and verily weighs me down.

Nobody could console me now that I have lost her, but there is no escape from fate.

(1) Al Mufaddaliyat, pp 381-387

(2) 'Hassan ibn Thabit was the great poet of the tribe of Khazraj, in the pagan age, and the poet of the Prophet and Ansar in Islam. In the pre-Islamic period he sang the exploits of his tribe, and particularly the glory of the Ghassanid Kings with whom he claimed kinship. In Islam he devoted his poetry to composing satires against the enemies of Islam. He lived in Yathrib (later Madina) and died probably in 660 A.D.
When I remember her I am as one that has drunk the strongest of wines.

I wonder if her other abodes such as: Zinafar, Liwa Al'A'raf, Darib,

Liwa Al Khurbat, are still as I knew them in the past when our people used to spend all the evenings playing and conversing?

Su'da was not fair in dealing with me - besides, seldom are my friends fair to me.

Let me weep on the past, as much as I can. Yet, every association is ultimately bound to be sundered.

However, if tears could ever be of help, my tears running in profusion down my cheeks would have helped me. (1)

(1) Diwan, Cairo. pp. 34-35.
A close examination of the amatory preludes of Ancient Poetry shows that pagan Ghazal was, on the whole, composed of three parts: in the first the poet, in poignant grief, gives, in lamenting verse, a description of the ruined abode of his beloved; in the second, he delineates her moral qualities and physical charms; and in the last part he specifies, though usually very briefly, his present attitude towards love-affairs.

In the first part, the poet sometimes - through despair and grief - sets out to lament desperately and Pathetically his lost love, and describes carefully the abandoned encampment of his damsel. We have seen, in a previous chapter, that the character of the nomadic pagan in ancient Arabia lent itself sometimes to exaggerated sentimentality and emotional outpourings such as the following lines of Tarafa, in the opening verses of his Moallakah:

The tent lines these of Khaula, in stone - stricken Tragmadi. See where the fire has touched them, dyed dark like the tattooing of her hands.

It was here thy friends consoled thee that day, with thee comforting, cried, not of grief, thou faint-hearted! Men die not thus easily.
However, we cannot fail to ask here: Why was this profusion of sentiment before ruined abodes and not before the poet's beloved? Was it pride and peculiar shyness which made the pagan poet prefer weeping and being on his knees before the effaced dwelling-places, to so doing before his lady?

Whatever the reason may be, it is always true that a great deal of emotion and tenderness were poured out in the first part of pre-Islamic Ghazal, i.e., in the description of ruined abodes. Al Farazdak, the great Omneyad poet once listened to a poem composed by his contemporary 'Amr ibn Abi Rabi'Ah, it was full of sentiment and tenderness and moved Al-Farazdak to say "This is the poetry that ancient poets missed; they indulged instead in weeping and descriptions of ruined abodes in order to make up for it. (1)

In the third part of the Ghazal, the pagan poets, after talking about their past love with mirth, and portraying their damsels with delight and realism, pass to specifying their attitude towards love-affairs at the time when they are composing the verse. The ancient poets generally finish by discarding love as a foolish and youthful dalliance and sometimes, through a subconscious inferiority complex, blame women and accuse them of fickleness. Some young poets

(1) Aghani I - 36.
living in poverty and inured to hard work go further and show contempt towards young people who waste their time with women.

Al Shanfara, in his L - poem, says: "I am not a stay-at-home fellow, who never quits the tent, but flirts with the women; who is occupied, evening and morning, with anointing himself and tingeing his eyes with stibium."

Only wealthy young poets like Imru'ul'Qais, or poets settled in towns and accustomed to exaggeration, like Abu Zu'ayb, Hassan, and Qais ibn Al Khatim, end some of their Ghazal by assuring their 'lost' beloveds of their everlasting devotion.

"This young girl", says Hassan, "gave my heart the task of remembering her unceasingly. My love for her overloads my heart, and verily weighs me down.

Nobody could console me now that I have lost her, though I believe in fate."

The claim to everlasting devotion, which we notice in the Ghazal of towns poets could be explained by the fact that these poets, unlike their nomadic colleagues who devote themselves, almost entirely to their tribe - and concentrate

on its survival the largest portion of their emotion are more likely to focus their devotion in their settled and comparatively secure society on the love and remembrance of their ladies.

The second part of pre-Islamic Ghazal, in which the ancient poet depicts his beloved, is the most developed and the most important one. In this part, he sings her moral virtues and celebrates her physical beauty. However, the distinction between moral qualities and physical charms is not, as we know, the pagan poet's concern, because he does not separate his being into soul and body. Nevertheless, we shall adopt here, this distinction just to study the two sorts of beauty separately.

It is true that the heathen poet puts the stress on the physical charm of his mistress. However, an examination of the excerpts given in the previous chapter will show very clearly that the ancient poet does not love his damsel merely because she attracts his instincts and pleases his senses. In his love there is a moral element deeply appreciated though it is not very adequately expressed. This element is detected when the poet describes some of his beloved's moral qualities such as her honesty, generosity, discretion, courtesy, distinguished lineage etc...
"Late in the evening" - says Al-Shanfara - "she carries her supper to her neighbours who have need, when such gifts become rare.

Slander would find no way to her home, even if it pervades other homes".

All these qualities, praised in the ancient Ghazal, prove that the pagan poet does not love his mistress simply because she is a beautiful woman; but he also admires her because she is, above all "a lady".

To the moral element that we notice in the heathen poet's love we must add an aesthetic element that we see when the poet portrays the physical charms of his beloved.

The ideal lady usually described by ancient poets has coal-black hair, a clear and bright face, smooth cheeks, big black eyes, dark lips and white and well-set teeth. Her neck is long and white, her breasts are full and round, her waist is slender, but her hips are thick and swelling. Her hands are white and her fingers are tinted with red. Taken as a whole, she is plump and tall. She walks straight and slowly like an oryx with its baby gazing into meadows.

We must admit here that the description that the ancient poets give of their beloved when they celebrate the beauty of the different parts of their body is more sensual than aesthetic. It appeals more to the listener's sensation than to his sense of beauty; particularly so in the poems
of Imru 'ul Qais, Al Nabigha and Al- A'sha.

"If she entertained a man " - said the latter - she would be able to quench his soul's thirst. She was fair and black-eyed, capable of fascinating whoever looked at her. Her breasts were set in relief below her neck, and her face was clear and radiant.

If she placed a deadman on her neck, she would come to life again".

This ideal woman is always wealthy and elegantly adorned; and the ancient poets take pleasure in describing her jewels and adornments. Their description is so beautifully portrayed that the reader cannot now fail to notice the capability of ancient poets for aesthetical appreciation.

"Her necklace" said Al'Nabighah, "was glittering like fire" and "the rustling of her jewels", said Al'A'sha "was like the fluttering of merry leaves of 'Ashrek touched by the winds".

These two poets must have admired the blazing fire and shivering leaves of 'Eshrek before comparing with them the beauty of their beloveds' jewels. Indeed, all the pre-Islamic poets must have had the gift of aesthetical appreciation. All the images with which they compared their ladies' charms prove it. They must have been touched by the elegance of the gazelle that holds up her fore legs to reach the twigs
of 'Arak, in order to eat the leaves which she likes; by
the clarity and perfection of pearls, by the colourfulness
and fragrance of gardens and so on ... to compare with all
these the features and gestures of their fair ones.

The images mentioned above are not the only ones
recurring in the pre-Islamic amatory preludes. We know
that the ancient poets often compare their beloveds' hair
with bunches of dates, its blackness with charcoal, that they
find a similarity between their maidens' eyes, neck and
way of walking and those of oryxes or gazelles; that they
compare the clear face of their beloved with the brightness
of sunlight or moonlight or with the light of the lamp of
a hermit praying late in the night. Their maidens' teeth
are compared with a tow of pearls or hail-stones; their
saliva with a delicious wine or honey, and their smile

(1) Imru 'ul Qais, Diwan. P.33. (2) Ib id, and A' sha,
Diwan, p.56. Al Nabigha, Diwan, P.88. (3) Imru 'ul Qais,
Diwan, p.58; Al Kamah, Al-Iqd Al Thamin, p.108; A' sha,
Diwan. p.5; Qais ibn Al Khatim, Diwan, Hassan. pp.122-123;
Zuhair, Al -Iqd Al -Thamin. p.75; Antara, Diwan P. 45;
Hassan, Diwan. p.313. (4) Nabighah, Diwan pp. 87-88;
Tarafa, Al-iqd. p.55; Suwa id, Al-Mufaddaliyat, p.383
Hassan, Diwan. pp.377-386. (5) 'Amr ibn Kul thum, Meallah
A' sha Nahsh al, Diwan of A' sha. p. 297. (6) Imru'ul Qais,
Diwan, pp. 33-60. (7) Nabigha, Diwan p.88, Tarafa,P.60.
(8) Imru'ul Qais, Diwan. p. 10. 154; Alnabigha, Diwan pp.88
25, 208; Hassan, Diwan, pp. 3, 274, 362, 381; A' sha, Diwan
P.5; Abu Zu'aib, Ash'ar-ul-Huzaliyun, pp. 8, 18.
with the white and elegant flower of chamomile. Their figure is always tall and supple like green twigs, and their hips are always full and thick like sandhills. Their smell is fragrant like musk and like a fresh, untrodden garden. Taken as a whole the Arab ladies are compared with precious pearls or pure ostrich eggs or gazelles or oryxes or marble statues.

1. A'sha, Diwan, pp. 28, 56; Nabigha, Diwan, p. 88; Tarafa, Al-Iqd, pp. 55, 60. (10) 2. Imru 'ul Qais, Diwan, P. 9; Qais ibn Katim, Diwan P. 17. (3) Imru 'ul Qais, Diwan, P. 62; 'Abid, Kitab Al-Khtiyyarayn, p. 163; Nabigha, Diwan, p. 277; Hassan, Diwan, P. 32.

4. Antara, Diwan, P. 45; A'sha, Diwan. p. 43.
5. Imru 'ul Qais Diwan. p. 33; Nabigha, Diwan. p. 87; A'sha, Diwan. p. 104; Zuhair, Al-Iqd, P. 75; Qais ibn Al-Khatim, Diwan, pp. 16, 18; Hassan, Diwan, pp. 175, 274.
The reader of the pagan ghazal cannot fail to ask here, very reasonably, the following two-fold question: Why do the ancient poets only concern themselves with the same and limited things when they portray their maidens, and why do they almost always use the same images and similes with which to compare their beloved?

To answer the first part of the question we should remember that the nomadic pagans are - as we have seen before - above all practical. They might be capable of aesthetical appreciation and moral assessment; but not of cultivating Art for Art's sake. The hardness of their life in the desert would not make it possible. Therefore, they are practical in celebrating the charms of their beloveds, content to describe - among their features, gestures and physical parts - only those which attract their eyes and appeal to their senses. As a result they do not admire in their maidens the abstract beauty of womanhood and do not describe every beautiful woman, but only that one who is theirs, who belongs to them, who pleases their personal desires; and even then, they describe this woman in as much as she could satisfy their ardent, youthful, but practical, love.

As regards the frequent repetition of the same images and similes in the ancient Ghazal, they might incline the reader to discern lack of imagination in the ancient poetry.
This conclusion would be true, but only to a certain extent, as we shall see later. A closer examination of the matter might afford another explanation. It is related to the effect of tribal life on the poets. The tribal society - as we know- fashions the mind and feeling of its members in the same mould, and makes the tribesmen similar in thought, taste, and appreciation. So when the poets compose their verse, they express the same things according to tradition, and compare them subsequently with the same similes and images. They are bound to do so all the more because, unlike modern poets who believe that to be a good poet is to be original, to have one's own ideas and technique, and to come to Olympus with fresh flavour and new colour in one's poetry, the pagan poets believe that the consummate poet is the one who, before being poet, has been 'Rawiya, or 'reciter, and that means that he has learned by heart all the poetic repertory of his tribe and others. Thus, when the ancient poets use the same comparisons and repeat one another they show their wide knowledge and prove themselves to be great poets by being (1) at the same time great Rawis.

Whatever, nowadays we might think of this technique, it helped, in the pagan epoch, to create a sort of homogeneity of appreciation in the inter-tribal society and

(1) Khizanat-ul-Adab, I - 246.
to unify - to a great extent - the feelings and attitude of the Arabs towards beauteous things, whatever their tribe. In this respect, to do justice to the pagan poets we must admit that they started the unification of the Arab people - if only on an emotional and aesthetical level - and laid the basis for a national community of sentiment.

Another point connected with the images of ancient Ghazal, could be brought up here. It is the fact that some of these images refer to types of plants and gazelles completely unknown to the inhabitants of cities and towns. The minute details given about these plants and animals, and the amazingly realistic description of the ever-moving sandhills and other scenery of the desert, prove that the hearts which have felt the wild beauty of these views, and the imaginations which have found similarity between their charms and the charms of Arab women, belong to persons who lived in the midst of the desert and were familiar with its exotic beauty. They could hardly be the fabrication of scholars who lived in towns like 'Abu 'Amr ibn Al'Ala or Khalaf Al-Ahmar. Such scholars would be capable of imitating the form and method of expression of ancient poetry, but by no means the very feeling of nomadic poets.

(1) We do not mention Hammad because he was familiar with the life in the desert.
This argument is all the more admissable when we perceive that even the stock images, metaphors and metonymies, which frequently recur in ancient poetry are not servilely copied and reproduced by heathen poets, without any real feeling and personal appreciation on their part; the way of using them, the minute and ingenious details that they add to them, the richness and fluidity of the style that they use to express them, all tend to give to these repetitions an ever-new charm, and reveal, at the same time, the poets' own enjoyment, and their genuine appreciation of their poetic figures. To give an example, we may refer to the three Maallakats of Imru-ul Qais, Tarafa, and 'Antara. The three poets describe, in their prelude, the remains of the abandoned abode of their beloved, and stress the description of the 'hearth-stones'. However, Tarafa gives some colour to these stones and depicts them as being as dark as 'Washm' or 'tattooing'; while Antara lends them some feeling: "Black they are, in their emptiness, and desolate for the loved ones". Likewise, both Imru-ul Qais and Tarafa compare their beloveds' fragrance with the smell of flowers. Yet, the former chooses the flower of 'coronation' and the latter the 'chamomile'. Antara goes farther, and compares his lady with an 'untrodden fresh garden'.
Another question might arise while we are dealing with the poetic images, metaphors and metonymies of ancient Ghazal. They are not only to some extent, stereotyped, but they are also frequent. Why do the pre-Islamic poets use so many figures in their verse? Is it to show the vividness of their imagination and their rhetorical gift? Perhaps so, but only partly. The main reason, we think, is because the poetic figures help them to be brief. Instead of giving a long description of the charms of their loved ones they compare them with pearls or gazelles. Instead of talking at great length of the sweetness of their kisses, they simply compare their saliva with precious wine. The pre-Islamic poets are indeed very fond of conciseness and word-pictures. They might deal - in their verse - with many and varied things; but they only lightly touch upon each one, suggest it, and pass quickly to the other. Full and accurate descriptions and exhaustive treatments of items are not their concern. These normally belong, perhaps, to more mature and more civilised ages.

(1) Al-Jahiz believes that conciseness is the characteristic of the Arabic eloquence. To illustrate his argument he relates the following story: "A nomadic Arab heard a Moslem read the Koranic Verse in which Moses, being asked by God about the thing he held in his right hand, said "This is my staff: I recline on it and I beat the leaves with it to make them fall upon my sheep, and I have other uses for it" (XX-19). The nomad said:" I trust that this answer was given by a non-Arab" - "Why"? said the Moslem: The nomad replied: "If he was an Arab he would simply say: "This is my staff".
The most important characteristic of ancient Ghazal, and more generally of all pre-Islamic poetry is that it belongs only to the realm of reality. Poets, and especially, modern ones, usually live in three worlds: reality, religion and a poetical world of visions, symbols and dreams. Religion provides them with mysteries, deep feelings, metaphysical beliefs, unlimited scope in time and in space and fulfils a vital need of their mind and soul. "It is" said Pascal "the nature of man to love and to believe". The world of dreams and visions enriches their creative imagination, enables them to make the most successful and illuminative combinations out of the items of reality, or to dive deeply into the realm of mysteries and symbols and to conceive the apparently desperate things of life in one single pattern. Far from that are the pre-Islamic poets. In their day-to-day activity they are stuck to reality and practical life, and so they stay in their poetry. No religious

(1) Wordsworth tells us that -

Poets, even as Prophets, each with each
connected in a mighty scheme of truth,
Have each his own peculiar faculty,
Heaven's gift, a sense that fits him to perceive
Objects unseen before ....
spirit, no wonder, no mystery, no illusion, nothing of the kind is to be found in their poetry even less so in
their Ghazal. Their Muse has rather short wings; it
flits from one material thing to another, only to suggest
comparisons, metaphors and metonymies. In this respect only
can we say that, in the eyes of the modern reader, the
ancient poetry suffers from lack of imagination.

(1) Admittedly a very few religious ideas and creeds found
their way into ancient poetry, but these were quickly
absorbed and lost in the general pattern. The devotion
of the hermit, for instance, and his long prayers all
through the night, influenced Nabigha in as much as they
gave him the opportunity of inventing a new exaggeration to
exalt his lady's charm, and of saying - as we have seen
before - that "if she made herself seen by such a hermit,
he would gaze at her charm and would be tempted by her
tender converse". Likewise, Al-A'isha who stayed a while
with the Christians of Najran, and certainly heard of the
Miracle of 'Azar who had been recalled to life by Jesus-
Christ, said of his mistress: "If she placed a dead man
on her neck he would come to life ... and people would say:
"What a miracle! A dead man has been recalled to life!".

(2) The work of Père Cheikho on Arabic Christian
Literature inspired Dr George Graf to undertake a further
survey of this subject. An introduction (pp 1-79)
defining Christian Literature in the narrow sense as that
which is distinctively Christian in authorship and
character, excluding secular literature although by
Christian writers followed by the question whether there was
any Arabic Christian literature before Islam. This is
answered largely in the negative and Louis Cheikho's
extravagant claims are refuted with candor. There were
pre-Islamic Arab poets but their product was mostly pagan,
and although there may have been liturgies in use, there is
no trace of actual translation of any considerable portion
of the Bible into Arabic before Muhammad's day. The
celebrated rock-inscriptions at Marib which testify to the
trinity are an outstanding exception, but they are not in
Arabic. Von Georg Graf: Geschichte der Christlichen
"Twas then" says 'Antara," her beauties first enslaved thy heart; those glittering pearls and ruby lips, whose kiss was sweeter far than honey to the taste. As when the merchant opes a previous box of perfume, such an odour from her breath came towards thee."

So we must look, in pre-Islamic Ghazal, for poetry of heavenly love, of mystical ecstasy, of conjugal love, or any other social sublimation. The love that this poetry sings and expresses is very simple — and perhaps the most genuine — it is purely and simply the feeling of poets when they are in love. Therefore their Ghazal is not a poetry of meditation or transcendence but a poetry of great feeling, in which they express their utter love, utter happiness, and utter grief, in a direct and uncomprising way; they allow of no half-measures. They are more keen on expressing themselves freely, fully and frankly than on pleasing their listeners and admirers.

"I wonder", says Abu Zu'aib, addressing his mistress," why I yearn for thee when I see thy camels gathered and ready to depart, whereas I avoid thee when thou art close by me?"

It is true that this realistic Ghazal is sometimes cynical but it is also true that this Ghazal is sometimes idealistic. Besides, cynicism and idealism about women are twin fruits of the same branch. They are the positive and negative poles

(1) E.H. Palmer's translation.
of a single thing, the soft and rough sides of the same cloth
and they may be found anywhere in the literature of romantic
love, and mixed in any proportion.

Now to sum up the literary traits of pre-Islamic Ghazal
we may say that it contains three parts: the first one is
the description of the ruined encampment of the loved one, full
of feeling and grief; the third part contains sometimes the
thought of the grown-old poet about love and women; and the
second part which is the largest, is the part where the poet
sings the beauty of his beloved. Here, the poet is more
interested in depicting her physical charms than in glorifying
her moral virtues, although he often wants us to believe that
she is 'a lady of high rank'. The ladies described in Ancient
Ghazal resemble each other, more often than not, in figure and
charms and generally answer the same descriptions. The poetic
figures "images, similes, metaphors, metonymies" used to portray
the beauty of these ladies are also similar, and rather frequent
in this Ghazal. They are also frequently, but repetition does
not debase them to the lifeless level of 'cliches'. The
heathen poets are always capable of handling them cleverly and
keeping them ever fresh. Some of the images are quite unfamiliar
to the inhabitants of cities, and prove convincingly that they
were invented by nomadic poets. The outstanding characteristic
of pagan Ghazal is that it belongs only to the realm of reality
and every day life. No religious spirit, no mystical ecstasy
no mysteries, visions or dreams are to be found in it. It only expresses the feeling of people who are in love, no less, no more. It is a poetry of deep, genuine and simple, feeling, expressed in a straightforward, realistic, but brief and rough-and-ready way. It is sometimes lightened by a touch of idealism, and sometimes soiled with a small spot of cynicism, but always deals with a romantic and lost love. It is often all the eternal song of a noble and generous people who love utterly and grieve bitterly, of the Arabs, who, if they were very often reluctant, in the pre-Islamic period, to be on their knees before their ladies, never failed to love them whole heartedly and to treat them chivalrously.
CHAPTER VII

THE EFFECT OF ISLAM ON EMOTIONAL LIFE AND GHAYAL.

Religion has its basis in the belief of a supernatural and infinite Power; and religious sentiment is deeply stirred when human beings conceive their connection with this Power. This connection may be conceived in different ways; and human beings may worship this Power because they fear it, or because they love it, or because they trust it and want to resort to it. Islam, we believe, belongs to the latter category; and the word 'Islam' itself means "The act of surrendering willingly", or 'voluntary resignation'. The part of 'will' in the Moslems submission to God has been overlooked by many European Scholars, but it is none the less essential for a real understanding of Moslem religion. It is because of this willing resignation that Islam differs from the fatalistic submission which characterises some religions of the Far East. It is also because of this willing resignation that all Moslems are asked to scrutinize their inner world, outroot its evil impulses, and strengthen their moral nature. This critical and purifying examination was called 'The greater Jihad' or 'The greater religious war', by the Prophet himself. Moslems differ only on the purpose of this scrutiny. A large number of them believe that the purpose is the creation of 'better men' and subsequently 'better society' in which human beings would be more capable of enjoying an honest life and showing at the same time a
perfect and voluntary surrender to the grace of Allah the Almighty. Others believe that the object of the 'greater Jihad' is to quell every inclination of human nature, towards earthly enjoyment, and to lead a perfect ascetical life. Both moderate and ascetical trends existed already during the life of Muhammad, and both were recommended by the Koran and Hadith, with, sometimes, preference for the latter.

"And seek" says the Koran, on the one hand "by means of what Allah has given you the future abode, and do not neglect your portion of this world, and do good (to others) as Allah has done good to you, and do not seek to make mischief in the land: surely Allah does not love the mischief-makers".

XXVII - 77.

On the other hand, the Koran says "O you who believe: shall I lead you to a merchandise which may deliver you from a painful chastisement? You shall believe in Allah and his Apostle, and struggle hard in Allah's way with your property and your lives; that is better for you, did you but know!"

LXI - 10,11.

The Prophet, in his private life, was ascetic. He renounced luxury and entertainment, all through his life, and expressed his renunciations very clearly in his saying:

(1) Moslem ascetism does not exclude marriage. Monachism is severely forbidden by Muhammad.
"Entertainment doesnot suit me, and I do not suit it, either". Even in his childhood music, wedding celebrations, enjoyments did not attract him at all.

However, Muhammad did not want his religion to be austere puritanism, in the eyes of his believers. Therefore, he exhorted them to practice moderation in the conduct of their life and affairs. "The best from among you" said the Prophet, "is neither he who neglects the Hereafter and sticks to this world, nor he who does the opposite. The best from among you is he who takes of this and of that".

Al Boukhari, in his 'Sahih' related that "A'isha, the Prophet's wife, had once conducted a bride to a man from among the Ansar. And the Prophet said: "O A'isha! why had you no music with you! For the Ansar love music".

Abu Bakr went once to see the Apostle at home, at the end of a pilgrimage. He found A'isha, with two slave-women playing the tambourine for her. He was displeased, and wanted to stop them. Then the Prophet said: "O Abu Bakr! Do not! we are on festival days!"

And when a slave-woman of Quraish vowed to herself to play the tambourine in 'A'isha's house, if the Prophet came back

(1)Nihayat-ul-Arab IV - 144
(2) Razi, Mafatih Al-Ghayb. I - 268
(3) Nihayat-ul-Arab. IV - 137.
safe and sound from war, she was allowed to do so by
Muhammad on his return.

And when 'Omar wanted to forbid some Abyssinians, who were playing and sporting themselves in the Mosque-yard, from doing so, Muhammad, who was watching them with 'A'ishah, did not agree with him. "Go on with your play!" said the Apostle to the Abyssinians.

The conflict between puritanical and moderate trends, which started during the life of Muhammad, continued during the rule of the Four Orthodox Caliphs. Except perhaps during the reign of 'Othman, the third Caliph, the puritanical tendency was rather predominant, in those early days. The great companions of Muhammad were divided, on this point, into two classes: The Moderates, like 'Othman, Ibn 'Abbas, Hassan, Khabbab ibn Al-Aratt, and Al-Zubeir ibn Al-'Awam; and the Puritans, like Abu Bakr, 'Omar, Ali, Ibn Maz'un, Abuzary, Shaddad ibn Aus, Abdallah ibn Amr and Abdullah ibn 'Omar.

Both parties, however, agreed on the necessity, for Moslems, of self-discipline and strife against instinct and emotion.

So social life grew stern, compared with the free and unorganised life of paganism; And Arabs had to give up most of their usual enjoyments. Gambling, wine-drinking, illegal

(1) Ibid IV - 140
(2) Ibid IV - 138
enjoyment with women, frequent attendance at singing and musical parties, were forbidden, and a rather unadorned - but more valued - standard of living was assigned to Moslem society.

The new standard admits the superiority of mind to emotion and instinct, and stresses the distinction between 'soul' and 'body'. 'Soul' is to be purified and protected against the unceasing sensual desires of the 'body'. All the impulses and emotions which impel us to act against divine law or against our reasoning are to be ruthlessly suppressed. They are sometimes grouped under the name of 'Hawa, or low desires; sometimes they are called 'Shahawat, or 'sensuous desires'; yet both 'Hawa, and 'Shahawat, have their origin in 'Nafs, or 'human nature', man's self. The wife of Al-Aziz (of Egypt) who fell in love with the Prophet Joseph, is reported, in the Koran, to have said: "I do not declare myself guiltless, most surely (man's) self is want to command him to do evil, except such as my Lord has had mercy on." XII - 53.

The Koran contains a large number of verses which exhort Moslems to disavow their 'Hawa' and 'Shahawat'; such as: "O David! surely we have made you a ruler in the land; so judge between men with justice and do not follow desire, lest it should lead you astray from the path of Allah." XXXVIII - 26.

(1) 'Othman, though he belonged to the moderate party, boasted of having never sung. Nihayat-ul-Arab. IV - 134.
"Your companion does not err, nor shall he fail, nor does he speak out of desire, it is naught but revelation that is revealed." LIII - 2,3,4.

"And as for him who fears to stand in the presence of his Lord and forbids the soul from low desires, then surely Paradise that is the abode." LXXIX - 40.

"And keep yourself with those who call on their Lord, morning and evening, desiring his good will, and let not your eyes pass from them, desiring the beauties of this world's life; and do not follow him whose heart we have made unmindful to our remembrance, who follows his low desires and whose case is one in which due bounds are exceeded." XVIII - 28.

Besides the Koranic Verses, a great deal of Hadith, exhort Moslems in the same strain, and warn them against their low desires and temptation.

The Prophet, imploring God, used to say: "O God! protect me from miserliness! Protect me from the temptation of wealth! Protect me from the temptation of this world."

To his followers, he used to say: "It is not poverty that makes me worry about you, but wealth. I fear that, when you possess it you will do as peoples, before you have done. You will waste your time in vain competition, and divert yourself from the right Path."

(1) Sahih al Bukhari, VIII - 144. (2) Ibid VIII - 162
"Wealth" said Muhammad to his followers, "is not great plenty of everything. It is surely the (wealth) of soul."

"The path leading to Hell" said the Messenger "Hides itself behind 'Shahawat' or "sensuous desires". And the path leading to Paradise can be seen behind austere duties."

The Moslem standard of life not only fights against 'Hawa' and 'Shahawat', which are the effects of 'Shaytan' or devil, on human nature; it also wants human nature to thirst after perfection. In fact, Islam, does not want its believers only to root out their low desires, and leave their place hollow; it wants them to finish their remarkable struggle with their inner world by surpassing their low desires with much nobler ones. He invites them to return good for evil, forgive their enemies and find balm for their wounded feelings in the assurance of being admitted to Paradise".

"The noblest of you" says the Koran, "in the sight of God is the nearest to 'Tuka', or 'religious perfection'. XLIX-13.

Among the natural tendencies that Islam wanted to quell vehemently is the sexual instinct. Moslem religion wanted people to (transcend) it, and substitute chastity for it. In fact, many factors contributed towards making Islam exceedingly strict about it. One of them, perhaps, is the fact that

(1) Ibid, VIII - 171   (2) Ibid VIII - 183
Moslem society is based on family institution, and not on tribal order like pagan society. Hence its great concern with laying down hard and fast rules aiming at the protection of family life; and hence its hostile attitude towards any tendency, whether social or innate, to encourage celibacy or break family happiness. Another reason might be mentioned here; it is the fact that Islam dawned and developed in cities; and moral life, in cities and towns, is usually more loose than that of rural areas. "As to what constitutes" says Prof. A Guillaume "the fundamental difference between nomad and settled religion in the realm of morals we may affirm that the former had a higher standard of sexual morality. Today in the desert women enjoy a respect and a freedom lost (1) by their sisters in the towns". Judging by the frequent and impetuous condemnations of adultery by the Moslem religion we might well believe that morals in Arabian towns were not, in this respect, very high before the Rise of Islam.

Another reason may be brought up here to account for the widespread adultery in pagan Arabia, especially in the towns where people were wealthier. It is, we believe, the presence of slave-women among the Arabs, and particularly among the settlers. These women did not belong to the tribe with which they lived. That is why the Arabs were not jealous about them.

(1) A Guillaume: Prophecy and Divination, P. 63.
On the contrary, they used to consider them as chattels, and sometimes indeed sell them to buy new ones. So the presence of these slaves in Arab society made the sin of adultery one of the daily problems of Moslem life. That is why the New Religion dealt with this problem with so much insistence, and adopted an uncompromising attitude towards it.

Ibn 'Abbas said that "pagan Arabs were hostile only towards undisguised adultery, that they tolerated concealed adultery. That is why God said in the Koran: "do not approach sexual sins, whether openly or secretly".

The Koran is full of verses which state the strength of sexual instinct, and warn Moslems against adultery. We confine ourselves here to making only a very few quotations:

"The love of desires, of women and sons and hoarded treasures of gold and silver and well-bred horses and cattle and tilth, is made to seem fair to men; this is the provision of the life of this world; and Allah is He with whom is the good goal of life". III - 13.

"And go not nigh to fornication, surely it is an indecency and evil is the way." XVII - 32

"As for the fornicatress and the fornicator, flog each of them, giving a hundred stripes, and let not pity for them detain

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(1) The problem of slave-women became, in this regard, as we shall see, more alarming in the Umayyad epoch.

you in the matter of obedience to Allah, if you believe in Allah and the last day, and let a party of believers witness their chastisement." XXIV - 2.

"Surely as for those who love that sexual sin should spread, respecting those who believe, they shall have a grievous chastisement in this world and the hereafter." XXIV - 19.

"And let those who do not find a match keep chaste until Allah makes them free from want out of this grace." XXIV - 33.

The prophetic condemnations of 'Zina' or adultery, are also numerous. One of them runs as follows: "He who commits adultery or drinks wine has his faith in God taken off his heart as easily and quickly as he takes off his own shirt."

Owing to this attention paid to sexual intercourse, the Arab woman obviously moved upon the stage of Moslem society with the spotlight of public opinion focussed upon her. The New Religion was, in fact, very anxious to find a sound solution to the problem of women. It is true that the Arab woman was free and independent before the Rise of Islam. Yet her freedom was - to a great extent - like that of a gazelle in the wilderness; always subject to attack by stronger and hungry beasts. The freedom of the Pagan woman surely did not protect her from frustration and injustice. The Arab raiders used to bring her away not as a captive but as a chattel. She actually did not belong to her tribe so much as to the tribe which
defeated them. Her family life was always shaky, uncertain, unsettled. Furthermore, her freedom did not help her to revolt against the disgraceful custom of some Arab tribe, of burning their baby-daughters alive. When Islam invited her to settle down in a firm and newly-organised family institution, under the protection of both her husband and Moslem law, she naturally lost a little freedom, but won, in return, security and established social position.

Moreover, some people who have made a study of the psychology of women were driven to believe that, more often than not, women prefer security and family life to irresponsible freedom and independence. This remark, based on sound observation, is borne out by the facts, at least as far as early Moslem women are concerned. For they welcomed the New Religion and, even more, abandoned their husbands and pagan homes and went to Medina to join Moslem society. "Women without their husbands" said Al-Khudri, the Prophet's companion, "used to come over to us, in Medina, to be converted into Islam. Then, we forbade them to come alone." (1)

While women were taking up their new position in Moslem society, they were very carefully examined; and different sides of their nature, were particularly stressed, now with a favourable opinion about them, now with bias against them.

(1) Tabari: Tafsir, V - 5.
Emphasis was laid on their virtues and defects by the Koran, Hadith, Some of the Prophet’s companions, and some poets of the time.

The Koran, for instance, sees in the Virgin Mary, the ideal woman. "And when the angels said: O Mary! surely Allah has chosen you above the women of the world. O Mary! keep to obedience to your Lord and humble yourself, and bow down with those who bow." III - 41, 42.

But, on the other hand, the Koran sees in 'Aziz’s wife the type of a corrupt and cunning woman.

"And she, in whose house he (Joseph) was, sought to make him yield to her, and she made fast the doors and said: "Come forward. He said: "I seek Allah’s refuge, surely my Lord made good my abode: surely the unjust do not prosper. And certainly she made for him, and he would have made for her, were it not that he had seen the manifest evidence of his Lord; thus it was that we might turn away from him evil and indecency surely he was one of our sincere servants." XII - 23.

The story of the Prophet Jospeh and the wife of the governor of Egypt is very interesting. It is the only love-story in the Koran. It sets up a high standard of chastity for newly converted Arabs, and shows that honest and pious men could resist the temptation of women.
As a matter of fact, Muhammad was fully aware - and surely worried - about the great ability of women to tempt men and lead them astray. Some of his Hadith run as follows:

"Two temptations make me worry about my followers: (1)
women and wine."

"When the devil finds no means to tempt human beings he does not despair, he resorts to the effect of women." (2)

Nevertheless, the Prophet was fully aware of the frailty of women, as well. He said to the leader of a caravan who wanted to ride quickly: "Go slowly! Take good care of the glasses!". (He meant the women in the caravan).

In another Hadith, the Prophet said: "The best of you are surely those who are the best (kindest) to their women." (4)

The picture that the Prophet drew of the ideal woman is to be found - to a great extent - in the following Hadith:

"If anything is worthy besides Moslem religion, it is surely a religious wife who pleased him when he looks at her, obeys him when he orders her, and keeps faithful to him and looks after his goods when he goes away."

Omar's idea of women was rather stern. He believed that women are like the pieces of meat that generous people put on a board, outside their houses, in order to let any needy passer-

(1) Nihayat-ul-Arab. II - 198. (2) Ibid II - 198
(3) Bukhari, Sahih VIII - 65 (4) Tirmizi X - 11
by take them. "Women" said 'Omar, "are like these pieces of meat. If not protected, anybody would take them."

In the poetry of this period, the virtues and vices of women were stressed alternately, according to the object of the poem. Hassan drew the most obscene pictures of the wives of the infidels of Mecca; but when he described 'A'isha, Muhammad's wife, he said:

"She is virtuous, wise, never suspected. She never speaks ill of other women."

To summarise the attitude of early Moslem society towards women we might say that, generally speaking, emphasis was laid more on their weaknesses than on their virtues, perhaps because of the perversion which pervaded pagan society before the Rise of Islam, and perhaps also, because of the puritanical trend which was then growing stronger and stronger.

Before examining the attitude of Moslem society, affected more and more by puritanism, towards Ghazal, we should do better by considering the attitude of Islam towards poetry in general.

As we have seen, in a previous chapter, the Koran mentioned poetry only in one verse which runs as follows:

"And we have not taught him poetry, nor is it meet for him; it is nothing but a reminder and a plain Koran." XXXVI.

In the five other verses bearing on this question the Koran challenged the infidels who had accused the Prophet of being
a poet, a diviner, or a mad-man, and passed the following judgment on poets:

"And as to poets, those who go astray follow them. Do you not see that they wander about bewildered in every valley? And that they say that which they do not do?" XXVI - 224.

We can see then that the Koran did not attack poetry, as a literary form; it rather attacked poets. Therefore, neither the Prophet nor his companions hesitated to listen to poems dealing with an interesting subject such as 'Hikma, or 'wisdom'. Muhammad actually admitted that "Eloquence might have the effect of magic, and poetry might contain wisdom." He also admitted that "sooner camels would cease to yearn than the Arabs would cease to compose poetry." He was once so pleased in listening to the verse of Umayya ibn Abi-L-Salt, while riding on his journey, that the reciter, called Al-Sharid, quoted then one hundred lines of Umayya's poetry.

"Poetry", in the Messenger's view, "like any other form of speech, might be good or bad". Muhammad and his companions used to enjoy its better examples. 'Omar, Ali and Ibn-'Abbas were great authorities on it. The two companions of the Prophet: Khubaib and Ibn Rawaha, recited verses of their

composition before falling on the battlefield, and when Ibn Maz'oon, another companion died, his wife composed an elegy upon him. And when some people said to Abi-Al-Darda, the companion of Muhammad: "why do you not compose verse, when as every man of Ansar does?" He recited two lines of poetry, of his own composition.

As a matter of course Muhammad and his companions loathed the sort of poetry which did not fall in with Moslem morals. However, they showed an often contempt for two species only: Obscene Ghazal which celebrated indecent experiences and could adorn adultery in the eyes of innocent people, and Satire. About the latter, they were well informed, especially when they were compelled to use it against the Infidels of Mecca who had composed distasteful poems against Moslems. The Prophet and his companions did not like the smutty language of Satire, nor the malicious defamations to which it led, and perhaps, all the Hadith that condemned poetry referred either to indecent Ghazal or Satire.

What Islam attacked more than these two reprehensible species of poetry was the pagan poets themselves. Many reasons drove Islam - and more precisely - puritanical Islam to adopt a very hostile attitude towards them. For one thing poets often allowed themselves to lie in their eulogies,

(1) Ibid I - 106. (2) Ibid I - 225
(3) Muslim ; Sahih VII - 50.
el gies and satire in order to stress their points, and
to emphasise the pictures they described; and, in order
to add flavour to their Ghazal or to their vain-glorious
poems they used to "say that which they did not do".

Furthermore, poets in pagan age were more than verse
makers. They were largely the 'spiritual' leaders of their
tribes, now the philosophers and moralists, now the legislators
and judges, now the political leaders and the like. Their
poetry was not 'art'; it was (supernatural knowledge) for
they claimed to be endowed with demonic power, and to have
their own 'Ra'iy, and 'Shaytan or 'devil'. Moreover, pagan
poets sang the pagan ideals, outlook and ways of living, or,
in a word, the very things that Islam was striving to destroy.
Subsequently, the new Religion looked down on their ideals,
denied them a supernatural power which belonged only to
Prophets, disapproved of the nomadic levity with which they
had treated Life's problems, and which did not suit the
civilised society that Islam was building up. Moslem
religion wanted the poets to confine themselves only to the
composition of decent poetry, and to leave 'their' other
functions to Moslem leaders, judges, and preachers.

All these reasons made Islam react unfavourably towards
pre-Islamic poets rather than on ancient poetry. These poets

(1) A. Guillaume. Prophecy and Divination. p. 243
were, for Moslem believers, the very representatives of a society which had been essentially pagan and sensuous, they could by no means fit in with Moslem way of life.

This was equally true of the poets themselves. Conversely they did not welcome the advent of Islam, and found the rigorous Moslem society unattractive, unsuitable to the development of their pagan Muse. As a result, only a few poets flourished in this Age. Some old masters, like Labid, for instance, gave up poetry and maintained to a permanent silence. Hassan, before the definite victory of Islam, set out to compose satire against the unbelievers, and afterwards, he nearly gave up poetry. Al Khansa went on making (harmless) elegies upon her two brothers. As for Ka'b ibn Zuhair and HuTay' A, they led in the Moslem Age, rather a pagan life, and were often, subsequently, the object of oppression and ill-treatment. The former was condemned to death before his very late conversion. The latter joined the revolt of 'Ridda; and when this revolt was put down by Abu Bakr, he spent his life visiting the remote places where something of pagan life was still alive, and composing eulogies for their Governors and leaders. He was always ready to compose satire against anyone who let him down; and when he did so unjustly against Al Zibrikan, 'Omar put him in prison.

Thus, the leaders of paganism felt like unwanted strangers in Moslem society. Worse still, they sometimes became, as we have just seen, outlaws, unavenged if they were
killed, or else locked in prison. As for their poetry, it was strictly censured by the Moslem Arabs who no longer looked on it for inspiration. The regrettable result was that the poets of the times did not put their art at the service of the Moslem movement. But for one poem (made) by Ka'b ibn Zuhair, no poet of this Age sang the high values of Islam, nor its victorious wars and incomparable advance all over the Middle East. So the glory of the Moslem religion, and the marvellous feats of the Arabs of this period remained, unfortunately, uncomposed poems.

As regards the attitude of Islam towards Ghazal, it was admittedly affected by its puritanical attitude towards both sexual intercourse and poetry in general. The decent Ghazal was not dismissed, and nobody objected to the amatory preludes of Hassan ibn Thabit, composed in Moslem times. Moreover, the eulogy that Ka'b ibn Zuhair composed for Muhammad, before his late conversion to Islam, and which was so much appreciated by the Prophet that he gave the poet his 'Burdj', or 'mantle' as a reward, began with a long Ghazal.

"Su'ad" said Ka'b, "hath departed. Therefore was my heart that day distracted, raving after her, irredeemably enchained."

"On the morrow of our separation, when she went forth, Su'ad was no other than a bleating antelope, with downcast glance, and eyes set off with collyrium".
"When she smiles she displays a row of teeth of glancing whiteness, as though it had been a damascene sword-blade, once tempered and then dipped a second time in wine".

"She remains not constant to any state she may have assumed even as the demon of the wilds varies in its costume!"

"She does not hold to any promise she has spoken, save as sieves hold water!

"The proverbial expression, (the promises of 'Urqub) is as it were a parable concerning her, and his promises were naught but lies!"

"I wish and desire that they would become present in an eternity; but what ails them, then? I feel the whole duration of time an impatience!"

"Let not, then, that deceive thee which she has bestowed, or which she has promised. Verily, desires and dreams are a delusion!"

The above quotation is only an extract from Ka'b's amatory prelude. What we should point out here is that the poet devoted all six lines of poetry to nothing but saying that his chaste lady might promise him and let him hope, but never did.

(1) more exactly: "When she smiles she lets (you) see a row of teeth set in a mouth the saliva of which is (as delicious) as spring water blended with wine"

she keep her promise. The emphasis that he laid on her chastity, notwithstanding her coquetry, had no antecedent in pre-Islamic Ghazal. The pagan poets who dealt with their maidens habit of breaking their promises did so only in one line, or at the most two. Ka'b himself would not have stressed this point in six lines had he not known that by so doing he would please the Prophet. Another point, though small, shows the bearing that Moslem Religion had already on Ghazal; it is that 'desires, and dreams' were described by the poet as to be 'verily a delusion', and this is exactly the Moslem viewpoint.

It was natural then that Ghazal, as long as it does not go beyond the boundary of decency, was permitted in the Early Moslem society. However, Isbahani, in his famous book 'Al Aghani (IV-98) reported that the caliph 'Omar forbade the poets to compose Ghazal of any sort. The story was related as follows:

"Omar forbade the poets to sing the beauty of women, and warned those who (would) contravened the rule that they would be flagged. The poet Han'd ibn Thor (pretending that he was celebrating the beauty of a tree) said:

"God forbade that this Sarha (-Tree) should be outshone by any other tree of 'Idah'.

"How pleasant is its fragrance! How sweet is the freshness of its shadow when the sun rises!"

(1) 'Sarha is a plant of the Pentenaria class. gen: any thornless tree. (2) 'Idah' are species of acacia trees gen: thorny trees. (3) This line does not exist in Aghani, but is mentioned by Ibn Rashik: Al'Omdah I-280
"Should I be to blame, if I indulge in singing the beauty of a Sarha?".

The question which arises as a result of this story is: why did 'Omar forbid poets to compose Ghazal? Were there indeed any valid reasons for his doing so?

It is well known that some Umayyad Caliphs occasionally prohibited Ghazal in Hijaz, during their reign, but why was 'Omar the first to take so hard a measure?

The books which related the story did not mention any reason. At all events, some of the reasons are apparent; they cannot be mistaken.

One of them, we believe, is that Love happened to be the cause of many offences and crimes, during the Caliphate of 'Omar.

"Nasr ibn Hajjaj, a handsome Arab of Hijaz, was driven away to Bosra, by 'Omar's order because he was suspected of being in love with a married woman". (1)

"A young man was found slain and thrown in the street of Madinah during the rule of 'Omar. The murderess, who was a young girl of Ansar, gave herself up and said that the young man was madly in love with her and that he had assaulted her." (2)

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(1) 'Uyun Al Akhbar IV - 24
(2) Nihayat Al Arab II - 179.
"A young man was ordered by 'Umar to join an expedition. Before leaving Madina, he asked his bosom-friend to look after his wife. Some time afterwards, the friend saw a stranger in the house of his absent friend; he was laughing and drinking and singing to the wife two lines of obscene Ghazal. The friend immediately killed him and then gave himself up."

"Amr ibn Ma'di Karib, the famous warrior told 'Omar a true love-story in which four men and one woman were killed".

Sahim, the Abyssinian slave of the tribe of Hashas, whose poetry was appreciated by the Prophet, was killed by his masters, during the reign of 'Othman, because he sang the beauty of their women.

These stories might be samples of the crimes caused by love, in 'Omar's time. It would not be remarkable if, among the measures he took to prevent illicit intercourse between men and women, he forbade poets to deal with Ghazal by any means.

Moreover, Ghazal, in this period, was used, for the first time, for another purpose than the celebration of the charms of women, and that purpose was satire, the sort of poetry of which Islam did not approve at all. Hamid ibn Thor, who wanted to

(1) *Iyyun-Id-Akhbar* IV - 116-117  
(2) *Nihayat Al Arab*. II - 181  
(3) *Ibid* II - 261
make a lampoon against two men of the tribe of Jurm, composed a fine Ghazal in which he showed his attachment to his beloved and then asked the two men to be his (medium) to her and to go and see her in disguise and, if she happened to be frightened by them they should assure her that they belonged to the tribe of Jurm which has never been known to make war on to frighten anybody. Accusing a tribe of being of no use in wars, and asking a man to play the shameful part of a medium between a lover and his beloved were too satirical in the Arab's eyes. It is rather suggestive that Hamid ibn Thor, who was the first to find a subterfuge to avoid 'Omar's ban of Ghazal, was also the poet who invented the mischievous and double-purposed Ghazal.

A third reason could be put forward here; It is that the Caliphate of 'Omar was, in the early history of Islam, the period of great conquests. Palestine, Syria, Iraq, Persia and Egypt were definitely conquered, during this period. It would be quite understandable if 'Omar, busy waging these large-scale wars with men and money, and sustaining them by highly virile morality and extreme religious devotion, asked the poets to stop composing Ghazal which sang, after all, rather effeminate feelings, and celebrated lazy and unmoslem-like enjoyments. Besides, singing the sweetness of the beloved or else the devoted attachment to one woman, at a time, when Moslem believers, through their

(1) 'Uyun Al Akhbar IV - 104.
incomparable devotion to God, and their total attachment to Islam and to the idea of establishing its sovereignty all over the world, were falling in the different battlefields ("like butterflies in the fire"), leaving distressed widows and orphans in Arabia, would certainly have been inappropriate, and would have been completely out of tune.

 Actually, Passion, which was becoming deeper and richer through the new religious life, was being driven into new and more dignified channels. Moslems who were asked to curb their desires, found a gratifying sublimation in the Love of God, His Messenger and Islam. This sacred love was much stressed by the Koran and Hadith; and when one realises how far the zealous Moslems went in their religious love one cannot fail to be impressed. The liberation of their love from the yoke of sexual instinct and its orientation towards a high religious aim was as spontaneous and rapid as it was amazing and imposing. As a result, the Moslem poets of the times were not able to adjust their old tunes to the religious love, quickly enough; yet this love can be traced in the late poems of Hassan and other companions of the Prophet, and more particularly in the poetry of the puritan 'Khawarej' or 'Dissenters' at the beginning of Umayyad period.

"The world, said Hassan, in his elegy upon Hamza, the Prophet's uncle, who was killed by the Unbelievers, "became dark

(1) This metaphor was used by 'Omar himself. Tabari. I.-18.
after your death, and the waning moon became black. But you will soon be very well satisfied with the meeting with God, in the Paradise where you will be welcome”.

In his elegy upon 'Othman, the Caliph-martyr, Hassan said: "They slaughtered an old man, on whose face you can see the traces of long prostrations, and who spent his nights praying and reading the Koran". (2)

Khubaib, a Prophet’s companion, sang the following verse before falling in battlefield:

“I do not mind being killed after becoming Moslem, and I do not care at all about the place where I shall be buried.

"I am giving my life to God and I hope that He will bless every part of me if I am cut in pieces (by His enemies)". (3)

Another outlet was provided by the New Religion for the growing passion of Moslems. It was the ‘Moslem friendship’. Pagan Arabs, of course, had known friendship, but they had been, on the whole, suspicious about indissoluble friendship. That is why, perhaps, they did not celebrate friendships between men in their poetry. The only thing they sang, with regard to this, was affectionate friendship with horses and camels. In fact, no literature, in the whole world, could outstrip Ancient Arabian poetry in the quantity and brilliance of its poems.

(1) Diwan, P. 930-31 (2) Ibid, P. 410
(3) Hilyat-ul-Awliya I - 113. (4) Except, perhaps, some of their elegies.
devoted to the description of horses and camels. But Islam, which refined Arab feelings and strengthened the sentiment of solidarity between Moslem believers, gave the sentiment of friendship a very good opportunity to develop.

Said the Koran to Moslems: "Remember the favour of Allah on you when you were enemies, then He united your hearts, so by his favour you became brethren." III - 102.

The Prophet stated that "one can never be a true Believer until one behaves towards his brother (in faith) as one behaves towards one's self".

The friendship of Muhammad and Abu Bakr, of Ansar and Muhajirin, in Madina were paragons in this field, and the description that 'Ali drew of his friend was a pattern of perfection. Moslems had to do their best to preserve their friendships. If their friends were unfair, or if they disappointed them, the Koran showed them what to do (then):

"And not alike are the good and the evil. Repel (evil) with what is best, when lo! between whom and you was enmity would be as if he were a warm friend." XLI - 34.

That is exactly what the poet M'an ibn Aus, who was one of the Prophet's companions, did when he quarrelled with his

(1) Nahj Al Balagha. III -
friend (who was also a relative of his). In the lengthy poem which he composed on this occasion we can read the following lines:

"He wanted nothing better than to defame me; while I would have died rather than to defame him."

"He insulted me in my absence, but I never insulted him."

"I patiently put up with all these things, because friendship and enmity between relatives make all the difference!"

"I went on being kind to him, and treating him as a mother treats her son."

"Until he put out the fire of enmity between us, and we became good friends again."

The emancipation of love from the bondage of sexual instinct favoured also the development of heavenly love. Its rudimentary prototype is to be found in the heart of all the Moslems who were capable of quelling their sexual instinct. The Koran showed that honest people like the Prophet Joseph could do it. The Koran also praised the Prophet John because he was "honourable and chaste and a prophet among the good ones." III - 38.

Muhammad mentioned, among the types of people who would be saved from the broiling heat of the day of Judgment and who would be admitted to take refuge in the divine shadow, the

(1) Diwan. P. 5. M'an has another poem in which he describes friendship. P. 36.
following kind of man: "who was sought to make himself yield to a beautiful and distinguished woman, and yet he said: No! I fear God."

The genuine heavenly love which adds a hotly inflamed passion to the suppression of sexual instinct found its first and foremost consecration in the Prophet's Hadith which runs as follows:

"He who falls in love and yet keeps chaste, and dies through lovesickness, will be (rewarded) as a martyr."

Unfortunately, heavenly love did not find its way into the poetry of this period. We have to wait till the Umayyad epoch to meet poets dealing with this pure passion and composing on it a new Ghazal bearing the Moslem stamp.

We see now that this period was not really favourable towards the development of Ghazal. It was a period of clash between two ideals: a carefree pagan one which was breaking down, and a serious Moslem one which was rising up. Furthermore, the development of puritanism in Early Moslem society made the position of Ghazal more critical. It took away much of its

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(1) Boukhari, Sahih, VIII - 292.

(2) This Hadith is in the spirit of the Koranic verse: "And let those who do not find a match keep chaste until Allah makes them free from want out of His grace." XXIV - 33.

(3) It would be fair to admit that some Arabs, in the Pagan period, had died from lovesickness; yet their love was not based on chastity, and their lovesickness grew fatal only because they could not marry their loved ones for some reason or other.
youthful, romantic ardour and put a critical, intellectual spirit in its place. But every movement has its extremes and its excesses. A great river is not judged by the foam of its surface. If certain austere attitude towards Ghazal, and poetry in general, was then on the surface, a mighty current was flowing steadily, like a river of life, through Arab poetry. Its effects, though sometimes unperceived in this period, became perfectly patent in the Umayyad epoch and those which followed. However, this period of the Orthodox Caliphate, did not end before Poetry had been rehabilitated. Arguments were gathered by the poets, and appropriate events were cleverly stressed by them to bring about this rehabilitation. The good services of Hassan and the story of Ka'b who had received the Prophet's mantle as a reward, were mentioned. Another story was frequently repeated. It was that of Laila bint Al Nadr who waylaid the Prophet and recited to him her poem in which she quietly reproached him for having killed her father. Muhammad, after listening, said: "If I had heard this poem before I should not have killed him".

The poet's struggle was indeed successful, and the study of the poetry in the Umayyad Age will show that it culminated to a complete victory.

(1) Al Bayan wal Tabyin III - 204.
CHAPTER VIII

1 - Literary Study of Ghazal in the times of Muhammad and the Orthodox Caliphate.

This period covered by our study of the Ghazal, in this chapter, begins with the Rise of Islam, and comes to an end with the assassination of 'Ali, the fourth orthodox Caliph. (661 A.D.)

In this period, as in the pre-Islamic one, it is rather difficult to group poets by any accurate standard. The most convenient classification would probably be to divide them into two groups: those who expressed the dominant spirit of the times and those who showed a secret or open rebellion against it.

The latter lived a pagan life in this Moslem period, at least as far as wine, women and song were concerned. Most of them lived far away from Madina, beyond the direct reach of the watching eyes of the orthodox caliphs, or the Prophet's companions, and some of them repented late in their life and became good Moslems like Al-Ukeaisher and Abu-Mihjan.

Al-Ukeaisher lived in Kufa. He was, according to Aghani X-85, profligate and given to drink. He was impotent, but composed a great deal of obscene verse about his sexual power, to cover this defect.

Abu Mihjan was a noted warrior, but addicted to drink.
He was punished and exiled as a result of it. He wanted his people to have him buried, after his death, near a vine "that its roots might drench his bones (with wine)". Aghani XXI - 211

From among this group we may also mention Abu Zubaid Al-Ta'i and Al-Najashi.

The former was a Christian, before Islam, and kept his religion during this period. He also was a great drunkard. He used to drink with his friend Al Walid ibn Okba, the Governor of Kufa under the caliph Othman; he once crossed the Mosque while completely drunk.

The latter, as described by Khizanat-al-Adab, was weak in religion. He drank wine in the month of Ramadan and was flogged by the Caliph 'Ali.

We want to make only two points about these poets and all the others who might have belonged to their group, according to our classification. First, they seemed neither to have well understood nor approved of the intervention of religion in their personal lives. In the Pagan epoch, law and rules had been laid down to regulate the relations between Arabs individually, or else between tribes; but by no means to stipulate the relations between the Arab and his own self.

(1) Khizanat-ul-Adab IV - 143.
Then nobody was allowed to reproach him for drinking wine, instead of water, or milk, as long as he paid for it and did not harm to any of his fellows. Islam, on the other hand, took a diametrically opposite attitude. It prohibited the drinking of wine, and he who dared contravene this order was officially flogged.

Abu Mihjan was puzzled by this religious attitude. To the wife of the Governor, who had asked him about the reason for which her husband, Sa'd ibn Abi Walid, put him in prison, he said: "I have not had food and drink by illegal means; he put me in prison only because I had drunk wine, although I paid for it." (1)

Following the same line of reasoning, some pagan poets were driven to believe that even fornication was harmless with the consent of the two partners as long as it was kept secret and did not turn into a public scandal. Ibn 'Abbas referred to this pagan outlook when he said:

"Pagan Arabs were hostile only towards undisguised adultery, that they tolerated concealed adultery. That is why God said in the Koran: "Do not approach sexual sins, whether openly or secretly". (Tabari, Tafsir, V - 14). (2)

To this statement we could add what has been reported

(2) Tafsir Al-Tabari V - 5. (1) Aghani XXI - 215
by some historians, that some people of the tribe of Huzail, had asked the Prophet to authorize fornication.

The story of Ubayred Al Riyahi, who lived about the beginning of the Umayyad epoch, might illustrate this pagan viewpoint. Accused of being in love with the wife of Sa'd Al Ibl and reproached by his people for it, he composed verses which started with the following line:

"Sa'd declaimed that his wife had committed adultery (1)
O Sa'd! wives sometimes do so".

If the poets of this group did not altogether share this point of view, they were more ready to agree on the little harm there was in committing adultery with prostitutes. Poets given to drink used to meet that type of woman in wine shops; and the description drawn by Ukaisher of one of them, in return for her kindness and to please her, after she had given him good wine, was more obscene - and perhaps more witty - than that of 'Al-Mutajarrida' by the Pagan Nabigha. "This" said then the woman to Ukaisher, "is the best poetry I have ever heard about myself.".

The second point we want to make about this group of late pagan poets is that they attempted to interpret some Koranic verses to their advantage, merely to justify their religious

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(1) Aghani XII - 12 (2) Ibid X - 94
sins, particularly that of wine drinking. The following story related by Aghani XXI - 219 show one of their attempts:

"A group of men" reported Aghani, "were brought to 'Omar amongst whom was Abu Mihjan. All of them were drunk. 'Omar asked them: "Why do you drink wine when God and his Messenger have forbidden it?" They replied that it was not forbidden, for God Says: "Those who believe in Islam and do good deeds will not be blamed for what they partake, if they are pious, believing in God and going good deeds". V x 94. 'Omar then asked the advice of his companions concerning this matter 'Ali said: "We must flog them!" While they were being flogged Abu Mihjan recited verses, one hemistich of which runs like this: "I shall not do without wine even for one day". 'Omar declared: "Now you are expressing your thoughts about wine in this stubborn way, you will get further punishment. 'Ali answered 'Omar: "You cannot do that, for you are not allowed to punish a man who merely expressed intention, if he has not actually done it, especially as God said about the poets: "They say that which they do not do". XXVI - 224.

(1) Aghani XXI - 219.
The poets, as we see, did not succeed in their attempt. However, they did consider their case thoroughly lost, for later, they made the most of 'Ali's use of the latter Koranic verse to their own advantage.

With this group of poets we can contrast the Moslem poets of this period, who were thoroughly converted to Islam, and whose poetry was influenced by their religion to a greater or lesser extent. Somewhere between this group and the late pagan one, we might place Al Hutay'a, the great poet of the times. Actually, if he did not have a religious spirit, he, at least, conformed the larger part of his poetry, especially his Ghazal, to the requirement of the New Religion.

Among the poets who belonged to the Moslem group, or in other words, those who expressed the dominant spirit of the times, we can mention Abdu ibn Rawaha, Ka'b ibn Malik, Hassan ibn Thabit, Ma'n ibn Aws, Rafi' ibn Hureim, Alnabigha Al Ja'afdi, and Ka'b ibn Zuhair who was converted at a late date. Islam had an external and internal effect on the poetry of most of them.

(1) Al Farazdah, the famous poet in the Umayyad epoch, recited to the Caliph Suleiman, a Ghazal in which he admitted having committed fornication. "How dare you confess that in my presence? Do you not know that I am responsible for the application of Moslem law in your case?" "Yes" said Al Farazdak. "Only I am" poet, and God said about poets that "they say that which they do not do". Uyun Al Akbar IV - 107.
The eternal effect came from the presence of Moslem society on poets. This society— as we have seen— was not very favourable towards Ghazal, and one of its first effects upon the poetry of this period was the cramping of the part given to Ghazal, in the odes, or else its entire omission, in a large part, of the poems which have come down to us from this period.

Among the poems composed by Hassan, after his conversion to Islam, only five had a classical amatory prelude; three of them were composed on the occasion of the battles of Badr or Uhud i.e. in the first three years of the institution of Islam in Madina. Besides these five poems, the Diwan of Hassan contains two other poems which begin with two or three lines describing the abandoned abode of the beloved and one single line only of Ghazal. The remainder which is indeed a large proportion, has no Ghazal at all, whether it deals with eulogy, satire or vain glorious theme. It might be held that most of the latter poems had their Ghazal omitted by ancient reciters— which cannot always be proved— but the fact remains nevertheless most striking, owing to the length of Hassan's diwan.

The poem recited by Alzibrikan, when he visited the Prophet at the head of the delegation of Tamim, had no Ghazal. Neither had the eulogy that Ibn Al-Ziba'ara, the poet of the Unbelievers, 

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(1) Diwan Hussan. Published by A. Barkuki. Cairo. 1929.
made for Muhammad, when he was converted to Islam. Al-Hutay' 'Ah composed a number of eulogies and satires without Ghazal during the Caliphate of Abu Bakr and 'Omar, and his poem that he composed for the latter begins with only three lines in which he described the 'dream vision' of his beloved. Likewise, the poem that Ma'n ibn Aus composed for 'Omar, begins with only one line of Ghazal which runs like this:

"He (the poet) was haunted by a dream vision in the place called 'Zat-al-Jarathem'. So his two friends slept but he was unable to sleep."

However, the lack of concern shown by the poets of the Moslem group towards Ghazal in the prelude of their odes was not entirely disastrous. On the contrary, it saved it from being dealt with by poets who were not suited for it, and who were driven to treat it merely to follow the traditional way of Ancient poets. Being handled almost only by people who enjoyed it, it was often treated separately, sometimes in a few lines, sometimes in very short poems, so little by little it became a literary form apart, and later, at the beginning of the Umayyad age, it acquired complete independence.

The stern attitude of the puritanical Moslem society towards Ghazal, which led to its shrinkage and disappearance

(1) Aghani X - 164.
from the ancient ode, also led the poets to seek new ways of celebrating their love, more adaptable to the strictness of their society. The poet Hamid ibn Thor - as we have seen - lent the charms of his beloved to a Sarha (tree) of which he celebrated the beauty, when Ghazal was forbidden by the caliph 'Omar. This peculiar sort of metonymy was used again by the same poet who, pretending to be describing a pigeon with her young, composed another specimen of the new Ghazal.

"If I want, I can listen to songs sung by one whose necklace is not an ornament made with coins fashioned by a jeweller. I can do so in Bisha, Nakhil, Tathlith or anywhere. This pigeon keeps cooing to her young one, and, in the morning she leaves him, with much lamenting to seek food for him. He is for her the only companion in her loneliness, and when he coos through happiness or sadness, he causes her to weep upon him.

Another device was used by the poets to make Ghazal more tolerable to puritan Moslems. It was the emphasis laid by the poets on the chastity of their loved ones. So they put the stress, in their amatory preludes, on the 'miserliness' of their beloveds, in love-affairs, on the fact they they never keep their promises - a poetical way to suggest their chastity -

(1) Ibid IV - 97 and 'Omda I - 280.

(2) Aghani IV - 97.
and also on the fact that the poets' pictures of their maidens were often made after a dream vision.

Ka'b ibn Zuhayr, in his noted poem 'Banat Su'adu' which he recited to the Prophet, when he wanted to embrace the Moslem religion, began with fourteen lines of Ghazal, yet, as we have seen before he devoted seven lines of them simply to saying that his beloved never kept her promises.

Ma'n, portraying his beloved, said: "The ties which link me to No'm are never strong (she always wears them out); I did not obtain anything from her except procrastinated promises". When he passed to describing the women of his tribe travelling in the caravan, in the same poem, he said:

"These travelling women of the tribes of Aus and 'Othman are as (beautiful) as statues. They are also chaste. Never did they make their uncles or husbands ashamed of them".

Al-Hutayfah depicted the dream-vision of his beloved in most of his amatory preludes. One of these, which occurred in his poem to 'Omar, runs as follows:

(1) Al-Jamhara. Cairo. (2) P. 148-149. (2). To make his listeners interested in the description of his beloved, after so much stress on her unkindness, Ma'n equally stressed her coquetry and says: "She let me see her and approached me kindly and then ended her kindness by running away, she did that either to fascinate me or to slay me cruelly.

"Umana abandoned thee, though she sometimes asked about thee, and let thee see her in thy dream."

"Her vision astonished thee by its visit when though has gone asleep and refused anything but fading away in the early morning."

"She belonged to the tribe of *Kinana* and lived far away. She nearly started a friendship when she wanted to destroy it".

In two other lines, beautifully composed, Al Hutay'Ah explained his attitude towards his beloved. It consisted of love awkwardly hidden, and great admiration, without the least hope.

"Do you hide your love from Hind from everybody? Well! (it is useless) for you are hiding a very well known thing."

"You will not have, from her, anything more than a look at her, just as a needy man looks at a wealthy one."

Al Nabigha Alja'di described his love more curiously. In the amatory prelude of the poem which he recited to the Prophet, he described his coyness in the presence of his beloved, and showed how easy to please he was in his love:


(2) *Diwan*. p. 160.
"The days of our friendship slipped away, only my extreme yearning for her has stayed."

"I am now content to look at anyone of her neighbours, when seeing her becomes impossible."

"I bestow my love for her on her neighbours, although they are neither my tribesmen nor my friends."

"When I met her, I felt that the mantle of coyness was thrown over me, whereas the mantle to which I had been used was: pride and authority."  

"I conceal her name" said Al Nabagha in another verse. "but God knows all concealed things."

Such Ghazal, if it did not please Moslem puritans, was, at least, unlikely to displace them, because it did not occur very often at the beginning of the poems, and when it did, it put the stress on chastity and depicted most frequently a dream vision.

We must admit that these traits which we have been pointing out in the Ghazal of Moslem poets, and which were favoured by the Moslem society, had not been unknown to the pre-Islamic poets. However, they had never been used to obtain the approval of public opinion, and they had never before been emphasised so much. On the other hand, we must

admit also that the development of the new tendencies in Moslem Ghazal was not due only to an external factor, more precisely to the pressure of Moslem puritanical life. It was equally due to an internal factor; because the authors of the new Ghazal were Moslems. The New Religion found its way into their hearts and modified their outlook on life and morals. Their conceptions, thoughts, feelings became different from those of heathen poets; and subsequently their ideas and emotions about women and beauteous things changed as well. If they praised the chastity of their ladies, they did not do so merely because chastity was highly appreciated by Moslem society, but surely because they also appreciated it themselves, because they believed that it was a very great virtue. In a word, when they attributed to their ladies virtues and qualities praised by Islam they did not do so only to please the Believers but also to please their loved ones, and themselves together. It was in this spirit, we believe, that Me'n said of his beloved:

"If she had been asked about her lineage and merit, she could have admitted 'Glory'. For, both her Moslem religion and the feats of her fathers could lay stress to her claim." (1)

The picture drawn of 'A'isha by the poet Hassan shows how far the external and internal factors of Islam had affected the Ghazal.

(1) Diwan, p.5.
"She is chaste, wise and above suspicion. She never speaks ill of honest women."

"She is the wife of the best man in the world, as far as religion and distinction are concerned, who is the Prophet who shows the right path and teaches the highest virtues.

"She is a descendent of the tribe of Lu'ay ibn Ghelib, well-known for its noble deeds and never-fading glory."

"She is well-bred. God refined her nature and purified it from evil and mischief."

To study more closely the effects of the internal factor of Islam on Ghazal, we must examine the two following quotations. The first one is three lines of Ghazal composed by Ma'in, and runs as follows:

"She said: I wonder why he is growing thinner. Is it through deep love or did he become an ascetic Moslem?.."

"She also said, to stir up my passion and inflame my love: "I think that the mantle of your youth is worn out?".

"Whereas I am indeed preserving my soul from the madness of love which leads to death. I hope that God will help me."

The second quotation consists of two lines of Al-Huta'ah. They run as follows:

(1) Diwan, p. 324.
(2) Diwan, pp. 26-29.
"In her ruined abode, I remembered my youthful foolishness. My tears then ran down quickly, while my companions were waiting for me."

"They said: Does a Moslem who sincerely devoted himself to God's sake, weep through yearning (for a woman)?"

Both quotations are extremely interesting to show the very new influence of religion on Ghazal. Such quotations were admittedly rare in the amatory poetry of this period. Nevertheless, they point out the effect of Islam coming from within the poet's selves, from their hearts and souls, modifying their poetry, and infusing a new spirit into it. A spirit of self-discipline and a zest of a new love, high and divine, growing in the poet's heart, run through these quotations, and make them thoroughly different from the pre-Islamic Ghazal. These two quotations show us two poets who were trying to look deep inside themselves for reasons of self-discipline, and also in order to introduce Moslem judgments to their inner world.

Now after studying the changes which occurred in Ghazal, as a literary form, and detecting some of the new tenderness.

(1) Diwan, p. 115. This Ghazal is the beginning of a eulogy composed by Al-Hutay'ah to the Governor of Madina, during the reign of Mu'awaiya, the first Umayyad caliph. By this time, Islam must have struck deep roots in the poet's heart, and taken away the reluctance that he had shown at the beginning of his conversion.
which developed within it during the period of the Prophet
and the Orthodox caliphate, let us turn to see if any
change occurred in its traditional theme and object, as well.

The main theme of the pre-Islamic Ghazal was love. In
the period that we are studying now, it soon became love
trimmed and controlled by Moslem ethic. This is not, however,
the only change, for Moslem strictness yielded to the rapid
formation of a prejudiced opinion about love-affairs, mostly
because sentimental intercourse became no longer a private
affair, but a state business; and the least suspicion about
it might turn it into a public scandal, to say nothing of the
terrible punishment inflicted on guilty lovers. As a result,
the majority of people preferred to say nothing about their
love, or their happiness in their conjugal life. Only if they
came to divorce, for some reason or other, did they permit
themselves to deal with this private question in public and,
if they were poets, to write verse about it, if only to
average their wounded pride and to justify their behaviour
in the eyes of the public. This kind of Ghazal - if it
might be called so - had not been much developed in the Pagan
period, and its subject - divorce - might be considered as
a new theme developed in Moslem Ghazal.

The poet Ma'in treated this theme twice. In the first
treatment he expressed his deep regret at having divorced his tragic wife; in the other he scolded his old wife who had wanted him to divorce her.

The poet Mutammim ibn Nuayrah annoyed his wife by his continual and demonstrative expression of grief at his brother's death. She asked him to divorce her; he did so, and then said:

"I said to Hind when I was displeased with her behaviour: Is that a (strange) sort of coquetry or rather the conduct of the wife who hates her husband?"

"Or do you want divorce? yea, I can stand every separation, after being separated from my brother."

Another new theme, far less congenial, found its way into the Ghazal of this period, and assigned a new object to some of its poems. It was satire, which found, in obscene Ghazal, an efficient way of ridiculing women and causing shame and disgrace to their families or tribes. What encouraged the poets to use Ghazal as satire is presumably the attitude of women themselves towards love-poetry. The majority of them, realising the discredit into which illegal love and some kind of love poetry were brought by Moslem puritans, did not want anybody to celebrate their charms. The idea of a public scandal, even an unjustified one - scared them frightfully. Some women went further, in this regard and denounced their

(1) Aghani X - 168. (2) Ibid. XIV - 71.
post-lovers. Abu Mihjan was a victim of such a denunciation when he fell in love with a married woman from among the Ansar, in Medina. He did his best to meet her, but all his attempts were in vain. Then he disguised himself and worked with some masons who were building a wall close by her house. When he saw her he recited verse which began as follows:

"I looked at her, although a great fear of God prevented me from (courting) her."

Her husband reported him to the caliph 'Omar who, then deported him to the isle of Hadawda.

The attitude of women towards love-poetry being so, it was quite understandable that some poets made the most of it in their satire. Hassan ibn Thabit chose the obscene Ghazal for this purpose. To Hind bint 'otba, one of the woman leaders in the Kuraïsh's wars against Islam, he said:

"Whose baby is that one thrown in the dust, without cot, in the place of Batha?"

"A White unmarried woman of the tribe of 'Abd Shams, with smooth cheeks, gave birth to him."

"And ran away scared and crying to see her (lover) Suyyah" O Hind! you must be very furious."

"The baby is very similar to his mother except his dark colour which denotes his black, fuzzy-haired father."

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1) Aghani XXI - 210 (2) A Great district in the city of Mecca. (3) Suyyah was a black slave with whom Hind was accused of being in love. (4) Diwan. 157.
The poet Harun, on the contrary, chose - as we have seen before - the framework of a decent Ghazal to satirize two men of the tribe of Jurm.

The use of Ghazal as a satire - as we shall see later - grew more frequent in the Umayyad epoch, and poets used decent and obscene themes alike for that purpose.

To summarize the effect of Islam on the development of Ghazal we can say that for one thing it reduced the part played by Ghazal at the beginning of odes to insignificance or even caused its complete absence; that it drove the poets to depict their ladies chastity as 'miserliness' in love-affairs, and reluctance to keep their promises, more than anything else; that it induced the poets to quell their passion or else to hide the true name of their mistresses and to use metonymies such as 'tree' or 'pigeon' to sing their beauty or to pretend to be describing a mere dream vision of them. Furthermore, two new uses of Ghazal became frequent in the period that we are studying. They somehow debased Ghazal, and made it deal with uncongenial things such as divorce and satire. In a word, Islam, directly or indirectly has rather 'negative' effects on Ghazal up to this point. Therefore, it is now time to see if it had also 'positive' effects on Ghazal, if it added new richness and 'positive' themes to it.

(1) 'Uyun al-Adabar IV: 104
We have already seen above in two quotations taken from the poetry of Ma'in ibn Aus and Al-Hutay'ah, that two tendencies were showing themselves, although hesitatingly, in the Ghazal of this period: the tendency to purify passion, and the tendency to divert it to a divine love. Both tendencies, although they were fully and beautifully developed in the Umayyad epoch, were not very noticeable in the early Moslem age, and the lines of poetry which clearly expressed them were rather scarce. These two tendencies, being actually the only 'positive' effects, that we can detect of Islam on the love poetry of this period we must now try to see why they were so faint, and why Islam did not have a more invigorating and enlightening influence on the Ghazal of the early Moslem society.

Of course, we do not want to deal here with the influence of Islam, particularly the Koran and the Hadith, on the language of poetry. It is well known that the poets were deeply impressed by the neat, limpid, fascinating style of the Koran and the Hadith, and equally by their original figures of speech. What we really want to consider now is the new ideas and the religious spirit brought about by Islam in order to discover the genuine factors which deterred them from entering the domain of the poetry of this epoch.
As regards the ideas, we find at least two deterrent factors: The first is that poets were not warmly welcomed by the early Moslem society. The second is far more important and often overlooked, it is the fact that the new ideas brought about by Islam were expressed in a highly achieved style which proved more eloquent and impressive than any poetry that the Arabs had even known. The Koran was so sure of its unattainable eloquence that it challenged the Arabs to imitate it.

"Say: If men and Jinn should combine together to bring the like of this Koran, they could bring the like of it, though some of them were aiders of others." XVII - 88.

Furthermore, all the Moslem ideas were expressed fully, clearly and exhaustively in the Koran. Nothing was missed, and none of its ideas needed, in the eyes of the Holy Book, to be developed or improved. "We have not neglected anything in the Book." VI - 38.

Besides, it was a very grievous sin to introduce the least alteration into the Koranic scripture, and the poet who naively attempted to do so, taking the Koran for a new kind of poetry, was scolded by the Prophet.

"When the poet Hadrami ibn 'Amir" said the author of Khizanat-ul-Adab - embraced Islam and became one of the

(1) When Hassan attempted to treat some religious ideas in his poetry, just to please Moslem society he failed. He produced poems so weak and insipid that he induced Al-Asma'i, the Abassid scholar, to believe that "poetry is good only when it deals with wicked themes". (2) III - 392
Prophet's companions, he learned the chapter of the Koran, which begins with the word 'Abasa. He added to this chapter the following verses: "And God bestowed on the pregnant woman the blessing of giving birth to a living creature." The Prophet then said to him: "Do not add anything to the chapter!"

This second factor obviously prevented the poets from dealing with the Moslem ideas, and compelled them to continue, as far as possible, on the ancient themes of Pagan poetry. In Ghazal, they felt quite happy to adorn the moral picture of their loved ones with Moslem virtues, and were content to produce that kind of Ghazal which we have studied above, and which is indeed a strange mixture of sensuous pagan passion and Moslem morality.

We might add here a third factor which is related to all religions not only to Islam. It is a historical fact that poetry does not always agree with religion. Sometimes they are incompatible. Religion brings about creeds and ideas and new outlooks on life, and wants people to believe in them; while the poet wants to go beyond the religious framework to express himself freely and independently. He wants to release his personality from chains, whether religious or conventional, to achieve its full and absolute development. "Arts" said Nietzsche "raise up their head when religion loses ground."
The objection that we might expect here is that the poets of the early Moslem period, if they felt repelled from treating religious or philosophical themes, should, at least, have expressed the new ideal of their society, established by Islam. They surely would not need to go beyond the religious boundary to praise the life of order, peace and high morality that Islam was then striving to establish in Arabia. Besides, a few poets including Hassan, Ka'b, Ma'n, Al Hutai'ah, touched upon this new ideal of social and individual life, only very lightly. Why then did they not go further and draw on it more adequately and more often?

The answer which could be found to this objection is that the new ideal before it finds its expression in poetry, must first establish itself in the poet's life. The poets must begin with their own souls, to discipline and enlighten it, and make it assimilate the new ideal, before expressing its beauty and value in literature. "He that would hope to write well hereafter in laudable things," said Milton, "ought himself to be a true poem; that is, a composition and pattern of the best and most honorable things." To be so, and to assimilate the new pattern needs indeed, a longtime perhaps, and can by no means be done all at once.

As regards the religious 'spirit' and the cause of its absence from the poetry of the times, it would be better to
say first only a few words about its true nature. As a matter of fact it does not exist independently like moral, philosophical ideas or religious dogmas and creeds. Yet all these things could have the religious 'spirit' if they were conceived intensively and inflamed by an infinite passion. Enthusiasm, excessiveness, infiniteness give the religious 'spirit' its mystical character. On the other hand, strictness and puritanism could not favour the religious 'spirit' because they cling to measure, order and limits. Therefore, the religious 'spirit', though it would fit in perfectly with love poetry did not find its way into the Ghazal of the early Moslem period. It had to wait until the Umayyad epoch to be expressed by the 'Udhrite' who sang their intense, infinite passion.

Now that we have considered the effects of the New Religion on Ghazal, we can trace the main line along which the Arab love poetry has been developing. The pagan poets expressed their passion openly and spontaneously, but the hardness of their life and their practical outlook prevented them from going to excess. Islam enlarged the Arabs' passion,

(1) We might however detect some signs of the growth of intensive, infinite love, during the early Moslem period, in prose sentences such as that addressed by a woman to the handsome Mas' ibn Hajjaj: "my love for you is so big and so intense that if it were beneath you it would carry you; and if it were above you it would protect you from the heat. (of the sun) Khizanat-ul-Adab. IV - 64.
made it richer, purer and deeper, but the puritanical tendency checked it and did not allow it a full, free expression. During the Umayyad epoch the Arabs' love and sentiments grew still sounder, purer and ever more fertile, and life became easier and more secure, and the grip of puritanism grew looser, so that the poets of this period, generally speaking, were capable of expressing their feelings frankly, fully and intensively.

With regard to the style of Ghazal, it passed from the crude, creaking, nomadic expression of paganism, that echoed the sound of those everyday occupations which accompanied the work of food getting, to a cleaner, clearer and neater style in which the influence of the Koran was undoubtedly evident. In the Umayyad epoch it grew still clearer and became so elegant and so melodious that some critic compared its effects upon human hearts with that of 'magic' or 'wine'. It possessed such effect indeed, as might possibly compensate for the 'wine' forbidden by Islam.
2 - Excerpts from the Ghazal of the period of Muhammad and the Orthodox Caliphs.

I - Abdullah ibn Rawaha.

"Do I remember 'Noufoud' since she has gone away, for she made my heart ache when I was young."

"I was then like a sick man who walks among people but hides his illness for a long while."

"She captivated my heart the first time when she showed me a face with flat cheeks, and a comely neck."

"She adorned her neck with beautiful pearls and necklaces."

"If she is now becoming ungenerous towards me and her former friendship is becoming worn out,"

"Well, I swear on your life, that the friend who does not keep her promises, and who is not generous does not suit me."

II - Al-Hutai' ah

"This is the encampment of a girl with smooth flat cheeks like a gazelle taking refuge in a thicket, and she is scented with perfume, and her chest with musk."

(1) Abdullah ibn Rawaha was one of the Prophet's companions, He took part in many battles fought by Islam and was killed at the battle of Mu'Ta. (630 A.D.) Only a part of his poetry and Rajaz has come down to us. (2) Jamhara p. 125.

(3) Al-Hutai' ah, whose life extended for 60 years into Moslem period, spent most of his life in Yamama (south west of Najd) and Iraq. On occasions he went to Mecca and Madina to make eulogies to their noted men. He dies in (650 A.D.) during the reign of Mu'ayya.
"And when she rises up to go to her tent, she breathes with difficulty, like one short of breath."

"When you parted from her, despite your capacity for enduring partings, the tears came quickly from your eyes like pearls."

III - Hassan ibn Thabet.

"A beautiful reserved girl captured my heart and made it ache in dreams, she let her lover drink from her fresh and smiling mouth."

"Which tastes like musk mingled with pure rainwater or like wine as red as the sacrificed blood of animals."

"Her back is broad and her hips are shapely. She is somewhat naive, and does not swear readily."

"She is made with well-covered hips which are like two marble pedestals when she sits down."

"And she is so lazy that she goes to her bed with difficulty, but then shows her soft and beautiful figure."

"During the day I remember her constantly, during the night I am fascinated by her in my dreams."

(1) Diwan, p.70.  (2) Hassan ibn Thabit, whose life extended for years into Moslem period, devoted his poetry to defend Islam, and to satirize the Unbelievers during the Prophet's life. During the upright caliphate reign, he realized that he had become unwanted by the growing puritanical society of Moslems and confined himself to remembering his happy old days. He dies in (660 A.D.) during the reign of Mawiyah.
"I swore never to forget her and to remember her till my bones are hidden in my grave". (1)

"Did the remains of the ruined encampment in the desert stir my memories? Yes, and there places have been effaced through the effects of dark rain-clouds."

"The huge winds which trailed their flowing garments over them, leaving nothing there but a crooked tent peg."

"These remains used to be the abode of the young girl whose coquetry charmed my heart, and from whom it was difficult for me to obtain any favour."

"She had the black eyes of a gazelle which grazes in a thicket with her baby, watching wide-eyed for ostriches." (2)

IV - Ma'n ibn Aus.

"No'm, my love, and the delight of my eyes, is in our encampment, she is the best among those who walk on the earth."

"She made my heart crazy for her in the past and the sickness she caused it to suffer has no equal."

(1) Diwan, P. 362. (2) Diwan, p. 313.

(3) Ma'n ibn Aus was one of the great poets who lived in pagan and Moslem period. He was with the poet Ka'b ibn Zuhair, in the belief of the Caliph Mo'awiya, the greatest poets of Islam. He died in Madina in 682 A.D.
She attracted me with her eyes, which were like the eyes of an oryx in a thicket, and by her neck was like a young gazelle, except that it was adorned with a necklace."

And also with her thick hair which was swathed up in a top-knot and which trailed like a vine when she let it down."

"Her hips were high and her legs were shapely and her ankles were well-rounded and plump."

"She was able to captivate men's thoughts with her kindness, and could slay them with her coquetry and sweet voice."

"If she had been asked about her lineage and merit she could have admitted glory, for both her Moslem religion and the feats of her fathers could lay stress to her claim."

"Shall I break with Mo'm, or shall I remain friends with her, for she frequently breaks with her friends?".

"Everytime I ward off youthful foolishness from my heart I am assailed by the memory of her kindness and her fluent conversation.

"And of her mouth also, with its sweet saliva and shining white teeth, and of her locks which are as long as her figure, and beautifully plaited."

(1) Diwan, P.3.
"And of her neck which is like a silver vase, and her
breasts, and her abdomen, sheath-like, for she was never
pregnant."

"She would show herself to me, and approach, then cease
her kindness by running away, inorder to cruelly slay me."

"Now the ties of my friendship with No'm are no longer
firm, and I cannot gain anything from her but procrastinated
promises."

V. - Suhraym, the Slave of Bani Al-Hashas:

"What does illness want with a girl like a moon; all
beauty is secondary compared with hers."

"What does it want with her beauty - may it be
unsuccessful, can it not content itself with ugly girls?"

"It made her pale and yellow where beauty and charm had
made her rosy."

"If it required a ransom I could say: Oh illness, I am
the ransom for my beloved."
CHAPTER IX.

The Umayyad Age.

It would be outside our scope, in this work, to consider all the characteristics of the Umayyad age. We shall examine here only those factors which had some connection with the development of the poetry of the period, especially those concerned with Ghazal.

This period saw not only the removal of the caliphate from Medina to Damascus, but also that of the home of poetry from the heart of Arabia to Hijaz, Iraq and Syria. For most of the nomadic tribes of Najd and Northern Arabia, which had produced the great pre-Islamic poets, migrated during this period to Iraq and Syria and to other newly conquered countries such as Egypt, North Africa and Spain. So the ancient odes, with their characteristic themes and structure, were composed no more in Central and Northern Arabia, with very few exceptions, but in other parts of the Moslem empire, particularly in Iraq.

As for Syria, few poets flourished in this epoch, their best representative was perhaps 'Adi ibn Al Riqa'. However, practically all the noted poets of this period visited Syria and stayed in Damascus for a while. For the Umayyad caliphs, like all true Arabs - were very fond of poetry. Furthermore, the policy of the centralisation of the administration of the
Moslem Empire, which was followed unrelentingly by the Umayyad caliphs made it very desirable for every poet who laid claim to fame and fortune, to go to Damascus and sing the glory of the caliph who was, after all, the established head of the whole Moslem Community.

In the Umayyad Court, the poets enjoyed hospitality, esteem, generosity and freedom. The political tendency of Hijaz, in the preceding period, had little influence in Syria, the poets being able to express themselves quite freely so long as they did not criticise the Umayyad policy. They took the opportunity of celebrating the caliph's grandeur to praise their lost loves, their own merits, the feats of the tribes and to satirize their enemies. The Umayyads welcomed this new pagan poetry because it helped them to embitter the powerful tribes against each other, which kept them busy and so prevented them from contesting the legitimacy of the Umayyad caliphate. Thus the union of politics and poetry which had been broken during the epoch of the Prophet and the Orthodox caliphate, was re-established in the Umayyad period; and subsequently the poets became as influential in social life as their pagan predecessors had been in the pre-Islamic age.
The odes of these poets were, on the whole, very similar to the ancient odes both in subject and in structure. Yet they did add new themes to their eulogies and satires. In their eulogies they laid emphasis on the legitimacy of the Umayyad caliphate, and on the tremendous and still extending power of the caliphs and governors of the times, and instead of calling the former the 'caliphs of the Prophet' which means "The successors and representatives of the Prophet" they called them 'the caliphs of God' which means 'The representatives of God in this world'. With regard to satire, the poets made much use of the unworthy innovation introduced by Hassan ibn Thabit and the Quraishit poets during the wars of Madina and Mecca, before the ultimate victory of Islam. It consisted of using obscene and indecent words, and obscene Ghazal for

(1) "When God invested you with the caliphate" said 'Adi ibn Al Risa to the Caliph Al-Walid "He wanted to reform the (Moslem) community and to put it on the way of righteousness."

(2) "I wandered in both eastern and western countries" said Al Numairi to Al-Hajjaj, when he gave himself up after running away "and came back after visiting every place" — (convinced) that even if I used al-'Anqa' (a big fabulous bird) to fly (and run away) you could still see me if you wanted."

(3) Al-Akhtal describing the caliph in a eulogy to Abd al Malek said: "He boldly faces the terrible war; he always brings good luck; he is the caliph of God, and if people would ask God for rain they would have rain, because he is in the Divine Favour."
satirical purposes. Unfortunately for Umayyad poetry, this kind of satire was championed by two of its greatest masters: Jarir and Al-Farazdaq.

However, the use of Ghazal was not limited to satire. The new odes, like the ancient ones, had amatory preludes, and the poems which had no Ghazal at the top were called 'Batra' or 'decapitated poems' and were compared with 'Hasa' or 'stones' because of their insipidity. Zul-Rumma, a noted poet of the times, found in Ghazal, as we have seen in Chap. IV, an ever-effective 'key' to poetry. When he was once asked what he would do if his genius did not help him to compose poems, his answer was: "How could my genius not help me, since I know an ever-effective means to stir it up?", "What is it?" he was then asked. "It is just to remember my beloved" said the poet.

Al-Hajjaj, the despotic governor of Hijaz and Iraq, was very fond of Ghazal. He said to Jarir who had recited to him a mere eulogy: "Where is its amatory prelude?"

Whether it was that Al-Hajjaj was unable to enjoy a eulogy without Ghazal, or that he was fully aware that a poem without an erotic prelude would not be popular among the people, it

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would be difficult to say. Yet the story is significant, for it shows that Ghazal was rehabilitated in the Umayyad age; it crowned once again the head of the classical odes.

One might question the value of this kind of Ghazal which became merely conventional, and which the poets sometimes composed simply to please the 'Eulogized' caliphs and officials. In any case, the Ghazal, whatever its sincerity, was based, after all, on the poets' own experiences in love-affairs, and because these experiences differ from one poet to another, the Ghazal of Jarir, Al-Akhtal and Al Farazdaq, the three prominent champions of the classical ode, was conspicuously different. While the erotic preludes of the dissolute Al-Farazdaq were bold and indecent, the Ghazal of the half-beduin Jarir was decent and inspiring. Al-Akhtal, who was more fond of wine than of love indulged in lampooning women in a large part of his odes. In those in which he depicted the heart-breaking effects of his beloved's departure, he quickly compared his condition at her departure with that of a drunkard and proceeded to a description of him, in the rest of the prelude.

The classical Ghazal was very much appreciated by the caliphs and governors of this period, who, besides their love for it, wanted to show to the non-Arab Moslems a marked favouritism for it and for everything connected with the
ancient Arabian culture and tradition. This Ghazal was equally enjoyed by the Arab tribes established in Syria and Iraq, or spread all over the Moslem Empire. The people of Hijaz were the only exception, because, among them, two new kinds of Ghazal were superseding the classical amatory prelude.

The Hijaz saw, in the Umayyad period, fundamental changes in every aspect of its life. In politics it did not give up easily its political leadership. Many revolts took place in it, the severest being that led by Abd ullah ibn Al Zuhair, which compelled the Umayyads in order to capture him, to besiege Mecca for months and to demolish a part of the Ka'ba. The Umayyad of Syria finished by subduing the Hijaz and became its undisputable political rulers; but the leadership of the Hijaz in the Moslem spiritual life and religious sciences remained untouched. Most of the great companions of Muhammad (1) and their disciples - who were largely non-Arabs - lived in Mecca and Madina during this period. Nearly all of them were hostile towards the Umayyad dynasty. The Quraishits were dissatisfied because the Umayyads were neither the legitimate nor the worthy successors of the Orthodox caliphs. The Ansar were discontented because they felt even more frustrated, during this period than they had been before, and

(1) Fajr Al - Islam I - 186.
because they disliked the Umayyad policy of sowing discord between them and the Quraishites. The 'Mawali or 'non-Arab Moslems' were resentful because of the Umayyad racial policy and their open preference for the Arabs in everything.

The resentment of all these leaders found its way naturally into the hearts of the inhabitants of Hijaz who consequently nourished an implacable hatred for the Umayyads.

The unflattering picture of the Umayyad dynasty, painted overdone for their benefit was certainly by their leaders. However, the Umayyad caliphs were, by all accounts, like neither the pious orthodox caliphs nor their Abasid successors who were skilled in religious showmanship. Consequently a keen disappointment in the Umayyad caliphate swept over the Moslem world being particularly intensified in the Hijaz by its discontented leaders. As a result, the majority of the Prophet's companions and their disciples secluded in the Mosques of Mecca and Madina, from public life and set out to study the Moslem dogma and law. Others found refuge in the places of worship and cemeteries and remote countries, and there, far from the disturbances and corruption of the social and political life, they led a life of perfect asceticism. The unquiet conscience of the Moslem community became an ideal place for new and comforting ideas such as
that of 'Mahdi'; the leader invested with supernatural power who would come to reform the Moslem society and put 'things' — including the caliphate — to rights. Even the poet Kuthayer was converted to the idea of Mahdi. He adopted the Kaisan's doctrine which believed in the return of its first leader Muhammad ibn Ali ibn Abi Talib, whose mother was of the tribe of 'Hanifah.

Other poets found another outlet for their political discontent. The Quraishit Al-Arji, who did not succeed in obtaining a high position in the Umayyad administration, in spite of his feats in Moslem wars, and his friend and counterpart in the Ansar, Al-Ahwas, who represented the resentment of Al-Ansar, both devoted themselves to a sensual and corrupted life and to the composition of love-poems, and gave vent to their resentment by composing harsh and obscene satire against the Umayyad. Both sought fame by political distinction, but when it was denied them, they sought it by intellectual, or more precisely by poetical distinction.

As regards religion in Hijaz, it was developing along two visible lines, at that time; the first was rational; it was followed by the Moslem scholars who devoted themselves to the study and teaching of Moslem dogma and law. The second was rather intuitive; it was adopted by those who wanted to avoid
even theological and jurisprudential discussions, and preferred to them a pious or ascetic life. Both tendencies had great influence on the development of poetry, and more precisely Ghazal, in Hijaz, during the Umayyad age.

The former dealt—among different things—with the definite attitude of religion towards poetry, particularly towards Ghazal. The scholars of Hijaz were generally favourable towards both.

When Sa'id ibn Muxayeb, one of the seven great jurisconsults of Madina, was told that some people of Iraq considered it irreligious to recite poetry, he said: "Their ascetism is quite foreign". And when Abul Sa'id Al-Makjzumi, the Prophet's witty companion was asked if there was anybody who disliked amatory poetry, his answer was "No! not as far as those who believe in Allah and in the hereafter are concerned."

The scholars of Hijaz treated also, among other things, the relationship between men and women. They endeavoured to give clear definitions in such matters as: adultery, fornication, kissing, wine, music, enjoyment etc., in order to draw a line of demarcation between permitted and prohibited pleasures. Naturally some of these scholars were puritanical, so their viewpoint about pleasure was very strict and stern, but apart from those there was a great

(1) Zahr al-Adab I - 207. (2) Ibid I - 207
number of the Prophet's companions and their disciples who were surprisingly tolerant.

Ibn 'Abbas, the Prophet's cousin and the great jurisconsult of the times, was once more ready to listen to a love-poem composed by 'Omar ibn Abi Rabia', than to answer questions about religion asked by people who had come to him from afar.

Abu Hazem, a great figure among the disciples of the Prophet's companions, was much more forward. He went once on a pilgrimage, and saw a beautiful woman who was being admired by a group of pilgrims. He said to her: "You are in a holy place, and you must fear God and be pious. You certainly must have noticed that you have been fascinating the pilgrims and putting them off their prayer. Why then do you not conceal your beauty?" "I am" said the woman, "from among those of whom the poet said: They do not go in pilgrimage to seek religious blessing but to slay the chaste and inexperienced people. Abu Hazem then said to his friends: Let us invoke God not to send this beautiful picture to Hell - So he commenced his invocation while his friends kept saying: Amen!

When this story was reported to Al-Sha'bi, the great jurisconsult of Kufa (Iraq) he said: "O inhabitants of Hijaz! How refined you are and what a sense of humour you have!"

The scholars of Hijaz, of course, considered more important problems than love, poetry and music. Among the

(1) Zahr Al-Adab I - 211.
very serious questions with which they dealt was the question of 'free will'. They were divided about it into two groups, but those who did not believe in it were rather predominant. The Umayyad caliphs were said to have favoured fatalism in order to have Moslems believe that the advent of their caliphate had been decreed by fate, that no power in the whole world was able to prevent its happening. Whatever the reason for its predominance, fatalism had its effects on the Ghazal of Hijaz. It may account partly for the development of the 'Udri-love' which was a kind of heavenly love, since this love required great moral power to stand suffering through lovesickness. No one would stand suffering without hope, and no one would agree to suffer willingly in the present, if he did not expect a magnificent reward in the future. Fatalism was, in fact, one of the factors which inculcated in the mind of the Udri-lovers that they must suffer from lovesickness and show their submission to their fate in order to be liberally rewarded in the hereafter. Love, which had been regarded by the pagan poets as a youthful pleasure was taken more seriously by the Udri-poets, and was considered to be a fateful plague.

(1) It is worth noting that Meleager, the refined poet with whom we dealt in Chap. II, called love a plague. A plague is love, a plague! but yet What profit shall it prove Again and oft again to fret And cry: A plague is love?
"One of my relatives" said Jamil Al-Udri, "blamed me about her. He was also a friend of mine and was very anxious to set me on the righteous path by his blame."

"I said: what you notice in me about her had been decreed by Allah. Could anything decreed by Him be stopped?"

"However right or wrong my love for her may be, I am now involved with it, though I did not choose it purposely". (1)

Fatalism, however, was not the only factor in the bringing about of Udri-love. The development of ascetism was another factor, by no means less important. For, if fatalism taught the lovers of Hijaz to endure suffering from love, as ascetism taught them to renounce earthly love even when it provided tempting pleasure. The union of love and sensual pleasure, which pervaded paganism, was broken up by Moslem ascetism. The Udri poets were able to love without necessarily claiming sensual intercourse.

"I am pleased" said Jamil Al-Udri, "with very little things accorded to me by (my beloved) Buthaynah. They are so insignificant that if they were known by the man (who spies us) he would not be annoyed with my love (for her)"

"I am pleased even when she says: 'no' or 'I cannot' and when she makes me live on promises... promises hoped for, but always disappointing."

(1) Diwan, P. 23.
"I am pleased with a quick glance at her, and even with spending a whole year without our meeting, neither at the beginning nor at the end."

The third factor which contributed to the creation of Udri-love was Moslem puritanism which adopted an uncompromising attitude towards adultery and fornication and consequently drove some pious people of Hijaz to find a compromise between their human instincts and their puritanical religion. They found it in the Udri-love which was presumably understood as a love which could teach the divine without abandoning the human, and might become spiritual while remaining also carnal. Indeed the Udri tendency in the religion of love was exactly the same as the puritanical tendency in the religion of Islam.

Other factors admittedly had also their bearing on the development of Udri-love, and a later chapter will be devoted to it; but the factors mentioned above were the chief ones; and all of them, as we see, were closely connected with Islam. So if it would be unwise to say that this pure love was a mere Moslem creation, we can justifiably hold that Udri-love owed its full development to the Moslem religion. Islam, in fact, had already achieved purification of the notion of God from all its materialistic epithets;

(1) Diwan. P. 56
pious Moslems and moralists had equally the liberation of the 'soul' from the bondage of the 'body', and the Udri-lovers, in their turn, liberated their 'love' from the yoke of 'sexual instinct'.

The Udri-love was - to some extent - a reaction against a kind of libertinage which was also developing in Hijaz during the Umayyad period. To put this libertine tendency in its proper setting we must say a few words about the social life of Hijaz in this age.

We have already seen that the scholars of Hijaz discussed 'free will' and 'fatalism' among the serious and topical problems which they examined. Another problem was examined by them very seriously; namely the problem of 'wealth'. For, as a result of the great (war) victories of Islam, all over the Middle East, North Africa and Andalusia, tremendous wealth, goods and slave-women came to Hijaz and became the property of the Hijaz leaders who had taken part in Moslem Wars or missions. The Moslem community next wanted to know if Moslems were, or were not, allowed to acquire wealth and to enjoy luxury and riches. Some scholars, impelled either by a prudential or ascetic bent, denied to the true Moslems any claim to wealth and luxury, and referred to certain Koranic verses and Hadith which lend themselves to such an interpretation. Other scholars, including a number of the Prophet's companions, supported the opposite
viewpoint and quoted all the Koranic verses and Hadith which could lend themselves to such assertion. "Say" said the Koran, "who has prohibited the embellishment of Allah which He has brought forth for His servants and the good provisions?" VII - 32.

Ibn Sa'd in his Tabqat (I - I - 158) reported that the legacy left by the death of Talha ibn Ubaid-illah, one of the great companions of the Prophet, was one hundred bags in each of which there was three Kintars (٣١٠٠١٠٠) of gold.

Al-Zubair ibn Al-Awwam, another great companion of the Prophet left, on his death, a legacy of about 50 million dirhams.

Most of the wealthy people of Hijaz had beautiful palaces and gardens and slaves, besides their wealth in gold and silver. The male slaves brought with them manners, modes of enjoyment, ways of life and songs to which they had been accustomed in their own countries. Egypt, Syria, Iraq and more particularly, Persia.

The part played by female slaves in the social life of Hijaz was far more important. Apart from dancing, coquetish manners, perfume, fashion (in dressing and hair-styles) and songs which they spread in the Moslem society of Hijaz, they were beautiful, attractive, full of love, fond of enjoyment and, above all, within easy reach of wealthy people who could buy them or sell them whenever they wanted. They soon took the fancy of the men of Hijaz, and, as a result, left the
Arab 'ladies' in the background. Consequently, the latter who had adopted an unfavourable attitude towards Ghazal, love and social entertainments, in the preceding period, were driven to compete with their slaves and rivals for fear of being eclipsed by those 'Non Arab slaves'. Therefore they provided themselves with a sound education, attended literary and social meetings, ceased to be particular about wearing veils, and further still they wanted the poets to compose love-poems about them.

'A'isha bint Talha ibn Ubaid-illah, whose father was a great companion of the Prophet, as we have just seen, was not in the habit of covering her face. When she married Mos'ab ibn Al Zubair, he talked to her about veiling; then she said: "Allah endowed me with beauty, I like people to see it since I have no vice (of which I must be so ashamed as) to cover my face!"

The same 'A'isha visited the caliph Hisham, in Damascus. He informed the leaders of Umayyad society of her arrival, and gave a party in her honour. At that party the guests treated different subjects of Arabic literature, poetry, history and astrology. In all these subjects 'A'isha took part, and dealt with them brilliantly.

'A'isha was very beautiful and so conscious of her beauty that she and Sukaynah, the daughter of Al-Husain ibn Ali ibn Abi Talib, arranged a beauty competition between themselves. The umpire, who was the poet 'Omar, found the former more beautiful, and the latter more charming.

Sukaynah was capable of deep appreciation of Ghazal. She once met 'Orwa ibn Uzayna and said "Do you claim really not to be in love despite your saying:

"When I revealed my hidden love to her she said: Keep concealing it! I thought you were careful enough to conceal it."

"Do you not see those who are around me? I said: my love for you and my suffering have blinded my eyes."

"I swear by Allah, continued Sukaynah, that such lines of poetry could not come from an uncaring heart."

The well-educated society of Hijaz was very proud of its refined social meetings. The social gathering which the Arab tribes in the pagan period used to hold occasionally, after dark in their encampment, were not to be compared with the literary 'salons' of Hijaz, in the Umayyad age. The latter were the achievement of a wealthy well-bred society living in opulence, security and laziness. In these salons, highly educated men and women and well-instructed slaves used to

meet, converse, discuss literary subjects or listen to poets and singers, or to reciters who related stories of love, youth and adventure. In these salons, the young aristocrats of Hijaz acquired a fair part of their literary culture, practiced their polite manners, heard good jokes and clever repartee, and enjoyed the company of a polished society. Among the poets who distinguished themselves in these social meetings may be mentioned Al-Ahwas, Al-'Arji, Ibn Abi-Atiq, Musaib, Malek ibn Asma, Al-Hariri ibn Khalid and Waddah Al Yaman; but the poet who towered above them all and rose like a lofty mountain on the horizon, was 'Omar ibn Abi Rabi'ah. He was, in fact, a remarkably clear and faithful reflection of the spirit of the refined society in which he lived. Belonging to a distinguished and wealthy family of Quraish, he did not need to depend on patrons or politics or pensions for fame and his livelihood, but was independent and had no profession but poetry. His adventurous life and his exquisite poetry made him the undisputed master of the gay and unrestrained Ghazal which flourished in the high society of Hijaz in his time.

(1) It would be significant to compare these literary reciters with "Al-Qassas" or 'religious reciters' who were the 'moralists' of the age, and preached Moslem morals in mosques and battlefields.
'Omar and his colleagues gave themselves to this kind of poetry which might be called 'Omarit poetry', for different reasons. Obviously, refinement, prosperity, an easy life and coquetish slave-women could largely account for it. For they often had the effect of making the stern realities of life forgotten, and established, instead, the ideals of youth and pleasure. More serious reasons may be recalled here: The political disappointment which dominated Hijaz society and drove poets like Al-'Arji and Al-Ahwas - as we have seen - to resign themselves to a life of pleasure and licentious poetry. On the other hand, the growing number of religious sects in the Moslem community and the dissent of the scholars on serious problems directly connected with Moslem ideals and social life created a sort of restlessness in the minds of the youth of this period. This restlessness held most of them aloof from the strife of sects and ideology and drove them to find an easy escape in the life of pleasure and free love poetry. 'Omar, depicting the charm of his mistress, alluded very gently to the dissent of scholars, which tortured subconsciously the mind of his generation.

(1) Al-Harith ibn Khalid, said the author of Zahr al-Adab, "excelled in Ghazal; but he did not compose it through love, but only to show libertinage and refinement."
"The face of this young girl could replace the waning moon"

"People disagree about many things, but on the superiority of her beauty, they are all in agreement." (1)

Among the factors which made the literary salons and Ghazal appeal to the youth of Hijaz, mention must be made of the increasingly important part women were playing in the society of the time. It was during this period that women assumed, for the first time perhaps, an important place in Arabic literature. Probably the chief reason for this interesting phenomenon lies in the fact that women, in Moslem society were given, for the first time, some chance of education, of entering into the intellectual life of the community; and, as is always the case when women are given anything like a fair opportunity, they responded remarkably well. Some of the female slaves abused this freedom, and were chiefly responsible for the corruption and sensuality which soiled the literary society of Hijaz during the Umayyad period.

These female slaves, evil as was their influence on social morality, produced a great effect on the Ghazal of this period, especially on its spirit and style. They induced the

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(1) Nihayat-ul-Arab. II * 35.
poets to deal with their coquetry, coyness and gentle conversation, to report their speeches and arguments, to depict the shallowness of their religion and morality, and to address them with a bold and unreserved language totally different from that used to address Arab ladies in both the Islamic and pre-Islamic periods.

"Beautiful girls" said Ayman ibn Khuraim, "have taught me wonderful things, I wish these virgins had met me when I was young."

"But enjoying the company of beautiful virgins is a difficult task when one grows hoary."

"After taming them in various ways, the (following morning) they are suddenly unsubdued."

"Why do they apply 'mascara' around their large black eyes and re-apply colouring so frequently?"

"And why do they show themselves if not for the reason that you know? so do not deny the beautiful girls the pleasure of love-making."

Waddah-ul-Yaman did not find it difficult to convert his mistress to his point of view on a life of pleasure.

"When I said grant me a favour, she smiled and replied: God prevent me from doing what is forbidden!"

(1) Aghani XXI - 8. (2) 'Uyun-ul-Akhbar IV - 100
"She granted me nothing till I implored her, telling her that God allowed some 'Lamam' (trivial sins)."

As for the form of poetry, the female slaves had their influence in the development of the clear, easy style which had the flavour of the conversational language. The development of music and singing, on the other hand, drove the poets to choose short metres for their love-poems and to constantly think of melodies while they composed their verse. The great popularity that the 'Omarit love poetry enjoyed in Hijaz, at this time may be attributed, apart from the fact that this poetry reflected the spirit of the refined society, to the ease and gracefulness of its style.

Thus Hijaz saw, during the Umayyad age the dawn of two new tendencies in love-poetry; the 'Omarit-Ghazal which was the Ghazal of impulse and unrestrained nature, and the 'Udri-Ghazal' which had a fixed purpose, and was favoured by poets of steadfast will who moved like saints among the 'Omarit poets. Yet, in many cases, these two new tendencies were interwoven, and the same poets dealt sometimes with both of them.

(1) The poet is making here clever use of the Koranic verse: "Allah may reward those who do good, with goodness; those who keep from the great sins and the indecencies except the (Lamam) (trivial sins). L III - 31-32."
These two tendencies may be considered, finally, as the expression of the development of individualism, in this age. Islam, which had the tribal frame and fused the Arab tribes into one community, encouraged the development of individuality by every means. The fervent Moslems devoted themselves to holy wars or to a pious life. The lazy, the disappointed, and the sentimental found in love and Ghazal a stimulating means of expressing themselves and asserting their individuality. They had no independent tribe to whom they could dedicate their personal deeds, so they threw their love-poems—probably the best things they could achieve—at their mistresses' feet. Ghazal subsequently became no more an erotic prelude to the classical ode, but an independent and noted literary form.

To these two new tendencies in Ghazal which developed in Hijaz and to the classical trend which developed outside it, we must add two others which are worthy of consideration in this chapter. The first is the development of that kind of poetry which had shown itself clearly enough in the preceding epoch and which dealt with family quarrels and divorce. The quantity of this poetry went on growing in the Umayyad period, and the most interesting examples of it can be found in the poems of 'Asha Hamdan, Al-Farazdaq, Abu

(1) Diwan 'Asha Qais, P.338. (2) Diwan. P.
Kutaifa and Jiran Al Awd.

The last named drew a witty picture of his wife who used to beat him ruthlessly.

"She used to put myrrh round her eyes" he said, "and to bind up her head, and to come up to quarrel with me early as a wolf does: the owl was still crying out."

"Wherever you meet her in towns or in the countryside, the hair of her head is always bristled, she never combs it or dresses it".

"If ever she combed it, it would look like scorpions raising their tails to sting."

The obselete and very difficult words used abundantly in his poetry, perhaps for the sake of alliteration, will incline the reader either to believe that his poetry was spurious, concocted by some Abassid antiquarian for the use of his disciples, or to put the alliteration down to some intentional witticism on the part of the poet himself. Anyhow, the style of Jiran's poetry may well be compared with that of Khaled Al-Kannas who lived in the Umayyad period, and who was also fond of unusual words and alliteration. However Khalid

(1) Aghani I - 18. (2) The information which has come down to us about the life of this poet is very sparse. Some historians believed that he had lived in the pre-Islamic period, but the reading of his diwan (published in Cairo 1931) would show that he more probably lived in a Moslem society.

was undoubtedly serious in portraying his beloved; and the picture which he gives of her, though inconsistent and confusing, was, in many respects, similar to the usual classical description of a mistress.

Albeit the casual style of the poem, the grammatical mistakes which occurred in it, and the impression of naive plagiarism which the reading of the poem would give to the reader, make one believe that Khalid did not address educated people but more probably common folk.

The literature of uneducated people — who were mostly non-Arab and who did not speak Arabic very well — is the second tendency to which we have just alluded. Khalid Al Kannas must be regarded as the representative of the best kind of this new literature; for a story related in Aghani (I - 26) shows that a very vulgar form of it existed both in music and poetry.

"It was related" said the author of Aghani, "that Ma'bad once went to Damascus and saw, in a public bath, a man to whom the manager of the bath showed great deference and attention to the exclusion of all the other customers. Ma'Bad thought that the man must be very important, so he went up to him and sang him his best songs. The man however was not very pleased. He called for an ignorant singer who sang him first the following words:

(1) The greatest singer in Hijaz during the Umayyad period.
"Sallor (river-eel) was in the frying pan, what a pity! the cat came up and ate it, what a pity!"

Next, he sang the following line:

"My beloved threw peaches at me, my beloved thought that I did not see her."

Now that the development of Ghazzal during the Umayyad age has been examined in outline it is worth remembering that this age is a period of transition, of amalgamation, as far as culture was concerned. Persians, Syrians, Egyptians, Greeks, Christians and Hebrews poured their respective shares into the common wealth of Islam and contributed to a greater or lesser degree, to the Moslem golden civilisation which was still in the making. The fusion of different cultures showed itself in the social life, in the divergence of religious sects, in entertainment, music and even in architecture. In fact the Ka'ba of Heer and the castle of Masjatta, built by the Caliph Hisham and the Caliph Al-Walid ibn Yazid respectively, to challenge the architectural glories of Abdul-Malik and his son Al Walid, were, to a great extent, a successful combination of the iconoclastic and clear-cut religious requirements, the fantastic spirit of the huge Moslem empire with its unusual proportions, and of all the refinements of ancient civilisations. It was only in poetry that the effects of mixed civilisations were
comparatively slow to appear. It is perhaps because Arabian poetry waited for the same of the non-Arab Moslems to learn the language of the Koran and to compose Arabic poems. It did not have long to wait indeed. Ziyad al-A'Jam, Isma'il ibn Yasar, and Bashar ibn Burd (the great leader of the Abbasid poets), came, the first two in the second part of the Umayyad epoch, and the last at its close, as representatives of the coming new age of mixed poetry, to join the procession of Arab poets who were to make the Umayyad age, above all, an age of poetry.
CHAPTER X

The ‘Omarit Ghazal.

Among the great changes which occurred with the passing of the Caliphate into Umayyad hands is the weakening of the religious influence in state-affairs. The new caliphs and governors of provinces, unlike the Orthodox caliphs and their collaborators who were very religious, proved to be autocratic administrators rather than religious leaders. The upholding of religious morals was not their chief concern so long as there were no specific complaints made about it by religious scholars, groups or individuals. Moslem morality thus lost the total assistance of the Moslem government, especially in Hijaz where the policy of the Umayyad governors was to have the least possible to do with its very sensitive and anti-Umayyad people, and to avert all possibility of getting into trouble with them.

The support of Moslem morals by the Prophet’s companions, their disciples and other religious scholars was not sufficient enough to make up for this loss. In fact, the religious leaders of Hijaz, dissatisfied with the Umayyad caliphate, secluded themselves in the Mosques and most by so doing, a part of their hold on public life. Undoubtedly they preached religious morals to their disciples and listeners, but their chief pre-occupation was
actually the study of Moslem law and dogma. They were, in fact, more theologians and jurisconsults than moralists, and those who were tolerant did not refrain from making friends with the licentious youth of Hijaz, or, being trusted by them, they adopted an understanding, though very passive, attitude towards them. They did not do much to better their loose morality. The real moralists, namely the 'Kussas' were also far from influencing the unrestrained youth of Hijaz either. The former drew on ascetical themes and invited the Moslems to discard the pleasures of this world in order to deserve the beauteous divine paradise, in the other world, and to escape, at the same time, the horrifying torture of Hell. The latter, on the other hand, were young, wealthy and proud of their prosperity and high rank, they were not ready to dismiss the attractive life of pleasure and laziness which they were enjoying, nor to appreciate the ascetical preaching of the 'Kussas'. This group of young people had in fact two tutors in their carefree circles: their instincts which made them behave, in their private life, like their pagan ancestors, and their slaves which provided them with different sorts of enjoyment. The poets of this group, whom we called the 'Omarites', looked for inspiration to pagan poets such as Imru-ul-Qais, Al-A'asha and the Abyssinian poet Su'aym because of their sensual and dissolute Ghazal.
However, love and pleasure were inseparably united in pagan life, whereas this union had to discontinue in Hijaz in this period. The 'Omarit poets and their partisans sacrificed true love for a light one and for pleasure; while the 'Udri poets rejected pleasure and accepted suffering for the sake of a true love. This disunion is an important fact in the characterisation of the development of Ghazal during the Umayyad age.

The pleasure-seekers were those young people of Hijaz who were brought up in a lavish aristocratic society and who could not resist the temptation of their dissolute surroundings. Some of these people, like Al-Ahwas and Al-Arjì started their lives by devoting themselves to noble and serious causes, but, distrust by the Umayyad rulers and bitterly disappointed, they found a comforting diversion in a life of pleasure and perversion.

Others, like 'Omar, Ibn Abi Attiq, and Waddah, being repelled by the attitude of Moslem leaders towards politics, religious questions, meaning of life, and ideals of Moslem community, found themselves sceptical and without ideals on the one hand, and attracted by the joyful and voluptuous life in towns, on the other, so they resorted to a life of pleasure and idleness as an agreeable escape.

Some others like 'Ubaidullah ibn Qais Al RuQayyat, Al-Marith ibn Khalid, Khalid Al Qasri joined the throng of pleasure-seekers, undoubtedly through youth and scepticism,
but they did not cease, in spite of this, to nourish other ambitions.

The first became, in fact, the poet of Quraysh and Bani Hashem and the greatest eulogist of their glory; the second became the governor of Mecca; and the third the governor of Iraq. Yet the fact of their realising their ambition did not lessen by any means their attachment to pleasure and a dissolute life; in fact, the governor of Mecca became even more dissolute.

"He was in love with 'A'isha bint Talha" said the author of Aghani, "she was once in procession round the Ka'ba, and Moslems were waiting impatiently to do their worship in time; but Harith, the governor of Mecca, postponed the service until she finished her procession". III - 103.

All these pleasure-seekers were town dwellers; consequently they had very few opportunities for hunting, riding and practising the other enjoyments of the open country like their pagan predecessors. So they had to be content with the pleasures which they could find in their cities namely wine, music, games, attractive women and literary salons.

Wine was prohibited by Islam, but even so some libertines of Hijaz drank it in secret. Some 'Omarit-poets alluded to it in their verse, and were sometimes flogged because they drank wine.
Music and singing thrived in Hijaz, during the Umayyad age; it was cultivated mainly by Greek and Persian slaves, and was so much appreciated by the people of Hijaz that it became an inevitable enjoyment in their literary salons. In these salons, such great singers of the time as Ibn Surayj, Al-Zarid, Ma'bad, showed how greatly the beauty of poetry was enhanced when it was sung. They achieved such success that music and poetry, particularly Ghazal henceforth went hand-in-hand.

Apart from the salons where the idle youth of Hijaz rioted in music, songs and literary discussions, there were places where they could read or play games such as chess and backgammon. The place run by Abdul Hakam ibn 'Omr, which was depicted in the book of Aghani (IV - 54) might answer perfectly to the description of a modern social club.

However the greatest enjoyment of the libertine youth of Hijaz was the company of attractive and refined women, and the celebration of their beauty, and sometimes their amours, in love-poems. In fact the aristocratic Arab ladies and their cultured female slaves played a prominent part in the refined society of Hijaz. Unlike the Arab ladies of the preceding period who were brought on the stage of social life by Islam, but were received by a puritanical and exacting audience, the ladies of Hijaz and their charming
attendants, who wanted to enjoy the gaiety of life, were whole-heartedly welcomed by the gay society of this period, and their gracefulness became the sunshine of the literary salons in Mecca and Madina.

This daring change of the attitude of the Arab women towards social life and public enjoyment could not have been achieved if they had not observed these two rules: First, not to meet poets and singers, nor to attend literary salons if they were not accompanied by their slaves; secondly, to avoid all meetings and entertainments which would make them the object of any suspicion, and to show a great preference for the poets who composed love-poems about them and put emphasis on their chastity and high virtues.

If 'Omar' Ghazal was highly appreciated by the Arab ladies of his society, it was perhaps among other reasons - because he was capable of understanding this requirement.

"I Gazed on her in 'Mohassab', near Mina" said 'Omar, "this look would have tempted me if I had not been afraid of irreverence."

"I said: what are those who appear behind the curtain, can it be the sun or the lamps of a place of worship which appear, or am I dreaming?"

"The ends of her earrings hang well above her shoulders. Her father must be either of the tribe of Nawfal or 'Abdshams and Hasem."
"Their women sought love, but when they reached it they left it unsoiled, like good and honest Moslems." (1)

Needless to say, the slave-women of Hijaz were not very particular about such observances. They used to feel quite happy if an Arab poet composed any kind of love poem about them.

After considering the varieties of enjoyment that the life of Hijaz was able to afford to its pleasure-seekers, during the Umayyad epoch, it would be worth studying the idea which the pleasure-seekers formed about pleasure, life and religion.

We have already seen two points which characterise the pleasure-seekers of this period. First, they were fond of pleasure and dalliance rather than true love. Secondly, they were town-dwellers content with the enjoyments which their cities offered. We can add now another point which may stress the difference between them and their predecessors. The pagan Arabs regarded their youth as a happy but transitory period which leads to maturity: when they had passed this period they used to disparage it, and to look upon their amours and idle enjoyments as youthful dalliance.

(1) Diwan, P. 63 and Aghani. I -
The 'Omarit-poets had a quite different viewpoint. Whatever the reason which drove them to the life of pleasure and idleness, this life was a solution for their problems. It helped them to forget their troubles and gave meaning to their existence. They were a group of disappointed or sceptical people who were not interested in the serious activity of the society in which they lived. Disappointed and sceptical people usually seclude themselves from public life, either by leading a hermit life, like the ascetics of this age and Abul'Ala' Al Ma'Arri in the late Abbasid period, or by devoting their life to the satisfaction of their sensual appetites like the 'Omarit-poets and 'Omar Al Khayyam in a later age. So while pleasure-seeking was youthful foolishness in the eyes of the pre-Islamic poets, it was a sort of philosophy and a way of living adopted by the 'Omarit-poets which lasted much longer than the days of their youth.

This philosophy was not clearly expressed by the 'Omarit-poets though it can be traced in their actions, speeches and poetry. It has presumably three parts. The first is concerned with their idea about pleasure and love. The poet Al Harith ibn Khalid said the singer: Al-Gharid, when the former became the governor of Mecca: "O Gharid! If I had had no other possession than you while I governed in Mecca it would have been a sufficient and perfect lot.
"O, Gharid! this world has its delight, and the delight of delight is that which makes the soul gay; and he who appreciates enough the value of music is able to enjoy life in this world."

The 'Omarit-poets believed that the rose of pleasure must be plucked before it withered. Life is short, they must make the most of it.

"I do not forbid myself to do anything", said Waddah, "because everything will soon be over."

'Omar incited his beloved Khid to disobey (her parents), at least (for) once because "only spineless people never break the rules".

The 'Omarit-poets laid stress on love as the greatest pleasure. Some of their poems, as we shall see later, were mere inducements to love-adventure. Fortunately for them love was glorified by everybody in this period. A Beduin said: "He who never loves has a bad nature and repulsive character and rough edges". Al-Sha'bi, the great jurisconsult of Iraq said (obviously about decent love):

"If you do not love and do not know what passion is you are like a donkey in the desert."

The glorification of love everywhere helped the 'Omarit-poets to induce Arab women and female slaves to join in their flirtations and perverted life. Furthermore, they

(1) Aghani III - 107. (2) Aghani VI - 46
(3) Diwan, p. 115 (4) Nihayat Al Arab II - 139.
seemed to have connected their love-adventures with some moral virtue.

"I came confronting a danger," said Al-'Arji, "confronting a danger for love is noble." (1)

The second part of their hedonistic philosophy was concerned with religion. In fact, the 'Omarit-poets who rejoiced in their newly discovered sense of life's splendour, were after all, Moslems. Though they did not keep up their religion very well, they believed in God, Muhammad and the judgment of the other world, and without depending on some tolerant attitude of God towards sinners, their life of pleasure and diversion would have had a restless background. They were certainly relieved to remember now and then that God is Merciful and Forgiving, and their case was not hopeless as long as they mingled good deeds with their irreligious behaviour, since the Koran said: "And others have confessed their faults, they have mingled a good deed and an evil one; maybe Allah will turn to them mercifully; surely Allah is Forgiving, Merciful." IX - 102.

The idea of mingling seemed to have been very clear in their thoughts. 'Omar referred to it in his talk with 'A'isha when she asked him to visit her in Madina.

(1) Aghani I - 155. (2) Aghani I - 47.
Waddah, in a love-poem said:

"Every evening I followed the Kussas (i.e. the preachers) in the prospect of obtaining as many divine rewards as the steps I made (to join them)."

Moreover Moslem religion welcomes penitence, and the 'Omarit-poets had every intention of repenting when they had quelled their thirst for joy and sensual pleasures. Waddah expressed this intention very clearly when he said, addressing himself: "O Waddah! why do you keep making flirtations? Are you not frightened that your life will soon come to an end? "Pray to God, the Owner of the (divine) throne, and have the feet which could take you to the safe side, on the day (of judgment) when falling and slipping are the rule."

"I am now fearing death, but for this fear

"I should follow my heart in its passion. Its passion surely is for those who live in pavilions (women)."

As a matter of fact, 'Omar repented at the end of his life, and penitence seemed henceforth to have become traditional when depraved poets felt that their life was about to draw to an end. The perverted Al/Farazdaq, a contemporary of 'Omar, repented at the end of this life; and, in the Abbasid period too, the licentious poets: Bashar, Abu Hualas, and Abu-l-Atahiya seemed to have rounded off their life

(1) Aghani VI - 44. (2) Aghani VI - 42.
with penitence.

The third part of the pleasure-seekers' philosophy is made for their countrymen, particularly the religious people who disapprove of their frivolous life. They endeavoured to show that they were capable of enjoying the company of their mistresses without claiming anything indecent.

"I did not obtain from her" said 'Omar, "anything forbidden except that we were both covered with the same crimson coat."

"Softly whispering sweet nothings to enjoy ourselves without being indecent, despite all who hate us."

Al-'Arji asked his mistress's slave-woman to help him not to be found out, for if he was then madly in love he might repent one day:

"Do not leave me to the mercy of a people who hate me so intensely that if they wanted to offer a meal they would offer my flesh."

"And do me a favour so you may have a better favour in return, besides, your people have already granted me many favours."

(1) Aghani VI - 47. 'Omar is referring here to his meeting with his mistress in the country. Caught by a rainshower they asked their attendants to hold a sort of cover above them and to cover them with his red over-coat lest they should catch cold.
"This favour is to help lovers not to be found at, for they might repent finally after sinning." (1)

Their clinching argument was that they could not help being madly in love with their mistresses, that their love was beyond their control, because it was extremely intense. Such an argument, romantic and untrue as it was, very impressive in a society where most people believed in fatalism. The Udri-poets used it likewise, but they were more sincere. As for the pagan poets, they were, as has been seen, rather reluctant to make such an un-manly confession.

"I swear" said Waddah, "by the One to Whom people go on pilgrimages in Mecca during the famous ten nights of pilgrimage,

"Since I loved her I have been unable to control either my love or my soul. What shall I do?" (2)

Omar claimed that his love reached its extreme:

"I cannot go further in my loving her, except to kill myself or to become mad." (3)

In another poem he said. "I looked at her; was my fate. (4) Fate sometimes drives one to death;"

"It would be idle to believe in all these exaggerations used by the 'Omarit-poets as a protection against their zealous countrymen, who disapproved of their idle and profligate life. For the same theme (that love was

(1) Aghani I - 155. (2) Aghani VI - 43.
their fate) was used by them equally to make their mistresses sympathize with them, and accord them new favours, as we shall see later. Besides their frivolous life and their numerous love-adventures could not square by any means with their claim to a deep and sincere love.

The arguments advanced by the 'Omarit-poets to account for their libertine life did not prevent them from being punished sometimes by the Umayyad caliphs and the governors of Hijaz. Waddah was killed by the caliph Al Walid because he was said to be in love with the caliph's wife Um Al-Banin. Al-'Arji and Al-Ahwas were flogged and put in (the) prison and 'Omar was once exiled from Mecca, by the caliph Sulayman, during the days of pilgrimage.

A close examination of the real causes of the infrequent punishment inflicted on the 'Omarit-poets shows that the causes were, more often than not, personal and seldom solely "for the sake of morality".

Those poets were indeed capable of leading a very dissolute life in the holy towns of Hijaz during the Umayyad period. Their joys were more sensual than intellectual. Their love-adventures were numberless, clever and daring and full of drama and humorous remarks.

'Omar once visited his beloved in the night, but was late to leave her place in the morning. So his beloved, frightened by the thought of being found out, asked her two sisters for help, her suggestion being described by the
poet as follows:

"She said to her two sisters, do help me in my (affair) with a young man who came to visit me. I shall help you in return on some other occasion."

"They came up and looked frightened, then said to her, do not blame yourself. The nuisance is less annoying (than you imagine)."

"The youngest said: I shall give him my robe and undercloth and this coat if he is anxious.

"So disguised, he must come and walk with us, so neither will our secret plot be discovered nor will he be recognised.

"Thus my armour against those whom I feared were three persons: a young girl and two others very young.

"After we crossed the market place of the district they said: Are you not ashamed? Will you not stop (going in adventure)? Will you not use your reasoning power?"

"If you would come again, do not look at us but at other girls that you may thus make people believe that your love is where you look."

Al-`Arji described his condition at a time when, surrounded by his mistresses, he became drunk.

"I stayed amongst them powerless as a sick man nursed by woman visitors."

(1) Diwan pp. 3-4.
"Now they said: may we suffer in your place, and now they hugged me as a father hugs his son to his chest." (1)

Waddah had no qualms about mentioning his adulterous experiences among his 'amourettes'

"I crept to her silently after her husband fell asleep, and the night was cold. And her hand was her husband's pillow."

"She gave me a sign out of the corner of her eye saying: welcome, welcome, you will have what you desire despite all the calumniators." (2)

The promiscuous adventures of the 'Omarit-poets remind us of the adventures of Imru'ul-Qais and Al-A' sha in the pagan period, though the former were more frequent and described with more detail; humour and sense of drama. Furthermore, they were very lewd, and strangely enough, the poets used to boast of them. The reader who would study these lustful experiences in the book of Aghani would be only too surprised to see that such experiences took place in the Holy cities of Hijaz, only just fifty years after the Rise of Islam.

To their perversions the 'Omarit-poets added a blasphemous attitude which they sometimes adopted towards the rites of Islam, especially towards the rite of pilgrimage. The season of pilgrimage was for them a season of love adventures, and the Mosque of Mecca, where women pilgrims

(1) Kitab Alzahra, p. 64  
(2) Aghani, VI-45
get rid of their veils to go in procession, was their vantage point to choose their new loves, and it was round the Ka'ba, when thousands of pilgrims crowded and squeezed to touch the Black-Stone, that they approached their beloved and made advances to them, to say nothing of the many other opportunities they took to run after the beautiful women when the pilgrims left for the mountain of 'Arafat.

We have seen above that the poet Al-Harith ibn Khalid, when he became the governor of Mecca, postponed the performance of a service just to let his beloved 'A'isha enjoy a peaceful procession round the Ka'ba. He was afterwards sternly blamed by the caliph for doing so, but his answer was: I do not mind, as long as 'A'isha was pleased. He then wrote a poem to her which begins as follows:

I did not welcome your anger, but I wholeheartedly welcome your being pleased with me." (1)

Ubaidullah ibn Qais Al Ruqayyat said, when he saw his beloved kiss the Black-Stone:

"Who could account to me for the fact that she denies me the things which she gives to something else when she goes in procession?" (2)

'Omar wished that pilgrimage had been a compulsory religious obligation which took place every other day; (3)

(1) Aghani III - 113  (2) Aghani IV - 166
(3) Diwan p. 235.
and Al-'Arji would lose interest in the season if his beloved was not amongst the pilgrims.

"We did not meet" said the latter, "for a whole year and then we met on the street,

"When she came on pilgrimage. What is (the value) of Mina and its pilgrims if she does not come?"

Many reasons, as has been seen before, may account for the sensuous behaviour of the 'Omarit-poets: prosperity of Hijaz, slaves, dissatisfaction with the Umayyads, disappointment and lack of faith in the serious side of everyday life. Other reasons can be advanced here such as the idleness of the spoilt children of Hijaz and the fact that people who live in holy places usually become used to them and regard them with less reverence than strangers who always invest them with a sort of mysterious holiness. However, these reasons cannot fully account for the impious attitude of the "Omarit-poets towards the rite of pilgrimage not for the pleasure they took in boasting boldly of their indecent associations and promiscuous adventures.

We must, in this connection, take into account the well developed individuality of the poets of this age. Islam, in breaking the framework of tribal life and conceiving society as a group of individuals, contributed to a

(l= Aghani I - 162.)
remarkable degree, to the liberation and development of individuality. The 'Omarit-poets seemed to have had no opportunity of showing forth their individuality except in breaking the rules of morality and religion. They had no glory to celebrate, so they celebrate their licentious life and depicted themselves as to quote Browning 'magnificent in sin'. That is why they described beautifully and frequently their private, indecent life, where they were with their mistresses the only (vedettes) on the stage, and said little or nothing about the public meetings and the literary salons where they would not have been in the foreground, though those meetings and salons were the great intellectual joy of their society. It is worth noting here that Ubaidullah ibn Qais, the poet of Quraish, who, beside his dalliance, had a serious ideal in his life, was not very bumptious whereas 'Omar, who devoted his life to love and Ghazal very fond of placing himself on 'vedette'.

The egotistical side of their individuality may be traced in smaller details which we find in their Ghazal, particularly in those lines where the poet, instead of conceiving love as the union of two souls, kept thinking of himself only and understood love as a pleasure or as favours given to him by his beloved:

"When I said: great me some favour, she smiled and replied: God prevent me from doing what is forbidden."
"She granted me nothing till I implored her telling her that God allowed some trivial sins."

"I wish, said 'Omar, "that Hind would give me what she has promised me, and thus cure the suffering of my soul (heart)."

The 'Omarit-poets, like their pagan predecessors, did not celebrate the charms and kindness of their wives in their love-poems. The explanation which we suggested in a previous chapter is, in our belief, still applicable to the period at present under discussion. Family life, like tribal life splits our emotion into two parts: the erotic which the family tries to quell or discredit, and the decent which the family cherishes and develops, and which becomes, in the long run, identified, with motherly or sisterly love. So the erotic feeling becomes 'homeless' having always strange women as objects. When the beloved stranger comes home and becomes the wife, her husband subconsciously starts loving her as he loves his mother and sisters, and his erotic emotion looks then for a new beloved who has nothing to do with his home. If this explanation is admissable, it will be more appliable to the case of the 'Omarit-poets, because the pagans were at least busy fighting for life, food and security and had not much time to spare for their love and

(1) Uyun Al-Akhbar IV - 100
(2) Diwan, p. 115.
erotic tendencies, whereas the 'Omarit-poets were prosperous secure and had nothing to do but enjoy the sensual life to their heart's delight.

To this cause we must add another which might also be valid in the case of the 'Omarit-poets. These poets were boastful, and the depiction of their love-liaison was for them an opportunity to show their 'merits'. If they had none their mistresses would not admire them, they would not love them; while a wife, in loving her husband is not exercising her free choice, so her love does not show the merit of her loved husband. 'Omar, in fact, never composed a Ghazal about mistresses whom he happened to marry.

If we consider the case of the 'Omarit-poets from the moral or patriotic point of view we may condemn their idleness and petty way of living at a time when the Moslem community was fighting its greatest wars. Yet this fact, though strange and important, is out of the scope of this study. We confine ourselves here to pointing out that this phenomenon occurred also in the history of many great nations, for example ancient Greece, Rome, Great Britain and France.

To do justice to the 'Omarit-poets and to put them in their right place in the development of Moslem civilisation we may say that Islam brought about two sorts of conquest: the conquest of the outside world, which was carried on by the zealous Moslem warriors on all the frontiers of the
Moslem Empire; and the conquest of the inner world which was achieved by the pious Moslems and the ascetics. They settled down to fight the (greater) war which was tendency. The poets of Hijaz, instead of considering the whole inner world, were only interested in the emotional side of human nature, more particularly in love. Both 'Udri and 'Omarit poets concentrated on the examination of love, only the former studied it from within, and the latter from without. Both studied its developments, signs and secrets and described it as carefully and as minutely as their pagan predecessors had described the encampment of their mistresses, and the scenery and animals of their surroundings. These, however, ceased to be the great concern of the poets of Hijaz.

The description of love from without means in fact the description of the poets love-adventures, their own behaviour and the behaviour of the women with whom they were in love. The 'Omarit poets depicted two sorts of women in their Ghazal: the female slaves who were generally attractive, adventurous and unrestrained, and sometimes cultured and refined; and the Arabs ladies who did not want to be eclipsed by their slave-women and wanted to compete with them in everything except in indecency. These ladies generally belonged to an aristocratic family, or were
relatives of the great companions of the Prophet, or of the leaders of Hijaz or of the Umayyad Caliphs. They admittedly represented the aristocratic women of Hijaz, but they are far from giving us a true idea of the condition of the Arab women in Hijaz, during the Umayyad period.

These aristocratic ladies with their charming slaves were indeed the great concern - we should rather say the great discovery of the 'Omarit poets. These poets devoted the largest part of their poems, if not the whole of them to dealing merely with women and love. With the Udri poets they achieved the definite independence of Ghazal which became no longer the amatory prelude of the ancient ode; but an independent and highly cultivated literary form sung for its own sake.

The Ghazal of the 'Omarit poets had generally two aims: the description of the women who enjoyed the gay life of Hijaz, namely the aristocratic Arab ladies and their refined slaves, and on the other hand the inducement of these women to love and adventure.

The 'Omarit poets had two means of inducement. The first was to address the women's vanity, to tell them for instance, as Waddah did, that being free and independent was an indication of aristocracy, or to laugh at their prosperous life as long as it was devoid of love, as 'Omar did, or to promise to celebrate their beauty in love poems, or to prefer
them to all the mistresses whom the poets had had previously.

"This (lady) of Quraish," said Waddah, "was like the sun in shining and beauty."

"She surprised the beauteous white (women) with her charm and clear skin.

"When she reached her full youth and had (her head) covered with (a part) of her coat

"She did not care for (the advice) of the girls of her age; she followed the excess and liveliness of youth"

"In her life" said 'Omar, "she was pleased with the shade in her room, with her green garden full of sappy trees."

"With her guardian who provided for all her needs, so nothing made her awake at the end of the night"

"Surely I am Waddah" said the poet, "if you are kind to me I shall compose love-poems about you and make of you a pretty description."

"May God make any other woman your ransom (in any distress), and her cheek shoes for your feet."

Their other means of inducement was to address both the heart, of the woman and her mind. When they addressed a

(1) Aghani VI - 37. (2) Diwan, p.2. One of 'Omar's beloveds was once awake at night through love. She recited these two lines and said: surely 'Omar does not know about me now. (3) Aghani VI - 44. (4) Aghani III - 114.
women's heart, they stirred her tenderness and sympathy by claiming that they were about to die through lovesickness.

"Tell me" said 'Omar to his beloved Kulthum, "how would you account for the slayer of a Moslem man?" (1)

"You have" said Waddah to his beloved, "either to grant me a favour today, or to explain why you are slaying a Moslem man?" (2)

The 'Omarit poets were more witty and clever in addressing their mistresses' minds. They wanted them to promise to grant their lovers some favour, in the future, just to comfort them and without being bound to keep their promises:

"Promise to grant me a favour" said 'Omar to his beloved "even if you do not want to keep it, for to live in hope does good to a lover." (3)

"Promise to grant me whatever you like, in the future, said Ubaid-ullah ibn Qais to his mistress, "for I love those who give promises even if they do not keep them for a long time." (4)

Later on, these poets pretended to forget that their mistresses' promises were not meant to be fulfilled and urged

(1) Ibid I - 82 (3) Ibid VI - 45
(3) Ibid I - 68 (4) Ibid IV - 165
them to keep their promises or to agree with referring the matter to a sort of tribunal whose judge and witness were chosen by the lovers and beloved.

"Let us refer" said Al'arji to his mistress, "to an outright and just umpire."

"You must know that, in courts of justice, they ask for witness or oath, so bring with you two witness."

"God knows that you will not be guiltless of (shedding) my blood even if you have taken part in the battle of 'Huṣain' with the Prophet."

To refer love disputes to a tribunal set up according to the Moslem law is significant. It shows that Moslem institutions had their influence in the development of the conception of love even the impious one, during the Umayyad period. 'Omar, who referred to the matter of tribunals, in his poetry, went, in fact, further and conceived the relation between the lover and his beloved as being similar to the relation between a guilty citizen and the administration of Hijaz:

"You are the governor" he said to his beloved, "listen to my speech and try to understand what you have not yet understood."

"I come to you repentant like a guilty man who fears the chastisement of a beneficent king."

(1) Ibid. I - 156
(2) Aghani I - 82.
"I am (ready to squander) my new and old wealth in order to make you pleased." (1)

On the other hand, the Udri-poets, as we shall see in the next chapter, conceived love, not only as administration, but as religion.

The quality which gave this poetry of inducement a nice flavour, peculiar to itself, is the fact that its seriousness was always mingled with playfulness. It is, in fact, hardly possible to draw the line between its earnestness and its jocularity. The 'Omarit poets as has been seen were concerned with pleasure and love-adventures rather than deep and true love. They humbly urged their mistresses to be kind to them and to grant them favours, and used different means to gain their love and consent, but it seemed, on the other hand, that they wanted their loved ones to be unkind, liars as regards their promises and misers in respect of their favours. They seemed to believe, like all pleasure-seekers, that kindness and generosity on the part of their mistresses would make love-affairs uneventful and would take away all the joys of adventure.

Kuthayer, the Udri-poet recited the following line to Ibn Abi Attiq, the great friend of 'Omar:

(1) Diwan. P. 73. 'Omar, in another poem claimed that his beloved, in her turn, called him: "her governor for the life time." Diwan. P.2.
"Those women broke their appointment with me and their word given to me, those who act traitorously have no religion"

Ibn Abi Attiq asked him then if 'loyalty' would be enough for him to fall in love with any woman if his beloved had no other charm to attract him. Kuthayer became angry, and recited this line:

"When the time came for me to enjoy their pure affection, they proved liars, and they left their promises as debts (to be paid in the future)."

Ibn Abi 'Attiq said: "This line is better, it attracts, hearts to them much more than previous line did. Surely, your master, Ubaidullah ibn Qais Al-Rugayyat was better informed than you about women. He was more capable of putting things in their right place when he said:

"I love her coyness and her coquetry, I love her large black eyes."

"When she talks she lies; and her promises are (1) doubtful".

Al Ahwas alluded to the same point when he said, "my love become stronger when she granted me nothing; for forbidden things are always wanted most." (2)

The second aim of the 'Omarit poets, in their Ghazal,

(1) Aghani IV - 166-167 (2) Kitab Alzahra, p. 165.
was the description of the women who enjoyed the gay life of Hijaz, namely the aristocratic Arab ladies and their refined slaves, who, in their day-to-day activity, rubbed shoulders with the pleasure-seekers of Mecca, Medina and Ta'iyf.

The poets described their beauty, adornment, fragrance and the sweetness of their converse as the pagan poets had done in the pre-Islamic period, but with more elegance and accuracy.

"They ever fascinate the inexperienced man" said Al-Harith, "and with their conversation they fill his heart with delight."

"I enjoyed their converse" said Malik ibn Asma, "it was as it has been described by the 'connoisseurs', pure rhythm."

"Their speech was correct, they sometimes made mistakes (in Arabic) yet, the best speech (in my opinion) is that which has some mistakes in it."

The same poet said:

"When a puff of narcissus or Jasmin's fragrance comes to me from some garden

(1) Aghani III - 112. (2) Aghani XVI - 43. The poet used the word 'Lahn' which means either mistake or allusion and metonymy. We preferred the former meaning because Malik was describing Persian women.
"I"turn and look round, hoping that you are seated somewhere near us."

'Umar described some singing girls as follows:

"those black eyed girls were like gazelles in Autumn when they are forced to come out (of their shed) and driven at a rapid pace

"Their silk-clothes smelled (of) perfume and of myrtle blended with musk."

"They stirred the yearning even of contented hearts, when they played with their tambourines.

"When they finished their marvellous (song) they still remained inviting the refined heart to diversion.""

What stresses the difference between the pagan poets and the 'Omarits is the fact that the former were not very much concerned with the description of women's nature, coyness, intrigues, coquetry, personality. While the latter dealt with all these things very frequently. Further more, they did not treat these things with the seriousness and reverence which the former had shown to their beloved, but rather with a witty and playful mind or with a discerning and sophisticated eye. Their realism was very accurate, shrewd, full of life and interesting minute details. It was sometimes bold and aggressive as compared with the naive and sober realism of their pagan predecessors. They were not content only to

depict their mistress in her outdoor life, but they portrayed her indoors where, surrounded by her sisters, friends or female-slaves she discussed men with them, and talked about her 'affairs' d'mour' and her intimate problems with confidential preciseness.

"They let her know" said 'Omar, "that I was married, she concealed her anger silently,

"Then she said to her sister and another person: I wish he had married ten

"But to other women with whom she withdrew her veil, she said:

"Why does my heart appear to be not a part of me and why do my bones feel weak? 

"Just because of the horrible news which has been brought to me, which burned, so that I felt there were hot coals in my heart."

Moreover the 'Omarit poets disclosed all the artifices taught to them by their mistresses. 'Omar was said, as we have seen before, not to have looked at his beloved when he came to her place, but at other girls "that he may make people believe that his love is where he looked (at\).

Al-Arji who visited his beloved in a night of full moon said that he was advised to wait till the moon disappeared.

(1) Diwan, 234. (2) Diwan, p. 3-4

(3) Aghani I 155.
Waddah said that his mistress said to him:

"Come when people are asleep, and light on us like dewdrops, by night, when there is no one to blame or forbid us." (1)

An exhaustive examination of the artifices of women, in Hijaz could not be included in this study. However, it will be interesting for the study of the changes which occurred in the moral and social life of Hijaz, during the Umayyad period. For some of those artifices were unknown and uncongenial to the traditional Arab and Moslem morals. The 'Omarit poets were at first reluctant to use the undignified tricks suggested by their non-Arab mistresses; but some of them were driven, in the last resort, to make use of any subterfuge. When Al-Ahwas was asked by his beloved to make friends with her husband he said: "Treachery is not my habit"

"Two sorts of women" he went on, "I do not attempt to court: my friends' wife and the woman who is my neighbour.

"As for my friend, I do not want to afflict him with unhappiness; as for my neighbour, she is recommended to me by God."

Waddah reported that his mistress had suggested a similar artifice, but he did not appear to be reluctant to use it:

"She said: Come and visit us! I said: How could I visit

(1) Nihayat Al-Arab II - 265.
you, I fear that our secret (relationship) will be disclosed

"she said: be kind then with my uncles, and friendly
with my brothers when you meet them

"So you may visit me with them, and our secret will not
be discovered."

The other point which distinguished the Ghazal of the
'Omarit poets from the pagan Ghazal is connected with the
description of love-adventures. Although very few descriptions
of love-adventures came down to us from the pagan period we
can say that the pagan description was a kind of drama.
The loving heart of the poet, after a gay and lively
portrayal of his love-experience, was driven spontaneously
to bewail his lost love and fleeting youth. So the drama
became a moving tragedy in which three obstacles at least
prevented the lover from enjoying his love; the first if
inexorable: time which slipped quickly, taking with it the
poet's youth; the two others were the jealousy of the
beloved's tribe, and her definite departure with her tribe
from the poet's neighbourhood for unknown places.

The love-experiences of the 'Omarit poets were equally
a kind of drama, but the hindrances were different. The
time-factor was not very depressing, because their dalliance
was not confined to their youth, it lasted during their
lifetime. They might also hope to repent at the end of their
life and to obtain the divine favour in the other world, which would make up for their lost life. Neither was the departure of the beloved an important draw back, because most of the mistresses were town dwellers living in Hijaz. The others who came to Mecca from Egypt, Syria, Iraq and Yemen and left at the close of the season of pilgrimage, were able to come back again on pilgrimage. Thus the love-adventures became less tragic than were those of the pagan period. Conversely they became more dramatic or perhaps more melodramatic because new obstacles came between the lover and his love, and because music and song were mixed up with most of the adventures of the 'Omarit poets'. Among these new obstacles we may mention religious morals, the growing fickleness of the lovers and their beloved, and the mistresses themselves who were generally intelligent, sensitive and full of originality.

In the following lines Waddah tells us about one of his love-adventures. His beloved did not want him to pay her another visit through fear of religion, but the poet knew how to allay her fear:

"She said: do not come to our house, our father is a jealous man

"Do you not see the gate barred between us? I said: but I can spring over it

"She said: but the castle stands between us; I said: I shall climb (in) from the roof."
"She said: but the lion is up there; I said: my sword is sharp and cutting.

"She said: but the sea is between us; I said: I am a good swimmer

"She said: but Allah is above us; I said: yes! but He is merciful

"She said: You always have an answer, come when people are asleep

"And light on us like dewdrops, by night, when there is no one to blame or forbid us."

Al-Harith who broke an appointment with his mistress, because of his illness, was accused by her of being inconstant. He wrote the following poem to apologise and defend himself:

"Layla secretly sent a messenger to me to blame me. She claimed that I was fickle and hard

"She broke all her promises. By God I have never purposely broken any promise to her.

"I answered the messenger who came to me, by saying: May misfortune come to you, do you think she was serious?

"When you go back convey my greetings to her and say to her: Layla do not be unfair; and come to the righteous path!

"Is it because I was missing for only three nights through illness that you want to add new trouble to my illness?

"Do you take this single unintentional fault into account while your own faults are numberless?

\[(1)\] Nihayat-ul-Arab II - 265
"If you wish I shall renounce all women except you, if you wish I shall never drink fresh and pure water." (1)

One of 'Omar's beloved was rather difficult to please. She was too clever and knowing to be tackled easily by his artful female slave;

"I sent my female-slave and said to her: be very careful!
"And say kindly to Zaynab: grant 'Omar some favour!
"Zaynab shook her head and, astonished, she said: whose order is this?
"Is this his way of fascinating women? They told me the whole story
"They said: when he obtains what he wants he breaks off." (2)

All these engaging melodramas are full of interest and witty and shrewd observation. All are adorned with fresh images and similes which add novelty to the classical 'cliches':

"The two lovers held each other, through burning love, in the morning" said Al 'Arji, "as a creditor holds the garment of a needy debtor." (3)

"Everything between us is now over. Except memories she left me nothing. I am now like a man who attempts to hold water by closing his hand." (4)

(1) Aghani III - 110  (2) Diwan, P. 234
The style of the 'Omarit melodramas is easy, simple, clear and direct. It was exactly the sort of style which was meant to be popular, fit for music, easy to commit to memory, and easy to understand by non-Arab women.

In fact, the 'Omarit Ghazal was very popular in Hijaz, during the Umayyad period. Both men and women enjoyed it and learnt its catchy tunes by heart. 'Omar's mistresses used to long to hear him reciting his Ghazal. Ibn 'Abbas referring to 'Omar said: His Ghazal will soon make decent and home-loving girls leave their home. Waddah was so conscious of the great influence of his Ghazal that he said: "Because of my love for you I sent you poems as effective as amulets."

To summarise the characters of the 'Omarit poets we may say that a life of pleasure and love-adventure was for them a pursuit which sacrificed true love to sensual pleasure, a life moreover which extended beyond the days of their youth. Wealthy, idle and town-dwellers the 'Omarit poets devoted their lives to wine, music and flirtation. The attractiveness of some aristocratic Arab ladies and the charms of their slave-women, invited the poets to love-adventures. To these adventures they devoted the bulk of their poems, perhaps even their whole poetry. On the other hand their repressed individuality and

(1) Diwan P. 13  (2) Aghani VI - 44.
and the dissolute life of the female slaves drove them to be impious, bold and aggressive in their Ghazal. They described their mistresses with accurate realism, and the melodramas which they composed about their adventures with their sensitive and intelligent beloveds were full of wit, interest and lively description. Their style was simple, direct and melodious and their Ghazal, on the whole, was an instrument of seduction rather than a mere picture of their love affairs.

The great 'Omarit poets of Hijaz during the Umayyad period were: Al-Ahwas, Al'Arji, Waddah-ul-Yemen, Al Harith ibn Khalid, and Ubaidullah ibn Qais Al Ruqayyat. But the poet whose influence dominated the Ghazal of his age and who was looked upon as a model, was 'Omar ibn Abi Rabi'A.

W.G. Palgrave, in his interesting study of 'Omar and his ambience, said: "Poverty of means, isolation of circumstance and insecurity of life, had, during the long ante-Islametic period, cramped the energy, narrowed the ideas, and marred the taste of almost all, indeed in some degree of all Arab poets. The circle they moved in was rough, barren and contracted; their genius dwarfed itself into proportion with the limits which it could not overpass. The high rank and noble birth of the pre-Islamic 'Amr ibn Kulthum and Imru 'ul Qais, had not exempted them from ever-recurring personal dangers and privations on the road and in the field; while the
vigorous spirit of Shanfara, Ta'abata Sharran and their like, was distorted by the physical misery and the savage loneliness to which their writings bear such frequent witness. All this had new passed away. Union had given security, conquest riches; while intercourse and Islam had developed the intellect of the nation. Two entirely new classes of society henceforth came into existence: the men of pleasure, and the men of literature: the former heirs of a wealth they care rather to enjoy than to increase; the latter seekers after wealth, fame, and name, but by intellectual, not by physical distinction. Love and song tissued the career of the former, poetry and eloquence, but chiefly poetry, were the business of the latter. Meanwhile a select few, the spoilt children of destiny, the Mirandolas of Byron of their land and day, combined the advantages of birth and fortune with those of genius. Foremost among these stands the nobleman, the warrior, the libertine, but above all the poet 0 the Don Juan of Mecca, the Ovid of Arabia and the East, 'Omar the Moghirit, the (1) grandson of Abi Rabi'a.

'Omar indeed was the best representative of the 'Omarit poets. His youth, handsomeness, wealth and idleness endowed him with the reputation of being a lady killer. His high rank and noble birth rendered him immune to interference from the

religious leaders of Hijaz, the governors, and the Umayyad caliphs. Moreover, his brother Al-Harith was in government service. Though austerely Moslem this brother was ready and able to extricate Omar from the trouble in which he got through his amours. The great popularity of Omar, however, comes from his personality and the excellence of his Ghazal. Omar was born in the year 23 A.H. (644 A.D.) spent the first part of his youth in Madina, and almost all the remainder of his life in Mecca. Some historians reported that, at the end of his life, he took part in the Moslem wars and that he died at sea (712 A.D.). As the possessor of a large fortune he was able to lead the gay and dissolute life supposedly suitable for a literary genius. Omar, however knew only too well where to stop in his misdemeanours, and how to refer to them in his love-songs. His sense of proportion and limit was so remarkable that the religious leaders of Quraish showed a marked preference for his Ghazal and enjoyed, in its qualities of which they would have disapproved had those qualities been found in somebody else's poetry. Some of his contemporaries were even ready to believe that he was a poet of high moral virtue, in spite of all his obscene Ghazal. In his literary life he showed, in equal measure, an admirable sense of balance. He attained, with his light, fluent love-songs, a great popularity among the people of Hijaz, parti-

(1) Ibn 'Abbas learnt some of his poems by heart; Aghani i 35. (2) Aghani i 53.
cularly among the pleasure-seekers and cultured slaves, and with his classical poems of long metres and great style he obtained the applause of the greatest classical poets of the time, namely Jahir and Al Farazdaq. The former was first reluctant to approve of 'Omar's poetry. When he listened to some of 'Omar's early Ghazal he said, "This poetry suits the warm climate of Tihama. When it comes up to Najd it becomes cold." Later on, Jarir admitted that 'Omar was really a rising genius.

It is true that 'Omar was, amongst the 'Omarit poets, the most boastful about his love-adventures, and the most eloquent in the description of the great attachment of women to him; it is equally true that Kuthayer met 'Omar once and said to him: Did you compose the following lines:

"She said to her companion: let us spoil our procession (round the Ka'ba by conversing) with 'Omar

"Stand up and try to encounter him, so he may recognise us, and wink at him modestly

"Her companion said: I have already done so but he did not respond. Then she set off running after me."

Kuthayer then said: Are you celebrating your beloved's charms or yours? By God, a cat in your house would not be pleased with such Ghazal.

(1) Aghani I x 38. (2) Al-Marzubani: Mo'jam Al Shu'ara, p.162.
All these remarks and their like may be very true, in respect of 'Omar's love poetry; but it is equally true that his poetry reflects a well-balanced personality which can handle all the subject matter of love tactfully. In fact, before the lines of poetry just mentioned above, 'Omar said, describing his beloved and her companions:

"Both beauty and charm were bestowed on them, both coquetry and modesty were their qualities.

"White, charming, attractive, they walked slowly and with a short pace like oryx."

Moreover 'Omar did not always put himself 'in vedette'. sometimes he reported his discussion with his mistress with perfect candour, sometimes he said that he had been insulted by her.

"She said: you are a changeable man, a new acquaintance makes you forget the old one.

"I said: no, you say that just to find out an excuse to break our relationship."

In another poem, 'Omar reported that his beloved had sent him her slave-woman with an unpleasant message; she said to her slave:

"Try not to be suspected, if you come across some enemy or gossiper.

"And tell him ('Omar) that he was the greatest liar among settlers and nomads."

(1) Aghani I - 75. (2) Diwan p.111.
Again, these playful dramatic descriptions of love (in action) do not prevent us from seeing even behind them, the well-balanced personality of the poet. 'Omar was indeed an intellectual and understanding lover. He knew much of the world of the human heart, and was endowed with a pungent wit and keen observation. He was able to understand every gesture, every action, every whim and every artifice of his mistresses. He was capable of grasping their wishes, passion, intention, attachment, suspicion, anxiety and jealousy, and to report them with grace, wit, accuracy and vividness.

"I wish" he said, "that Hind would give me what she has promised me, and thus cure the suffering of my soul.

"I wish that she would flout convention for once, for only spineless people never flout convention"

"She was said to have asked her female neighbours, while she was getting undressed to cool herself:

"Do you see that I really look as he described me, or was he exaggerating somewhat?"

"They laughed to each other and said to her: "Beauty is in the eye of the beholder"

"They were surely jealous of her. Besides, jealousy has ever existed among human beings."

'Omar's heart was full of love and kindness, and seemingly capable of deep passion. Yet the poet never went

(1) Diwan. p. 115.
to the extreme in expressing his feeling. When he was serious he was capable of communicating his deep feeling to his listener without too much exaggeration. He had the ability of controlling both his passion and his expression. His Ghazal might be moving to impress the sentimental, especially women - but never mournful and pathetic like the prelude of the pagan Ghazal.

"My soul" he said," is the ransom of my mistress who made me lovesick. My love for her is in two parts: a hidden and a visible one.

"I cannot do without remembering her; she cannot do without remembering me.

"If ever I were mentioned, her tears would run down, if she were mentioned my tears would run down with effusion.

"When I look at her face I see that she loves me; and if anybody looked at my face, he would notice my love for her."

Simple, naive are these lines,, but full of feeling and also of gracefully controlled love. Likewise, when the poet was not serious and wanted to talk about his foolish

(1)'Omar's poetry was described as a mixture of the coquetry of Hijaz and the Ghazal of Ywmen (Aghani I - 32). Yet, apart from the fact that his mother was from the South, and that the Abyssinian poet, Su'aym might have been one of his father's slaves, nothing more is known of the influence of the South on him. In fact, his visit to Yemen took place after his reputation had been established. Waddah of Yemen could not have influenced him, because he was 'Omar's junior.

(2) Diwan, p. 10-11.
dalliance he knew very well what to say and when to stop. The power of suggestion to which he made appeal on such occasion was limitless.

"When we met" he said, "I knew she felt exactly as I did; alike as two shoes.

"She let the tent flap fall and said: Do not care about my family; talk to me!

"We kept chatting to each other to the exclusion of her women attendants who knew well what an anguished lover desires,

"They were aware of what she wanted and said to her: Allow us to go walking in the plain for an hour to enjoy the fresh night.

"She said: Do not stay long! they replied: continue talking, we shall soon join in again; and like gazelles of the sand slipped away

"And when they arose they let every intelligent person know that they were doing was just for my sake."

'Omar was capable of depicting the highly sensual and suggestive scene with tact and grace. His sense of proportion and due limit helped him to cover his voluptuous desire with the mantle of decency.

(1) in more idiomatic English; as alike as two peas.
(2= Diwan, p. 122.)
"Her woman friends" said 'Omar, "arose in order to leave us alone. She then started weeping.

"She said to them: Have you no pity for me? Do not leave me with a courteous man with a burning passion.

"They said: Be silent! you will not be obeyed. You must know that your lover will be more kind to you than we."

All these qualities made the Ghazal of 'Omar extremely popular in Hijaz, and made the other poets admit that he was the best in the description of women.

We must not underestimate however the part played by 'Omar's friends in the building of his great reputation. He was indeed most fortunate in having had two famous singers of Hijaz, namely Ibn Suraij and Al-Gharid, as great friends. While the other poets urged them incessantly to sing some of their own poems, these two singers were extremely fond of putting the Ghazal of their friend 'Omar into songs and thus made his Ghazal very popular in the society of Hijaz, particularly in the literary salons. The other friends of 'Omar used to spread his poetry among people with a little story relating the circumstances and the occasion on which the poem was composed. This point is worth noting, because this anecdote not only adds interest and vividness to the poem,

(1) Aghani I - 65 (2) Ibid, I - 25.
but it helps, first and foremost, towards the understanding of it. The pagan poems might have had their stories as Noldeke thought, which illustrated them as does the legend a picture, and we should have been more able to understand and enjoy the pagan poetry, had their stories not been lost. 'Omar's bosom friend, Ibn Abi 'Attiq did more than merely report the stories of 'Omar's Ghazal. He was, one might say, his literary critic. His remarks show an excellent taste and a very solid literary education, in addition to making a witty, thought-provoking and helpful contribution towards the enjoyment of 'Omar's poetry.

'Omar once recited the poem which he had composed about his adventure with his beloved Al-Thurayya, to Ibn Abi Attiq. When he recited the following line:

"She said to her sister: If we turn him away without granting him any favour, we shall be unfair and cruel."

Ibn Abi Attiq said (jokingly): she knew how to return kindness gracefully.

'Omar then recited: "This was in a lonely and secure place. I quenched his thirst and mine."

Ibn Abi Attiq said: "by so confessing she is really compromising herself."

'Omar went on reciting: "We stayed there ten consecutive

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days during which we paid our debt and the debt to us was fully met.

Ibn Abi Attiq then made this remark: "Neither her debt nor yours was silver or gold coins. May God prevent you from doing shameful things."

And when 'Omar finally recited: "All this took place when we went on pilgrimage. God only knew what was our intention therein."

His friend said: "What you say outwardly betrays clearly what your intention was, unless you have a new explanation to give. O 'Omar! worthless will life be after your death. By God, if you die I shall die with you." (1)

A great part of the charm of 'Omar's Ghazal comes from his style. It is easy, brilliant and transparent, with a wonderful power of touching the heart and pleasing the senses. 'Omar's verse is as spontaneous, simple and direct as a refined conversation. Its diction is unaffected, its phraseology is lively as a gesture, and its metres are melodious, flexible and light as sweet music. 'Omar was very fond of using dialogues in his Ghazal and made of the lovers' conversation a perfect art. His style was so powerful that it adorned all the subjects which he touched. He wrote about the libertine life of Hijaz with a fanciful felicity, and when love's flowers were blasted either by the gale of exaggerated..." (1) Aghani I - 91
puritanism or by the heat of unrestrained sensualism, he but touched them with his hand, and these flowers bloomed anew with a dewy and immortal sweetness.

No wonder then that Ibn Suraij said about 'Omar's Ghazal: "Nothing more harmful than 'Omar's poetry could be introduced to the young girls in their pavilions"; that another said: "His Ghazal had the effect of magic on human hearts"; that a third said: "If you want to make a man of Quraish dance, sing him a poem of 'Omar as it was sung by Ibn Suraij."

In the modern Arab world, 'Omar still holds a very high position. Taha Hussain called him "the greatest poet that the Arabic Ghazal has ever known."

Some British Orientalists were very fond of him. W.G. Palgrave, as we have seen made an interesting study of him and Clouston reserved a chapter to him in his book entitled: Arabian Poetry. Later on Professor J.S. Jabboor, in the preface to his exhaustive study of 'Omar's life and ambience, said the his professor Sir Thomas Arnold has once said to him:

(1) Ibid I - 35  (2) Ibid I 9  37
(3) Taha Hussain ; Hadith Al Arbi'a II - 127.
(4) W.G. Palgrave : Essays on Eastern Questions. London 1872. pp. 2734...
(5) W.A Clouston ; Arabian Poetry. Glasgow 1881.
"Do you not feel, when you study 'Omar, as if he were indeed seated near you, holding out his hand to you, down the centuries, greeting?"

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Extracts from The 'Omarit Poetry.

I - "One year, says Palgrave, on the authority of the poet's best biographer Abul Faraj, "on the very day of the great annual festival, when the pilgrims, assembled from all quarters of the Muhammedan world at Mecca, were engaged in the evening performance of their solemn traditional rite, pacing seven times in prayer round the sacred Ka'aba, Zeynab, a young girl of hoble birth, happened to be present among the crowd of worshippers, from whom, she was easily to be distinguished by her surpassing beauty and the gay dresses of her numerous attendants. What next followed 'Omar may best recite after his own fashion, and in his own metre, we have as far as possible preserved in the translation.

Ah for the throes of a heart sorely wounded!
Ah for the eyes that have smit me with madness!
Gently she moved in the calmness of beauty,
Moved as the bough to the light breeze of morning.
Dazzled my eyes as they gazed, till before me

(1) J.S. Jabboor: 'Omar ibn Abi Rabi' A. Beyrouth, 1839. Vol. II.
All was a mist and confusion of figures
Ne'er had I sought her, and ne'er had she sought me,
Fated the love, and the hour, and the meeting!
There I beheld her, as she and her damsels
Paced 'twixt the temple and outer enclosure
Damsels the fairest, the loveliest, the gentlest,
passing like slowwending heifers at evening
Ever surrounding with courtly observance
Her whom they honour, the peerless of women.
Then to a handmaid, the youngest, she whispered:
"'Omar is near; let us mar his devotion
Cross on his path that he needs may observe us;
Give him a signal, my sister, demurely."
"Signals I gave, but he marked not or heeded,
Answered the damsel, and hastest to meet me.
Ah for that night by the vale of the sand-hills!
Ah for the dawn when in silence we parted:
He who the morn may awake to her kisses
Drinks from the cup of the blessed in heaven.

II - "'Omar's brother, Al-Harith, "says Palgrave", alarmed
at the possible consequences of his adventures with Zeynab,
sent him off to look after some family estates in the extreme

(1) Clouston: Arabian Poetry, P. 358-359. Palgrave seems
to have taken some liberty in the translation of the two first
and two last lines of this lyric. Diwan, P. 27.
south of Ywmen. 'Omar obeyed, but once alone, a male
Wariana in the south, separation and solitude proved too
much for him; and before many weeks of his banishment were
over, he had begun to solace his loneliness with several
pathetic effusions, to all of which Zeynab was the keynote.
The following may serve as a specimen:

Ah! where have they made my dwelling? Far, how far,
from her, the loved one,

Since they drove me lone and parted to the sad sea­
shore of 'Aden:

Thou art mid the distant mountains, and to each, the
loved and lover,

Nought is left but sad remembrance, and a share of
aching sorrow.

Hadst thou seen thy lover weeping by the sand-hills of the
ocean,

Thou hadst deemed him struck by madness: was it madness?
was it love?

I May forget all else, but never shall forget her
as she stood,

As I stood, that hour of parting: heart to heart in
speechless anguish;

Then she turned her to Thoreyya, to her sister,
sadly weeping;
Coursed the tears down cheek and bosom, till her passion found an utterance:

"Tell him, sister, tell him; yet be not as one that chides or murmurs -

Why so long thy distant tarrying on the unlovely shores of Yemen?

Is it sated ease detains thee, or the quest of wealth that lures thee?

Tell me what the price they paid thee, that from Mecca bought thy absence."

III - "'Omar's diction" says R.A. Nicholson," like that of Catullus, has all the unaffected ease of refined conversation. Here are a few lines:-

"Blame me no more, 0 comrades! but today
Quietly with me beside the howdahs stay
Blame not my love for Zeynab, for to her
And hers my heart is pledged a prisoner.
Ah, can I ever think of how we met
Once at al-Khayf, and feel no fond regret?
My song of other women was but jest
She reigns alone, eclipsing all the rest.

(1) More precisely: Tell me if the price you have had could ever compensate the loss you had in missing the rite of pilgrimage. (2) Clpuston: Arabian Poetry. P.362-363; also Diwan, P. 96.
Here is my love sincere, 'tis she the flame
Of passion kindles, so, a truce to blame!"  

IV  - 'Omar and Sukayna.

"O sukayn! the fresh water of the Euphrates is not
more delicious to me - when I am thirsty and short of drink.
"Than you, though you are away now. Seldom do women keep
affection for (lovers) who are away.

"Would you grant me a favour which may quench my heart's
thirst? You have been tormenting me for a long time.
"For your sake, I disobeyed my relatives, and the
family ties which linked me to them are now broken up.
"Whereas you never grant me a kindness to enjoy, not
did you regard me (clinging to you)

"So I am now become like a traveller who - on a hot day -
spilt the little water which he had, simply because he had
seen a shining mirage."  

V  - 'Omar and the Three Sisters:

"While they were talking about me they saw me riding on
horse-back less than a mile distant.

The eldest sister said: "Do you recognise that young
man?" the second said: "Yes, it is 'Omar.

p. 237. ef. also Diwan p. 98.
(2) Diwan, p. 182.
"The younger sister whom I had made heartsick said:

Of course we recognize him, a moon cannot be mistaken\(^1\)

(literally: unseen)

VI - 'Omar and love

"If you love a person and become passionate about him do not make this person your God!"

"Go to your beloved when you can, but refrain from visiting her frequently.

"Interrupted visits are surely better than continuous ones. The latter will not make your beloved love you much more

"On the contrary, she may get tired of you and might say 'no' whereas she used to say 'yes' before.

VII - 'Omar and the artifices of women

"I said to my friend who praised the charms of those young girls: You make me yearn, can you ever assist me?"

"You have stirred (the passion) of (my) heart which renounced youthful dalliance and all the like, can you now help me with the young girls?

"If what you say is true, the four girls whom you are praising are second to nobody, in the whole world.

"My friend said: come and see, I said: How, I fear that I shall be recognised and blamed for it."

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\(^1\) Diwan: p. 31.  \(^2\) Diwan, p. 184
"He said: go and ride on a camel's back and shield your face and go straight to them and do not look self-conscious.

"I shall take care - my friend went on - to hide you from the eyes of other people, for fear that (your adventure) might be discovered.

"I did as my friend suggested and came to the appointed place riding a light-footed camel.

"When I met the (four young girls) I greeted them. Beauty made their shining faces too proud to be concealed with veils.

"They pretended not to have recognised me, and said: "He is a passer-by who has been tiring his camel through over fast centering.

"They began to stir up my desire for love-affairs very delicately, while I was hurrying things and wanting to go a 'yard' for their 'inch'.

"After conversing together for a while they said to me: 'Did you think that you could mislead us?"

"Khalid, (your friend), was sent to you by us, yesterday. We have worked out the whole thing and explained it to him.

"So you came here to an appointment known by all of us, for which we all came.

"This site - they said - is very quiet, away from the watchers' eyes, plain, spacious, surrounded with smooth hills.
and full of thick plantations.

"You are a noble man favoured by noble women, and so you deserved to enjoy this day."

VIII - A 'Omar's love-adventure:

"Hind, my beloved, sent me a messenger to say that she was coming (to pay me a visit)

"in the darkness) when no eye can watch her.

"I said (to the messenger): This visitor who has given my heart sickness, and haunted my memory - will be most welcome.

"I secretly prepared myself to meet her when a part of the night had passed, and the moon had disappeared

While I was waiting for her in my place, sleep overcame me.

"After dropping off into sleep for a little while, I was suddenly awaked by the smell of her perfume mingled with musk,

"I said: Who is there? She said: 'I am the one who stays awake for a long time because of you,

"Why did I love you and give myself this trouble? I believe that it was my fate.

"You have been breaking every appointment with me, and you always come with excuses.

"Tell me for God's sake: Have you not pity on me or is your heart harder than stone?

"When she finished talking I said to her, while my tears were running down like pearls.

(1) Diwan, p. 47
"You are my eye's pleasure. You must know that you are, to me, the equal of my sight and hearing,

"Cease blaming me and consider my excuses, and do not listen to the liars (who speak ill about me).

"She then let me taste her delicious saliva. It was like honey mingled with fresh water.

"I spent the night happily, kissing her to my heart's desire.

"We enjoyed our night until the cock began to crow, and the zealous got up to pray.

"Then she awoke me, and, restless, she said - while her tears were running down -

"Get up, my soul's favourite. The dawn is now shown, can you feel its freshness"

(1) Allowing for the difference in time and language an anonymous poem (early XVIth century) is brought to mind by these lines:

On a time the amorous Silvy
Said to her shepherd, "Sweet, how do you do?
Kiss me this once and then God B' wi' you,
For now the morning draweth near
With that, her fairest bosom showing,
Opening her lips, rich perfumes blowing,
She said, 'now kiss me and be going
    My sweet dear'
Kiss me this once and then be going
For now the morning draweth near.
With that the shepherd waked from sleeping,
And, spying where the day was peeping,
He said, 'now take my soul in keeping,
    My sweetest dear
Kiss me, and take my soul in keeping
Since I must go, now day is near.'
"What she said to me, I shall not forget for a long time, so long as pigeons coo on twigs.

"She said - When I insisted on (doing) what she was reluctant to do - untrustworthy men act in this way."

IX - Al-Ahwas.

"O, my friends! let us halt our camels, and let me say a few words to that beautiful girl,

"(I want) to say to her: "Why are you deserting me. Indeed I am not at fault because you were to blame, first."

"If you want a reconciliation I am ready for it, I shall welcome your return magnificently.

"If you prefer turning your back on me, my life will be unhappy and you will split our union."

X - Al'Arji.

"O, the house of 'Atika, near Al-Azhar, or beyond it, behind the red hill.

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(1) Diwan. p. 29.  (2) Abdullah ibn Muhammad Al-Ahwas was of the Ansar. He led, in Madina, a veryperverted life and was flogged for adultery and homosexuality. Because of his shameful conduct and biting satire he did not attain the popularity of 'Omar in Ghezal, in spite of his highly finished poetry. He dies in 723 A.D.  (3) Aghani. IV - 57.

(4) Abdullah ibn 'Omar Al-'Arji was a poet cavalier. He fought the Byzantins with Maslama ibn Abdul-Malik and when he came back to Mecca he gave himself up to sensual pleasures and hunting. The governor of Mecca was his enemy; he did not fail to find some reason to put the poet in prison where the latter died in 738 A.D.
"I have not met people for years, I wish that our meeting had never occurred (because I kept yearning for it afterwards).

"In your yard, the singer Ibn Mush'ab was then present, we were conversing with other guests and (enjoying) the moonlight.

"Wearing Persian coats tinted with saffron and safflower.

"The two lovers spent the happiest night and when the dawn shone like the blaze on the forehead of a horse.

"They held each other closely as a creditor holds the garment of a needy debtor."

XI - Al-Harith ibn Khaleēd.

"They said that the parting would take place on the day after tomorrow. This news made my heart tremble,

"My eye kept weeping thereupon, my tears ran down like pearls.

"She said - while her tears were running down in profusion - Do not cry too much when we part.

"We complained to each other about the impending parting which would separate us."

XII - Al-Harith and Um 'Omran.

"O, Um 'Omran! my yearning for you is still so intense that I become emaciated and sick."

(1) Aghani I - 157. (2) Al-Harith ibn Khaled was of the Quraishit tribe of Makhzum. Like 'Umar, he confined himself to composing Ghazal. He became the governor of Mecca under the Caliph Abdul Malik and died in 700 A.D. (3) Aghani III - 104
"My heart is yearning to meet you as a drowning man yearns to be rescued.

"Um 'Omran used to grant me too few favours and she was always frightened like a person frightened of touching a snake." (1)

XIII - Waddah's love.

"Can my people save me from those who blame me - and indeed they are becoming numerous - and can they help me also with the beautiful coquettish dream-vision which came to me by night? "Crossing rocks and deserts, the distance of an eight nights journey

"She upbraided me in my dream, but how lovely was her blame and her voice.

"I welcomed the dream vision, my words of welcome - I said - are as profuse as raindrops.

"I love my damsel who used to say when we were alone: "I would sacrifice my people and my wealth for your sake."

"She is my anxiety, my hope and the love of my soul even when other lovers would tire

"I measured the love of people who came before us, but I found no criterion for my love.

(1) Aghani III - 108. (2) Abdul Rahman ibn Ismail, called Waddah of Yemen was of the Himyarites. His beloved was a Persian slave of Yemen. He was afterwards accused of being in love with Um Al-Banin, the wife of the caliph of Walid, and killed in about 708 A.D.
"I found no love like mine, nor men who loved as I love.
"I swear by the One to Whom people go on pilgrimage during the ten (holy) nights,
"Since I loved her, I could not control either my heart or my soul, What shall I do?
"If she leaves me, her going will be like death, and if she is kind to me I become beside myself with joy
"O daughter of Maliki, you are the happiness of my soul, will you slay me because I love you?
"What offence should I commit if I said that I love Hijaz as I love pure waters?
"I love Hijaz because I love its inhabitants and nourish a passion for everything in it."

XIV - Waddah and Habbaba

"Who could assist my heart, which will not obey those who give advise, and cannot awake from love's spell.
"Lovers' hearts might forget, but mine remains sick with longing.
"Habbaba made my heart sick through her coquettish ways and attractive figure.
"And with her eyes like the eyes of Gazelles which breed on the sand hills of Aqiq.

(1) Aghani VI - 43 (2) Habbaba was a beautiful slave with whom Waddah had fallen in love, in Hijaz, before the caliph Yazid ibn Abdul-Malik bought her and took her to Syria.
"Her black eyes shine with magic, she goes to the head like old wine.

"A slender waisted girl, she will come towards you as beautiful as the rising sun.

"Her hips are like small hills, smoothly curved.

"She is like a pearl in a shell embraced always by a marvellous perfume.

"Come, my love, and quench my heart's flame

"You are my hope, have pity of my heart, do not cause it too much suffering.

"Because of you there is in my heart the sickness of a lover and the happiness of a suitor full of tender care.

"Both my sickness and care lead me urgently to you

"O, my soul, you tempted me and gave me all the troubles of love and must suffer now.

"You were yearning to feel burning passion for her, and must yearn now."

(1) Aghani VI - 42.
CHAPTER XI

The 'Udri Poets.

Love was almost the only concern of both the 'Omarit and 'Urdi poets. The former enjoyed it in its lighter and more joyous form, and described it from the 'outside' dealing almost exclusively with their dalliance and adventures with their shrewd damsels. The 'Udri poets took love much more seriously and depicted it rather from a more introspective viewpoint, dealing with their own passion which was almost always described as desperate and burning like fire.

The 'Udri poets drew their name from 'Udra, a tribe which was noted for its passionate lovers. Most of the latter - if not all - died through lovesickness and despair, and their moving stories are to be found in every book of Ancient Arabic literature. Ibn Qutayba who narrated some of these stories in his 'Uyun-al-Akhbar (UV - 131 ) said that an 'Urdi tribesman was once asked to what tribe he belonged. He answered: I belong to the tribe whose lovers die from lovesickness". Al-Nuayri, who also related some of the mournful love-stories of the 'Udris in his encyclopaedia: Nihayat-ul-Arab (II x 184 ..) stated that the 'Udri martyrs of love were numberless.

'Omar ibn Abi Ra'di'a, the leader of the libertine poets,
had a 'Udri friend: Abu Mishar who was described by the poet as: 'chaste when he was with his beloved, and he could not forget his love easily as I myself do'. Abu Mishar would have presumably died from lovesickness had 'Omar not helped him to marry his beloved. (Aghani X - 50).

The most outstanding figure among the 'Udri martyrs was perhaps the poet 'Orwa ibn Hizam. Being of little estate he was unable to marry his cousin with whom he was deeply in love. Her covetous parents, especially her mother, wanted a very large dowry such as he could not afford. He thought however that his uncles, settled in Persia, would help him, so he went off to them after his beloved's parents had promised him that they would await his return. In his absence, Afra, the beloved was married to a wealthy Syrian gentleman. 'Orwa, who discovered this on his return, became very desperate. He followed her to Syria, and, while wandering from place to place seeking her abode, he happened one day to be the guest of her husband. 'Afra recognised his voice and was very happy to meet him. Her husband allowed him to stay in his house, and to talk to 'Afra. When the two lovers were alone, 'Afra ordered wine for him; 'Orwa politely declined to drink it and said: "You know that I never allow myself forbidden things. If I should want to sin, I should sin with you because you are my only lot in this world, and now you do not belong to me and I do not want to live any longer. Your husband received me kindly..."
and generously in this house, and made me feel ashamed of staying here any longer. Then 'Orwa went away weeping. A few days afterwards, 'Afra heard of his death, and died herself some days later from grief and despair.

The poet 'Orwa was perhaps the greatest 'Udri lover, but not the greatest 'Udri poet. This title belonged deservedly to Jamil ibn Ma'mar Al-'Udri called: 'Imam ul Muhibbin', or 'The religious leader of lovers'. Jamil was in love with Buthayna; they used to meet, while shepherding their camels in the valley of Kura (between Mecca and Medina) where their respective tribes lived. Her people however thought that it would be a great disgrace to marry her to her lover and obliged her to marry another man. Jamil then became broken hearted, and when he attempted to meet Buthayna again, her parents complained to the governor of Hijaz. The latter authorized them to kill Jamil if he ever came near Buthayna's house. Notwithstanding this drastic measure, Jamil used to meet Buthayna secretly and recite to her the poems he composed about their unhappy, but ever-lasting love.

To the 'Udris; 'Orwa and Jamil, we must add a group of poets who did not belong to the tribe of 'Udra, but, for some reason or other, shared with its desperate lovers their
We have seen in previous chapters that the pagan Arabs had known some unfortunate lovers like the elder Moraqesh and Al Nahdi of 'Udra who died from lovesickness and despair; and that the Prophet was reported to have said: "He who falls in love and keeps chaste and dies from lovesickness will be treated as a martyr, in the world to come." "In this chapter however, we shall concern ourselves only with the poet-lovers who, though they did not belong to the tribe of 'Udra, sang the same 'Udri love, in Hijaz, during the 'Umayyad period. More precisely we shall deal with the following poets:

a) Majnun Layla, Kuthayer, Al Simma al-Qushayri, Tawba ibn Humayer and Abu Sakhr al-Huzali who, like Jamil, were not permitted to marry their cherished loved ones.

b) Nusayb, Abu Dahbal and Ibn al-Dumayna, who all fell in love hopelessly after having married other women.

c) Qays ibn al-Zarih who, like Alnahdi, was forced by his parents to divorce his dear, but sterile wife, and was not able to do without her afterwards.

d) 'Orwa ibn Uzayna and Al-Qass whose strict religious morals prevented them from giving way to their glowing passions.

All these poets, with the exception of the two last mentioned, and perhaps also Jamil and Kuthayer, who spent a large part of
their poetical life in Mecca and Medina, lived outside the cities of Hijaz, either in the countryside or in the desert. So we may say that the 'Udri love belonged to a great extent to the countryside of Hijaz, as opposed to the 'Omarit love which belonged to the Hijazi towns.

The 'Udri love had other characteristics; the most outstanding of which were probably: intensity, despair, chastity and faithfulness.

Intensity, despair and faithfulness were very much stressed in the love stories and poems of 'Orwa ibn Hizam, Majnun Layla and Qais ibn al Zarih, whereas chastity was stressed in the life and poetry of poets such as: Nuayb, 'Orwa ibn Uzayna, Al Qass and Abu Dahbal. However, all the characteristics of 'Udri love appear unmistakably though not in the same proportion - in the 'Udri Ghazal of all the poets mentioned above.

Other aspects of the 'Udri love though not general, may be mentioned here in addition to the four salient features, for example: religious resignation, humility (on the part of the lover) and cruelty (on the part of the beloved).

These features may stress the similarity between the 'Udri and courtly love, and serve to clarify the points where the former differs from its pre-Islamic counterpart. In fact, the fatal love of the pagan Muraqish or Nahdi, was - as we
shall see later - very different in degree, and sometimes in nature, from the 'Udri love as described in this chapter. Besides, the lovers of all periods who die from lovesickness are not necessarily 'Udri lovers. The 'Udri love was essentially a new ideal of love which marked the emotional evolution - perhaps one might say revolution - of the pious circles of Hijaz during the Umayyad period. It was, furthermore, a general tendency and one which influenced even the 'Omarit poets who - like 'Omar and Ahwas for instance - sometimes composed poetry in which the 'Udri inspiration was evident.

"I shall hide my love for her", said Al-Ahwas, "and shall cherish it in my heart till the Day of Judgment when the heart's secrets will be judged."

Actually the 'Udri love was - to some extent - a reaction against a kind of moral laxity which developed in Hijaz during the Umayyad epoch. Some decent living people of this country, clinging to the Moslem morals, found in 'Udri love a compromise

(1) 'Azza the beloved of the 'Udri poet Kuthayer, is reported, in Aghani (XI-23) to have once preferred some Ghazal of Al-Ahwas to that of her lover. "He shows, she said, "more kindness and obedience to his damsel, in his poetry than there is in yours. I believe - "went on Azza - "that he was a better poet than you when he said: "you who upbraid me about her and ask me to break with her, have already talked too much and in vain - I shall not obey you nor shall I pay heed to your calumny; my heart shall not forget her, and there is no shame in loving her.

(2) Aghani IV - 49.
between their human instincts and their puritanical religion; they understood it as a love which could reach the divine without abandoning the human, and might become spiritual while remaining also carnal. They attached to it noble and passionate feelings, but regard 'chastity' as its highest quality.

Abdul Rahman ibn Abi 'Ammar, reports the author of Aghani (VIII - 6) "was one of the ascetics of Mecca. He was called 'Al-Qass' or 'the monk' because of his great religious devotion. He felt passionately in love with a singing-girl called 'Sallama'. She said to him one day when they found themselves alone: "By Allah, I love you". "By Allah, so do I" answered Al Qass. "I want" she said "to put my lips on yours". 'By Allah, so do I,' she said: "What then prevents you from doing so in this empty place?" He said: 'God, describing the Day of Judgment, said in the Koran that: "Friends shall, on that day, be enemies one to another, except those who guard against evil" XLIII - 67; I do not want to do any evil thing which will make you my enemy on that day. Then Al-Qass left Sallama and went away."

The poet 'Orwe ibn Uzayna was among the great jurists and masters of Hadith in Medina. He was once met by Sukayna bint Al-Hussain who said to him: "Do you claim to be a noble and pious man, and chaste in your Ghazal? How can you
then account for your saying: "When I revealed my hidden love to her she said: Keep concealing it! I thought you were careful enough to hide it."

"Do you not see those who are around me? I said "my love for you and my suffering blinded mine eyes'. Aghani XXI - 107.

This story may show that chastity was quite a new factor in love. Some people like Sukayna and also the parents of Buthayna, the beloved of Jamil, seemed to have had some difficulty in understanding how a fiery passion could be combined with chastity. Buthayna's parents were unable to understand that Jamil, when he met their daughter, was satisfied with only talking to her, and reciting the 'Udir Ghazal which he had composed about her, that the two lovers were, in fact, perfectly chaste, decent and honest throughout their meetings. That is why Buthayna's parents reported Jamil's visits to their daughter, to the governor of Hijaz, who, in turn, authorised them to kill the poet if he should ever come again.

Jamil was reported to have said on his dying bed: "May Muhammad not be my saviour (in the other world) if my hand ever touched Buthayna for a suspicious thing. All I used to do is to rest her hand on my heart in order to have some relief.

Al-Hajjaj, the governor of Iraq - and the ex-governor of Hijaz - seemed also to have been doubtful about chastity in
'Udri love. He once said to Layla Al Akhyaliyya, the beloved of the poet Tawba: "Now that Tawba is dead and your love and youth are over I want you to tell me the truth" was there ever anything of a dubious nature in your love for each other?

"None" answered Layla, "except once when alone, he asked me something which I judged to be lacking in self-control, and to which I answered with the following lines:

"I said to him when he expressed his desires: you would do better to conceal them for they are unattainable as long as I live.

"I have my husband and do not want to deceive him, and you are the husband of another woman."

"I swear by God, went on Layla - that from that moment until his death, he did not make any suspicious suggestion".

Aghani X - 68.

The observance of chastity, however was not without its own peculiar suffering. The 'Udri lovers suffered indeed tremendously from all the pangs of unrequited love; not to speak of expulsion, humiliation and threats which the parents of their damsels or the agents of public order reserved for them when they attempted to visit their loved ones.

We shall see when we come to study their poetry that these ill-fated gentlemen were suffering deeply, and that their suffering, lacking any other channel of expression, found an
outlet through the medium of Ghazal. There is no reason to doubt their emotional suffering, yet it was to some extent a form of experience which was deliberately sought and which was endured of their own free will, perhaps one might say a form of martyrdom with which they themselves would have been loathe to dispense.

"They said" said Majnum Layla, "that I could forget her if I wanted to; I answered them that I did not want to." (1) "They said", confessed Kathayer "that she departed and that I had to choose between forgetting her or continuing to weep; I said that the latter would better soothe my pain."

We must admit that the 'Udri poets often proclaimed that love was their fate and, using fatalistic arguments declared that they could not help loving their damsels. Jamil, for example, said:

"One of my relatives" blamed me about her. He was also a friend of mine and was very anxious to set me on the righteous path by his reproof

"I said: what you notice in me about her has been decreed by Allah. Could anything decreed by Him be altered?

"However right or wrong my love for her may be, I am now involved in it, though I did not choose it purposely."


(3) Diwan, p. 23.
Yet we ought to see in this an attempt to justify, to the world his passionate love, rather than merely an explanation of the fact of love. It will not perhaps be paradoxical to say that the 'Udri lovers hid a remarkably free and powerful will behind their so-called fatalism. They did not want to get rid of their pain, because pain is the only genuine criterion of true love.

"Fantastic fancies fondly move
And in frail joys believe
Taking false pleasure for true love
But pain can ne'er deceive" (1)

Abu Sākhr Al-Huzali urged his soul to let its suffering grow stronger every night while expressing the wish that his eventual 'rendezvous' with forgetfulness should come no earlier than the Day of Judgment. (2)

The resignation of the 'Udri lovers was like the resignation recommended by Islam, a wilful one. It was a willing acceptance. (3)

(1) Lord Rochester. (2) Al-Hammas, p. 544. (3) Majnum's resignation was sometimes mixed with discontent. In fact one could not fail to remember some lines of Job's plea with God when one reads the following line of Majnum: "God who decreed that she would be for somebody else, afflicted me with my love for her; why would He not afflict me with something else?" (Kitab al-Zahra, p. 332)
The attitude of the 'Udri lovers towards love may be compared with that of the ascetic Moslems towards life. The latter renounced all the joys of this world, and the 'Udris renounced all the sensual pleasures of love. In fact the growing ascetism in Hijaz had a great effect on the development of 'Udri love which was, after all, a compromise between love and religion. 'Orwa ibn Uzayna and Al-Qass were, as has been seen, ascetics and lovers at the same time and most of the 'Udri lovers renounced the joys of life for the sake of their hopeless passion.

The 'Udri poetry owes a large part of its fascination to the freely endured resignation. It is always moving to listen to the loving hearts which, despite insurmountable difficulties do not relinquish their passion, but became even more attached to their beloveds. Furthermore, their constancy in pursuit knew of a love affair which they must always remain unattainable was a paragon of high morality. Not only the chivalrous morality which required that the lovers should devote his heart to one mistress alone, but also the religious one. For faithfulness to a single mistress, i.e., after all, a sort of chastity in love. So chastity, faithfulness, self-sought suffering and resignation, all are to be admired in the 'Udri Ghazal.
"They said O, Jamil, keep steady; but I swear I could not possibly do it with Buthayna.

"How wretched is my soul, it has enough cause for worry, and how unhappy are my relatives on account of this sad affair.

"Oh my friends, have you ever, in all your lives, seen any other victim weeping for love of his murderer?

"I shall never see a couple with higher morals than my beloved and I.

"If one day a shoe should be found in some deserted place, you must know, Buthayna, that it was mine."

It is worth noting here that ascetic resignation could not be endured except by people who believe in a future. The 'Udri lovers, like the ascetic Moslems, believed in a future life. Therefore they were capable of resigning themselves to living a death-like life, in the hope of deserving a better one in the world to come, whereas the pagan lovers, whose lives centred round 'today' for lack of a 'tomorrow' in which they should believe, did not show any sign of such resignation. This point is worth stressing not only because it shows the difference between 'Udri love in the pagan and Moslem periods, but also because it shows the influence of Islam on the development of 'Udri Ghazel.

(1) Diwan of Jamil, p. 48-49.
Moreover it may account for some novelty in imagination and thinking which appeared in the 'Udri poetry during the Umayyad period, namely the idea of a personified love which survives death, and the hope of a lovers' meeting in the hereafter. Here again we can see the influence of Islam on 'Urdi Ghazal. In fact, Moslem religion by introducing introspection into the individual life of the Arabs made the poets familiar with the practice of talking to their hearts and of discussing things with them. The 'Udri lovers, when they thought of breaking with their damsels in order to put an end to their suffering, found their hearts to be always on their damsels' side. So the lover's heart became the faithful representative of the beloved and, in the long run, the representative of love itself. Hence the frequent dialogues between the 'Udris and their hearts reported in their Ghazal.

"My heart" said Kuthayer "revealed my love to her and helped her against me; I cannot rely on my heart." (1)

"I suggested forgetfulness to my heart" said Majnun," it said: "I cannot promise it, and do not want to mislead you, so prepare yourself for continued suffering." (2)

Other factors, of course, contributed to the personification of love such as the Moslem belief in the real existence of spiritual and moral beliefs and ideas.

taught by Islam, and the fact that religion by introducing the duality of eternal soul and perishable body in everyone's individuality and by extending the notion of space and time in Moslems' minds, permitted the 'Udri poets to imagine their love surviving their death. 'Orwa ibn Hizam was looking forward to the Day of Judgment because he was told that he would then meet his beloved 'Afra.

Qais ibn al-Zarij said:

"Our love will survive every event, and will visit us in the darkness of the grave."

Thus, Moslem religion had its bearing on all the aspects of 'Udri love which we have studied so far, namely chastity, faithfulness, despair, resignation, personification of love and the conception of an eternal passion. It is now time to study the effect of the religion on another important characteristic of 'Udri passion, that of intensity to which reference has already been made.

We have seen in a previous chapter that intensity is the characteristic of religious spirit, that the latter does not exist independently like moral or philosophical ideas or religious dogmas and creeds, yet all these things could have the religious 'spirit' if they were conceived with sufficient

intensity and inflamed by an infinite passion. This is precisely the case with the 'Udri love, now under discussion. Its enthusiasm excessiveness and infiniteness sometimes gave it a mystical character, while other features such as despair and resignation made it pathetic; its chastity and faithfulness rendered the 'Udri Ghazal magnificent poetry for ever capable of moving and of possessing generous hearts.

"Do me good" said Suthayer to his beloved, Azza, "or do me harm, I shall not blame you, nor hate you, even when you make yourself hateful.

"Although 'azza broke with me I praise her and keep faithful to her and am grateful for all she has done for me.

"I shall not wish her any suffering, not be happy if her foot slides.

"The calumniators must not believe my love for 'Azza was merely an infatuation which is now evaporating.

"By Allah, and by Allah again, no one before her took my heart, nor shall anyone after.

"It is strange how my heart can confess such things and how my soul becomes resigned."

The personification of love by the 'Udri poets, was much more than a literary device. The distinct conception of love and its independent existence, taken for granted by modern

(1) Diwan, I - 53-57
poets, were quite new discoveries for the 'Udri lovers. It is true that the 'Omarit poets also conceived of love as a thing of independent existence, and sometimes personified it in their Ghazal, but their conception of love was quite simple and rudimentary in comparison with that of the 'Udri poets. The 'Omarites were rather interested in its active manifestations, while the 'Uhdris, given to introspection, and being the victims of long design and suffering, were more interested in the study of love itself, its nature, mystery, development, duration, in order that they might come to an understanding of the passion which was consuming their life.

What was the 'Udri conception of love? This is the question with which we must now concern ourselves. We have already seen that they localized their desperate love in their hearts (sometimes in their souls) and engaged in argument with their own hearts, when overwhelmed by their crushing pain. In fact they described love as a consuming passion, Abu Dahbal (1) compared it with a piece of hot coal and 'Orwa ibn Uzayna compared it with a blazing flame which nothing could extinguish. "When I suffer from the blazing flame of love in my heart I go up to the watering-place of my people, looking for coolness."

(1) Aghani VI - 156. (2) It is (liver) in the text. The Arabs used to localize their suffering in their (livers) and (intestines).
"But even when the coolness of water freshens me from outside, how can I put out the burning heat which is within me."

Orwa ibn Hizam compared the suffering caused by love with that caused by the searing-iron of a doctor applying cauterisation, and like the poet Tawba he compared his heart entangled with desperate love with a sand-grouse caught in a snare. Majnun Layla felt as though his suffering heart was in the clutches of a wild bird which grasped it cruelly when the name of Layla was mentioned. Jamil gave the following definition of love:

"Love, at the beginning, as an obstinacy which occurs fatefully

"When the lover crosses the deep sea of love, he comes across enormous and unbearable things.

Qais ibn al-Zarih described it as follows:

"Is love anything but tears after sighs, and a burning heat in our hearts, which could never be cooled?

"and weeping in profusion when I see from afar a landmark of my beloved's country?"

It is worth noting here that the 'Udri poets, when they set out to describe their inner world, and the effect of love on it, must have had some difficulty in depicting some of their

deep, rich and painful feelings with a poetical language which was not accustomed to the idea of introspection. As we see, they overcome this difficulty by using concrete images to depict their feelings, such as hot coals, blazing flames, searing-irons, snares. This was so much the better, for the reality of moods, emotions and feelings could not indeed be easily grasped and appreciated by men, if they were not turned into tangible persons or concrete things.

Besides the quality which love possessed of inflicting pain, the 'Udri poets were amazed by the irresistible power of passion. Qais ibn al-Zarih believed that it goes, in the inner world, deeper than grief or happiness, and compared his love with something which was sprinkled in his blood where it would stay forever. 'Orwa ibn Uzayna said that 'love blinds the sight', and Kuthayer said:

"When a person is in love, he cannot see or hear but through his heart."

The 'Udri poets were so possessed by their delirious passion that they came to believe that life without the beloved was meaningless. Qais ibn al Zarih, 'Orwa ibn Hizam and Majnun died from lovesickness and despair. The latter found that,

(1) Aghani, VIII - 117  (2) Ibid, XXI - 167
(3) Diwan I - 60.
When he lost his beloved, 'even the great open spaces became, in his eyes, as narrow as the aperture of a finger-ring'

Ibn al Zarih said:

"Any land in which my beloved does not dwell, even though well watered and fertile, is in mine eyes, deserted and barren.

The other poets, who did not die from despair, were not less absorbed by their love. The beloved, for them, became everything, and in their passion for her they sank their individuality, independence, their whole life. Jamil said:

"I have no other wish in this world except to have her love. Apart from this, I wish for nothing." "If I were given the choice between meeting her for a short while, or living without her till the end of the world, I should say: let me meet her for one hour, without watchers and calumniators, and end my life afterwards." "If she asked me to give her my life" says also Jamil, "I should give it to her willingly if that were feasible"

Dealing with the same point Jamil said

(1) Aghani II - 12. (2) Aghani, XIII - 133. (3) Diwan, p. 24. (4) Diwan, p. 28. (5) Diwan, p. 69. R. Herrick dealing with the same thing said "Bid me despair, and I'll despair;
Under the Cyprus tree
Or bid me die, and I will dare
E'en death, to die for thee."
again: "though I like living, I should wish to have a shorter life if that would make hers any longer."

Abu Sakhr would have preferred one night spent with his damsel without sin, to all his wealth and that of his tribe. Al-Mass declared that he would die if his beloved died.

The 'Udri lovers seemed to have realised that their passion was so powerful, so all-possessing that nobody in this world could help them to bear their love.

"I am ready" said 'Oerta ibn Hizam, "to give the soothsayers of Yamama and Hujr everything they want if they can cure me."

So giving up every hope of getting help from human beings, the 'Udris turned towards God and implored Him to help them in their despair. Jamil complained to Allah of his burning love and long sighs, he also implored Him - as He is Almighty - to make Buthayna love him. Abu Sakhr declared that the balm of his suffering is only in God's hand, and Ibn Hizam implored God the Helpful to help him to bear his pain and Ibn Farith said:

"I complain to Allah of my loss of Lubna, like an orphan complaining to God of the loss of his parents."

(1) Diwan p. 69. (2) Hamasa, p. 545 (3) Aghani VIII-9
(4) Aghani XX - 156 (5) Diwan, p. 34 (6) Diwan. p.39
(7) Aghani XLI-150 (8) Ibid XX - 155 (9) Diwan I x 99
The attitude of the desperate 'Udris towards their invincible love (and subsequently towards their mistresses) is worth stressing, because it is quite new in the Arabic Ghazal. It is unlike the attitude of pagan lovers, which may be compared with that of pleasure-seekers, it is also different from the attitude of the 'Qmarit poets, which was like that of gazelle hunters; it is a more unselfish and less arrogant one, it is the attitude of a faithful, obedient lover to his virtuous and unattainable lady. This new attitude led the 'Udris to conceive love as a fusion of two souls into one, and to imagine that two lovers were a self-contained unity. Jamil, as has just been seen, had no other wish in this world except to have Buthayna's love; and Kuthayer wish that he and his beloved had been created as a couple of camels, inorder that they could go grazing alone into the desert. 'Orwa ibn Uzayna, describing two lovers, said: "They did not care for what other people thought of them, and they were pleased with everything they did or said (to each other)."

The 'Udri lovers were tightly linked to each other by only two ties: dominating passion and high morality. Everything else was left out, even beauty. The physical charms of the beloved take, in fact, least place in 'Udri Ghazal. The 'Udri poet often assured his damsel that he preferred her to other

(1) Hamasa, p. 569  
(2) AL-HAMASA, p. 569
women, even to the beautiful ones who attempted once to capture his heart. Besides, the idea that beauty has nothing to do with love, seems to have been well known in Hijaz. A singing girl who was blamed for being in love with an ugly lover, said:

"Do not blame a lover about his love. Every lover imagines that his beloved is beautiful, even when she latter looks like a monkey."

We have seen so far that love, as it was conceived by the 'Udris, was: painful, all-possessing, invincible, and independant of physical beauty. To these characteristics we must add two more: the first is that the 'Udris conceived love as a mystery. They walked in its mysterious paths lighting their way with their blazing passion, and trying to discover the secret of their attachment to their damsels, but they came back with more wonder and more questions: Why was love my fate? Why did Allah make me love my damsel? Why does the victim of love adore his murderer? These questions and many others alike were asked by the 'Udri poets in their Ghazal. The fact that they were left unanswered does not mean in the least that the poets were not fully conscious of the mystery of love. Even

(3) Kuthayer also asked: "Why does one love a person who does not love him?" Diwan I - 73.
when the Udris seemed sure of themselves and, described love, and gave some definitions of it, they revealed their doubts about it. "One wants to assert one's happiness, said Anatole France, "only when one is doubtful about it." The happy man does not speak of it at all. Likewise we may say that the 'Udri poets spoke much about love because it was not clear to their eyes. It was something mysterious, enigmatic, difficult to understand.

The last feature which we want to add to the descriptions of love, as it was understood by the 'Udris, is that love was for them a pursuit, and, to some extent, a way of living. Just as the 'Omarit poets found, in pleasure-seeking, a pursuit, a meaning to give to their lives, so the 'Udris found, in passionate love, an occupation or a way of living.

Moreover they conceived love as a religion, and endowed it with all the virtues and holiness due to a religion.

We have seen in the previous chapter that the 'Omarit poets sometimes conceived love as a law court or as an administration. We shall see now that the 'Udris understood it primarily as a religion. So much so that they might be sometimes accused of blasphemy. One could not but wonder how did the 'Udri love, influenced as it was by Islam, could lend itself to such blasphemy.

In the worship of love, the maiden was, of course, the
prominent figure, and divine qualities were sometimes invested in her. She was not like the pagan mistress, the lover's equal, not was she like most of the 'Omarits' damsels, intimate and loving, she was imagined as a sacred and venerated person in whose presence the lover became self-conscious.

"When I suddenly met her," said Ibn Hizam, "I became confounded. Nothing right or wrong could I find to say."

The lover looked to his beloved, as the only person, after Allah, capable of bestowing happiness on him. Jamil said:

"You are the only person, after God, who, if you want, could make me either happy or miserable."

Majnun, instead of turning his face towards the Ka'ba for prayer, sometimes turned his face towards his damsel's place. Tawba imagined his beloved to have supernatural power when he said that if she, when passing his tomb, would greet him, he would be (then) able to answer the greeting.

Ibn Al-Dumayna imagined his damsel as a 'Raqib' or 'an angel responsible for watching his personal behaviour' when he stated:

"Even when you are away I take good care to do nothing which might displease you, as if you were a 'Raqib'."

The same poet asked his friends, who would pass his beloved's abode,

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1. Aghani XX - 156  
2. Diwan, p. 69.  
to throw on it few stones (Jamarat) as the pilgrims do in Mina (near Mecca). When Jamil was asked to take part in 'Jihad' or Moslem Holy War' and was told about the great reward reserved by Allah for the martyrs of this war, he said:

"I was asked to take part in 'Jihad'; is my love not a 'Jihad'?"

"Women's converse is real bliss, and women's victims are martyrs".

The same poet confessed that when he was on procession round the Ka'ba - and when he was supposed to be entirely absorbed by his prayer - he was thinking of his beloved; and when he remembered her in his daily-prayer he wept.

"How wretched I am" added Jamil "and what a terrifying punishment I must expect in the hereafter". Majnun when smitten by Layla's remembrance, did not know how many times he prayed. The beloved was sometimes compared, by Jamil and Kuthayer with the divine paradise. Kuthayer who described his beloved as a goddess, chose for her, to avoid trouble with zealous Moslems, Christian worshippers.

"The monks of Madinah" said Kuthayer "and all the pious who, I know, spend their nights, weeping and worshipping God,

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(1) Ibid. p. 268.  (2) Diwan p. 21.
(7) Diwan I - 72.
Would prostrate themselves to 'Azza, if, they would listen, as I did, to her converse.

Although the use of religious conceptions and sacred terminology in the description of love and damsels, would be considered as a blasphemy by zealous Moslems, we must do justice to the 'Udris and admit that blasphemy was by no means their intention. The Moslem religion was a predominant pattern in their minds, no wonder then that their conception of love was influenced by this pattern, all the more because they were - or, at least, most of them were - very religious people.

Some of them were not satisfied solely with the adaptation of religious terms and ideas to their love; they wanted also to see in it an imitation of love as it was depicted by the Koran. Kuthayyer, remembering the story of Joseph with the wife of the governor of Egypt, related in the Holy Book, said that he was one day visited by 'Azza while he was sharpening some wooden arrows. When he saw her he was so surprised and so pleased that he cut his fingers. That is exactly what the women friends of the wife of the governor are reported in the Koran to have done when they met Joseph and were dazzled by his surpassing beauty. Furthermore, the

(1) Diwan I - 65  (2) Diwan I - 35  (3) Koran XII - 31
words used by the Koran to describe the temptation felt by Joseph and the wife of the governor, namely "Hammat bihi wa Hammah beha" were reproduced by Kuthayer in his verse:

"I felt tempted (Hamamtu) said Kuthayer, "she also felt tempted (Hammat) then we both felt ashamed, because chastity was our habit." (1)

The conception of love as a religion had two remarkable effects; the first, on the re-establishing of love in a position of respect in Moslem society, the second, on the development of the notion of love itself.

Love was looked at, by the pagan Arabs, as a youthful foolishness; in Moslem ages, it was debased by the 'Omarits and unwelcomed in the religious circles of Hijaz where it was only acceptable in its more spiritual form. The 'Udris in raising the 'love for women' to high esteem, and in investing it with a religious character, came in fact to its rescue and 'rehabilitation'. They were indeed very proud of their love and very devoted to it. "There is no sin in love" declared Ibn al-Dumayna; and Jamil, who considered women's victims as martyrs, said "My intense love is not a new thing, it is a very old story". Kuthayer said: "there is no shame in

(1) Koran XII - 24  (2) Diwan I - 142.
loving " He stated that "The base, the coward
might be repelled by love, and the noble might fall
deeply in love."  

The well-educated women, who were attempting to
raise women's status to a high level, in the Moslem society
of Hijaz, naturally found in the 'Udri poets admirable
defendants of their cause. They therefore showed an open
preference towards the Udri Ghazal and rewarded some of the
Udri poets with considerable sums of money. Sukayna's
reward to Jamil was the biggest that she ever gave to a poet
because 'Jamil', she said, "called our victim a martyr, our
converse bliss, and a man's best days those in which he
defends us and protects us; and he said all that in a
polite and respectful way."  

The introduction of the religion-pattern into the
conception of love had, as has just been said, a noticeable
effect on the development of love itself. The beloved who
was the main object of love happened sometimes to give place
to love itself. That which had been a 'means' became an 'end'
and was sought for its own sake. This new tendency is to
be detected in all the lines in which the 'Udri poets
preferred 'endless suffering' to 'forgetfulness'. For, though

(1) Aghani XI - 23 (2) Diwan I G 188
(3) Diwan, p. 10.
they were without hope of attaining their damsels, they wanted to stay in love. Love, and not the beloved, was their chief object. It was for them, as has been seen, a pursuit, a way of living, something which gave a purpose to life.

"They said" stated Kuthayer, "that she departed and that I had to choose between forgetting her or continuing to weep. I said that the latter would better soothe my pain.

Majnun Layla said: "They said that I could forget her if I wanted to; I answered them that I did not really want to!"

Abu Sakhr Al Huzali, after stating that he and his maiden broke definitely, with each other urged his soul to let its suffering grow stronger every night and expressed the wish that his eventual 'rendezvous' with forgetfulness should come no earlier than the Day of Judgment."

The tendency to be concerned with 'love' rather than with the 'beloved' is clearly shown in the straightforward saying of Jamil:

"My love dies when I meet her, and comes to life when we part."

Some of the literary critics, attempting to explain this new attitude, suggested that 'living on the spirit of anticipation' was more agreeable than the 'meeting of the beloved'. Commenting on two lines of poetry composed by

(1) Diwan II - 251. (2) K. al-Zahra, p. 329.
al-Ahwas is the 'Omarit poet - in which he said that he knew two kinds of nights, a happy one spent with the beloved, and a restless one full of sorrow and cares. Ibn Jundab said: "I prefer the restless night to the other." Al-Harami, the reporter of the story added: "That was because the sorrowful night gave him the opportunity of yearning, hoping and composing Ghazal.

Looking at the question from another viewpoint one may say that the fact of substituting the 'means' for 'the end' is rather general in the development of both individual and collective psychology. A miser begins hoarding money because money is a 'means' to attain comfort. He soon overlooks the aim of gathering money and saves it for its own sake. Likewise when man went hunting in the early days of Humanity, his 'aim' was chiefly to get food. Later on, he hunted solely for the love of the chase.

The religion-pattern might have had some bearing on the devotion of the 'Udri lovers to one single beloved. This 'monogamy' in love-affairs was not noticeable in the pre-Islamic period, and totally unknown by the 'Omarits. One might venture to say that the religion-pattern which set up one single God - instead of many idols - and one single

(1) Ibn Jundab was a friend of Abul-Sayeæ al-Makhzumi, the Prophet's companion, and a contemporary of Al-Ahwas.
(2) Aghani IV - 55.
nation - instead of many tribes - led the 'Udris, spontaneously perhaps, when they transposed it to their love-affair, to concern themselves with one single beloved.

Now, after studying the characteristic features of 'Udri love, the influence of Islam on it, the conception which the 'Udri-poets had of it, and the bearing of the religion-pattern on its development, we must turn to the internal examination of 'Udri poetry.

The unfortunate 'Udris, unlike the pagan poets, had no happy 'past' to remember very often, or to draw on in their Ghazal. Their 'present' was full of tears, grief, yearning and moving Ghazal. This Ghazal concerned itself chiefly with two subjects. The description of their own weeping and suffering, and the portrayal of their unattainable beloveds. To these two themes must be added a third which consisted of the wishes and hopes formed by the unhappy poets for 'the future' with the object perhaps of alleviating their present pain.

The main items of the first theme, namely the description of the poets' suffering were as follows:

a) That the lover was spending his time weeping, suffering from burning passion and despair, and that his pain made him

(1) Kuthayer D. I - 29, 84. Jamil D. 49. Abu Mishar, Aghani X - 51
(2) Ibn Uzayn, Aghani, XXI - 167; Abu Dahbal, Aghani, VI - 156.
absentminded, and made other people pity him.

"Anyone who could see my emaciation" said Jamil "be he friend or enemy, would pity me.

"My love for you made me so pitiful that if I asked even pigeons to weep on me they would do so." "The pleasant thrill which I had when her name was mentioned" said Majnun, "was like the thrill of a bird when drenched with raindrops."

c) That the 'Udri poet loved his maiden to excess, that he belonged humbly and entirely to her, that he could be pleased even with too little of her kindness, that he did not want any other woman than her, because he preferred her to everybody, and that his passion for her surpassed that of all the 'Udri lovers before him.

"I wonder" said Majnun, "why the 'Adri 'Orwa was much talked about by many people,

"'Orwa died (once and for all) and he has now rest and peace, whereas I myself die every day."

d) That the lover was cloaking with secrecy both his love and the things which occurred between him and his damsul and that he was chaste and virtuous.

"No sin is in my love for her" said Kuthayer to his friend, "though I have been in love for a very long time."

The concentration of the 'Udris on the depiction of their unhappy life in their present time gave them but few opportunities of portraying their beloveds in detail. This fact brings up another point of difference between the pagan and 'Udri poets, the former having been more concerned with their 'past' and also with the description of their loved ones. Moreover, while the pagans were fond of depicting their beloveds physical charms, and while the 'Omarits concerned themselves with the description of their love-adventures, the 'Udris were chiefly interested in the portrayal of their mistresses' qualities and virtues; namely:

a) her sweet converse

"If the gazelles sheltering on the top of the mountain of Radwa would listen to her conversation," said Kuthayer, "they would certainly come down to her." (1)

b) the fact that the beloved surpassed other women in everything, and that she was both the cause and only cure of her lover's unhappiness.

"I cured my suffering from missing Layla by remembering her," said Majnun, "just as a drunkard who has no other cure, for his pain, but drink." (2)

c) her strictness, cruelty, keenness on secrecy, coquetry and chastity.

"I said to my friends," said Majnun, "that she was rather like the sun, impossible to reach, though its brilliance is felt and enjoyed." (3)

For the physical beauty of the beloved the Udris showed slight concern, with the possible exception of Qais ibn al-Zarih who gave a beautiful description of his wife. (4)

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he was compelled to divorce - the Udri poets were very often contented with mentioning their maidens' magical charms, and "looks". They described these 'looks' as capable of wounding the lover's heart without affecting his skin.

The 'Udri poets, dissatisfied with their present life, and having no delightful past to recall, indulged sometimes in cherishing wishes, and hopes for the future. Jamil wished to be standing near Buthayna, on the day of resurrection and hoped that she would be buried near him when she died. He also wished to be blind and to have Buthayna as a guide. Kuthayer went farther in wishing strange things and wished that "Azza and himself were a couple of camels grazing in a secluded place. 'Orwa went even further and wished to be eaten by crows, so that no one would know where he died. He also wished that all lovers might be happy. Abu Sakhr al-Huzali envied the animals "because, he said, nobody intervenes in their love".

(1) 'Uyun al-Akhbar, Iv - 145. (2) Jamil, D. p. 69
(9) K. al Zahra p. 120. (10) Hamasa, p. 544.
This wishful thinking adds invaluable charm to the 'Udri Ghazal and makes it superior to the pagan and 'Omarit equivalents at least from the poetical point of view. For the pagan and 'Omarit poets lived only in the material world and dealt with things mostly pertaining to their daily life while the 'Udri poets lived in three different worlds: reality, religion, and the world of wishes, hopes and vision?. The worlds of religion and vision lend themselves only too well to poetry. Therefore the Udri Ghazal was more beautiful, more impressive and more inspiring than the other two.

The world of vision into which the 'Udris sometimes roamed did not consist solely of wishes and hopes. It was also full of real visions. Nusayb imagined that he was about to fly with birds; and Majnun had a conversation with a mountain called 'Tubad'.

"When Tubad saw me weeping" said Jamil, "he welcomed me

"I said: where are those who used to camp here and enjoy happiness and security?

"He said: they went far away and left their encampment to my care. Nothing can last in this world."

The same poet imagined that if he would touch his beloved with his hand, her magical freshness would cause green leaves

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(1) Aghani, I . 145  (2) K. al-Zahra, p. 213.
to grow upon it, and because he found some likeness between Layla and a gazelle caught by some hunters, he bought the gazelle and set it free.

"It ran away when I set it free. 0, gazelle, you owe your freedom to Layla."

Most of the 'Udris talked to pigeons and turtle-doves and asked them why they never cease to weep (= to coo).

Al-Qass thought that lovers were asleep even when they thought themselves to be awake, and Majnun forced himself to sleep, just to see the dream-vision of Layla. Jamil looked at the sky in the hope that Buthayna was looking at it at the same time, so that both their looks might meet; and Ibn Zarih, abandoning the hope of meeting his beloved again consoled himself by saying: "However, the breeze still keeps us in touch with each other. We behold the sunset, every evening, at the same time; and our souls still meet in dreams."

The last point we want to study in the 'Udri Ghazal is the question of 'secrecy' and 'favour'. These two words recurred very often in the 'Udri poetry, and one might wonder as to what was to be kept a secret, since both the lover and his beloved were perfectly chaste and virtuous. Furthermore,

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(1) Aghani I, 187  (2) Ibid II - 11
(3) Majnun, K. al-Zahra, p. 239  (4) Aghani VIII - 7
    Aghani II - 7.
(5) Diwan, p. 32.  (6) Aghani VIII - 123
what sort of favour did the 'Udris actually expect from their honest and unattainable damsels?

In answer to the latter question it may be said that the 'Udri lover was pleased, in his love, with so little that the simple fact of meeting his beloved and conversing with her, was regarded by him as great favours.

As regards the question of secrecy, it may be said that it was to be applied to the lovers' meetings which, though innocent and unobjectionable from the religious viewpoint, were not allowed by the jealous men of the beloved's tribe. The lovers might also have meant by 'secret' things the endearing words which they exchanged in their meetings. We might bring up here another explanation. It is that both asking for favours and keeping things in secret belonged to the pagan and 'Omarit love, in more general terms, to the common love as it was understood by the people, in their everyday life. The delicate 'Udri lovers, who were on a higher plain, probably wanted, by using current love-terms, to protect themselves against attack. In other words, they wanted to protect themselves against vice and cynicism by allowing words suggestive of vice and cynicism to take their place inside the 'Udri Ghazal.

The reader of Arabic poetry may find two main objections to

(1) As some politicians hold that the only way to make a revolutionary harmless is to give him a post in the government.
'Udri poetry. First, that the 'Udri poets frequently used 'old clichés to express their new, intense and rich feelings, so that they put new wine into old bottles, and did not realise that an 'old cliche' even when used to express new sentiment - has a limited and established power of expression, and that it could not suggest anything more than a very conventionalised and therefore restricted sentiment and thought.

The second objection is that they clung to the classical metres of the ancient odes in their Ghazal. The 'Omarits who used shorter and lighter metres for their own Ghazal, were more advanced than the 'Udris, in this respect.

However, these objections, can by no means keep the reader from enjoying the moving and fascinating charms of the Udri Ghazal. Its poems were indeed like roses which blow fresh and beautiful, notwithstanding the thorns around them:

"The rose is fairest when 'tis budding new,
And hope is brightest when it dawns from fear
The rose is sweetest wash'd with morning dew
And love is loveliest when embalm'd in tears." (1)

(1) Sir W. Scott: The Lady of the Lake.
Excerpts from The 'Udri Ghazal.

I - Jamil ibn Ma'mar.

1) "I am pleased with very little things accorded to me by Buthayna; they are so insignificant that if they were known by the men who spies on us he would not be suspicious about our love.

"I am pleased even when she says: 'no' or 'I cannot' and when she makes me live on promises ... promises hoped for, but always broken.

"I am pleased with a quick glance at her, and even without meeting her for a whole year neither at the beginning nor at the end.

2) "I wish that the prime of youth, and my days with Buthayna, would come back again.

"We should then start our life anew, and would live near each other again; no matter how little her favour would be.

"I shall never forget her asking me, when my camel was made ready to carry me away: "Are you leaving for Egypt?"

"Do forgive me" she said, "for being unable to pay you a visit; but for the eyes which were watching me, I certainly should have done.

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(1) Jamil grew up in Wadi al-Qora (between Mecca and Medina) and lived in Hijaz. During his latter years, he emigrated to Egypt where he died (701 A.D.) (2) Diwan. p. 56.
"O, my friends! I keep my lovesickness in secrecy, but my tears betray me.

"When I said to Buthayna that my passion for her was about to kill me, she said: 'I wish that it would grow stronger.'

"When I said: 'Give me back my reason (caught by you). I want to live like other people (without passion), she said: You are asking an impossible thing.'

"So neither did she comply with my demand, nor did my love for her fade away, like every other thing.

"I wasted my youth, and all my life waiting for her favours.

"When I meet her, my passion dies; it comes back to life when we part again.

"I was asked to take part in 'Jihad', is my love not a 'Jihad'?"

"Women's converse is real bliss, and women's victims are martyrs."

3) "The calumniators were pleasee that Buthayna broke with me, showing me indifference.

"They said: 'Oh, Jamil, keep steady!'; but I swear I could not possible do it with Buthayna.

"Did they want me to show discretion? No: it is too late; or to be careful? I was already threatened with death.

(1) Diwan, p. 20-21.
"When we recalled what passed between us, tears stained with mascara streamed from her eyes.

"If she had not deprived me of my reason, I should not have pursued her. I am pursuing her because I am out of my senses.

"How wretched is my soul, it has enough cause for worry, and how unhappy are my relatives on account of this sad affair.

"I never seem to have the opportunity of meeting Buthayna, except when I am frightened (of being watched) or when I am on my camel's back.

"Oh, my friends, have you ever, in all your lives, seen any other victim weeping for love of his murderess?

"I go amongst beggars and ask her family for hospitality, while my own wealthy and generous relatives are within reach.

"We were both on the point of crying for each other, and her tears were quicker than mine.

"I went away, but our separation did not help me to forget her, but I found that separation could never make anybody forget his beloved.

"I did not love her because she was generous with her love but because she fascinated me with her coquetry and reserve.

"I shall never see a couple with higher morals than my beloved and I

"If one day a shoe should be found in some deserted place, you must know, Buthayna, that it was mine."

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(1) Literally: miserliness  (2) Diwan p. 48-49
"My friends, this was the encampment of 'Azza. Stop your camels and weep on her abode.

"And touch the earth which may have touched her skin and remain spending the night where she stayed and spent the night.

"And do not doubt that God will forgive your sins if you pray where she prayed.

"Before leaving 'Azza I did not know what it was to weep, and before her departure I did not know what things could pain my heart.

"When she broke with me she was merely like a woman fulfilling a vow.

"I said to her: Oh, 'Azza, every misfortune could be overcome if you would resign your soul to it.

"Everyone who suffers from love sickness and blinding passion sees the clouds roll by eventually.

"When she left me she did not heed me, I called to her, but she was silent as a rock, so smooth that gazelles would slip if they walked there

"Reluctant she was, and always cruel; and if I tired of such behaviour, she wearied also.

"She settled (in my heart) in a sacred place never touched by anyone else before.

(1) Kuthayer originally was the reciter of Jamil's Ghazal. Subsequently he himself composed love-poems on his beloved Buthayna. He belonged to the sect of Kay-saniya, and believed in the transmigration of souls. He died in 723 A.D.
"She was unfair, for she made me hate other women and yet she was unwilling to grant me favours.

"Her jealous husband wanted her to insult me, and though she was not happy about it, she yielded to his request.

"Enjoy insulting me, 'Azza, to your heart's delight. My honour is at your disposal.

"By Allah, every time I came near her she went far away; and when I spoke at length she said little.

"She climbed the mountain of love together, but when we reached the top of it, I stood still and she slipped down.

"If you want me, 'Azza, to apologise, I will do so by all means; because it is my duty to make amends with you.

"Do me good or do me harm, I shall not blame you, nor hate you, even when you make yourself hateful.

"Although she broke with me I praise her and keep faithful to her, and grateful for all she had done for me.

"I shall not wish her any suffering, nor be happy if her foot slides.

"The calumniators must not believe my love for 'Azza was an infatuation which is now evaporating.

"By Allah, and by Allah again, no one before her took my heart; not shall anyone after.

"It is strange how my heart can confess such things, and how my soul became resigned.

"I am, in my love for 'Azza, after we both separated from each other,
"Like a man who hopes to have the shade of a cloud, but
everytime he wants it to envelop him, it disappears.

"I am with 'Azza like a man living in an arid place, hoping
for clouds which do not rain till they have passed beyond
his land.

"If the calumniators asked 'why did you abandon her?' I
should reply, I tried to console my noble soul, and it
attained consolation."

2) "O, 'Azza, I wish we were a couple of scabby camels grazing
away in an empty place.

"He who would see us would say: these are two scabby animals
whose disease is contagious, even though the female is
beautiful

"If we should approach a watering place, its people would
shout out to us, throw stones at us and beat us.

"I wish that our owner were a man of great wealth, so
he would neither care for us nor miss us (when we ran far away)

III - Adbullah ibn al-Dumayna.

a) "You obeyed those who asked you to break with me, would
you ask them to do the same with their loved ones?

(1) Diwan I - 34-57. (2) Diwan I - 99

(3) Ibn al-Dumayna was a nomadic poet. He killed
his wife's lover and was himself killed by the
lover's tribe in 757 A.D.
"If they would obey you break then with me, if not, do not obey them in your turn

"I swear by the camels galloping all over the valleys, and by all those who pray at Numan al-Arak

"I hid and cherished my love for you in my heart, which I never did for anyone else."

b) "O breeze of Najd, when did you come over from Najd? Your gentle blowing fanned my burning passion.

"Why do I weep, in the mid-morning, when a turtle-dove cooes on the green twigs of Rand?"

"Why then do I weep like a child, why do I not show endurance, why do I reveal what I was trying to conceal?"

"I was told that the lover tires if he stays a long time with his beloved, and that separation is an effective balm

"I tried everything to cure myself, but it was in vain. However it is better to be near the beloved than to be far away (from her)

"Yet the fact of being near her is useless if the person whom you love does not love you."

IV - 'Orwa ibn 'Uzayna.

"That one who claimed that my heart became tired of her, was created to be my love, just as I was created to be hers.

"The love I cherish, within my ribs, for her is so

(1) Aghani 15-154 (2) Hamasa. p. 571 (3) 'Orwa lived in Medina. He was a poet and a jurisconsult and master of Hadith. He died ib 747 A.D.
powerful that, if it were put under her bed, it would carry her,

"It is also so huge that if it were over her on a hot uncloudy mid-morning, it would envelop her with shade."

"When the slight signs of forgetfulness made themselves shown in my soul, my heart coaxed it and tooted them out.

"She was a white-skinned maiden, brought up, since her early days, in comfort which carved her exquisitely

"When I passed her, I greeted her, hoping for the best. and fearing to be rejected by her

"She did not respond to my greeting. I said to my friends: She means too much to me, and accords me too little.

"He said in a low voice: she might have some reason for being so cautious, I said: Yes, she might indeed."

(1) The same idea was expressed only in prose, in the preceding period. (2) Aghani XXI - 168. (3) Al-Simma, a nomadic poet fell in love with a woman of his tribe whom he could not marry. He became desperate. His parents married him to another woman with whom he could not live. He left her with his tribe and emigrated to Syria. He died in the Moslem wars in Persia. 714 A.D.
"O my friends, halt, and bid farewell to Najd, and to all who live there. How seldom do we depart from Najd!

"May my life be a ransom for that land; how splendid its hills, and how beautiful it is in spring and summer!

"The evenings you spent there will never return, so let tears stream from your eyes.

"When I saw the mountain of Bishr rising between us, and when all my yearning thoughts blazed up,

"My left eye shed a tear, and when I rebuked it for this foolishness after its previous discretion, both my eyes wept.

"I looked back towards my beloved's abode for so long that my neck ached. (1)

"When I recall my days there I clasp my heart for fear it will split.

"I fear that my soul will never be satisfied with anything in the world but her, however worthy it may be

"I blame my soul (for yearning) now that she is out of reach; but my soul can do nothing but look at her.

"I must take my leave of this world, for there is no rest in it as long as we are parted.

"There is no welcome from me for places where you are not, even though they may be fertile and flourishing

"(I find) water without pasture, or pasture without water,

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(1) literally: liver.
or if perchance I find water and pasture, I find beasts of prey too.

"It is as though we were created only to be separated and that it would be a sin for circumstances to re-unite us."

VI - Abu Sakhr al-Huzali.

"I swear by (Allah) who makes people weep, laugh, die and live, and who is the Omnipotent

"She left me in such a condition that I now envy the beasts of the wilderness, because every pair of them can love without fear.

"I urge my lovesickness to grow stronger every night, and wish that my eventual 'rendezvous' with forgetfulness will not take place earlier than the Day of Judgment.

"It is very strange that circumstances were against us, when we were together, and that they cease to be so now that our love has come to an end."

VII - Tawba ibn Humayyer.

"Some people told me that our separation would not be too harmful to me; I believe that it will, it will make me pine.

(1) Hamasa. pp. 538-540 and A. Maymani, al-Tara'if al-Adabiya. p. 80 - ... (2) Abu Sakhr was among the poet-partisans of the 'Umayyads. He fell in love with a woman who married somebody else. Besides his Ghazal he composed many eulogies.

(3) Hamasa, p. 544 (4) Tawba was in love with Layla al-Akhyaliya, but her father would not allow her to marry him; He died in 704 A.D.
"I still hope for the best from her, and believe that she will grant me a favour some day, or she will set me free from captivity.

"One day without Layla seems to me as though it were longer than months and years.

"O turtle-dove of the two joint valleys, keep cooing. May the rainy clouds of the morning quench your thirst.

"Talk to me, turtle-dove, may your feathers stay smooth, and may you always live in a green shadowy park.

"When you coo you stir my tears, and when you sigh you fan my lovesickness."

VIII - Nusayb ibn Rabāh

"I once waylaid her in order to greet her secretly since she would not greet me (openly)

"When she saw me she did not talk to me because of the watchers round her, but her eyes streamed with tears.

"How wretched are lovers. The life of all of them together is not one pennyworth."

(1) Ibid. p. 269 - 270. (2) Nusayb was a great poet noted for his eulogies and Ghazal. The latter were addressed to his wife. Musayb died in 718 A.D. (3) - (4) literally: Dirham. (4) Aghani I - 149.
IX - Abdul-Rahman ibn 'Ammar al-Qass.

"The maiden who visited me in the encampment, was walking with her lute; while I was performing my religious rite.

"She meant to captivate my heart or to ask me to return her affection for me; because friends have duties to observe towards each other.

"She kept entertaining me, and she imagined that I was awake, while I was (dreaming as if I was) asleep.

"When the light flashed out, I found that all was a mere dream."

X - Wais ibn Mulaweh (Majnun Layla)

1) "O my God, make her love me and cherish me; you are the Almighty

"Or help me to forget my pain, though I loathe the idea of forgetting her, for I am extremely fond of her."

2) "When I pray I turn my face towards her place though the right direction is the opposite one

"I do not do that through polytheism, but because my lovesickness resisted the cure of the doctor.

(1) Al-Qass lived in Hijaz and was very well known for his piety.
(2) Aghani VIII - 9.
(3) Majnun fell in love with Layla but her parents would not let him marry her. He became mad and died from lovesickness in 700 A.D.
"When I pray in the mid-morning I sometimes wonder if I pray twice or eight times.

"When I attempt to cure my pain by visiting her and looking at her I find my cure useless and go back bearing all my pain."

3) "While I was on pilgrimage somebody mentioned the name of Layla, and did not know that he stirred the yearning passion in my heart.

"Although he meant another Layla, the name made me feel as though a bird, lighting within my chest, flew up.

"I suggested forgetfulness to my heart. It said: I do not want to mislead you; prepare yourself to suffer henceforth."

XI - Qais ibn Zarih.

"Do you weep on Lubna while you left her of your own accord? I see now that you were like a man who goes to death of his own accord

"O, my heart, admit that you love her, and then try to forget her; no, O love, do whatever you will.

"O my heart, tell me what you will do when Lubna goes very far away?

(1) Al-Douha. (2) K. al-Zahra, p. 28 (3) Ibid. p. 167. (4) Qais was in love with his wife Lubna, but his parents forced him to divorce her. This he did, but could not continue to live without her. He died in 690 A.D."
"You seem as if you have not been inured to separation and misfortunes.

"No one can have his beloved for ever; no one can always stay out of the reach of calamities.

"Any land in which my beloved does not dwell, even though populated, is to me deserted and barren.

"As long as Lubna is away (from me) I shall not sleep at night, when everybody enjoys sleeping.

"I spend my days talking to myself about her, and cherishing hopes. By night I meet her in my dreams.

"My love for you is as firmly attached to my heart as my fingers are to my hand."

(2)

XII - 'Orwa ibn Hizam.

"I am ready to give the soothsayers of Yamama and Hijr whatever they want if they can cure me.

"They did not leave any of their devices unused, they also had me drink all the potions they offered

"O, my God, you only can help me in my long suffering because of 'Afra

"My heart is fluttering very quickly, as if a sand-grouse were hung on it from its wing.

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(1) Aghani VIII - 133.  (2) 'Orwa fell passionately in love with his cousin. Her parents did not permit him to marry her. He died from lovesickness in 650 A.D.
"I wish we could live together, or that we should have the same tomb when we die.

"I love the Day of Judgment since I have been told (1) that I shall meet her there."

Ubayd-ul-Allah ibn Abdullah ibn 'Otba. (2)

I concealed my passion so long that it did me grievous harm; some people reproved me, their blame was unfair.

Who can save my soul, which does not escape suffering by death, yet does not live a worthwhile life.

Must I refrain from visiting my Love, lest I should sin? I believe it would be a sin to leave her.

I am suffering now because I spurned her, since I thought it was the right thing; I fully realise now I was mistaken.

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(1) K. al-Zahra, p. 282 - 283.

(2) He was one of the seven great jurisconsults of Medina. He composed 'Udri Ghazal about a girl of Husail with whom he fell in love.
CHAPTER XII

The Traditional Ghazal.

The 'Omarit and 'Udri ghazal developed only in Hijaz. Though new and promising, these two tendencies did not receive a warm ovation elsewhere. Throughout the other Arabic countries the classical ghazal was the only form of love poetry which was cultivated by the well-known poets, and appreciated by leaders, officials and cultured people.

This classical ghazal was nothing but the continuation of the pagan form. Like the latter, it was not the main subject of the ode, but only an erotic prelude; and the Umayyad poet, like his nomadic predecessor, indulged in descriptions of the ruined encampments in the desert, the departure of the beloved with her tribe, and the beats of the wilderness; and very often, he did not mind borrowing the greater part of his ideas, comparisons, images, 'cliches' and metres from his pre-Islamic colleague, and strange though it may seem to the modern reader, he took pride in so doing.

However, the traditional ghazal, in the Umayyad period, was certainly not an exact replica of the pagan form. It had its own characteristic weaknesses and qualities.
It is well known that most of the Arab tribes emigrated, in this period, from Arabia to other countries, especially Iraq, where they settled down, and that, moreover, the greatest poets of the period came from Iraq and Syria, and not from the heart of Arabia, as did the pagan poets. 'Adi ibn al-Riq'a was Syrian, al-Far-Azdaq, and al-Akhtal came from Iraq and lived in towns, and Marir, despite his nomadic origin, spent the greater part of his poetical life in Iraq and Syria.

This being so, one can only wonder why these great poets of the time confined themselves, in their ghazal, to following scrupulously in the footprints of their nomadic predecessors, and also why, while living in towns and being surrounded by fertile lands, they looked over the horizon towards the distant outline of sand hills and the barren desert beyond.

One can easily attribute it to the fact that the Umayyad period was, in the social development of the Arabs, a period of transition from bedouin towards sedentary life, and that the nomadic character had been hitherto noticeable in their poetry. The real reason, however was perhaps deeper than that, it was probably that the Arabs have always had a great attachment to their desert, and a love of its free, healthy and adventurous life. Therefore, when they found themselves driven to live in more fertile countries they brought with
them to their new environment all the ideals and imagery of the desert life. Their conservation was so intransigent and so amazing that, in all their descriptive writings, they did not show any response to the beautiful scenery of Syria or the magnificent Iraqi landscapes.

The depiction of the scenery of the desert, and the weeping on the beloved's ruined abode were the main theme of Zul-Ruma's poetry. For this reason he was deservedly called: "the poet of the desert and abandoned encampments"; and his descriptions were often fresh and moving.

(1) The bedouins, even nowadays, are very proud of their desert. Deeply attached to their freedom and wholesome air, they look down on the town-dwellers. Some historians believe that the love of the simple desert life is not only in the background of Arabic poetry but also of the teaching of the Semitic prophets. This teaching is thought to have sprang from dissatisfaction at the corrupt and artificial conditions of the civilised life, and to have advocated the necessity for returning to a more simple and natural existence, an existence which was, in fact, similar to that following in nomadic Arabia, presumably the birthplace of all the Semites. The introduction of the poetic imagery of the desert into the towns by the Umayyad poets may be compared with the explanation given by some historians, of the development of Arabian idolatry. The Arab tribes, they said, used to take with them some stones from Mecca, as souvenirs, before they began their wandering to and fro across the desert; and, finally, they finished by worshipping these stones. The two facts serve to show the great attachment of the Arabs to their tradition and primitive life.
"I halted my camel", he said, "at the deserted abode of my beloved Mayya; and set out talking to it, weeping,

"And drenching it with my tears so much that its stones and play-grounds were about to talk to me through sympathy.

In this place, I remember having seen through the curtains, a black-eyed white-necked gazelle.

"Mayya swore that all I had said to her was a mere lie.

"If that was so, may God afflict me with an unexpected misfortune, and may I spend all my life fighting against enemies in my own land.

"I see no plague more dangerous for an honest Moslem than love, he is blamed when he catches it,

"He suffers if he disobeys it, and he is led astray if (1) he obeys."

Jarir, like Zul-Ruma, succeeded in drawing tender and melancholy pictures of his lost love and his mistress's ruined places; but the success of both poets applied only to a limited number of their poems. In the rest, they repeated themselves, like all the classical poets of the time; their ghazal became a mere 'cliche', insipid and devoid of true feeling, and their images became tarnished and worn through immoderate usage. The reader who may appreciate some of the

traditional ghazal, and admire the ingenuity of the poets of
the time, in adding freshness, colour and interesting details
to their reproduction of pre-Islamic ghazal, soon becomes tired
with the exhausting repetition of the same themes, and
inclined to believe that the Umayyad classics were not very
sincere in their amatory preludes, and that they were harping
on themes and 'cliches' which they had only learned by heart.

Moreover, the classical poets not only ran the risk of
being blamed for copying, in their ghazal, the pagan feelings,
imagery and endearing words, and imitating the structure of
the ancient ode, but also they seem to have failed to attain
harmony between the different parts of the ode itself.

The pagan poet wanted to unfold himself in his poem; so
he described in it his beloved and her dwelling-place, his
camel, his tribal or personal deeds, and satirized his enemies.
He took an interest in dealing with each item of his ode, and
succeeded in creating in it a sort of uniformity. The Umayyad
poet, on the other hand, had generally one or two main objects in
his ode, (praise, vainglory, or satire) and yet he also dealt
with some of the other items merely for the sake of imitation.
Hence the lack of cohesion in the Umayyad ode; hence also the
rupture between the ghazal of the poems and its main part.
For the poet, being in a hurry to pass from the traditional
amatory prelude to the real subject of his interest, ended his
ghazal abruptly, and began immediately his eulogy or satire.
Jarir, attempt sometimes to bridge the gap between the ghazal and the main theme of his poem, and to pass smoothly from the former to the latter; but he hardly ever succeeded. In the following lines he passed from a conversation with his wife about poverty to the praise of the caliph:

"Um Hazra was consoled and said that those who visited the caliph came back with gifts.

"Do not blame me, I said to her, and wait until I visit a man as generous as the sea.

"You must believe in two things: that God has no associate, and that my visit to the caliph will be successful."

The Abassid poets not only disliked this interruption between the ghazal and the chief subject of the poem, but also made an art of bridging the gap between them. Abu _DETAILS_ began a eulogy addressed to Khaṣib, the governor of Egypt as follows:

"She said when I left her house: It is indeed painful to see you leaving.

"Then she wept. Her tears had fragrant scent. I said

"Let me augment the number of those who envy you, by visiting a country governed by Khasib."

(1) Diwan, p. 36. (2) Diwan, p. This in translation is puerile and one wonders whether to an Arab lover of poetry it is anything but a clumsy and obvious artifice.
Generally speaking, the Umayyad ode began with ghazal; primarily because the pagan poem began with it, and also because it was appreciated by both the Umayyad poets and the distinguished persons for whom the poems were composed. The poet Zul-Ruma believed that his poetical genius could never resist him or disappoint him as long as he began his odes with ghazal. Al-Hajaj, after listening to a eulogy recited to him without its ghazal, by the poet Jarir, asked:

"Where is its amatory prelude?"

However, some attempts to break away from this rule were noticeable in the Umayyad period. The poet al-Kumayt who devoted the largest part of his poems to a eulogy of the Prophet's family began one of his most famous odes in this fashion:

"I am yearning, but not for the white-skinned ladies; and my yearning is not like that of a lover, for youthful dalliance.

"The ruined abodes could not distract me, neither could the girls, with their red-tinted fingers, fascinate me

"I am only yearning for the meeting of the men of virtue and wisdom who are superior to all human beings.

"My love for those glorious men makes me deserve Allah's grace and favour."

Al-Akhtal, in most of his eulogies and satires, passed

(1) Aghani XV - 124
swiftly from ghazal to the description of wine and drunken people.

His greatest poem composed in praise of the caliph Abdul-Malik ibn Marwan began as follows:

"The caravan left in the morning or in the evening, and its people were disturbed by the thought of separation.

"When they departed I felt as if I had drunk the wine of Homs or Judar.

"I was like an intoxicated man, unconscious, and my heart could not see clearly."

Al-Farazdaq who was known for his conceit and lasciviousness composed two kinds of ghazal: a classical one which he very often forgot to put at the beginning of his odes, and a very obscene one, far more obscene than the 'Omarit Ghazal, in which he depicted his adulterous adventures.

There is no good reason for believing that many of his erotic preludes have been lost, for the poems of al-Farazdaq were carefully collected. The Abassid lexicographer Younus stated that 'but for al-Farazdaq's poetry, a third of the Arabic vocabulary would have been lost.' Furthermore, the boastfulness of the poet and his lack of tender feelings must surely have made him unsympathetic towards the yearning and weeping of the classical ghazal in a large number of his odes.

Apart from these attempts to break away from the classical structure of the Ode, the traditional ghazal was, in its outlines, similar to the pagan amatory prelude: a
reminiscence, and a lamentation in a deserted abode about a lost beloved and a vanishing youth.

The bewailing of youth which is to be found in all the classical ghazal of the Umayyad epoch, with the exception perhaps of the poems of Yazid ibn al-Tathariya and some poems of Zul-Rama, needs here some special consideration. If the classical ghazal which has come down to us from this period was composed by the poets in their grey years, where then is the ghazal of their youth? Did they lament for youth while they were still young, merely to imitate the pagan poets? It would indeed be difficult to believe that. One would be more inclined to say that a large number of the lines dealing with youth and hoariness were appended by the poets, during their latter years, when they passed a last hand over their odes. An interesting point to consider at this juncture, is that youth was regretted much more by the Umayyad poets than by the pagans, and while old age was welcomed by the latter, because it brought wisdom, it was bitterly hated and satirized by the former.

"The last time, said al-Farazdaq, "one can court beautiful girls is when one's hair becomes grey."

"I cannot stop hoariness from coming to me, I have no hope of recovering my youth again."
"I wish that hoariness, which now invades me, would remain away until the Day of Judgment."

"Then it would be the dearest thing to expect, but the most hated if it came unexpectedly.

"I have never known in this world a pleasure preferable to youth, nor cloth better than its stuff.

"(The ferment of) youth is able to melt the stones of the mountains.""

The reason for this attachment to youth is perhaps because life in the Umayyad period, compared with the pagan life became more secure, agreeable and interesting than it was before; and also because the cultured background of Islamic doctrine, laws and morals enabled the Arab to develop the cultured side of his nature without being dependent on a life-time of personal experiences to achieve this end.

As regards the damsels whose charms were sung by the Umayyad classics, they were neither libertine like most of the 'Omarrts' mistresses, not very strict like most of the Moslem women who lived in towns. They were the bedouins whose life was a mixture of freedom and convention, a compromise between paganism and Moslem religion. They were allowed to talk to young men and to listen to their love poetry. The author of Aghani reported that Yazid ibn al-

Tathariya was once sent by his tribe to court the young girls of the Tribe of Jorm, and that a young man, called Mayad, was sent by the latter to the tribe of Yazid, to court its girls. It was a sort of rival competition between the two tribes with the object of showing whose men were more fascinating and whose women were more difficult to seduce. Yazid came back to his tribe with a large number of scarfs and finger rings which were given to him by the girls of Jorm as tokens of their affection and admiration. (Aghani VII - lll ...)

The picture given by the Umayyad poets of the physical beauty of their bedouin damsels was very similar to that drawn by the pagan poets of the damsels of their time. As for moral qualities, the Umayyad damsels were portrayed as sincere and unaffected. They liked to talk to their admirers when the jealous men of the tribe were absent:

"When the jealous ones were away" said Zul-Ruma "and our blessed day, though short, became bright

"The girls became happy, smiling and cheerful like smiling rain-clouds."

Yet the standard of their morality was described as very high. They knew how to draw the line between affection and that which was forbidden.

"If you asked her" said Jarir,"to grant you a favour, she would refuse, but if you asked for her affection she

(1) Diwan, p. 61
would give it to you.

The damsels of the Umayyad age were chaste and discreet as their religion taught them to be. If they were unkind to their lovers, that was because they preferred a reserved attitude towards these latter to sin.

"She is honest", said Jarir, "the suspected man could not be her friend. She does not divulge secrets, nor does she like to roam."

Zul-Ruma, describing his beloved said

"She does not commit adultery in her neighbour's house; her conduct is never to be blamed or suspected."

The influence of Ismael on the traditional ghazal, though noticeable, was not outstanding. It can be traced, as we have just seen, in the description of the damsels' virtues, and also on certain other occasions. Zul-Ruma attributed the fascinating effect of his beloved's eyes to God's will:

"Allah said to her eyes: have, on human minds, the effect of wine; and so they had it"

He also thought that God would reward the lover for his forbearance.

"I weep, because weeping relieves the suffering of my

(1) Diwan, p. 51  (2) Diwan, p. 65
(3) Diwan, p. 13  (4) Diwan, p. 34
soul from chaste love, and I bear my lovesickness to show endurance and to deserve God's reward."

Jarir complained to God about his suffering. He said to his mistress: "If you would realise how much I suffer, or if you listened to my complaint to the Master of the Throne, you would be kind to me."

Al Tirimmah found in piety a satisfying substitute for love:

"I could not sleep in Nahrawan, for the love of those fascinating eyes called for me,

"I yearned for love (for a short while), then I stopped my yearning, finding a satisfying substitute for it in piety, as good Moslems do."

Yazid ibn al-Tathariya, probably exasperated with the people who had blamed him about his love, put forward the Moslem idea that 'one is responsible, before God, for his own acts."

"If I go astray, my sin will not be put down on your account, and if I follow the righteous path, you will gain nothing."

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(1) Diwan, p. 34

(2) Diwan II - 160

(3) Diwan, p. 79-80

(4) Kitab al-Zahra, p. 327
Islam had more influence on the attitude of the Umayyad poets towards love, than on the development of the classical ghazal itself. The quotations mentioned above show that love became a 'problem' for the Moslem classicists. Unlike the 'Omarits who considered it a delightful pleasure, and the 'Udris who took a sacrificial pleasure in the pain of an unrequited love, they attempted to find a practical compromise between it and the teaching of Islam. They seem to have failed. For, if it was taken for granted that a good Moslem might fall in love, it was equally taken for granted that this good Moslem would soon find himself on the horns of an unpleasant dilemma.

"I see no plague", said Zul-Ruma, "more dangerous for an honest Moslem than love, he is blamed when he catches it.

"He suffers if he disobeys it, and he is led astray if he obeys."

The effect of the 'Omarit and 'Udri ghazals of Hijaz on the classical amatory poetry was not great. The reason perhaps is that the latter, despite its lack of originality, was highly valued by all the Arab people and leaders, and was to a greater or lesser extent - supported by the government. The poets of the traditional ghazal, therefore, considering themselves the masters of Arabic poetry, were not ready to

(1) Diwan, p. 14-15 (2) V.S.
let their ghazal be influenced by the new tendencies which were developing in Hijaz. However, the frequent visits of the classical poets to Mecca and Medina could not be without effect on their love-poems. In fact we can trace the ideas and the deep passion of the 'Udri love in some poems of Jarir, Zul-Ruma and al-Tirimmah.

"Will you care", said Jarir to his beloved, "a heart which is suffering from its love for you more than Orwa did from his love for Afra?"

Zul-Ruma said that "while love grows faint and disappears through separation, his own was always fresh and ever growing stronger."

Conversely, the effects of the 'Omarit love can be traced in some poems of Yazid ibn al-Tathariya and al-Farazdaq. The latter, in fact, composed, his best-known obscene poem after an adulterous adventure which he had experienced in Medina, and which caused him to be expelled from the town by the governor of Medina.

Yazid, in the following lines, brings back to our minds, the blitheness and touch of humour of 'Omar ibn Abi Rabi'a:

"If, under the influence of calumniators, she finds many faults with me, do tell her that:

(1) Diwan, p. 64. (2) Diwan, p. 20."
"If I was innocent she would then have done me wrong, and
if I was guilty I might have repented."

The classical ghazal, because it had no strong connection
with the mighty current of Islam, nor with the impregnating
ghazals of Hijaz, and because it had retired within itself,
did not show a great development as regards ideas and imagery.
However some new ideas and images found their way into it.
Zul-Ruma compared his beloved's caravan with an oasis of
palm-trees, and imagined the happy past which he had enjoyed
with his maiden to be as the shadow of a vineyard. Adi ibn
al-Riqa, described the vision of his beloved as if it was lost
and hesitating in his heart; Al-Tirimmah compared his
beloved's cheeks with a mirror. Al-Farazdaq, who compared
his damsel with a palm-tree added that he was not allowed,
however, to enjoy either its shadow or its fruit.

Besides these few innovations in ideas and images, the
traditional ideas and figures of the ancient ghazal were
cultivated, developed and detailed. It would be an endless
task to illustrate this fact by quotation, especially if we
consider the description of ruined abodes. The following
examples, however, may give us an idea of the process.

(1) K. al-Zahra, p. 113. (2) Diwan, p. 35.
(3) Diwan, p. 47. (4) Al-Taraif al-Adabiya, p. 93.
The pre-Islamic poet compared his beloved's eyes with that of a gazelle, and did it briefly.

"She has a slender waist", said al-A'sha," and fresh youth. She had also the eyes of a gazelle and black hair." (1)

When Hassan ibn Thabit wanted to detail this simile he gave particulars which were more related to the description of the gazelle as a whole than to the beauty of its eyes. He said:

"She has the black eyes of a gazelle which, while grazing with its baby in the thicket is watching some ostriches." (2)

But when the 'Omayyad poet 'Adi ibn al Riqua dealt with the same simile, he concentrated on the description of the eyes of the gazelle, and while al-A'sha needed only two words, and Hassan one line, to treat this simile, Adi used two lines. He said:

"Compared with other women, she looked as if a gazelle of Jasim had lent her its eyes

"At the time when it was invaded by sleep and became drowsy, and when the sleep hesitating in its eyes made it look half awake and half dormant." (3)

Imru'ul Qais, describing the effect of his beloved's eyes on his heart said to her: "Your eyes streamed with

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(1) Diwan, p. 56. (2) Diwan, p. 313.
(3) Nihayat-ul-Arab II-50.
tears with the single purpose of piercing my bruised heart
with their twin shafts."

The same idea, developed by Jarir, became as follows:

"The large black eyes slew us, but they did not call
us again to life.

"They were capable of paralysing even a wise man, and
rendering him totally powerless, though they were the most
vulnerable things in a body."

Likewise, the pagan poets were very brief in the
depiction of their maidens’ speech, whereas the Umayyad
classics gave a more detailed and more beautiful description
of it

"When we meet" said Zul-Ruma, "we have a conversation which
is as beautiful as embroidered robes

"A conversation which has a soothing and healing effect
on my heart like the effect of rain on the parched land."

Al-Qutami, describing the women’s converse with men, said:

"They slay us with their talk which has profound meaning
and which they fill with allusion to mislead their jealous
relatives

"Their converse has on our hearts the effect of water on
the heart of an extremely thirsty person."

(3) Nihayat-ul-Arab, II-70.  (4) XX - 119
To these examples we may add the one mentioned before, in which al-Farazdaq dealt with hoariness in six lines, while only one hemistich, or at most, one line was accorded to the same item by the pagan poets.

The attempts to detail and develop the traditional themes of ghazal were between very limited and extremely few when compared with the huge bulk of classical ghazal in the Umayyad period. Naturally, the classical poets who did not take any conscious and serious step to put their poetry in touch with the impregnating currents of religion and culture of the time, could not have either the imagination nor the capacity to be successful in carrying on their attempts. After having enlarged on the classical images to a limited extent, they found that their capacity for plagiarising was at an end. At this point they resorted to what can only be termed "padding", and furthermore "padding" of an extremely tedious and insipid nature. Their mastery of the poetical form did not help them, in the slightest degree, to hide the poverty of their resources and means. Jarir, al-Akhtal, and al-Farazdaq, the greatest masters of Arabic poetry in the Umayyad period, were the first whose love poems showed this sign of weakness and decay. The five following lines of Jarir - who is generally considered the best among the trio, in ghazal - may give an idea of this regrettable fact.
"The crow loves what I loathe, the departure of the beloved. It is always crying out.

"I wish that the crow which foretells our separation would have its jugular veins slit.

"You certainly know that our secret things are very well hidden in my ribs.

"When the loved ones departed, they looked at me with their calm eyes through the curtains (of their litters).

"Their charming conversation was then like pure honey." (1)

Strangely enough, al-Akhtal seemed to have been very pleased with his amatory poetry. He was reported to have said: "I outstripped the poets in eulogy, satire and ghazal." and to have given the following lines as a sample of his ghazal.

"O Hind, of the tribe of Badr, I wish you may for ever farewell, though our tribes are enemies.

"Hind is a shy, white-skinned girl. Her belt is always loose (because of her slender waist) but her silver anklet does not move.

"She hovers between life and death, with the man who shares her bed. Her back is smooth, and her waist is clear cut." (2)

Al-Farazdaq and Jarir were more fair when they show some

(1) Diwan I - 33 (2) Aghani VII - 177
admiration, though only occasionally, for the love poetry of certain Hijazi poets, namely 'Omar ibn abi Rabi'a and al-Ahwas. Jarir was the most outspoken amongst his colleagues. He admitted that his ghazal was not very successful when he said: "Had I not been busy satirizing those dogs (al-Farazdaq, al-Akhtal, and the other poets) I should have composed love poems which would have made any old woman yearn for her youth."

Besides the lack of originality and poverty in ideas and imagery, another deformity afflicted the classical ghazal, in the latter half of the Umayyad age, when the lexicographers and grammarians of 'Bosra' and 'Kufa' in Iraq began to work. It was the love for difficult and obsolete words in poetry. The more strange words and turns of speech a poet used the higher he was in the estimation of the scholars. These latter, realising that the Arabic language spoken in towns was becoming distorted and full of mistakes and foreign words, intended to collect the language as it was spoken by the genuine Arabs. Al-Farazdaq and Zul-Ruma answered very well the purpose of the Iraqi scholars, all the more because they filled their poems with unusual words and expressions.

(1) Ibid I - 36  
(2) Ibid IV - 56  
(3) Diwan I - 3
Zul-Ruma went further and claimed to be illiterate, and that was meant to show that his poetry was genuine, spontaneous, unaffected by the rules laid down by the grammarians of the time, and as a result, full of interest and novelties for the scholars. Unfortunately for him, he once composed, inadvertently perhaps, the eye of his camel with the letter M in Arabic (م); and when he was asked to account for it, he said that he had heard a schoolboy describing the letter M, and understood that it was something narrow like his camel’s eye. Al-Tirimmah outstripped all the classical poets in this matter. His poems are sometimes as difficult to pronounce and decipher as tongue-twisted or mysterious amulets. The philologist Muhammad ibn Habib said that he asked Ibn al-Arabi about 18 uncommon words he had found in the poems of al-Tirimmah and that Ibn al-A`rabi admitted, in his turn, that he could not explain them either. The great scholar Abu `Amr ibn al-Ala is stated to have said that he saw al-Tirimmah in 'Hufa' copying down words which he heard from the Nabit (Arabians), and when he asked him why he did this he replied that he would arabicize them and use them in his verse.

(1) Conversely the grammarians did not appreciate very much the poetry of al-Kumayt, for the only reason that he knew grammar very well.

(2) Al-Tanbih ala Awham al-Qali. p. 124.
Thus, the essential beauty of the classical ghazal, namely the mastery of the form, faded away in its turn, on account of this love for unusual and obsolete words. Love-poetry became no more the expression of loving hearts but a hunting ground for lexicographers.

The classical poets, in the Umayyad period, may be classified under three heads
A) those who mixed themselves with politics, and wanted to be rewarded by the caliph, his representatives, or the leaders of the period, for their verse. They were Jarir, al-Farazdaq, al-Akhtal, and 'Adi ibn al-Riqa. The ghazal of these poets, though based on personal experiences and sometimes successful, was merely an amatory prelude in the style of the pre-Islamic age.

B) The poets who used uncommon words and turns of speech in their verse for the purpose of displaying their mastery of the language; namely: al-Farazdaq again, Zul'Ruma, al-Tirimmah and al-Kumait. The latter did not concern himself very much with ghazal.

C) The poets who celebrated, in their verse, the desert life and love, and expressed the most nomadic feelings and ideas, namely Zul-Ruma again, and Yazid ibn al-Tathariya.

Jarir (640-728 A.D.) was the master of the classical ghazal of his time. He was capable of deep feeling and
sincere expression. In most of his poems he celebrated the beauty of women in general, described the sorrowful departure of his damsels' tribes, lamented the passing away of youth, and showed his great attachment to the past because it was full of love, youth and happiness. He was not fond of sensual descriptions and his ghazal was, in general, clean and decent. His style was easy and fresh, but sometimes lengthy and full of 'cliches' and repetition.

Al-Farazdaq ( ? -728 A.D.) was rather a selfish, conceited and sensual poet. Incapable of deep emotions and sincerity, he did not succeed either in ghazal nor in elegy. His style is rather affected, and his verse sometimes abounded with unusual words. Only his obscene ghazal is worthy of note because it shows the difference between libertine poetry outside Hijaz and the 'Omarit ghazal. It is indeed a version of the latter ghazal which lacked its refinement, humour and melodious style.

The ghazal of Akhtal (640-708 A.D.) was similar to Jarir's. Yet his feelings were not so profound, and many of his preludes were more devoted to the description of wine and drunken people than to love-affairs. His expression was often more graceful than Jarir's, and his style was much more concise.

Only a very little of the ghazal of 'Adi ibn al-Riqa ( ? -714 A.D.) has come down to us. Judging by it, 'adi who lived in the Umayyad Court of Damascus, and devoted the
largest part of his verse to the praise of the Umayyad caliphs, was a second rate Akhtal, as far as ghazal was concerned.

Zul-Ruma (696-735 A.D.) on the other hand, but for his exaggerated love for the depiction of abandoned encampments, and for the use of uncommon words, would have been the equal of Jarir in the mastery of the traditional ghazal. His expression was even fresher and more original, his imagery was less hackneyed and his love was sometimes deeper than Jarir's.

The Kharijite al-Tirimmah ibn Hakim (? - 700 A.D.) and his great Shi'ite friend, al-Kumayt al-Asadi (680-744 A.D.) were poets and scholars. The latter devoted the greater number of his poems to the praise of Bani Hashim, the Prophet's family; and ghazal was not generally his concern. Al-Tirimmah's ghazal would have been more original and agreeable had it not been crammed with unusual and very difficult words.

Yazid ibn al-Tathariya (? - 744 A.D.) was probably the greatest lover and the most nomadic poet amidst the classics. His ghazal was rather like that of the pre-Islamic poets, i.e., a strange mixture of sensuality and sentimentality. He was a real artist of form, but his imagery was very limited and some of his ideas were criticized by the learned critics of Iraq for being very simple and naive. They did not like him for instance for saying said:

"Those who wept for their love left me alone, only a dove stayed weeping with me."
"When we exhausted our tears in the evening, we arranged to begin weeping on the following morning at (the) sunrise."  \(^{(1)}\)

These lines, they said, showed that he used not to weep by night when true loves give way to their tears.

Likewise, they did not appreciate his saying:

"My love for her was the first which invaded my heart; it found it empty and settled down in it definitely"  \(^{(2)}\)

"Because, they said, the love which invades an empty place is not necessarily strong and meritorious."

The classical ghazal, despite all its weaknesses, was the ghazal of the Arab people. It appealed to their senses and moved the depth of their souls. In the early period of the Abassid age it was displaced by a new Arab-Persian ghazal which was like the 'Omarit ghazal, but overloaded with exaggerated sensuality and perverted refinement. However, the classical ghazal, with some modification and adjustment, returned once again to crown the poems of the great poets of the age, particularly Abu Tammam, Al-Buhturi, Ibn al Rumi, al-Mutanabbi, Abu Firas, al-Radi, and al-Ma'arri (in his poems of youth).

EXTRACTS FROM THE CLASSICAL GHAZAL.

I - Jarir

"Greet the abodes (and remember the time) when we would not have exchanged our dwelling places or our neighbours for anything.

I wish that my heart would meet the person who could divert it, or else someone who would give him to drink a potion which would bring forgetfulness.

"O, Um 'Amr, May God forgive you. Give me back my heart and I want it unharmed as it was before.

"Are you not the most beautiful of all? Are yours not the most charming eyes?

"I hid my love and became sick. I can hide it no longer.

"May God not bless this world if our association be sundered.

"The long separation has not been able to cut off the ties which linked me to you, nor has it been able to bring forgetfulness.

"The large black eyes slew us, but they did not call us again to life.

"They were capable of paralysing even the wise man, and rendering him totally powerless, though they were the most vulnerable things in the body."

(1) Diwan, p. 160.
II - Al-Farazdaq.

"I remember once that I persuaded white-skinned girls to go out with me to the open-country whilst people were asleep. They were six girls, the youngest of whom liked kisses only.

"They were real gazells, only time changed them and substituted long hair for their lost horns.

"They came out to meet me; they were scared that they might be found out and killed.

"They had not gone out with anybody before, they were as pure as the eggs of the ostrich.

"Powerless they lay down beside me, while I was enjoying myself.

"The dawn came upon us very quickly. We were quenching our thirst.

"If Imru ul-Wais/Hujr was in Darat Juljul he would see my love adventure.

"He would see them weeping and regretting that the night was not so long as half a year.

"The beautiful girls find me old now and call me their father when they greet me.

"If they laugh at me now I do not mind, for, in the past, I enjoyed my youth.

"If they asked their grandmothers about me, those latter would send me many greetings."

(1) Diwan, p.138.
III - Al-Akhtal.

"Did I see, in the darkness, a vision of al-Rabab, or was it an optical illusion?"

"It came to me when I was in Abateh, though al-Rabab had broken with me in Abrak.

"Her vision changed its forms like a Djin, perhaps to stir up my fears; Besides, beautiful girls always cause us great suffering

"They know very well how to throw their large net in order to catch lovers.

"No net, no artifice can be compared with theirs, as far as I know.

"They speak ill about those whom they like; they talk kindly to those whom they hate

"If they promise they break their promises or they take a very long time to fulfil them.

"If they call you 'their uncle' (you must know) that this title puts you out of their favour

"If you compare their serious and playful side by (1) weight, the latter will tip the scale."

VI - 'Adi ibn al-Riqa"

"The girl of the tribe of Lu'ay hit you when she shot at you; but when you shot (on her) you hit somebody else.

(1) Diwan, p. 41-43.
"Fate made you love her and made her love somebody else.

"She was white-skinned, capable of stealing a man's mind. Her hips were big, her waist was slender.

"Her mouth, at dawn, had the taste of wine mingled with ginger.

"She was like a gazelle; she was young, and was brought up in happiness.

"When her vision entered my heart, it wandered within me as if lost, then my eyes streamed with tears.

"Could I forget her by travelling on the back of a she-camel inured to long journeys?"

V - Zul-Ruma

A - "O the ruined abode of Mayy, may you remain, and may rain always drench you.

"By Allah, I do not know which is wiser: weeping or being patient.

"In weeping through pure love there is relief, but there is a divine reward in showing patience and endurance.

"Separation does not affect my love for Mayy, though it dries the leaves of the love tree.

"Her skin is silky, her talk is melodious. She is neither silent nor loquacious.

"Allah bade her eyes to have the affect of wine, on human minds.

(1) Al)Tara'if al-Adabiya, p. 92.
"Her lightning smile shows her white teeth which are like chamomile drenched with rain drops.

"I keep imploring God that her departure should not take place, till the last moment when she went up in her litter.

"When her caravan departed it was like the oasis of palm-trees in Qadisiya or Hijaz.

"I tried then to recover myself, though my soul was about to leave my breast."

B - "Weeping has no connection with patience. I am now patient though I weep.

"O Mayy, do you return my tears and hot sobs by your own tears?

"When, in my journey, I look at the place where you dwell, I keep staring at it.

"Even when I am with my friends I keep remembering you.

"When my travelling companions drop off to sleep, by night, your vision comes to me."

VI - Al-Tirimmah ibn Hakim

"These girls were no longer interested in childish entertainments; they now enjoyed pleasant converse.

"Apart from enjoying conversation, they were chaste as long as love did not lead them astray, for love can overthrow the lovers.

"I swore not to blame lovers as long as sand-grouse fly by night, and as long as the palm-tree of Katat blossom." (1)

VII - Al-Kumayt al-Asadi.

"She is like the sun, the only difference being that she could kill well-bred men.

"She is white-skinned, soft and merry. Her voice is melodious, her hips are high and her waist is well-shaped.

"She is adorned by her coquetry, her pure mouth and her melodious and kind speech.

"One could not wish to see a girl who was created more beautifully than her." (2)

VIII - Yazid ibn al-Tathariya.

"She is of the tribe of 'Akil, her hips are like a sand-dune, and her waist is slender.

"Is not one look at you too little to please me? Not with you it is not too little

"O friend of my soul! I have no friend besides you to share my happy hours.

"I concealed my love for you, I did not obey your enemies; I did not divulge our secrets.

"Is there no place where I can (meet you and) complain to you about the grief of separation, and about my fears of enemies (who will slander me)?

(1) Diwan, p. 151. (2) Aghani XV - 122
"May my life be your ransom. My foes are numerous, my home is far away from you, and my friends near you are very few.

"I used to invent artifices inorder to visit you; what shall I say now that I have exhausted all my artifices? "I cannot pretend to have something to do in your land every day; and I cannot send you a messenger every day. "I am folding lying pages of scolding for you, but I shall unfold them one day.

"You are slender, you cannot carry a heavy sin on the Day of Judgment, so do not slay me."
CHAPTER XIII

OTHER TENDENCIES.

We have seen, in the previous chapter, that some masters of the classical poetry tended, in the second half of the Umayyad period, to encumber their verse with uncommon words and difficult expressions, in order to attract the interest of the lexicographers of Iraq who began thereupon to write down the Arabic vocabulary for the first time.

This unhappy development was contrary to the spirit of true poetry and its effects are but too plain in verses of this kind of poetry called "Rajaz."

The main difference between Rajaz and the classical ode was two-fold:

a) Rajaz had only one metre, also called "rajaz". It required a rhyme at the end of both hemistichs of a line, and not only at the end of the latter one, as did the ode.

b) It was a sort of extemporary verse and generally did not exceed two or three lines which the poet composed on different occasions, such as on starting a fight, drawing water out of the well, or encouraging the camel on long journeys.

Some people believe, justifiably enough, that Rajaz was the original and simplest form of Arabic poetry. Yet it was not very well developed in the pre-Islamic period. Only in the Umayyad epoch did it attain to its full development. It
imitated the structure of the classical ode and dealt with eulogy and satire, and each poem displayed, at its opening, ghazal and also descriptions of ruined abodes. The first poet to write poems of any length in Rajaz fashion, was Abul-Najm al-Ijli, and those who made of it a mere hunting ground for philologists were al-Zafayan, al-'Ajjaj, and his son Ru'ba.

Abu-l-Najm, in the rajaz-poem in which he described the camels on their way to and from the watering-place, did not deal with ghazal. Yet when he portrayed the camel-herd he gave the following descriptions of him:

"The camels were cheered up and driven by a man who never washed his hair. His stick was strong, and he was unmoved by ghazal.

"He passed the playful pretty girls as a falcon passes small birds, He did not condescend to run after them."

(1) He died during the reign of the Umayyad Caliph, Hisam ibn Abdul-Malik, at the age of 70. He is considered to be the greatest Master of Hajaz poetry. (2) A contemporary of al-'ajjaj. (3) He was born in the pre-Islamic age and died in 708 A.D. (4) He is al-'Ajjaj's son; lived in Bosra at the end of the Umayyad epoch and the beginning of the Abassid age and died in 762 A.D. The lexicographers made very good use of his wide knowledge of Arabic vocabulary. (5) This looks like a deliberate polemic against the classical form of ode - an interesting occurrence at such an early date. (6) A. al-Maymani: al-Tara'if al-Adabiya. p. 70.
One can only agree with this brief description based on sound observation: when one has no leisure, when one is absorbed in hard work, one is not much interested in ghazal.

The ghazal of the other ṭajaz poets is not very interesting. It occurs in the prelude of rajaz, and deals with the familiar themes of traditional ghazal, the only difference being that the former is more overloaded with unusual and most difficult words.

"O Friend, said Ru'ba, "do the ruined abodes stir up your whispering love?

"What would you do when they become completely effaced, having no living voice to answer you?

"They were inhabited, in the past, by beautiful, coquetish and friendly girls

"Honest, charming and sociable, but, like jinn, they were difficult to understand.

"They were as smooth as ostrich eggs; as beautiful as statues."(1)

Among the familiar themes of classical ghazal, the rajaz poets favoured the depiction of the beloved's physical charms and the description of old age and women's attitude towards it.

"When Um 'Amr" said al-Zafayan, "saw that I was at the end of my life."

(1) W. Ahlwardt: Sammlungen Alter Arabischer Dichter. III - 66
That my hair had turned white after being black, and the top of my head looked as though it had been plucked.

That my ribs became as bent as sickles, and my skin grew rough and barren.

"She scorned me and started to hate me."

Some other poets, like Khalid al-Qannas for example, did not adhere to rajaz; they did use however, uncommon words, in their ghazal, but only in moderation. Khalid's purpose was, presumably, to invest his poetry, which was apparently composed for uncultured people, with a veneer of scholarship. He was not desirous, in the least, of attracting the attention of serious scholars.

So his long poem called 'al-'Arous' or 'the bride' - the only poem which has been preserved for us - deserves special consideration. It deserves this consideration not because it displays a number of difficult and unusual words, but rather because it was presumably written for uneducated people, in imitation of classical ghazal. In fact, Khalid al-Qannas accumulated almost all the items and imagery of the traditional love poetry in his poem, without showing any great concern for order and continuity, or fear of contradiction. Describing his mistress he said:

(1) Ibid, II - 94

(2) A. al-Maymani ; al-Tarayef al-Adabiyya. p. 102-103
"She is kind to me, attached to our love, she stands up for me, she abandons me and forget me.

"I have loved her for years. She breaks with me through cequetry, she is my worry when I am with my friends.

"She entertains her partner, she lights her censers, she nourishes her hair with musk and nutmegs.

"Her cloth is covered with necklaces and jewels, she fills her scent-boxes with the best perfume.

"Her breast is pearly yellow, her eye-brows are very thin; the locks of her hair are as black as night." (1)

After devoting the first part of his poem to the portrayal of his damsel, Khalid devoted the second part, to the description of his 'noble friends' when they sought pleasure, wine and music.

"When they drank too much they became intoxicated and began talking nonsense. They looked like drowsy people.

"They were killed, though nobody had killed them, they looked ill-behaved, though they did nothing. They were drunken, but still obeyed Luqman's orders.

"They were dead, but not buried, then they came to life without being resuscitated, and stood up, but not for the Day of Judgment, above them there were bunches of scented basil." (2)

(1) Al-Tarayef al-Adabiya, pp. 105-107. (2) Perhaps the wine seller's name. (3) al-Tarayef al-Adabiya, p. 113.
Khalid's poem is full of common witticisms, clumsiness and incongruity. Yet its most interesting feature is perhaps its strong rhythm and internal rhyming. The metre of the poem is the classical 'Basit'; but every hemistich in it is divided into two parts. So every line of the poem is compounded of four short hemistichs. The three first have a special and common rhyme, while the fourth has the monorhyme of the poem. So the poem was rhymed as follows:

\[
\begin{align*}
&\begin{array}{c}
\text{b} \quad \text{b} \quad \text{b} \quad \text{A} \\
\text{M} \quad \text{M} \quad \text{M} \quad \text{A} \\
\text{E} \quad \text{E} \quad \text{E} \quad \text{A}
\end{array}
\end{align*}
\]

The disposition of rhyme in such an order is sometimes to be found in the eulogies of al-Khansa' and some Huzaylit poets. It occurs there in two or three consecutive lines only and never more. Khalid was the first poet meticulously to observe this arrangement of rhymes, throughout a whole poem, from beginning to end. The effect of this technique is that it provides the poem with a double rhythm; the poetical one, and the rhythm of rhymed prose. Being strongly scanned, this double rhythm lends itself remarkably to popular songs and wine shop poetry; it might have been one of the main reasons for the reputation which Khalid's poem enjoyed.

Between the classical poets who overloaded their ghazal with difficult words, and Khalid who made a moderate use of them just to add a flavour of erudition to his poem, we may
place Jiran al-Awd. This poet is too little known. Some people believed that he was a pre-Islamic poet, while his small diwan which has come down to us, shows indubitably that its author belonged to the Islamic ages. Jiran, like some classical poets was extremely fond of using unusual words, in his poetry. However, he differed from them in the fact that he did not draw, in all his ghazal, on the traditional details and imagery. Far from that; indeed one of his best known poems may be deservedly called a witty, realistic description of unhappy married life. He began it with a description of his new wife whom he married after an unsuccessful previous marriage. She looked beautiful in her clothes and make-up when he saw her first at her parents home, but when he took her to his house, and had the opportunity of seeing her without her make-up and adornment, he realised that he had made a very bad choice.

"She used to put myrrh round her eyes", he said, "and to bind up her head, and to come up to quarrel with me early as a wolf does; the owl was still crying out.

"Whenever you meet her in towns or in the countryside, the hair of her head is always bristled, she never combs it or dresses it."

"If ever she combed it, it would look like scorpions raising their tails to sting." (1)

(1) Diwan, p. 5-6.
Moreover, while they were still in their first days of marriage, she beat him severely. She caught hold of his hair and dragged him round the house and hit him with a big stick until he fainted. Then she dragged him again to the water-jug, in order to revive him for further maltreatment.

To this satirical description of his wife, Jiran added the horrible picture of his previous spouse who used to beat him insult him and throw stones at him.

The poet was in such despair that he wanted to divorce both of them:

"Take the half of my wealth and leave me the other half, and go away, unregretted wives! celibacy is much more convenient." (1)

Jiran admitted, however, that there were two types of women; those who were like fragrant gardens and those who were like chafing fetters. As for his problem he could not find any solution other than to get a lash and be ready to whip his two wives if they ever tried to beat him again.

Jiran's poem interests us in this study because of its witty and satirical description of his wives. For the student of Arabic literature in general, it may have a further interest. It may be considered as a poetical form of 'Maqamats' in which a difficult and obsolete vocabulary was used for a didactic purpose, to relate unusual, witty, satirical and sometimes attractive stories. Such stories are also to be found in

(1) Diwan, p. 5.
prose, in 'Kitab al-Amali', and all other books concerned with lexicography.

The poems of Jiran, and his friend al-Rahhal, in which they described the ugliness and mischievousness of their wives, must not be confused with some of the satires of al-Faradaq and Jarir, in which they portrayed good and honest women, in an obscene way, only because the poets wanted to offend those women's tribe. This way of using indecent ghazal for satire had been known before the Umayyad period, and was frequently used by the poet Hassan ibn Thabit; though it became more widespread and more vulgar and obscene during the Umayyad epoch. Furthermore, this sort of satire had nothing to do with the family quarrels so realistically described by Jiran and his friend al-Rahhal. These quarrels often led to divorce, and the Umayyad poets composed many poems about it. Some of them, in their attempt to justify their action, found in divorce an opportunity for vain-glorious out-pourings:

"You thought" said 'Asha Hamdan to his divorced wife, "that I was powerless

"Do you know that my lineage is related to glory from both my father's and mother's side?

"And that when I am not content with a place, I quickly make up my mind to leave it?

(1) In fact, al-Qali, in his Amali, I-104 related the story of a nomad who quarrelled with his wife, and mentioned the insults used by both the husband and his wife.
"When she insulted me I divorced her resolutely
"And I sent her to her tribe without inflicting any
(other) punishment on her
"She began to yearn like a she-camel, but I was quite
(1) indifferent."

Some other poets regretted the divorce afterwards, and
expressed their regret in their verse.
"I deeply regret", said Abu-Qutayfa, "having divorced
Um 'Amr, and regret also her departure with her tribe to Iraq.
"It is impossible not to visit her; I have no earthly
(2) hope of meeting her before the Day of Judgment."

Among the poets who found in divorce the tragic end of
(3) their married life, mention must be made of al-Farazdaq,
(4) al-Mutawakkil al-Laythi, and Abu Kutayfa. They all mourned
their former wives in tender and moving poems.

The wine song, with which the gay life of paganism was
celebrated, resumed its development during the Umayyad period.
Admittedly this sort of song was discarded by Islam; and wine
itself was renounced by the overwhelming majority of Moslem
people. The wine drinkers were publically flogged by the
government representatives during Moslem ages. However, some
people drank wine secretly. Only high-ranking persons and
non-Moslem people dared to boast about drinking it, and to

(1) R. Geyer Diwan al 'asha, p. 338. (2) Aghani I - 18
(3) Diwan (4) Aghani XI - 39-40
compose songs about it. Al-Akhtal devoted a large part of
his poetry to the description of wine and drunken people.
Al-Faraqdaq, who referred to wine in his poems, used to drink
with al-Akhtal in the same shop, in Kufa. Zul-Ruma drank
wine also, and preferred wine drinkers to sober people,
because the latter used to steal the clothes of the former
when they became drunk.

"As for wine", said Zu-l-Rumma, "do not fear those who
drink it. When you are with water drinkers take good care of
your clothes.

"For, they hide their intention, and when they have
any opportunity, they become as harmful as disease." (1)

In Hijaz, al-Ahwas and al-'Arji drank wine and referred
to it in their ghazal. Yet no one was more daring and more
outspoken in the description of wine, its shops, the drinkers
and the wenches, than the caliph al-Walid ibn Yazid. He used
to go from Damascus to Lebanon to drink the best wine in the
noted Christian convents. He gave, in his diwan, many detailed
pictures of the parties which he had attended either in his
own palaces or in the wine shops, and in which he and his
companions enjoyed wine, music and sensual love.

"May God, devoted angels and pious worshippers be my
witness when I say.

(1) Al-Amali, II - 45
"That I like music, wine and biting beautiful cheeks

"And the noble companion and the brisk waiter who (1)
supplies me with glasses of wine."

Al-Walid's songs do not reveal a high poetical inspiration. Nevertheless they are interesting for all the information they give about the gay and turbulent life of a perverted aristocracy in Syria, at the end of the Umayyad period. They are equally interesting for their bold and unaffected expression, their short metres, and their direct, easy style which reminds the reader in this respect of the 'Omarit poets.

"Al-Walid become now" said the caliph poet, "enthusiastic about young girls.

In the desert, he has wine, a wine-jug, and a glass (2) beside him."

The wine poetry of Al-Walid may be of interest to the student of Arabic Literature, in that it may, with justification, be considered the origin of 'the brilliant and spirited wine songs' which flourished in the 'Abbasid age, particularly in the poetry of Abu Nuwas. In fact, some of Al-Walid's songs are by no means inferior to the best of Abu Nuwas:

"Kill the whispering worries with gaiety, and enjoy life by drinking the daughter of the grape (-wine).

(1) Diwan, No. 22.
(2) Diwan, No. 14.
"Once poured out, wine appeals to the drinkers more than does a noble pretty girl.

"My companions (when I drink) are noble glorious young men of the Umayyad family."

One point is worth noting here, in this quotation. Wine was preferred to girls in wine parties. The pagan drinkers, and more precisely Hassan ibn Thabit, held the same view, and the Abbasid poets later on were most outspoken about it. The reason for this preference is, perhaps, that the customers of wine shops and those who frequented wine parties, were essentially pleasure-seekers. Women were for them very agreeable things among others such as music, wine, witty conversation, but not, in the least, their main preoccupation or their essential joy. Furthermore, the wenches of the wine-shops and the women-slaves: their counter-parts in the parties given by wealthy and high-ranking people, were very cheap, within the reach of every drinker. In such places vice was likely to appear and, a preference for beautiful boys over wenches, may be supposed to have crept into vogue, and thus into the poetry of wine-parties, and Moslem society.

Homosexuality might have been known in Arabia before Islam. The Koran accused the people of Lut of having developed this vice. But it was never wide-spread, and the pre-Islamic poets -

(1) Diwan, No. 8.
if one may judge by the poems which have been passed down to us - never referred to it. The Umayyad poets, inside and outside Hijaz, took the same attitude towards this sort of perversion and did not devote one single line to it. Even al-Whwas whose homosexual vice was well-known did not refer to it at all, in his poetry. Likewise, in the Diwan of al-Walid, we do not find any reference to ghazal connected with boys. However, in some description of wine parties, he suggests that boys are present as waiters in addition to wenches. He seems to have asked two of the boys to act the part of the 'caliph' and the 'adviser' when he and his adviser (or minister)
grew drunk, in some convent.

"We made of Fatrous, the caliph of God; and of Yohanna, his (2) adviser."

Thus, the ghazal relating to boys, had to wait till the Abassid period to develop and form a new departure in the formation of ghazal.

The last tendency with which we shall deal, in this chapter, is the ghazal composed by women, in the Umayyad period. It seems that women poets, in Arabic Literature as well as in any other literature, were not very fond of writing love-poetry.

(1) Aghani IV - 44 (2) Diwan, No. 92.
They preferred to be the object of ghazal, not the authoress.

In pre-Islamic period it was somewhat impracticable for women to compose ghazal, because the latter consisted mainly of description of the physical beauty of the beloved. Furthermore, the damsel who almost always depicted as being shy and innocent. So no poetess would compromise herself by describing the physical charms of her male beloved. During the Umayyad epoch, conditions distinctly changed. Women became more independent and more fully aware of their individuality. Their rights and the scope of their action might have become more limited, but they were nevertheless supported by the law and by the government. The Moslem law required the women's consent if they were to be married, and that means, in emotional terms, the right to choose a husband, the right to love. Furthermore, the poets of the time did not confine themselves to the depiction of the beloved's physical beauty, they dealt rather with love itself: its mystery, value, pleasure and richness. They also dealt with faithfulness; and both subjects could be treated by women lovers without subjecting themselves to criticism. In fact, Arab women, particularly the Beduins, were never ashamed of honest love. Ibn Dawud al-Isfahani (909 A.D.) the author of Kitab al-Za'ara, which is perhaps the first book written about love in Arabic literature, and in which one finds the largest anthology of love-poetry, included in this book many love poems composed
by nomadic Arab women. Some of them were his contemporaries, others lived in previous epochs, mainly in the Umayyad period. The study of these poems shows that they all have to a greater or lesser degree, the following characteristics: The description of love, its sickness and effects on lovers. The insistence on chastity and piety. The descriptions of things and phenomena which stir up women's imagination and make them yearn for their lovers such as winds (which blow from the direction of the lover's land), lightning etc...

One may observe that the poetesses generally avoided any physical description of their male-beloved; when they talked about them they depicted them as suffering from love and separation.

Al-Farazdaq reported having met 'Aqila bint al-Dahhak who was deeply in love with her cousin 'Amr. When the latter was compelled to leave for the land of Yamama she became desperate. To al-Farazdaq who asked her about 'Amr she recited:

"When carefree people sleep, 'Amr stays awake till the morning, tormented by worries.

"Remembrance tears up his heart and mine. He can neither forget nor shake off love."

A bedouin woman of the tribe of Murra said:

(1) K. al-Zahra, p. 163.
"Let in the fresh south wind, its breeze heals my heart from its lovesickness because of (him)"

"Nay, how could the wind heal my long yearning and my eyes (1) which have been weeping for so long."

Layla, the beloved of the 'Udri poet, Qais al-Majnun, was reported to have said about him, when a traveller told her that he had been seen roaming absent-mindedly in the desert:

"I wonder - calamities being numerous - when Qais will come back!

"May my soul be the ransom of that man who never stays in one place, and who would be lost, if God did not protect him."

The 'Udri Abu Mishar, was reported by his friend 'Omar ibn 'Abi Rabi'a, to have fallen madly in love with a poetess who did from him her love for him. When he married her she recited the following lines:

"When I saw you impatient I hid my love, I said to myself: this young man is looking only for a friend

"So I concealed my feeling though I was suffering terribly (3) from lovesickness."


(3) Ibid, X - 53. These lines might bring to mind the following lines of Alice Meynell (1847-1922):

"Oh, just beyond the fairest thoughts that throng
This breast, the thought of thee waits hidden yet bright;
But it must never, never come in sight
I must stop short of thee the whole day long."
Ibn al-Dumayna's mistress wrote to him the following lines when she thought that he had grown tired of her:

"You have broken your promises to me, and made my enemies pleased and happy."

"If gossip could wound the skin, my body would be covered with wounds."

The reader of Kitab al-Zahra will notice that the author was not very fair towards certain Umayyad poets and poetesses. He lived in the 'Abbasid period when the poets appreciated exaggeration and preferred the supposed beauty of expression to exactitude and sincerity. Thus he was unable to appreciate the deep feeling and frankness of Layla al-Akhyaliya; and he underestimated the sincerity of her verse. He quoted the following lines of her Beloved Tawba:

"Layla wept and said to me: the parting frightens me. Besides, parting haunts the mind of those who fear it."

"If anyone should die through fear of parting, it should be I."

"Love filled my heart. I could not bear it. I confess the fact without affectation."

The author of K. al-Zahra made about this verse a comment which can be summarized as follows: Layla was ignorant, as far as love was concerned. If she was a

(1) Aghani XV - 154. (2) K. al-Zahra. p.167
true lover her life after the death of Tawba would have become impossible. The second line shows how shallow was her passion.

If we pass from the desert to towns, we find that no poetesses flourished here, among the aristocracy. As for the middle class and common people, they seemed to have generally preferred home life to out-of-doors activities. However, some women living in towns sometimes composed love poetry on special occasions. One of them loved a soldier in the army of Bishr ibn Marwan. He could not visit her in Bosra, because it was out-of-bounds by Bishr. The beloved, however, did not excuse her lover and wrote to him:

"A true lover would not fear punishment even if it was cauterisation.

"Life has no meaning for a true lover until he finds himself and his beloved in the same place."

The urban dwelling poetesses were not generally to be found among the Arabs, but rather among the slave-girls, who sometimes received a good education, and were capable of composing poetry. The slave girl of the caliph Sulayman ibn Abdul-Malik was reported to have said before she committed suicide:

(2) Ibid, p. 208.
"He who dies through love must die like this, love is worthless if it is not ended by death." (1)

A singing girl of Medina had an ugly lover. When she was reproached about her choice she said:

"Do not blame a lover about her beloved. Every passionate lover is mad about his love.

"A lover finds the beloved charming and beautiful, even if he resembles a monkey.

The love poetry of the slave girls was very clear and refined. It sometimes expressed deep and clever ideas about love. However it was often bold and sophisticated, as opposed to the love poetry composed by Arab women. The latter were more sincere, and expressed much deeper feelings in their verse. Moreover the ghazal of the slave-girls was a sort of imitation. They often repeated in their verse what they had heard at the literary meetings, and wine and song parties, at which they were in attendance as waitresses, dancers or singers. The ghazal of the Arab girls, on the other hand, was more original and much more spontaneous. Furthermore, the latter composed their poems in the classical style and favoured the long metres of Arabian prosody; while the style of the slave girls, though sometimes awkward and

uneven, was rather similar to that of the 'Omarites with a marked preference for short metres.

The women's ghazal which has come down to us from the Umayyad period is indeed very slight. It does not, moreover, reflect very clearly the women's social condition at the time, nor does it show their real attitude towards love, happiness and life. Strangely enough, this information can be found, to a greater or lesser extent, in the ghazal of the 'Omarites and others who described their mistresses in detail and in a very realistic fashion. In their love poetry, they reported the speeches and confessions of their damsels, both in private and public life. There we can find sufficient material to study the women's emotional and social life, in the Umayyad period. In discussing this point, in previous chapters, we have noted that a sort of competition was taking place between the Arab women of the aristocracy and their female slaves, and this, in spite of the great difference in rank, between the two groups. We also noticed that the former were proud of their race, lineage, social rank, and high morality, whereas the slaves were more coquetish and more capable - with their art of adornment, loose virtue and devices - of attracting the idle, wealthy youth of the time, particularly the poets. As regards poetry, the slave-girls
were left behind only at the beginning - when they had to learn Arabic as a foreign language. Later on, in the Abassid period, when Arabic became their mother tongue, the slave-girls outshone the Arab women of the towns even in poetry. Only the Bedouins remained invincible. The Arab women in the Abassid period shared the destiny of their men. They brought peace, freedom and new ideals of life to other peoples; but these peoples, once converted to Islam, surpassed the Arabs and relegated them to the back-ground of Moslem social life.

The Arab women, unwilling to compete with the slave-girls on account of the obscenity and libertinage of these latter, took shelter in their homes. There they lived in a sort of seclusion, and there, during the long Abassid ages, they were invaded, little by little, by the ignorance which brought with it begotry, prejudice and superstition. They were replaced by the slave-girls and boys, both as habituees of the literary 'saloons', of parties, and as the subject of love-poetry. In fact, the Abassid ghazal is nothing but the description of, and eulogy upon, the beauties of slave-girls and boys.
I - Raja.

A) Al-'Ajjaj (died in 708 A.D.)

"I remember the days when my beloved showed me her well-shaped mouth, bright as lightning, and her beautiful eyes. "And very thin eyebrows, and hair as black as night. "Her abdomen like a gazelle's and a handsome figure with broad rippling hips.

"I was over zealous in my love, so much that I feared sin. "Or that tongues would wag in gossip about us."

B) Ru'ba ibn al-Ajjaj (died 762 A.D.)

"A gallant poet in "Zi-Urat" used to behold a woman from the tribe of 'Saad',

"She shone like a flash of lightning. Between her necklace and her rings,

"Her neck was like that of a gazelle. When she awoke after sleep she was fragrant."

C) Ru'ba.

"I remember the days when love for 'Arwa' haunted my heart. As she walked trippingly, her body rippled like sandhills.

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(3) Ibid, p. 108.
"Her dress stretched tightly around her broad hips. When she smiled she showed teeth white as lightning.

"With her gazelle-like eyes and her graceful neck she fascinated even shy adolescents.

"I used to be gay and playful, pursuing girls and seeking love."

II - The wine songs and ghazal of al-Walid ibn Yazid.

A) "My heart became love-sick when a beautiful girl appeared before us on her way to church.

"I regarded her with loving eyes until I saw her kissing a twig,

"A crucifix. Oh my poor soul! who has seen so favoured a symbol of worship?

"I implored God I should be in its place, though I should become fuel for hell fire." (1)

B) "The wine, in the glass, was as yellow as saffron. The Tajibi bought it from Asqalan

"You could see every particle and the shape of the vase without laying a finger on it.

(1) Al-Walid ibn Yazid succeeded his uncle the caliph Hisham in (743 A.D.). He was killed in (744) south of Palmira. The castle of Mshatta, one of the architectural glories of the Umayyads, was built in the solitude of the desert for his amusements.

(2) Diwan, No. 32.
"When water was added, it effervesced and shone like the lightning of Yemen."

C) "When my companions became drunk they began to make wishes, they wished for prosperity, livestock and gold.

"Then they said to me, have a wish, and see how we chose our wishes:

"Then I wished Salma, my cousin, to be mine. She is of the highest rank of Arabian aristocracy."

III - Women's ghazal.

A) Um al-Dahak of the tribe of Muharib, loved her husband very much. When he divorced her she became heartsick and composed the following verse:

"I asked the lovers who had endured love sickness in the past,

"Saying: what would remove love after it has settled in the breast under the ribs?

"They replied: A new love would cure the previous love, or a long separation,

"Or despair, until the heart forgets and gives up all hope, for despair helps to bring about forgetfulness."

(1) Diwan, No. 91. (2) Diwan, No. 11. (3) Al-Qali: al-Amali II - 86.
B) Zaynab bint Farwa loved her cousin al-Mugira and composed the following lines about him:

"Odriver, as you pass on your way this morning, halt, I want to tell you of my feelings."

"My love for my beloved is more intense than any love ever experienced by other people."

"I am pleased only when he is pleased with me; and I do my utmost to please him and retain his affection till the end of my life."

IV - Ghazal and divorce. Al-Mutawakil al-Laythi, regretted having divorced his wife, and mourned her in the following poem:

"My heart refrains from loving any woman other than 'Um Bakr."

"The free of heart sleep by night, while the tears are streaming from my eyes."

"The slanderers succeeded in arousing her anger (against me) Thus the bond of our love was severed."

"As long as I live, I shall always remember my love for her, and shall cherish it in my heart."

"If I had pleaded with a stone as I pleaded with her, surely I should have been answered."

(1) Ibid, II - 87

(2) Aghani, XI - 40
"I love to be near her, and she deliberately chooses to be far from me."

"When I remember Um Bakr I feel like a wounded man smarting from his wounds."

"O Um Bakr, by the life of your father. I shall not forget you until my soul shall dwell in the grave."

V - Ghazal and family life. Al-Rahhal, like his bosom friend Jiran al-Awd, had an unhappy family life. He described it in a poem from which the following lines are taken.

"May God withhold His blessings from the camel which carried her (to my house) on the evening of our wedding. May God withhold His blessing from my virgin (bride)."

"May God withhold His blessings from her embroidered litter (on the camel's back). May God withhold His blessings from her red cloak.

"May God withhold His blessings from the musk which they sprinkled under her cloak, and from the green scent-boxes (which she brought with her)."

"And from the saffron with which (her family) perfumed her, and from the jewels which were hung about her neck.

(1) Diwan Jiran al-Awd, pp. 10-12.
"The wedding night took place (at the end of a lunar month) on a moonless night; but all other nights in that month were equally dark.

"I was misled by the dye on her palms, the mascara of her eyes, and her yellow cloth.

"And her locks which were like unsheathed swords, and her eyes which were like the eyes of a gazelle.

"I wish I were married to a strong and fierce tigress, instead of her.

"I wish that a she-wolf were under her cloak, despite its tusks and claws.

"I shall not love her, as long as the pigeon cooes on the green boughs.

"I shall abjure women until the Day of Judgment or (at least) till the end of my life.

"I advise (those like me) to marry Bedouin women; for I found death in marriage with (one townswoman who wore golden earrings."
CONCLUSION.

I - The study of the development of 'ghazal' or 'amatory poetry' during the pagan, early Moslem and Umayyad ages, shows that the term 'ghazal' or 'Nasib' meant, in the pre-Islamic period, an erotic prelude in which the pagan poet talked about his damsel and celebrated her beauty. In the Moslem epochs, the term had the same significance but with certain modifications. It treated not only of beloved women, but was also written objectively, in order to seduce them and entice them to join the revels of the pleasure-seekers of Hijaz. Not only did it celebrate the beauty of the beloved, but it also sang the charms of the divorced - and regretted - wife. Yet it never concerned itself with the description and praise of handsome boys as did its Abbasid counter-part. The Umayyad ghazal was not composed solely by men; some poems were written by women; both Arabs and slaves.

II - The pre-Islamic poets knew the wenches and singing-girls of the wine shops which were to be found on the main commercial routes up and down Arabia. They equally admired the beauty and serenity of the nuns whose convents were close by the wine shops. Yet the girls whom they really loved and generally described in their amatory poetry were Arab. The poets, belonging generally to the aristocracy of their tribes,
sang the charms of their high-ranking mistresses; and besides
the charms and lineage of the latter, reference was often made
to their wealth and to their jewels which were described in
detail. The attitude of the pagan poets towards their damsels
was entirely chivalrous. Not only did they treat them as
equals, but they also found in them the inspiration of a high
romance. Stendhal believed that the purest and noblest form
of love was born in the desert, in the dark tents of the
pagan Arabs.

The pagan woman was completely free and had generally
the same rights and opportunities in social life as the man.
She took part in every activity, in war and peace alike, and
experienced the extremes of good and bad fortune. Now she was
a lady, now a servant, here a queen, there a captive or slave.
However, her complete and untrammeled freedom did not prove,
in the long run, to be to her advantage. It was rather
like that of a gazelle in the wilderness; always subject to
attack by strong and hungry beasts. She never enjoyed a
settled home life, but dwelt sometimes with her husband,
sometimes with her own people, should these latter happen to
be at war with the tribe to which her husband belonged.
Sometimes her tribe would suffer defeat; in which case she
would suffer captivity and slavery. Her every day life was so
complicated and so absorbing that she could not devote to her
love-affair, or rather her tribe would not allow her to devote
to it, more than a part of her youth. That is probably why the damsels described by the pagan poets were, in general, only girls in their teens. The advent of the Moslem religion offered to the Arab woman a very settled homelife, but by confining her within it, as her real and proper realm, it limited her opportunities, and fettered her pagan freedom. However, the rights and prerogatives given to her by Islam were sanctioned by the religious law and became assured to her by the Moslem state. Conversely her love-affair was no longer a private thing, it became rather a state-affair, and a problem for public concern. Because the family was the basis of Moslem society, everything connected with its security became the concern of the state, Thus extra-marital love was disavowed, and men and women were even flogged for adultery and fornication.

An inverse ratio seems to exist between feminine freedom and the consideration and respect shown to the sex by men. Everywhere, not only in Moslem countries, men insisted on women’s frailty as grounds for restricting her rights and freedom. Her relations then become more jealous and protective; and others - particularly her suitors - grew more respectful and courteous. This remark is valid at least as regards the

(1) In modern civilisation, the traditional courtesy towards women seems to be disappearing. The women have to work hard; and only few people leave their places for them in a queue, bus or train. They are, of course, gaining freedom, but, on the other hand, they are loosing social regard.
condition of Moslem women, in the Umayyad period. The slave-
girls who were non-Arab and had no particular tribe or family
to watch over their moral life and jealously to guard their
reputation, enjoyed considerable freedom, in their love-affairs
and enjoyment of life. The result was that the 'Omarit poets,
who composed verse about them, treated of them with haughtiness
and cynicism, and alluded very often to their cheapness,
artifices and perversions. The Arab damsels, on the other hand,
who were jealously protected by their people, and who had far
less freedom than the slave-girls, were addressed, by the
'Udri lovers, with great courtesy and veneration. These
latter sometimes bestowed divine qualities on their ladies, and
showed a very religious devotion towards them.

The girl-slaves, in the Umayyad period, strove to attain
to the social distinction which was then held by the Arab
women. Their attempt was initially not very successful; but
in the long run, they succeeded in relegating the Arab women
to the back-ground of social life and in taking their places
in literary meetings, in salons and social functions. In the
Abbasid ages, while the Arab women were invaded, in their
seclusion, by ignorance, bigotry and superstition, the slave-
girls became the stars of parties and receptions, the idols
of the poets and the mistresses of the great leaders. Only
the Bedouins remained invincible, and became the only
worthy representative of the Arab women of the time.
As regards love itself, the pagan poets knew only its simplest form, namely that sentiment felt by any person 'in love'. Their life in the desert was free and natural. Nothing prevented them from expressing their love openly and freely. A moral life based on suppression and inhibition, on an antithesis between duty and inclination was unfamiliar to them. So also were the conceptions of 'divine love', 'Mystical ecstasy', 'conjugal love', and similar sublimations occasioned by social restrictions. Paganism, which did not split human individuality into 'soul' and 'body' spared the entity of their life and left their hearts united to their senses and their 'love' to 'pleasure'. Their life in the desert, which made their temperament a combination of opposite qualities: hatred and magnanimity, apathy and sentimentality, cruelty and tenderness also made their love a mixture of cynicism and idealism, grossness and delicacy. Both their paganism and their life in the desert made their love practical, expeditions, connected mainly with youth, pleasure, and the passing moment. The pagan Arabs never abstracted their love, or gave it any form of personification. They did not even deal with other people's love. All that the pagan poet did, in his ghazal, was to express his own personal feeling.

Islam, like other religions, divided the human entity into 'soul' and 'body', and achieved subsequently the separation of
"love" from 'pleasure'. By introducing introspection into the inner life of Moslems, and by urging them to curb their desires and to cling to chastity, Islam led to the development of the 'Udri love which was a compromise between love and religion. The religious education made the emotional life of the Arabs deeper, richer and purer, and assigned to it new aims such as love of God, religion and Moslem brotherhood. The religious passion - unknown to the pagan Arab - found its full expression in the performance of religious rites, holy wars and ascetism. Its literary expression came out later, in the Umayyad and Abbasid ages.

The 'Udri love flourished in Hijaz in the Umayyad period. It is - to a great extent - a Moslem creation. It liberated 'love' from the yoke of sexual instinct, and turned the former into a form of ascetism. Love became a consuming passion; and chastity was its crowning virtue. The study of this form of passion shows how love was personified by the 'Udri lovers, how they attempted to discover its nature and mystery, and to conceive love as a religion, how ultimately they sometimes substituted 'love' for the 'beloved' herself, and made an 'end' of 'the means'.

The opposite of the 'Udri love was the 'Omarit love. This latter was a bold reaction against the growing strain of puritanism, in Hijaz. It sacrificed true love to pleasure, mirth and sensual enjoyment. The 'Omarits sometimes
celebrated the charms of the Arab ladies, in their verse, but their favourite companions were the cequetish slave-girls who - like themselves - had no other ideal than light love and pleasure. The 'Omarit love was not like the pagan love a youthful dalliance of desert-living people; it was rather the main occupation of wealthy and idle town dwellers. It was for them a sort of escape from life, a pursuit which outlived youth.

Besides the 'Udri and 'Omarit love, the classical ghazal, in this period, continued to sing a form of love which was mainly pagan, yet it was noticeably influenced by Islam and the amatory trends of Hijaz. The Umayyad period was, as far as love was concerned, a period of strong and deep sentiment of spontaneity and sincerity. Love, whatever its form, was enjoyed or appreciated in this period; and love stories were not only welcome in the popular meetings and literary salons but also in the palaces of the caliphs and the governors of the provinces.

IV - The pagan poet, like most happy people, did not talk about his love while he was enjoying it. Only when he lost it, he mourned it, as he also mourned his fleeting youth. On the abandoned dwelling place of his beloved he shed tears in profusion, and recalled the happy days of love and pleasure. His memories were so vivid in his mind that he was capable,
Despite his sad mood, of evoking the past with all its lustre and gaiety, and of describing his mistress with a striking realism. He devoted to his ghazal the prelude of his ode, but before he proceeded to deal with a new item, he used to find some consolation in calling his lost love a 'youthful foolishness' to which he preferred the wisdom and experiences of old age. The pagan ghazal is a strange mixture of sensuality and refinement, of sophistication and romance. Besides its spontaneity, sincerity and nostalgic charm, it is very rich in imagery. Its metaphors, metonymies and images, though frequently repeated, still retain a freshness and charm. The pagan poet sometimes used short metres for his amatory verse, but the greater part of pre-Islamic ghazal was composed in the long and classical metres of the ode.

The advent of Islam was not initially favourable to the development of love-poetry. The Moslem leaders were rationalists and sometimes puritans. They looked on emotional life from a rational and moral point of view. Therefore their attitude towards love, unless it was divine or 'Udri, was frankly suspicious. They did not approve of extra-marital love, and did not like the pagan ghazal, because it dealt exclusively with free love. The poets of this period - apart from a few who continued to sing secretly of the pagan life, grew less partial to ghazal, in their odes than were their
predecessors. Most of Hassan's poems were free from amatory preludes. The poets who began their poems with ghazal stressed the high morality of their damsels. Ka'b ibn Zuhair devoted the largest part of the ghazal of his famous poem called 'Al-Burda' to the description of his beloved's chastity. Some allegorical love poetry came to birth when the caliph 'Omar forbade poets to compose ghazal. The poet Hamid ibn Thawr, for instance, composed a poem in which he celebrated the charms of a tree. The obscene ghazal which was not very frequent in the heathen period grew more obscene and more frequent in this period. Only it belonged no longer to love-poetry; it was used almost exclusively as satire.

The hold of religion was somewhat relaxed in the Umayyad period; and ghazal resumed its development with new strength and richness. Hijaz, with its security, prosperity and refined culture was an ideal home for love and the ghazal. In fact, the most outstanding trends of amatory poetry of the time, namely the 'Omarit and 'Udri ghazal, flourished in Hijaz. The 'Omarit ghazal was brilliant, gay and melodious. It was highly appreciated by the pleasure-seekers of the time, sung in the literary salons and recited by the attractive slave-girls of Mecca and Medina. It was, indeed, to the liking of these girls: easy, sunny, tempting and tuneful. Unlike the pagan ghazal which was concerned with the past, with a 'lost love', the 'Omarit ghazal sang love
while it was 'living' and 'present'. It was meant to induce women to a life of pleasure and enjoyment, and also to give men a full account of women's psychology. No poetry in Arabic literature has succeeded more than the 'Omarit ghazal in describing women's moods, coquetry, artifices, love for men and adventures, and in reporting their confidential conversation about their lovers. The 'Omarits were equally successful in the choice of short and lyrical metres for their ghazal: their poems were promptly set to music by the great singers of Hijaz. So ghazal and music became united. They developed, henceforth, hand in hand.

The 'Udri may be considered as a reaction against the 'Omarit love poetry in as much as it was more serious, more sincere and more concerned with religious morals. It was valued by religious people in general, and also by the Arabs who did not like the cynicism of the 'Omarits, and preferred the poets who devoted their love to free-born 'ladies', rather than to slave-girls, and who adopted the traditionally chivalrous attitude towards them. It is significant that almost all the 'Udri poets and their damsels were die-hard Arabs, and that they generally lived in the desert or the countryside, but not in towns. From the poetical point of view, the 'Udri form of ghazal may be the highest of all the forms which we have examined in this study. The 'Udri poets described three worlds in their ghazal; the real one
in which they lived and suffered, a world of religious feeling and pattern, and a world of visions, dreams, and wishes.
The pagans and the 'Omarits, on the other hand, lived in, and dealt with one single world: that of reality. However, the 'Omarit ghazel was superior to that of the 'Udris, as far as metres and imagery were concerned. The latter clung to the classical long metres and did not use the supple and lyrical short ones to the best advantage, as did its 'Omarit counterpart. As regards imagery, the 'Udris used the classical figures and images to express their new and very deep feelings. Their new images were not many. This is rather surprising, because the 'Udris poets had, in fact, much to say which would not be directly expressed through the medium of the contemporary Arabic vocabulary. Thus they were forced to arrive at an expression of their feelings through the use of concrete imagery. One would have thought that the need for new forms of expression would have led them to make greater use of new images.

The merit of both 'Udris and 'Omarit poets comes essentially from the facts: First, they achieved the independence of ghazel by devoting to it the whole poem instead of its prelude only. Secondly, their ghazel was so full of life, charm and gentleness that love poetry came to be the most finished poetical form, during the Umayyad age. This is in
contrast to the pagan epoch, when ghazal was not the highest literary form. Descriptive poetry was often superior to it. Again in the Abbasid age, ghazal was surpassed by other forms.

The classical ghazal of the Umayyad period was rather like its pagan counter-part, an amatory prelude. It also drew on pagan themes and described ruined abodes and desert scenery, though the poets were usually townsfolk. The religious influence and the two trends of Hijazit ghazal, sometimes found their way to the classical ghazal and provided it with freshness and vigour. Nevertheless they could not stop the inevitable decline which was essentially due to exhaustion. The other flaw which detracted from its charm was the pleasure which some classical poets took in overloading their poems with difficult and unusual words. These poets seem to have realised that Islam had brought about the superiority of 'mind' to 'emotion', and made the 'learned man' superior to the 'poet' both from a social and religious point of view. Incapable or unwilling to be jurisconsults or learned men in religious matters, they attempted to show their great knowledge in lexicography. The result was that their verse became complex, sombre, overburdened with the use of uncommon words.

Among the other tendencies which developed in love poetry during the Umayyad period, mention must be made of
the ghazal which was concerned with 'family life and divorce.
Of this ghazal, we have some tender and moving poems on the
one hand, and the witty, satirical poems of Jiran al-Awd
and his friend al-Rahhal, on the other. Another form of ghazal
was represented by the famous poem of Khalid al-Qannas, called,
'Al-Aroos' or 'the bride'. This poem seems to have been a
parody of the classical ghazal. It was probably written for
the benefit of uneducated people. The most interesting
thing about it, is its strong rhythm and the disposition of its
different rhymes.

The wine songs were not numerous in this period.
Nevertheless, they found their mouthpiece in the caliph al-Walid
ibn Yazid. His songs, which are more interesting for their
documentary value than for their poetical achievement,
described the perverted and irresponsible aspects of the life
of the Umayyad aristocracy of the time.

The ghazal composed by women appeared in this period,
perhaps for the first time in the history of Arabic love poetry.
It was written by both Arab and slave-girls. The former were
mostly Bedouin; and their ghazal was perhaps the best of its
kind.
V - Ghazal, in the heathen period, was usually recited in the desert, round the Bedouin tents, in the evening, when the men and women of the tribe rested after a day of hard work. It was also recited, jointly with other items of the classical odes in the palaces of the Kings of 'Hira' and 'Ghassan', the periodical Arab fairs such as 'Okaz and Zul-Majaz, and perhaps also in the wine shops. As a rule, the maiden celebrated in the verse was not present among the listeners; and ghazal itself was not meant to be recited specially to her. It was rather composed to be declaimed in public, particularly in literary gatherings.

In Moslem times, the Umayyad palaces replaced those of 'Hira' and 'Ghassan', and the literary salons sprang up in the Arab towns, especially in Hijaz. In these palaces and salons the finest love stories were related and the best forms of ghazal there found an appreciative audience. The salons of Hijaz, in particular, had their influence on the development of the 'Omarit poetry. This latter reflected, in fact, the merriment and witticism of the refined 'habitués', of the salons. Moreover, the urgent need of the literary gatherings for a form of amatory poetry which could be elegantly set to

(1) The description of the beloved in the darkness (her face, eyes, teeth and jewels) is outstanding in the pagan ghazal. One could attribute the fact to various reasons, one of them is probably that ghazal was then recited in the darkness, round the fire of the tribe.
to music, let the poets to choose clear and simple words for their sentences, a sweet and melodious style and short and lyrical metres for their verse. The salons also favoured the development of "Muqatta'at" or 'poetical fragments"; partly because these latter were more convenient for the singers who would have taken a very long time to sing the whole of a long poem, and partly because, in literary gatherings, many poets and reciters took part; thus everyone had to be brief and to declaim not his whole poem, but only the best part of it. The first anthology of amatory fragments, in Arabic literature was perhaps achieved in the literary salons. There during the Umayyad period the best ghazal was selected, though it was not collected in book form. In the Abbasid Ages, many collections of song i.e., of the best extracts of ghazal, came to birth, the most important among them being the incomparable work of Abul-Faraj al-Isbaimni, called "Kitab-ul-Aghani" or 'the book of songs."

The part played by the wine and song parties, in the development of love poetry, was far less important than that of the literary meetings of Hijaz, from a poetical view point. However, a study of the social history of the Arabs might well prove that the ghazal composed about boys had its origin in the wine shops. Here, not only wenches, but handsome boys waited on the revellers. None of this ghazal
however, has come down to us.

VI - Ghazal, in the pre-Islamic period, though it was confined within the prelude of the classical ode, was a highly finished form of poetry. Apart from its artistic and complex metres which were also the metres of the ode, its style was elegant and polished, and its rich imagery conformed to generally accepted standards. About the oldest ghazal and its historical origins, we know very little. The literary history of the ancient civilisations which flourished in Arabia, in the very remote past, has not yet been systematically studied by scholars. All that we can say about these civilisations is that they were parts of a greater civilisation which had prevailed in the Middle-East since time immemorial. Only the existence of such a civilisation could account for the similarity which exists in the religions and literatures of the peoples of the Near and Middle-East. As for ghazal, one can only be surprised to see how similar was the pre-Islamic ghazal in its spirit and imagery to the love-poems of the Greek Meleager (50 B.C.), to the Hebrew 'Song of Songs' (10th century B.C.) and also to the Egyptian love-songs (1202-1102 B.C.). The common features of all these specimens of ghazal which belonged to different peoples and different epochs, may be found in imagery, in the stress put on the description of the beloved's physical charms, and in the
connection established between love-poetry and poetry of lamentation over the fleeting nature of youth and the trammels of old age. The reader of Arabic ghazal cannot help recalling Meleager, while studying 'Omar, or the shepherdess of the 'Song of Songs' while reading the ghazal of the Umayyad poetesses.

Two main trends seem to have predominated alternatively in all the literatures of the Near and Middle East. The first was pagan, sensual, inviting pleasure and merriment; the second was religious, ascetic and puritanic. The pagan trend was successively quelled by Judaism, Christian religion and Islam, they could not however entirely eradicate it. Islam, in its turn, admitted compromise, during the Umayyad period. It did not disapprove of human love sung in the 'Udri fashion. Yet, the 'Udri ghazal was almost exclusively cultivated by the Arabs; and when the Arab influence grew fainter, in the Abbasid ages, the 'Udri poetry faded away. Its only representatives, in these ages were Al-Abbas ibn al-Ahmad and al-Sharif al-Radi, in the East and Ibn Hazm, in Spain.

The 'Udri ghazal was superseded by a religious poetry which sang of the love of God, of piety and religious devotion. This form of poetry may be said to have started with Hassan ibn Thabit, the Prophet's poet. It was developed, at the

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(1) "Post-Biblical lyrics are confined within a small scale of human feeling: Love for God and devotion to Zion are the predominant notes". The Jewish Encyclopedia: Poetry, p.93
at the beginning of the Abbasid ages by Saleh ibn Abdul-Qaddus and Abul-Atahiya, and eventually replaced the 'Udri ghazal, after having absorbed much of its imagery and its mode of expression. The religious poetry was cultivated in a later period, chiefly by 'Sufi' or 'Mystics'. The crowning star of mystic poetry, in the Abbasid ages, was Ibn al-Farid. A branch of this poetry was devoted to singing the love of the Prophet Muhammad and to celebrating his supremely high qualities. The master of this poetry was al-Bousiri. The Moslem religious poetry was, in general, very similar to its Christian counterpart, namely the Syriac poetry. Both were a compromise between 'poetry' and 'religion' and both used the subject of 'love' and the style of 'ghazal' for religious purposes. Both achieved their full development in the same country, namely in Iraq. Therefore, it would not be surprising if some common ground were discernible between them.

The 'Omarit ghazal continued its development during the Abbasid Ages. Yet, although it was welcomed by the poets of the time, it suffered many alterations. It was subdued by the Persian influence. It is true that it subsequently acquired more cultivated ideas and images, but, it lost, on the other hand, its freshness, sincerity and spontaneity. It became full of exaggerations. Its imagery became far-fetched and its descriptions grew more sensual, more cynical and more
obscene. Its worst aspect was its use in praise of the beauty not only of girls but of boys.

The Abbasid poets reserved the warmest welcome for the wine songs which reached their peak very early in this period.

As for the poetical form, the Abbasid poets inherited both the classical style with its long metres, and used it in serious and classical subjects, and the 'Omarit style with its easy structure and short metres, and used it very often in ghazal, wine songs and light poetry.

This study of the development of ghazal throughout the periods of paganism, the lifetime of Muhammad, the Orthodox Caliphate, and the Umayyad dynasty, has attempted to show the literary character of ghazal as it developed through these periods, its main themes, ideas, imagery, various styles and metres. This study has also examined the development of the conception of 'love' in Arabic life and poetry, the evolution of the Arab society, and especially the changes in the status of women. It has shown that ghazal reflected at every point the social conditions of the society in which it flourished, that there was a remarkable continuity and an evolutional relationship between the form of Arabic poetry both before and after Islam. It has endeavoured to show moreover that the Umayyad poets were heirs to the heritage of their predecessors just as the Abbasid poets were heirs to
the Umayyads. This point is valid as a further proof of the authenticity of pre-Islamic poetry. Another point has also been examined in this study, and may be used in support of the same argument, namely that Arabic poetry can claim its origins in more remote epochs than the pre-Islamic period; that the literature of the Arabs, in spite of its incontestable originality, may have been the heir of a very ancient culture which had flourished in the Levant since time immemorial, and which belonged to no one place or community but to all the peoples of the Near and Middle-East.
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