



THM Sadaqa Group, Inc.

**Your Standard Salafi Curriculum Guide to Online Salafi Homeschool**

### **The life of The Noble Prophet**



### **Lesson 1.6: Religion of the Arabs**

Most of the Arabs had complied with the call of Ishmael - Peace be upon him -, and professed the religion of his father Abraham - Peace be upon him -. They had worshipped Allâh, professed His Oneness and followed His religion a long time until they forgot part of what they had been reminded of. However, they still maintained such fundamental beliefs such as monotheism as well as various other aspects of Abraham's religion, until the time when a chief of Khuza'a, namely 'Amr bin Luhai, who was renowned for righteousness, charity, reverence and care for religion, and was granted unreserved love and obedience by his tribesmen, came back from a trip to Syria where he saw people worship idols, a phenomenon he approved of and believed it to be righteous since Syria was the locus of Messengers and Scriptures, he brought with him an idol (Hubal) which he placed in the middle of Al-Ka'bah and summoned people to worship it. Readily enough, paganism spread all over Makkah and, thence, to Hijaz, people of Makkah being custodians of not only the Sacred House but the whole Haram as well. A great many idols, bearing different names, were introduced into the area.

An idol called 'Manat', for instance, was worshipped in a place known as Al-Mushallal near Qadid on the Red Sea. Another, 'Al-Lat' in Ta'if, a third, 'Al-'Uzza' in the valley of Nakhlah, and so on and so forth. Polytheism prevailed and the number of idols increased everywhere in Hijaz. It was even mentioned that 'Amr bin Luhai, with the help of a jinn companion who told him that the idols of Noah's folk – Wadd, Suwa', Yaguth, Ya'uk and Nasr – were buried in Jeddah, dug them out and took them to Tihama. Upon pilgrimage time, the idols were distributed among the tribes to take back home. Every tribe, and house, had their own idols, and the Sacred House was also overcrowded with them. On the Prophet's conquest of Makkah, 360 idols were found around Al-Ka'bah. He broke them down and had them removed and burned up.

Polytheism and worship of idols became the most prominent feature of the religion of pre-Islam Arabs despite alleged profession of Abraham's religion.

Traditions and ceremonies of the worship of their idols had been mostly created by 'Amr bin Luhai, and were deemed as good innovations rather than deviations from Abraham's religion. Some features of their worship of idols were:

1. Self-devotion to the idols, seeking refuge with them, acclamation of their names, calling for their help in hardship, and supplication to them for fulfillment of wishes, hopefully that the idols (i.e., heathen gods) would mediate with Allâh for the fulfillment of people's wishes.
2. Performing pilgrimage to the idols, circumrotation round them, self-abasement and even prostrating themselves before them.

3. Seeking favour of idols through various kinds of sacrifices and immolations, which is mentioned in the Quranic verses:

☛ "And that which is sacrificed (slaughtered) on *An-Nusub* (stone-altars)" [5:3]

Allâh also says:

☛ "Eat not (O believers) of that (meat) on which Allâh's Name has not been pronounced (at the time of the slaughtering of the animal)." [6:121]

4. Consecration of certain portions of food, drink, cattle, and crops to idols. Surprisingly enough, portions were also consecrated to Allâh Himself, but people often found reasons to transfer parts of Allâh's portion to idols, but never did the opposite. To this effect, the Quranic verses go:

☛ "And they assign to Allâh a share of the tilth and cattle which He has created, and they say: 'This is for Allâh according to their pretending, and this is for our (Allâh's so-called) partners.' But the share of their (Allâh's so-called) 'partners', reaches not Allâh, while the share of Allâh reaches their (Allâh's so-called) 'partners'. Evil is the way they judge." [6:136]

5. Currying favours with these idols through votive offerings of crops and cattle, to which effect, the Qur'an goes:

☛ "And according to their pretending, they say that such and such cattle and crops are forbidden, and none should eat of them except those whom we allow. And (they say) there are cattle forbidden to be used for burden or any other work, and cattle on which (at slaughtering) the Name of Allâh is not pronounced; lying against Him (Allâh)." [6:138]

6. Dedication of certain animals (such as *Bahira*, *Sa'iba*, *Wasila* and *Hami*) to idols, which meant sparing such animals from useful work for the sake of these heathen gods. *Bahira*, as reported by the well-known historian, Ibn Ishaq, was daughter of *Sa'iba* which was a female camel that gave birth to ten successive female animals, but no male ones, was set free and forbidden to yoke, burden or being sheared off its wool, or milked (but for guests to drink from); and so was done to all her female offspring which were given the name '*Bahira*', after having their ears slit. The *Wasila* was a female sheep, which had ten successive female daughters in five pregnancies. Any new births from this *Wasila* were assigned only for male people. The *Hami* was a male camel, which produced ten progressive females, and was thus similarly forbidden. In mention of this, the Quranic verses go:

☛ "Allâh has not instituted things like *Bahira* (a she-camel whose milk was spared for the idols and nobody was allowed to milk it) or a *Sa'iba* (a she camel let loose for free pasture for their false gods, e.g. idols, etc., and nothing was allowed to be carried on it), or a *Wasila* (a she-camel set free for idols because it has given birth to a she-camel at its first delivery and then again gives birth to a she-camel at its second delivery) or a *Hâm* (a stallion-camel freed from work for their idols, after it had finished a number of copulations assigned for it, all these animals were liberated in honour of idols as practiced by pagan Arabs in the pre-Islamic period). But those who disbelieve, invent lies against Allâh, and most of them have no understanding." [5:103]

Allâh also says:

☛ "And they say: What is in the bellies of such and such cattle (milk or foetus) is for our males alone, and forbidden to our females (girls and women), but if it is born dead, then all have shares therein." [6:139]

It has been authentically reported that such superstitions were first invented by ‘Amr bin Luhai.[]

The Arabs believed that such idols, or heathen gods, would bring them nearer to Allâh, lead them to Him, and mediate with Him for their sake, to which effect, the Qur’an goes:

☛ "We worship them only that they may bring us near to Allâh." [39:3], and

☛ "And they worship besides Allâh things that hurt them not, nor profit them, and they say: These are our intercessors with Allâh." [10:18]

Another divinatory tradition among the Arabs was casting of *Azlam* (i.e. featherless arrows which were of three kinds: one showing ‘yes’, another ‘no’ and a third was blank), which they used to do in case of serious matters like travel, marriage and the like. If the lot showed ‘yes’, they would do, if ‘no’, they would delay for the next year. Other kinds of *Azlam* were cast for water, blood money or showed ‘from you’, ‘not from you’, or ‘*Mulsaq*’ (consociated). In cases of doubt in filiation they would resort to the idol of Hubal, with a hundred-camel gift, for the arrow caster. Only the arrows would then decide the sort of relationship. If the arrow showed (from you), then it was decided that the child belonged to the tribe; if it showed (from others), he would then be regarded as an ally, but if (consociated) appeared, the person would retain his position but with no lineage or alliance contract.

This was very much like gambling and arrow shafting whereby they used to divide the meat of the camels they slaughtered according to this tradition.

Moreover, they used to have a deep conviction in the tidings of soothsayers, diviners and astrologers. A soothsayer used to traffic in the business of foretelling future events and claim knowledge of private secrets and having jinn subordinates who would communicate the news to him. Some soothsayers claimed that they could uncover the unknown by means of a granted power, while other diviners boasted they could divulge the secrets through a cause-and-effect-inductive process that would lead to detecting a stolen commodity, location of a theft, a stray animal, and the like. The astrologer belonged to a third category who used to observe the stars and calculate their movements and orbits whereby he would foretell the future. Lending credence to this news constituted a clue to their conviction that attached special significance to the movements of particular stars with regard to rainfall.

The belief in signs as betokening future events was, of course common among the Arabians. Some days and months and particular animals were regarded as ominous. They also believed that the soul of a murdered person would fly in the wilderness and would never rest at rest until revenge was taken. Superstition was rampant. Should a deer or bird, when released, turn right then what they embarked on would be regarded auspicious, otherwise they would get pessimistic and withhold from pursuing it.

People of pre-Islamic period, whilst believing in superstition, they still retained some of the Abrahamic traditions such as devotion to the Holy Sanctuary, circumambulation, observance of pilgrimage, the vigil on ‘Arafah and offering sacrifices, all of these were observed fully despite some innovations that adulterated these holy rituals. Quraish, for example, out of arrogance, feeling of superiority to other tribes and pride in their custodianship of the Sacred House, would refrain from going to ‘Arafah with the crowd, instead they would stop short at Muzdalifah. The Noble Qur’an rebuked and told them:

☛ "Then depart from the place whence all the people depart." [2:199]

Another heresy, deeply established in their social tradition, dictated that they would not eat dried yogurt or cooked fat, nor would they enter a tent made of camel hair or seek shade unless in a house of adobe bricks, so long as they were committed to the intention of pilgrimage. They also, out of a deeply rooted misconception, denied pilgrims, other than Makkans, access to the food they had brought when they wanted to make pilgrimage or lesser pilgrimage.

They ordered pilgrims coming from outside Makkah to circumambulate Al-Ka‘bah in Quraish uniform clothes, but if they could not afford them, men were to do so in a state of nudity, and women with only some piece of cloth to hide their groins. Allâh says in this concern:

☛ "O Children of Adam! Take your adornment (by wearing your clean clothes), while praying [and going round (the *Tawaf* of) the Ka‘bah]. [7:31]

If men or women were generous enough to go round Al-Ka‘bah in their clothes, they had to discard them after circumambulation for good.

When the Makkans were in a pilgrimage consecration state, they would not enter their houses through the doors but through holes they used to dig in the back walls. They used to regard such behavior as deeds of piety and god-fearing. The Qur’an prohibited this practice:

☛ "It is not *Al-Birr* (piety, righteousness, etc.) that you enter the houses from the back but *Al-Birr* (is the quality of the one) who fears Allâh. So enter houses through their proper doors, and fear Allâh that you may be successful." [2:189]

Such was the religious life in Arabia, polytheism, idolatry, and superstition.

Judaism, Christianity, Magianism and Sabianism, however, could find their ways easily into Arabia.

The migration of the Jews from Palestine to Arabia passed through two phases: first, as a result of the pressure to which they were exposed, the destruction of their temple, and taking most of them as captives to Babylon, at the hand of the King Bukhtanassar. In the year B.C. 587 some Jews left Palestine for Hijaz and settled in the northern areas whereof. The second phase started with the Roman occupation of Palestine under the leadership of Roman Buts in 70 A.D. This resulted in a tidal wave of Jewish migration into Hijaz, and Yathrib, Khaibar and Taima’, in particular. Here, they made proselytes of several tribes, built forts and castles, and lived in villages. Judaism managed to play an important role in the pre-Islam political life. When Islam dawned on that land, there had already been several famous Jewish tribes — Khabeer, Al-Mustaliq, An-Nadeer, Quraizah and Qainuqa’. In some versions, the Jewish tribes counted as many as twenty.

Judaism was introduced into Yemen by someone called As‘ad Abi Karb. He had gone to fight in Yathrib and there he embraced Judaism and then went back taking with him two rabbis from Bani Quraizah to instruct the people of Yemen in this new religion. Judaism found a fertile soil there to propagate and gain adherents. After his death, his son Yusuf Dhu Nawas rose to power, attacked the Christian community in Najran and ordered them to embrace Judaism. When they refused, he ordered that a pit of fire be dug and all the Christians indiscriminately be dropped to burn therein. Estimates say that between 20-40 thousand Christians were killed in that human massacre. The Qur’ân related part of that story in *Al-Buruj* (zodiacal signs) Chapter.

Christianity had first made its appearance in Arabia following the entry of the Abyssinian (Ethiopian) and Roman colonists into that country. The Abyssinian (Ethiopian) colonization forces in league with Christian missions entered Yemen as a retaliatory reaction for the iniquities of Dhu Nawas, and started vehemently to propagate their faith ardently. They even built a church and called it Yemeni Al-Ka‘bah with the aim of directing the Arab pilgrimage caravans towards Yemen, and then made an attempt to demolish the Sacred House in Makkah. Allâh, the Almighty, however did punish them and made an example of them – here and hereafter.

A Christian missionary called Fimion, and known for his ascetic behaviour and working miracles, had likewise infiltrated into Najran. There he called people to Christianity, and by virtue of his honesty and truthful devotion, he managed to persuade them to respond positively to his invitation and embrace Christianity.

The principal tribes that embraced Christianity were Ghassan, Taghlib, Tai' and some Himyarite kings as well as other tribes living on the borders of the Roman Empire.

Magianism was also popular among the Arabs living in the neighbourhood of Persia, Iraq, Bahrain, Al-Ahsá' and some areas on the Arabian Gulf coast. Some Yemenis are also reported to have professed Magianism during the Persian occupation.

As for Sabianism, excavations in Iraq revealed that it had been popular amongst Kaldanian folks, the Syrians and Yemenis. With the advent of Judaism and Christianity, however, Sabianism began to give way to the new religions, although it retained some followers mixed or adjacent to the Magians in Iraq and the Arabian Gulf.

For additional reading on this subject at an advanced level please read the Article below found at <http://spubs.com/sps>

### **The Origins of Shirk**

**Author: Shaikh Naasir ud-Din al-Albaani**

Source: Tahdheerus-Saajid min Ittikhaadhil-Quboori Masaajid

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### Lesson 1.6: Worksheet

**Match the following with its counterpart below**  
**Read pgs. 34 - 42**

**Bahira**

a stallion-camel freed from work for their idols, after it had finished a number of copulations assigned for it, all these animals were liberated in honour of idols as practiced by pagan Arabs in the pre-Islamic period

**Sa'iba**

a she-camel set free for idols because it has given birth to a she-camel at its first delivery and then again gives birth to a she-camel at its second delivery

**Wasila**

a she-camel whose milk was spared for the idols and nobody was allowed to milk it.

**Ham**

a she camel let loose for free pasture for their false gods, e.g. idols, etc., and nothing was allowed to be carried on it.

**Extra Credit Essay Question:** Complete Sentences required. Choose One

*Please explain how the worship of Idols came into existence during this period of time.  
(Mentioned above)*

*Give an example of Idol worshipping in Today's society. Full explanation.*

*Superstitions has no basis in reality, explain why.*

May Allah protect you, me, and your family from the practice of any form of Shirk, ameen.