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THE BOASTS OF THE BLACKS OVER THE WHITES

(JAHIZ)

Translation by T. Khalidi*

In the name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate:

May God protect and preserve you; may He bring you the job of obeying Him and accept you among those who win His mercy.

You mentioned (may God protect you from deception) that you have read my essay on the controversy between children of Arab parents and those of non-Arab mothers, and the reply of the latter together with the reply of their maternal uncles, and that I make no mention therein of the vaunts of the blacks. Know, God protect you, that in fact I delayed doing so on purpose. You also mentioned that you desired that I write to you about the vaunts of the blacks. Therefore, I have written down for you what comes to mind of their boastings.

Al-Asma'i said: "Al-Fizr, a slave of the Fazara (tribe) who had a hole in his earlobe, said: 'Harmony is quick to arise throughout all creation. Thus goats do not come near sheep as long as there are goats. The lamb keeps clear of a beast with claws and does not feel at ease with the hoof.'" Abu Zyd al-Nahwi recited the following verse:

"Were it not for harmony, man would perish."

Shaddad al-Harithi, an eloquent and scholarly man, said, "I asked a black slave-girl in the desert, 'To whom do you belong, black woman?' 'To the master of city-folk, O bald one,' she replied.

'Are you not black?' I asked.

'Are you not bald?' she answered.

'How annoyed you are by the truth!' I retorted.

'It is you the truth has annoyed,' she said. 'Do not be insolent if you want to be respected, and to desist altogether would be more seemly.'" Shaddad added, "When I spoke to her I really thought I was a match for even the people of Najd (in eloquence). By the time she left me, I felt I was not even a match for my slave-girl."

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Al-Asma'i said: "Isa ibn 'Umar said: Dhu'l-Rumma said: 'May God curse the black slave-girl of the house of so-and-so; how expressive and eloquent she was! I asked her once, 'How is the rain in your region?' She answered, 'We were rained upon to our satisfaction.'"

The Virtues of the Blacks

Luqman the Wise was one of the blacks, and it is he who says: "There are three types of men whom you do not know except in three moments: the moderate man in moments of anger, the courageous man in moments of fear and the friend in your moments of need." He said to his son, "If you wish to keep a man's company, make him angry beforehand. If he deals justly with you, well and good; if not, beware of him." They report no more than this from him because there are so many of his sayings from which to choose. Surpassing all this is God's praise for Luqman and His calling him "the Wise," as well as his testament to his son.

Sa'id ibn Jubayr was also one of them. Al-Hajjaj killed him at the age of 49, six months before al-Hajjaj's own death at the age of 53. Sa'id was the most God-fearing and pious of men and the most eminent companion of Ibn 'Abbas. The scholars of *hadith* doubt the veracity of those who hand down traditions from the circle of Ibn 'Abbas except traditions which include Sa'id ibn Jubayr. His father was a *mawla* of the Asas tribe, and Sa'id himself was a *mawla* of the Umayyads. When he was killed, men said: "We are all in need of him."

Also among the ranks of the blacks was Bilal the Abyssinian, may God be pleased with him, of whom 'Umar ibn al-Khattab, may God be pleased with him, said "Abu Bakr is our lord, and he manumitted our lord (Bilal) while Abu Bakr yet comprised a third of the Muslim community." Mihja' was also a black. He was the first to die in battle for the cause of God. And of their number was also Al-Miqdad, the first whose mount carried him forward in the cause of God. So too was Wahshi, who slew Musaylima the Liar. He used to say, "I killed the best of men," meaning Hamza ibn 'Abd al-Muttalib, may God be pleased with him, "and the worst of men," meaning Musaylima the Liar. Of their number was Makhul, the scholar of law, and al-Hayqutan, the poet pre-eminent in sound judgement, reason and resolution. It is he who says of friends: "You know not a friend until you develop a close relationship with him at home and accompany him on travel."

Julabib was of their number. It is narrated of him that when the Messenger of God, may the blessing and peace of God be upon him, set out once on a raid, he said to his followers: "Are you missing anyone?" And they replied, "We are missing so-and-so." Again he came out to ask: "Are you missing anyone?" "We are missing so-and-so," they replied. When he asked

the third time, they replied, "No." He said, "But I cannot find Julaybib; look for him." They searched for him and found him lying dead among seven men whom he had slain. The Prophet, may the blessing and peace of God be upon him, said, "He killed seven before they killed him. He is of my (kin) and I of his." Then he gathered him up in his arms and carried him until they dug a grave for Julaybib, and he had no bier other than the arms of the Messenger of God. They do not mention whether he was washed for burial.

Of their number too was Faraj the cupper, a man of upright character and noted for his honest testimony. He was manumitted by Ja'far ibn Sulayman. The story goes that he served Ja'far for a long time, trimming his moustaches and beard and dressing him up. Ja'far never knew him to err in word or deed, so he said, "By God, I shall test him. If his behaviour is the result of wise intent and purpose, I shall free him, marry him off and make him rich. If it be otherwise, I shall know how to deal with him." So one day, while Faraj was cupping him, he asked him, "Slave, do you cup yourself?"

"Yes," he answered.

"When?" he asked.

"When necessary," he replied.

"And do you know when it is necessary?" Ja'far asked.

"I know most times, but sometimes I make mistakes," he replied.

"What do you eat?" he asked.

"In winter," he said, (182) "I eat thick sweet *dakabarah*. In summer I eat a tasty and sour *sikbaja*."

Ja'far carried out his promise to him.

Faraj is the man of whom Abu Fir'awn wrote (rajaz):

"Clear the way, my wife walks before me.

I am the dear friend of Faraj the cupper."

They said of Faraj that his spirit was so just, noble, God-fearing and pious that his patrons among the children of Ja'far and the notables of Mirbad would not want him to give testimony except in straightforward legal cases where no conflict arose.

As for al-Hayqutan, he was the author of the following poem which the Yemenites cite in their polemics against Quraysh and Mudar and which the Persians and Abyssinians cite against the Arabs. Jarir had once seen al-Hayqutan, a black man, wearing a white garment on a feast-day and spoke the following verse (sari'):

"When he appeared in public, he looked like

The penis of an ass wrapped in papyrus."

When al-Hayqutan, who was then in Yamama, heard this line, he went into his house and composed this poem (tawil):

"Although my hair is curly and my skin black as coal,
I am openhanded and my honour is untarnished.
My black colour is surely no cause for shame,
For on the day of fearful battle I strut and haughtily brandish my sword.
If, in spite of the inadequacy of your own glory, you would dare boast
thusly, (then know this):

The followers of the Negus have more cause for glory among men than
you!

When al-Julanda, Ibn Kisra, Harith, Hawdha, the Copt, and the vener-
able Caesar all refused Islam,

It was of all kings only the Negus who attained good fortune (by
accepting Islam);

And thus his kingdom lasted long, imperturbable and prosperous.

Luqman was of their number, as was his son and his mother's son,

And Abraha too, the king whose fame cannot be gainsaid.

Abu Yaksum invaded the very heart of your territory,

Yet you were as numerous as the grains of sand, or even more!

You were like water birds, pounced upon

In a deserted spot by grey-coloured birds of prey with crooked talons.

Had anyone but God desired to defend the Holy Sanctuary,

You would have learned your lesson, and the man of experience is more
knowledgeable.

No other glory have you than that your homes face the Sanctuary
and that your fires burn in its vicinity.

A fearless general among you would slowly pick his way (toward us),

Only to be confounded by us at some times, or to flee at others.

All you can claim for an honour is the divine prophethood,

For it is not in your power to defend the Shrouded Sanctuary.

You claim that you are men who have never been subjugated and you do
not pay Tribute:

(I say that) you would find it easier to pay a levy than to flee!

Had any king the desire to conquer your land,

Surely the *Maqawil* of the Himyarites would have descended upon it.

Yours is a land which offers neither summer nor winter resort;

Nor does its water gush forth like Ju'atha.

There is no pasturage for the male oryx, nor hunting ground;

Only trade centers, and trade is despicable.

(Jarir), are you not a member of the Kulayb tribe? And your mother, is
she not a ewe?

Your fat sheep are the source of both your shame and your boasting!"

Now when al-Hayqutan says:

"When al-Julanda, Ibn Kisra, Harith, hawdha, the Copt, and the

venerable Caesar all refused Islam,”

he is referring to the time when the Prophet, may the blessing and peace of God be upon him, wrote to the Banu Julanda, but they did not believe. The same was true of Chosroes, of Harith ibn Abi Shamir, of Hawdha ibn ‘Ali al-Hanafi, of the Muqawqis, the leader of the Copts and ruler of Alexandria, and of Caesar, the emperor of Byzantium. However, the Banu Julanda did embrace Islam some time after they received the Prophet’s letter, whereas the Negus embraced Islam before the conquest (of Mecca) and so retained his dominions while God deprived the others of their prosperity. As for Caesar, although some of his dominion has survived, he has been chased out of every spot accessible to cloven hoof, and his only defenses have become the bay, towering mountains, fortified castles, the wintry season, snow and rain. The poet also boasts of Luqman and his son.

When the poet says:

“Abu Yaksum invaded the very heart of your territory,

Yet you were as numerous as the grains of sand, or even more!” (186) he is referring to the Master of the Elephant when he marched on Mecca to destroy the Ka’ba. The poet is saying: “You were as numerous as the grains of sand, so why did you flee from him, none of you coming out to confront him until he reached the outskirts of Mecca?” Mecca is the mother of cities. The home of the Arabs is the Arabian Peninsula and Mecca is one of its urban centers, but since it is the most ancient and the most important town, it is considered the “mother” of the peninsula. For this reason the conquest of Mecca is referred to as the “conquest of conquests”. Similarly, the *Fatiha* of the Book is called the “mother of the Book”.

The Arabs sometimes refer to an object as the “mother” of another which it did not beget. For example, they say: “He struck him on the ‘mother’ of his head,” or they speak of the “mother of Hell”. The guest refers to his hostess as the “mother of my bed”. A nomad plagued by fleas at the house of a woman where he was a guest spoke the following lines (rajaz):

“Mother of my bed, may I be deprived of your face;

May the Lord of the Heavens rescue me from your town

And from the sting of a flea, which I fear will be the death of me.

I spend my night in vigorous scratching,

Like a mangy camel that scratches itself during the rest-stop.”

God, may He be exalted, singled out Mecca and the Ka’ba in the following verse of the Qur’an:

“The first holy shrine built for mankind was that at Bakka,
a blessed spot and a guidance to the world.”

The poet means to say: “If Mecca is raided — and Mecca is the mother of cities, in which is located the Holy Sanctuary, your claim to glory — then it is as if you have all been raided.”

When the poet says:

"All you can claim for an honour is the divine prophethood.

For it is not in your power to defend the Shrouded Sanctuary.

You claim that you are men who have never been subjugated and you do not pay tribute:

(I say that) you would find it easier to pay a levy than to fleet!"

the word *al-laḡah* means a land which does not pay a tax to kings. The word *al-aryan* means the *kharaj*, more particularly a tribute paid by subjects. In this context, the poet 'Abid ibn al-Abras says (*waḡir*):

"They disclaimed to submit to kings and thus are *laḡah* (i.e., non-subjugated);

When they are called to war, they answer the call."

The poet means: "You say that you are exempt from taxation and pay neither *kharaj* nor *aryan*. But paying the *kharaj* is easier than flight and surrendering your homeland, although you vastly outnumber your attackers."

When the poet says:

"Yours is a land which offers neither summer nor winter resort;

Nor does its water gush forth like Ju'atha,"

he means that the conquest of Mecca has never been tempting, or else the people of Yemen and other nations would have conquered it. It is neither a summer nor a winter resort, for the Meccans seek cold weather in Ta'if and warm weather in Jidda. Ju'atha is a spring in Bahrayn: there is nothing in Mecca that compares with this.

When the poet says:

"There is no pasturage for the male oryx, nor hunting ground;

Only trade centers, and trade is despicable,"

he means that Mecca has no places for recreation, and hunting there is forbidden by the law. There are only merchants there, and merchants are despicable. The poet says that the Meccans are generally considered weak and that no king would approve of depriving them of their livelihood. Such livelihood, in any case, would not satisfy the needs of kings. The Meccans are a people who are incapable of protecting themselves. This is why the Jahiliya poet Mu'awiya ibn Aws said (*mutaqarib*):

"Many a wineskin I bought from a store, swarthy

Like a dark man. I struck the mouth down upon its neck;

Its body was like a leprous hand.

(I carried them) to a greedy Arab merchant, or the wine-store

Of a jabbering non-Arab wearing earrings."

The poet intended all this to apply to Quraysh. He says that they are merchants who take refuge in the Holy Sanctuary, and when they set forth they festoon themselves with the fruit of date palms and the best of trees so

that they would be recognized and no one would kill them.

As for the lines:

“(Jarir), are you not a member of the Kulayb tribe? And your mother, is she not a ewe?”

Your fat sheep are the source of both your shame and your boasting!” the Kulayb tribe is accused of intercourse with their sheep, as are the tribes of al-A’raj and Sulaym. The tribe of Ashja’ is accused of intercourse with their goats.

Al-Najashi said (tawil):

“If only one of the tribes of Quraysh had vilified me
Other than the goat buggers, Sulaym and Ashja’!”

Al-Farazdaq said (wafir):

“As long as I live, I shall not sacrifice a milk ewe of a man from the tribe of A’raj.

If I spend my money, who knows, the ewe may beget a boy!”

Another poet said (wafir):

“If you wish to raise the price of a she-ass, indicate to the Darimi tribesman that it is for sale.

He will kiss its back and, but for its dryness, would draw near to its buttocks.

The Darimi, once he copulates with the she-ass, would want his mouth to reach hers.”

‘Abd ibn Rashid said (tawil):

“They are an evil tribe; their best men are like their worst.

For their sheep they are both ram and shepherd.

When one of their brides is decked out for her groom,

The spotted ewe is the loudest in weeping.”

This is why al-Akhtal said (kamil):

“Go call to your sheep, Jarir,

For in the wilderness your soul has tempted you to evil.”

This is why al-Hayqutan says:

“(Jarir), are you not a member of the Kulayb tribe? And your mother, is she not a ewe?”

Your fat sheep are the source of both your shame and your boasting!” The shame is their reputation with their ewes. As for their boasting, the poet implies that they can only boast of their sheep and cannot even rise to the level of camels.

Another example of the boasts of the blacks, the Zanj and the Abyssinians, aside from what we have cited from the poem of al-Hayqutan, is the response written by Sanih ibn Rabah Shar when Jarir ibn al-Khatafi ridiculed the tribe of Taghlib in the following lines (kamil):

“Seek not for maternal uncles in the tribe of Taghlib,

For even the Zanj have nobler uncles than they.”
 Sanih was angered, and he ridiculed Jarir and boasted of the Zanj in the following lines (kamil):

“How is it that this dog from the Kulayb reviles us,
 Seeing that he is no match for Hajib and ‘Iqal?
 A man who compares the she-ass Maragha and her son (Jarir)
 To al-Farazdaq is indeed unjust and unreasonable.
 If you were to meet the Zanj in the battle formation,
 You would indeed meet noble heroes.
 Ask Ibn ‘Amr, when he sought out their spears,
 If he did not in truth find the spears of the Zanj long.
 They bereaved Ziyad of his son and dismounted for battle.
 And when they dismounted to head the call to combat, what a battle!
 In their courtyards were tethered their warhorses,
 While you had only ewes and lambs corraled in yours.
 Ibn Nadba, a warrior in your ranks, was one of our sons,
 As were Khufaf, bearer of great burdens,
 And the two sons of Zubayba, ‘Antara and Harasa.
 We do not see the like of them in your ranks.
 Ask Ibn Jayfar, when he marched against our homeland,
 What destruction he met when they attacked him.
 And Sulayk, that mighty lion, or that great lord ‘Abbas,
 When they attack, they surpass you in valour.
 Of their number too is Ibn Khazim ibn ‘Ajla,
 Who surpassed all tribes in courage and integrity.
 Sons they all were of noble women, themselves descendents of noble
 women;
 They are lions who bring up cubs.
 We have indeed more noble maternal uncles than Kulayb;
 But you, in truth, have uncles more vile.
 The sons of al-Hubab are generous in their blows against the foe,
 But also generous with their food in wintertime when the north wind
 howls.”

The Ibn ‘Amr mentioned by the poet is Hafs ibn Ziyad ibn ‘Amr al-‘Ataki, who succeeded his father as prefect of police for al-Hajjaj. When Raban Shar al-Zanji gained ascendancy in the Euphrates region, Hafs ibn Ziyad marched against him. Rabah killed him and his men and plundered his camp.

As for Ibn Jayfar, his full name is al-Nu‘man ibn Jayfar ibn ‘Ubad ibn Jayfar ibn al-Julanda. He had attacked the land of the Zanj, who slew him and looted his camp.

The poet then mentioned the sons of Zanj women where they resembled

the Zanj in courage and pride. He cited Khufaf ibn Nadba, 'Abbas ibn Mirdas and the two sons of Shaddad, 'Antara (the lord of) knights and his brother Harasa, as well as Sulayk ibn al-Sulaka. These are the lions among men, the strongest of heart and the most courageous. For this, they are proverbial. Of their number also is 'Abd Allah ibn Khazim al-Sulami and the sons of al-Hubab, 'Umayr ibn al-Hubab and his brothers. Al-Jahhaf ibn Hakim was also one of them.

They also boast of Raban, brother of Bilal, and of his standing and piety, as well as of 'Amir ibn Fuhayra, who was present at Badr and died as a martyr on the day of Bī'r Ma'una, when those present saw him being raised up by God between Heaven and earth so that he had no earthly grave (193). Of their number too is the family of Yasir.

They say: "Ghudaf, companion of 'Ubayd Allah ibn al-Hurr, was one of us, and none on earth matched him in courage: alone, he would intercept a caravan with all its guards and escort. So was Ka'bawayh, companion of al-Mughira ibn al-Fizr, whose courage was proverbial." They also say: "Of our number too was Marbah al-Ashram, the young slave of the general Abu Bahr. He came over from Syria in the days of Qutayba ibn Muslim. Men avoided an encounter with him, and his reputation is widespread." They add: "Al-Maghlul and his sons are of our number, and they are overseers (of property). No one on earth is more knowledgeable about the desert, more steeped in its lore or better informed about it than they. And among our ranks was Allah, who single-handedly raided the caravans of Khurasan for twenty years. Malik ibn al-Rayb was able to kill him only by trampling his under hoof in the middle of the night when Allah was in a drunken stupor. The proof of this is in the verse of his son (tawil):

"Were it not for drunkenness, Malik, you would have found

That he was brother to the russet-hued lion, or rather surpassed him."

As (the blacks) say: "We have ruled over the domain of the Arabs from Abyssinia to Mecca, (194) and our word was law throughout this territory. We defeated Dhu Nuwas and killed the *Aqyal* of Himyar. You, however, never conquered our homeland. Your own poet said (tawil):

'Riyat with his army destroyed Ghumdan and demolished its roof,

He whose attack was shattering.

The Abyssinians surrounded it at night and razed to the ground

An edifice erected by the *Aqyal* in bygone days.

With Riyat was a multitude of black Abyssinians,

Like lions of al-Shara wearing leopard skins."

And (the Zanj) say: "Kabajala too was one of us; and of all those who ever ascended the Sulayman Canal or fought in individual combat, there was none to match him. (195) The forty men who rose up in revolt in the Euphrates region in the days of the judge Sawwar ibn 'Abd Allah were also

from among our ranks. They evicted the people of the Euphrates region from their homes and wrought terrible carnage among the people of Ubulla. The man who decapitated 'Isa ibn Ja'far in 'Uman with a Bahrayni scythe when none dared to do so was one of us." They add: "All men agree that in no nation on earth is generosity as prevalent or as preponderant as among the Zanj; and these two characteristics, (courage and generosity), have never been found in any but a man of noble character."

Of all nations, that of (the Zanj) is the one most naturally disposed to measured and rhythmic dancing as well as to the measured and rhythmic beating on the drum, without any training or formal study. No nation on earth has more melodious voices, and there is no language on earth lighter on the tongue than theirs. No nation on earth is more distinct in their speech and draws less than they. There is no nation on earth where you will not find one who lisps, stammers, falters or has a speech defect — except among them. When an orator rises to speak in the Zanj language in the presence of the king, he continues from sunrise to sunset but resorts neither to digressions nor to pauses until he finishes his speech. No nation on earth has men of stronger bodies or greater stamina than they: a man from among them could lift a heavy rock which a group of beduins or others would be incapable of lifting. They are courageous, strong-bodied and generous, and these are the characteristics of nobility. (196) In addition to his virtuous character and lack of mischief, you will always find the Zanj in a good mood, smiling and debonair. This is nobility.

To those who claim that the Zanj are generous because they are feeble-minded, unreflecting and shortsighted, we would reply: What a perverted compliment you have paid to generosity and honesty! According to your analogy, the most intellectual and the most scholarly of men must of necessity be the most niggardly and the least charitable.

We have seen that the Slavs are more miserly than the Byzantines, while the latter are more thoughtful and possess more vigorous minds. But according to your analogy, the Slavs should be more liberal in spirit and more generous than the Byzantines. We have also noted that women are feebler in mind than men, and children are feebler in mind than both; while children are more miserly than women and women more feeble-minded than men. If greater vigour of mind renders its possessor more niggardly, the child would have been the most virtuous among men. Yet we know of nothing on earth worse than a child: he is the most deceitful, the pettiest intriguer, the greatest glutton, the most miserly, the least charitable and the most cruel of men. The child abandons these traits only by slow degrees, in so far as he gains in reason and therefore in the performance of worthy deeds. How then can feeble-mindedness be the cause of the generosity of the Zanj? You conceded generosity to them and then stated something which

cannot be proven true. We have demonstrated to you how your argument in this context may be refuted by the use of the proper analogy.

Your argument would further entail that the coward should be more rational than the brave man, the treacherous man more rational than the faithful, and still further that the restless man should be more rational than the patient. But you cannot argue in this manner since these qualities are God's gifts to mankind: reason is a gift, moral character is a gift, and so are generosity and courage.

The Zanj say to the Arabs: "It is an indication of your ignorance that you thought us fit to marry your women in the days of the Jahiliya, but when the (egalitarian) justice of Islam was established you thought this reprehensible, even though we did not avoid you. The desert, on the other hand, is full of our brethren who intermarried with you, became chiefs and lords, protected your honour and sheltered you from your enemy. You made proverbs about us and magnified our kings, in many instances preferring them to your own. This you would not have done if you had not thought us superior to you in this respect.

"When al-Namr ibn Tawlab spoke the following line of verse (mutaqarib):

'(Misfortune) befell his reign as it befell Tubba'
And the great king Abraha,'

he exalted him over the kings of his own nation.

"Labid ibn Rabi'a recited the following (kamil):

'If ever a man could in this life attain eternity,
That man would have been Abu Yaksum.'

This is a portrayal of virtue the like of which has never before been ascribed to anyone."

(The Zanj) add: "Another example of your preferring our kings to your own are Labid's verses (kamil):

'Nights overcame what remained of the family of Muharriq;
Nights that had done their work with Tubba' and Heraclius,
Nights that had vanquished Abraha, he whom you found staying in the
palace chamber of Mawkal.'

He thus preferred Abrah (although he) wished to treat all the other kings as equals."

They state: "From Abyssinia came 'Ukaym the Abyssinian, who was more eloquent than al-'Ajjaj. The scholars learned from him just as the Iraqi scholars learned from al-Muntaji' ibn Nabhan." Al-Muntaji' was a man from Sind with a hole in his earlobe. He came to the desert as a child and came out more eloquent than Ru'ba.

When Hakim ibn 'Ayyash al-Kalbi recited the verse (basit):

"Do not boast of a maternal uncle from the Asad tribe;

Even the Zanj and Nubians are nobler uncles than they.”
 ‘Ukaym the Abyssinian made the following rejoinder (basit):
 “On the day of Ghumdam we were lions, as the Arabs well know;
 And on the day of Yathrib we were the stallions of the Arabs.
 On the night of the Elephant their hearts deserted them:
 Every one of them fled, riding on his pack-saddle.
 The Negus is one of us, whereas Dhu’l-‘Aqsayn is your brother-in-law.
 (Of our number) was the grandfather of Abraha, the protector of Abu
 Talib.

Even if I forgive ‘Adnan for mocking us,
 What (can be said) for Himyar, especially when genealogy is discussed?
 They are donkey-drivers, gathered from every quarter
 As a net gathers fish from the brimming tumultuous sea.”

Ghumdan as a citadel where the king who ruled the Yemen resided.
 When the Abyssinians conquered the Yemen, the king there was a Persian.
 The Abyssinians destroyed the citadel, except for some remnants which
 were demolished after the coming of Islam by ‘Uthman ibn ‘Affan, may God
 be pleased with him, who said, “The vestiges of the Jahiliya must be
 erased.” In the citadel there was a cistern topped by a dome of asbestos,
 concerning which Khalaf al-Ahmar wrote the following (mutaqarib):

“And the cistern of asbestos, destroyed by
 Marauding Abyssinians when they attacked its king.”

Concerning this cistern, Qudama, the wise man of the East and an
 alchemist as well, wrote the following (tawil):

“He kindled his fire inside it, and were the fire
 To burn forever the cistern would not be consumed.”

This is because if a fire were to be kindled on asbestos for a thousand years,
 the asbestos would not grow hot. The naptha flame-throwers smear
 themselves with asbestos before they go into the fire.

Labid recited the following (wafir):

“My friend, do you not see the lightning flash at midnight,
 Like the light of the flame in the wick?

It kept me awake, but moved toward Najd after a stillness
 As my companions sat astride their saddles.

Low-lying clouds, laden with rain, in which are glimpsed
 Silhouettes of Abyssinians, advancing with spears and lances.”

Labid used this imagery because when the Abyssinians advance with
 their lances and spears, their bows and swords, their standards, their horses
 and their elephants, along with their dark colours and their huge bodies,
 you would experience terror the like of which you have never before seen,
 heard of or imagined.

When ‘Ukaym says:

"And on the day of Yathrib we were the stallions of the Arabs," it is a reference to Musrif ibn 'Uqba al-Murri when he allowed Medina to be pillaged. It is claimed that the blacks and the army committed shameful deeds, concerning which a poet from Mudar recited (wafir):

"Ask Musrif al-Murri about you,
That morning when he abandoned the virgins to his troops.
The Zanj, in their fury, debauched you,
And the Syrians surged forth like ferocious lions.
It was Wahriz and his Persians who defended you
When the king of Abyssinia ruled in Dhamar.
He defiled your progeny with blackness of colour
And a penis like a donkey's organ."

(202) He makes mention here of the raping both of Yemen by the Abyssinians and of Medina by Musrif.

When the poet says:

"They are donkey-drivers, gathered from every quarter
As a net gathers fish from the brimming tumultuous sea,"

he accepted what story-tellers relate of Himyar — that they were drivers of donkeys. By *shubayka* (a small net) he meant *Shabaka* (a net).

The blacks say: "This is an example of our virtue: the Prophet, may the blessing and peace of God be upon him, prayed only at a funeral or at a graveside except in the case of the Negus, for whom he prayed while he was in Medina although the Negus was buried in Abyssinia."

They add: "The Negus gave Umm Habiba, daughter of Abu Sufyan, in marriage to the Prophet, may the blessing and peace of God be upon him. The Negus summoned Khalid ibn Sa'id and appointed him her legal guardian and, in the name of the Prophet, may the blessing and peace of God be upon him, offered a dowry of 400 dinars."

They state: "Three items passed to you from us: first, the civet, which is the sweetest-smelling, most luxurious and noblest of perfumes; second, the litter, which provided more covering for women and better protection for the inviolable; and third, the codex, which safeguards and protects its contents better and is more handsome and practical."

They say: "And we strike more terror into the heart and are more imposing to the eye, just as the black-wearing ('Abassids) are more terrible to the eye and more imposing to the heart than the white-wearing ('Alids), and just as night is more terrible than day. Black is always more terrifying."

In describing their camels the Arabs say: "The wine-coloured are fast, the red produce much milk, and the black are astonishingly beautiful." This applies to camels. (As for other beasts, the blacks) say: "Black horses are more beautiful and sturdier, as black cows are more attractive and more beautiful, and their skins more valuable, more useful and longer lasting.

Black donkeys are more expensive, more attractive and studier, and black sheep produce richer milk and more cream. The dark brown in colour produce more milk than the red, while every mountain and boulder is dryer and harder in texture if it is black. The black lion cannot be resisted."

The sweetest of all dates is the black, which also is of greatest value and is longest lasting. Date palms are more vigorous if their stems are black. A saying of the Prophet declares, "Follow the great black colour," and the poet al-Ansari recited (tawil):

"I am in debt, but my debts are not a liability to me,
(For they are offset) by towering date palms, tall and pruned,
And by every heavily laden date palm whose trunk appears
To have been smeared with pitch or the blood of sacrificial animals."

(The blacks) say: "The prettiest green is the one closest to black." God, may He be exalted, said: "And besides these two are two gardens." In describing them and arousing longing for them, God called them "dark green." Ibn 'Abbas, interpreting this word, said: "The green (of the two gardens) has become dark through irrigation."

No wood on earth is better timber, more expensive, heavier or more free of worms, nor more fitting to be engraved upon than ebony. It is so dense, homogeneous, smooth and impenetrable that of all wood, precious or otherwise, only ebony sinks in water. In this respect it outstrips even certain kinds of stones which do not sink while ebony sinks immediately.

Man is most seemly to look at as long as his hair remains black. This is how man's hair will appear in Paradise. The most noble thing in man are the pupils of his eyes, which are black. The most precious kohl is made of antimony, which is black. This is why a saying of the Prophet declares that God will cause all the faithful to enter Paradise furless, beardless and their eyes blackened with kohl. The most useful organ in man is his liver, by which his stomach is regulated and his food digested. When all this is sound, the body is healthy. The liver is black. The most precious and valuable thing in man is the black bile of his heart, which is a black blood clot located in the middle of the heart. It performs in the heart the function performed in the head by the brain. One of the most delicious and desirable things in a woman is to kiss her lips, and the lips are loveliest if they verge on the black. Dhu'l-Rumma recited the following (basit):

"A woman with dark green lips, reddish-dark, magenta,
As are her gums, and her teeth are fine and glittering."

The most delightful and coldest of shades is black. As says a poet, composing in the *rajaz* metre:

"Pitch-black in colour,
Like the shade cast by boulders."

Humayd ibn Thawr recited (tawil):

“We sought shade in a cave while our mounts
Sought the shadows of tall shade-giving trees,
In trees with black shadows that resemble nuns
Who abstain from wine and neither eat nor drink.”

God made the night a time for peace and rest and the day a time to earn one's living and to toil.

A further proof that darkness, from another viewpoint, is associated with intensity and severity, excitement and activity is the proliferation of snakes and scorpions and the potency of their poisons at night, as well as the excitement and fury of wild beasts, the quickening of pain and the appearance of ghouls. All these things become active at night. (The blacks) say: “In this respect too we resemble the night.”

They also say: “The deepest of midday naps, the most healthy, the quickest to come when you want them and the slowest to go away when you do not, is the nap that takes place in darkness when curtains are drawn and doors are closed.”

They say: “There is no colour more profound in its essence and more consistent in its beauty than black. A current proverb to describe how far away something is, runs as follows: You will not see this until tar becomes white and the raven becomes grey-haired.”

According to the philosophers, black is the accident that fills a locus.

The most precious perfumes are musk and amber. They are both black. The hardest rocks are black. Abu Dabbil al-Jumahi recited the following lines in praise of al-Azraq al-Makhzumi, whose name was ‘Abd Allah ibn ‘Abd Shams ibn al-Mughira (basit):

“My thanks to you indeed have no end,
So long as there are rocks in the valleys of Lebanon.
You are one worthy of praise and precious in value,
Just as one cannot find fault with the Black Stone.”

The Arabs boast of black colour. If it is said, “How can this be so, seeing that the Arabs speak of someone as pure white, bright white, white and white-browed?” we would answer: They are not referring in this context to whiteness of skin, but rather to nobility and purity of character. The Khudr (of Banu) Muharib boasted of their black skin. The blacks are called *khudr* (lit., ‘green’) by the Arabs.

Al-Shammakh ibn Dirar recited (tawil):

“The she-camels set off in the evening from Zarud (with the setting sun) covering

Zubala with a dark (*akhdar*) cloak of the night.”

A poet recited the following in the *rajaz* metre:

“Until the morning unsheathed me from a dark (*khadir*) night,
As the hero unsheaths his hardy sword.”

They call from *akhdar* because it is hardy, since *akhdar* signifies black.

Al-Harith ibn Hilliza recited (munsarih):

“When we sped our camels from the palm leaves of Bahrayn
Galloping on until our camels reached al-Hisa’,
We then defeated the troops of Ibn Umm Qatam
Even though they possessed dark (*khadra*) Persian armour.”

Al-Muharibi recited the following, boasting of his membership in the Khudr clan (basit):

“From the Khudr (clan) of the tribe of Qays am I held to be descended
by every man of virtue;
Not easily led, refusing to endure injustice, and agile.”

The clan of Mughira are the Khudr of the tribe of Makhzum. ‘Umar ibn ‘Abd Allah ibn Abi Rabi’a ibn al-Mughira al-Makhzumi recited the following lines, which are also attributed to al-Fadl ibn al-‘Abbas al-Lihbi (kamil):

“I am al-Akhdar, known to all,
The man of dark (*akhdar*) skin in the land of the Arabs.
Whoever seeks me out in contest seeks out a noble man,
One who fills the bucket up to the knot in the rope.”

The Khudr of the Ghassan tribe are the royal house of Jafna. Al-Ghassani recited (basit):

“Al-Hakam held me to be descended from the royal Khudr lords
Who paid the blood-money to the people of Baris.”

Hassan (ibn Thabit) or some other poet made mention of the Khudr of the tribe of ‘Ukaym in the following verse (basit):

“You are neither from the clan of Hashim, a noble family,
Nor from the clan of Jumah, Khudri and mighty.”

They add: “The ten lordly sons of ‘Abd al-Muttalib were very black in colour and large of body. When ‘Amir ibn al-Tufayl saw them circumambulating (the Ka‘ba) like dark camels, he said, ‘With such men as these is the custody of the Ka‘ba preserved.’”

‘Abd Allah ibn ‘Abbas had very dark skin and was large of body. The family of Abu Talib, the most noble of men, is more or less black-coloured.

(The blacks) say: “The Prophet, may the blessing and peace of God be upon him, said, ‘I was sent to the red and the black.’ It is well known that the Zanj, Abyssinians and Nubians are not called either white or red and have no other name but black. We know that God, may He be exalted, sent his Prophet to the whole of humanity, both Arab and non-Arab, and when the Prophet says, ‘I was sent to the red and the black,’ and we are, for him, neither red nor white, it means he was sent to us. Therefore, when he says ‘black’ he means us, for men cannot but fall within these two categories. If the Arabs are red, then they must be counted among the Byzantines and

Slavs and the people of Faris and Khurasan; but if they are black, then that designation must have been derived from our name. In fact, the Arabs when they were included in our number were called black even though they are swarthy and dark, just as the Arabs treat the feminine form of masculine personal names as masculine. Since the Prophet, may the blessing and peace of God be upon him, knew that the Zanj, Abyssinians and Nubians were neither red nor white, but black, and since God, may He be exalted, sent him to the black and the red, he placed us and the Arabs on an equal footing. In fact, we are the black rather than they. Since the term black is applied to us, we are the pure black whereas the Arabs are only approximations to purity. Hence we preceded them to the call of Islam, and their name is a derivative of ours. For it is we alone who are called black, while they are not called black unless they are counted of our number."

They add: "You (Arabs) see glory in multitude, and we are the most numerous of men and have the most progeny. We are of two kinds: ants and dogs. If you were to match all the Arabs with the ants in number, the ants would surpass them. What if the dogs were to be added to their number? And then, what if you were to add the people of Abyssinia, Nubia, Fazzan, Marawa, Zughawa and other kinds of black tribes?"

"Qahtan is not close to 'Adman in any respect. We, however, are closer to the Abyssinians and our maternal kinship is closer to theirs than that of 'Adnan to Qahtan. If you cite the differences in languages, then the language of the 'Ajuz of the Hawazin tribe (differs from the language of the eloquent men of Hijaz). Languages may differ even though they have the same origin and might be similar even though they have a different origin. He who has visited nearest and farthest Khurasan, as well as the nearest and farthest regions of Jibal and Faris, would know that languages might differ depending on the different characteristics of regions, although in origin they are one."

(The Zanj) add: "You (Arabs) have never seen the real Zanj, but only those taken captive and brought from the coasts of Qanbalu and its jungles and valleys. These are but our menials, our riffraff, our slaves. The people of Qanbalu have neither beauty nor brains. Qanbalu is the name of the place where your ships drop anchor before (the seamen) go ashore. The Zanj are of two types, Qanbalu and Lanjuya, just as the Arabs are either 'Adnan or Qahtan. You have never met anyone from the Lanjuya, neither from the coasts nor from the hinterland, for if you were to meet them you would forget beauty and perfection.

"If you ask: 'How so, since we have yet to meet a Zanji who has the brains of even a child or a woman?', we would reply: Since when have you encountered among the captives of Sind and Hind men of reason, knowledge, education and morals, that you seek such men among the Zanj

captives fallen into your hands? You are well aware of what Hind possesses of the Sciences of arithmetic and astronomy and the secrets of medicine, of Hindi craftsmanship with the lathe and Hindi carpentry, of their paintings and their many wondrous crafts. How is it that despite the numerous Hindi captives you have enslaved, not one was found among them with such skills, or one who possessed even one tenth of such skill?

"If you then say: 'Men of honour, reason and knowledge are drawn toward the interior regions near the seat of royalty, while these are mere servants, louts and hired labourers who dwell on the coasts, in thickets, deltas and islands, and are hired workmen and fishermen,' we would answer: This applies to those of us whom you have seen as well as to others whom you have not seen, and our answer to you is the answer you gave us."

They say: "If the progeny of Zanj men and women who married were to remain in the land of Iraq beyond the age of puberty, they would take over the country by virtue of their numbers, their tenacity, their knowledge and their expertise. But while the children of Hindi men and women, of Byzantine men and women and of Khurasani men and women remain among you and in your country, like their fathers and mothers, the child of a Zanj couple does not remain beyond the age of puberty. Indeed, we would not encounter even one such case in ten thousand except when a Zanj man marries other than a Zanj woman, or a Zanj woman other than a Zanj man. And were it not for the fact that a Zanj man and woman rarely desire marriage with strangers, by now we would be in a position to see the numerous progeny of Zanj men. But a Zanj woman can hardly summon enthusiasm for other than a Zanj man." They add: "The same holds true for your white men, who can barely summon enthusiasm to reproduce from Zanj women. The Zanj woman is also quicker to conceive by a Zanj man than she is by a white man."

They say: "You can hardly count amongst your numbers anyone to whom one hundred of his own offspring were born except if he were a caliph, in which case it would be so because of the multitude of his concubines. But such cases will not be found among the rest of you. The Zanj, however, would not consider such a number either large or surprising, because it is frequent in their country. For the Zanj woman delivers about fifty times in fifty years, with two children in each delivery. The total is more than ninety, because it is claimed that women cease to deliver when they reach the age of sixty, except what is related about the women of Quraysh in particular."

"The Zanj are, of all God's creatures, the ones most solicitous about their women, and their women likewise about them. They are also better disposed than other women."

"Ponder upon what we have said and argued. For we have related historical material and quoted poetry, and we have known you (Arabs) and

other nations as well."

Al-Farazdaq was the most knowledgeable man about women and had tried all races but did not find their like. This is why he married Umm Makkiya the Zanj woman and remained constant to her, leaving other women because of the qualities he found in her. In this context, he recited the following (rajaz):

"Many a young woman from among the girls of the Zanj
Walks with an oven (vulva) brightly lit,
Rounded like a cup made of heather wood."

Dananir, daughter of Ka'bawayh al-Zanji, lived with A'sha Sulaym. She was very black in colour. One day he saw her hands dyed with henna and her eyes with black kohl, and he recited the following (rajaz):

"She dyes the palm of her hands, palms as if clipped off from her forearm.
She dyes the henna with her black colour.
She seems, with the kohl in her pencil,
As if she is applying kohl to her eyes with part of her skin."

When she heard these lines, she answered (tawil):

"Uglier than my colour is the blackness of his arse
Contrasting with his skin, which is like palm pith or even whiter."

People began to call him black (arse) and the street urchins took up the cry, so he divorced her. On the morning of their wedding he had recited, "Dinars (*Dananir*) are of poor alloy," (215) and she had replied (wafir):

"Whiteness of head is more vile than my black colour,
And grey eyebrows are the real scandal."

He held off her for awhile and then began again to attack her. When she disgraced him, he divorced her.

They say: "And if white men regard black women with other than lustful eyes, the same is true of black men and white women. In fact, sexual desires are matters of custom and, in most cases, of imitation. For example, the people of Basra find Hindi women and their daughters, as well as the women of the Aghwar, the most desirable. In the Yemen the most desirable women are the Abyssinians and their daughters; for the people of Syria the most desirable women are the Byzantines and their daughters. In fact, each people lust for their imported slaves or their captives, with some exceptions — but one cannot deduce from the exceptional."

They add: "The most fragrant smelling breaths and the sweetest and the most watery mouths are those of the Zanj. Dogs have the most fragrant mouths among beasts."

They say: "Darkness is good for the eye. If the eye is diseased and one is concerned for it, there can be no better medicine for it than sitting in darkness with the patient holding a black rag (over it), for darkness is (good) for eyesight and eyesight is the most valuable thing in a human being."

They say: "Black men are more numerous than white. The most that the whites can count their own are Faris, Jibal, Khurasan, the Byzantines, Slavs Franks and Avars and little else beyond these. On the other hand, the blacks can count the Zanj and Abyssinians, Fazzan and Berber, Copts and Nubians, Zaghawa and Marawa, Sind and Hind, Qamar and Daybul, China and Masin. The sea is more extensive than the land, and the islands of the sea between China and the (lands of the) Zanj are teeming with blacks. Among such places are Sarandib, Kala, Amil and Zabaj and the islands off the coasts of India, China and Kabul, as well as the coastlines of these areas. The blind Ishtiyam used to say: 'There are more black men than white men, more rocks than mud, more sand than loam and more salt water than sweet.'"

They add: "The Arabs are of our number, not of the whites, because their colouring is closer to ours. The Hindis have a more conspicuous colouring than the Arabs and they are counted among the black nations. Since the Prophet, may the blessing and peace of God be upon him, said: 'I was sent to the red and the black,' it is common knowledge that the Arabs are not red, as we mentioned above. This is reason enough for the Arabs and us to boast against all white races if the Arabs care to do so. If they decline to do so, then the honour we mentioned belongs to us above all others."

We also say: "If we surpass your number by reason of the Zabaj alone, we would still clearly be superior to you in merit. When the king of the Zabaj is angered by the inhabitants of a kingdom and they do not ward him off by paying the *kharaj*, he sends them a thousand *sumbuqa* with a thousand men in each, with instructions not to flog or fight them. Rather he orders his men to take up quarters amongst them indefinitely until they buy them off by paying the *kharaj*. What these invaders consume in eating, drinking, nourishment and clothing is many times more damaging to the inhabitants than the amount of *kharaj* due. They either ward them off by paying the *kharaj*, or the king sends another fleet of a thousand *sumbuqa*. The (local) ruler, then finds no alternative but to stave him off by meeting all his demands and is not secure in mind that the king may not be incensed and destroy him together with the population of his realm."

(As the blacks) relate: "Once the king of the Zabaj alighted near an estuary which measured several parasangs in area. As he sat at table in his tent on the bank, he heard a woman wailing. 'What was that?' he asked, and stopped eating. They told him that it was a woman whose son had fallen into the estuary and was devoured by a crocodile. 'Can anything exist in the same spot where I am that shares with me the right for the killing of men?' he said, and jumped up and dived into the estuary. When his people saw him, they dove in to the last man and stirred up the estuary, even though it measured several parasangs, until they had bagged every single crocodile

with their own hands." It is said that the people of Zabaj and its estuaries account for more than half the population of the earth.

They say: "The ends of the inhabited earth are all people with black men. The peripheries of the inhabited earth are more populous than the central regions, just as the circumference of the windmill which faces the wind is wider and longer than the short pivot of the windmill. Let us compare this to the balcony surrounding a house. One does not realise its full dimensions because of its narrowness, but we find it larger in area than the building itself."

Beyond the Zabaj there are no white men, as is the case with all the lands of the blacks who live at the peripheries and in the farthest zones of habitation. (The blacks) say: "This, then, is proof that we outnumber you, and since we outnumber you, we have greater cause for boasting. Your own poet said (sari):

'You are not more than him in number,
Yet glory belongs to the greater in number.'"

They add: "The Copts are a branch of the blacks. (Abraham), the Friend of (God) the Merciful, sought them out (for marriage), and to him was born a son and prophet of great importance, the ancestor of the Arabs, Isma'il, upon whom be peace. The Prophet, may the blessing and peace of God be upon him, also sought them out for his progeny, and his son Ibrahim was born to him. The angel Gabriel called the Prophet by the *kunya* (Abu Ibrahim).

They say: "The Black Stone is from Paradise. Copper when it grows darker in colour is more valuable and of better quality. Whoever considers black an ugly colour (should bear in mind) that there is nothing uglier or more revolting than the Franks, Byzantines and Slavs with their excessively lanky, thin and reddish hair, the red hair of their heads and beards and their white eyebrows and eyelashes. Among the blacks there are no white eyelashes: these are found only among you. Nor are there any among the blacks who are born either prematurely or beyond their natural term."

They say: "In addition, we possess a knowledge of philosophy and speculative theology, and we are the most refined of men. As an explanation for our blackness we maintain that God, may He be exalted, did not make us black in order to disfigure us, but rather it is environment that made us black. The proof of this is the fact that there are black tribes among the Arabs, such as the Banu Sulaym ibn Mansur. All who dwell in the Harra other than the Banu Sulaym are also black. They use *Ashban* slaves as shepherds, water-carriers, workers and servants and take Byzantine women for wives. By the time three generations have passed, the Harra has changed their colour to the colouring of the Banu Sulaym, for this Harra is so unusual that its gazelles and ostriches, its insects and flies, its foxes, sheep and asses,

its horses and its birds are all black. Blackness and whiteness are in fact caused by the properties of the region as well as the God-given nature of water and soil and by the proximity or remoteness of the sun and the intensity or mildness of its heat. Such differences in colour are not the result of any deformity or punishment, disfigurement or shortcoming. What is true for the territory of the Banu Sulaym is true also for the lands of the Turks. When one sees their camels and amounts and every other Turkish thing belonging to them, it is as if one were seeing only one object. Everything the Turks own is Turkish in appearance. The *ghazis* this side of al-'Awasiim sometimes come across Byzantine sheep and others all mixed together, but they do not mistake the Byzantine sheep for the Syrian because of the 'Byzantineness' they discern in the former. Again, we might come upon people, the offspring of Beduin men and women, who have settled in Khurasan, and we would not doubt that they were the barbarians there. This is prevalent in everything. Thus we would find the locusts and worms of vegetables and flowers green in colour, as we might find the lice on the head of a young man black, white when his hair turns grey and red if he dyes his hair with henna. Hence the black colour of us Zanj is just like the colour of the Banu Sulaym and of the other Arab tribes enumerated at the beginning of this discussion.

"The excessive blackness of black men is like the excessive whiteness of white men. The same holds true for the brown colouring produced by their mixture, as well as for attire and general appearance, for crafts and for food and desires."

A poet, praising Usaylim ibn al-Alnaf al-Asadi, made mention of the black colour of the Yemenite Arabs in the following lines (tawil):

"There stands Usaylim, whose place cannot be hidden

From searching eye or attentive ear.

He belongs to the select company of honourable chieftains

Who, when they mention their descent, and other men

Fear the ring of the (royal) gate,

Loudly clash their arms.

Black sweet-smelling musk gives a lustre to the parting in his hair,

And perfumed oil (reveals) his scalp, the hair receiving from his brow.

If a group of black Yemenites contrive to weave him a woollen cloak,

They would have to make it thin and wide

Some white men ridiculed a slave of the Banu Ja'da because of his colour,
so he recited the following (basit):

"Some men have ridiculed me because of my colour. I said to them:

Only an excessively stupid man can fault me thusly.

Even though my colour is reddish black and my skin is rough,

My character is white.

I satisfy friends and protect womenfolk travelling in their litters,
Confronting the point of the lance; and I bear the *kunya* (Abu) 'I-Saraq."

The wife of 'Amr ibn Sha's used to treat 'Irar ibn 'Amr harshly. He was the son of a black woman, and in reference to this 'Amr ibn Sha's recited the following, in which he described the children of Abyssinian and Zanj women (tawil):

"Has she not heard that I have come to myself and grown humble
So that I no longer requite the vicious with viciousness?
Like a man of courage, I bow my head in silence;
For if the courageous man found it proper to use his teeth, he would
bite most harshly.

She wanted to humiliate 'Irar, and whoever wants
To humiliate him is indeed unjust.

Although 'Irar is not light in colour,
Yet I love the brown man with broad and perfect shoulders.
If you really are mine and cherish my principles,
Be for him like butter for the preservation of which the skin has been
coated with date butter.

Or else depart like a mounted traveller, stocked for five days,
Who does not tarry on his way."

As for the Hindis, we find that they are considered preeminent in astronomy and arithmetic. They are particularly (famous) for geomancy and are also considered preeminent in medicine. They possess the secrets of medicine and in particular the cures for loathsome diseases. Theirs is the art of fashioning chessmen and of carving and painting images to be placed in prayer niches or in similar places. To them also belongs the game of chess, the noblest of games and the one that demands the most planning and perspicacity. Theirs too are Qal'iya swords, and they are the most adept and dexterous of men in wielding them. They excel in incantations which are effective against poisons and pains. They have marvellous chants. They have the *kankala*, which consists of a single string stretched over a calabash and takes the place of the strings of the *'ud* and *sanj*. They have all sorts of dances and nimble steps, and they are particularly adept fencers. They possess the knowledge of stewardship. To them belongs the art of magic, fumigation and medical leeches. They have a script which combines the letters of many languages and many other scripts as well. They have much poetry, long discourses and skill in philosophy and belles-lettres. The book *Kalila wa Dimna* was translated from their literature. They are men of wise counsel and courage; none are more patient than they. They wear fine clothes and have laudable manners, which are reflected in the use of toothpicks, hair curlers, and the *sivak*, *ihtiba'*, the parting of hair and the dying of hair. They have beauty, good looks, graceful form and fragrant body odour. Their

women are proverbial. From their land Hindi aloes is brought (as a gift) to kings, which no aloes can match. From their land originated the science of meditation and incantations which render poison harmless. The computation of the stars began in their land, and men took it from them. Adam, upon whom be peace, when he descended from Paradise, alighted in their country.

They say: "Among the vaunts of the Zanj are their clear throats and melodious voices. You will find this in singing slave-girls if they are from among the girls of Sind. Yet another virtue is that of all black slaves, none is a better cook than the man from Sind, who is the one most naturally disposed to the best cooking. Another of their vaunts is that money-changers do not entrust their money-bags and treasuries to any except the men from Sind and their progeny, for they find them more efficient in the affairs of monetary exchange, more mindful and more trustworthy. Hardly anyone will find the keeper of a money-changer's purse or keys to be a son of a Byzantine or of a Khurasani. Merchants have found them such a blessing that when the money-changers of Basra and the spice merchants saw how much money and land Faraj Abu Rawh al-Sindi made for his master, every one of them bought himself a slave from Sind, coveting to gain what Abu Rawh had gained for his master."

He said: "'Abd al-Malik ibn Marwan used to say: 'Al-Adgham is the lord of the people of the East,' meaning 'Ubayd Allah ibn Abi Bakra, who was the blackest of blacks. It is he who is intended in the following verse of 'Abd Allah ibn Khazim:

'An Abyssinian abyssined by Abyssinians.'"

This, in sum, is what came to my mind of the vaunts of the blacks. We wrote earlier about the vaunts of Qahtan and will speak later, God willing, of the boasting of 'Adnam against Qahtan in much of what they said.

كتاب فخر السودان على البيضان

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

تولك الله وحفظك ، وأسعدك بطاعته ، وجعلك من الفائزين برحمته .
ذكرت - أعاذك الله من الغش - أنك قرأت كتابي في محاجة الصرحاء للهجناء ،
ورد الهجناء ، وجواب أخوال الهجناء ، وأنى لم أذكر فيه شيئا من مفاخر السودان .
فاعلم حفظك الله أنى انما أخرت ذلك متعمدا .
وذكرت أنك أحببت أن أكتب لك مفاخر السودان ، فقد كتبت لك ما حضرنى من
مفاخرهم .

قال الأصمعي : قال الفزر عبد فزارة وكانت في أذنه خربة : ان اللوام يتترع في
جميع الطمر : لا يقرب العنز الضان ما وجدت الماعز ، وتنفر الشاة من المخلب ولا تأنس
بالخف .

وأشدد أبو زيد النحوي :

* لولا اللوام هلك الانسان *

وقال شداد الحارثي - وكان خطيبا عالما - : قلت لأمة سوداء بالبادية : لمن
أنت يا سوداء ؟ قالت : لسيد الحضر يا أصلح . قال : قلت أو لست سوداء ؟ قالت :
أو لست أصلح ؟ قلت : ما أغضبك من الحق . قالت : الحق أغضبك ، لا تشتم حتى تترهب ،
ولان تتركه أمثل .

وقال شداد : لقد كلمتها وأنا أظن أنى أنى بأهل نجد ، وما نزعت عني الا وأنا
عند نفسي لا أنى بأمتي .

وقال الأصمعي : قال عيسى بن عمر : قال ذو الرمة : قاتل الله أمة آل فلان
السوداء ، ما كان أفصحها وأبلغها : سألتها كيف كان المطر عندهم ؟ قالت : غثنا ما شئنا .

مناقب السودان

- أن لقمان الحكيم منم ، وهو الذي يقول : ثلاثة لا تسرفهم الا عند ثلاثة :
 العليم عند النضب ، والشجاع عند الخوف ، والاخ عند حاجتك .
- وقال لابنه : اذا أردت أن تخالط رجلا فأغضبه قبل ذلك ، فان انصفك
 والا فاحذره .
- ولم يرووا ذلك عنه الا وله أشياء كثيرة . وأكثر من هذا مدح الله اياه وتسميته
 الحكيم ، وما أوصى به ابنه .
- ومنهم : سعيد بن جبير ، قتله الحجاج قبل موته بسنة أشهر وهو ابن تسع
 وأربعين سنة ، ومات الحجاج وهو ابن ثلاث وخمسين سنة . وكان سعيد أروع الخلق
 وأتقاهم ، وكان أعظم أصحاب ابن عباس . وأصحاب الحديث يطعنون في الذي يجيء
 من قبل أصحاب ابن عباس حتى يجيء من سعيد بن جبير . وأبوه مولى بنى أسد ،
 وهو مولى بنى أمية ، وقتل يوم قتل والناس يقولون : كلنا محتاج اليه .
- ومنهم : بلال الحبشي رضي الله عنه ، الذي يقول فيه عمر بن الخطاب رضي
 الله عنه : ان أبا بكر سيدنا وأعق سيدنا ، وهو ثلث الاسلام .
- ومنهم : مديج ، وهو أول قتيل قتل بين الصفيين في سبيل الله .
- ومنهم : المقداد ، وهو أول من عدا به فرسه في سبيل الله .
- ومنهم : وحشى قاتل مسيلمة الكذاب . وكان يقول : قتلت خير الناس - يعني
 حمزة بن عبد المطلب رضي الله عنه - وقتلت شر الناس - يعني مسيلمة الكذاب .
- ومنهم : مكحول الفقيه .
- ومنهم : الحيقطان الشاعر ، الذي كان يفضل في رأيه وعقله وهمة . وهو الذي
 يقول في الاخوان : لا تعرف الاخ حتى ترافقه في الحضر ، وتزامله في السفر .
- ومنهم : جليبيب الذي تحدث الرواة أن رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم خرج
 في غزاة فقال لاصحابه : هل تفقدون من أحد ؟ قالوا : نفقد فلانا وفلانا . ثم خرج
 فقال : هل تفقدون من أحد ؟ قالوا : نفقد فلانا وفلانا . ثم خرج فقال : هل تفقدون
 من أحد ؟ قالوا في الثالثة : لا . قال لكني أفقد جليبيبا ، اطلبوه . فطلبوه فوجدوه

بين سبعة قد قتلهم ثم قتل . فقال النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم : " قتل سبعة نسيم
قتلوه . هذا مني وأنا منه " . قال : ثم حملة على ساعديه حتى حفروا له ، ما لسه
سرير غير ساعدي رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم . قال : ولم يذكروا غسلا .
ومنهم : فرج الحجام وكان من أهل العدالة ، والمقدمين في الشهادة . اعتقه
جعفر بن سليمان ، وذلك أنه خدمه دهرًا يصلح شاربه ولحيته ويهيئه ، فلم يره أخطأ
في قول ولا عمل ، فقال : والله لا أمتحنه ، فان كان ما أرى منه عن تدبير وقصد لأعتقنه
ولأزوجه ولأعنيته . وان كان على غير ذلك عرفت المنع فيه . فقال له ذات يوم وهو
يحجمه : يا غلام ، أتحتم ؟ قال : نعم . قال : ومتى ؟ قال : عند الحاجة . قال :
وتعرف ذلك ؟ قال : أعرف أكثره وربما غلطت . قال : فأى شيء تأكل ؟ قال : أما في
الشتاء فداكبراه خاترة حلوة . وأما في الصيف فسكباجة حامضة عذبة . فبلغ به جعفر بن
سليمان ما قال . وهو الذي يقول فيه أبو فرعون :

خلوا الطريق زوجتي أمامي أنا حميم فرج الحجام

قال : وبلغ من عدالته ونبله في نفسه وتوقيه وورعه ، أن مواليه من ولد جعفر
وكبار أهل المريد ، كانوا لا يطمعون أن يشهدوه الا على أمر صحيح لا اختلاف فيه .
وأما الحيقطان فقال قصيدة تحتج بها اليمانية على قریش ومضر ، ويحتج بها النجم

والحبر على العرب ، وكان جرير رآه يوم عيد في قميص أبيض وهو أسود فقال :

كأنه لما بدا للنساس أير حصار لف في قرطاس

فلما سمع بذلك الحيقطان وكان باليمامة ، دخل الى منزله فقال هذا الشعر :

لئن كنت جسد الرأس والجلد فاحمم

فانى لسبط الكف والعرض أزهر

وان سواد اللون ليس بضائري

اذا كنت يوم الروع بالسيف أخطر

فان كنت تبغي الفخر في غير كنهه

فرط النجاشي منك في الناس أفسر

تأبى الجلندی وابن كرى وحاتر

وهوذة القبطي والشيخ قيصر

وفاز بها دون الملوك سعادة

فدام له الملك الضيع الموفر

ولقمان منهم وابنه وابن أمه
وأبرهة الملك الذي ليس ينكسر
غزاكم أبو يكسوم في أم داركم
وأنتم قبض الرمل أو هو أكثر
وأنتم كطير الماء لما هوى لينا
بيلقمة ، حجن المخالب أكثر
فلو كان غير الله رام دفاعه
علمت وذو التجريب بالناس أخير

وما الفخر إلا أن تبيتوا إزاه
ويدلف منكم قائد ذو حفيظة
فأما التي قلتم فتلك نبوة
وقلتم لقاح لا نودى اتاوة
ولو كان فيها رغبة لمتوج
وليس بها مشى ولا متصيف
ولا مرتع للعين أو متقنص
ألست كلييا وأمك نجمجة
أما قوله :

تأبى الجلندي وابن كسرى وحارث
وهوذة والقبطى والشيخ قيصر

فانه يقول : كتب النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم الى بني الجلندي فلم يؤمنوا وكذلك
كسرى ، وكذلك الحارث بن أبي شمر ، وكذلك هوذة بن على الحنفي ، وكذلك المقوقس
عظيم القبط صاحب الاسكندرية ، وكذلك قيصر ملك الروم . على أن بني الجلندي قد
أسلموا من بعد ذلك الكتاب ، ولكن النجاشي أسلم قبل الفتح ، فدام له ملكه ونزع الله
من هوذة النعمة . وقيصر ان كان قد بقي من ملكه شيء فقد أخرجه من كل مكان
يبلخه ظلف أو حافره ، وصار لا يتمنح الا بالخليج والمعقاب والحصون وبالشتا والتلج
والامطار .

وفخر بلقمان وابنه .

وأما قوله :

غزاكم أبو يكسوم في أم داركم
وأنتم قبض الرمل أو هو أكثر

فانه يعني صاحب الفيل حين أتى مكة ليهدم الكعبة . يقول : كتم في عسدد
الرميل ، فلم فررت منه ولم يلقه أحد منكم حتى أفضى الى مكة ، ومكة أم القرى ، ودار
المرب ، هي جزيرة الرب ، ومكة قرية من قراها ، ولكن لما كانت أقدمها قدما ، وأعظمها
خطرا ، جعلت لها أما . ولذلك قيل لفتح مكة : فتح الفتح . وعلى مثل ذلك سميت
فاتحة الكتاب : أم الكتاب .

والمرب قد تجمل الشيء أم ما لم يلد . من ذلك قولهم : ضربه على أم رأسه ،
وكذلك أم الهاوية . والضيف يسمى ربة منزله أم عشوى .

وقال أعرابي وقد أصابته براغيث عند امرأة كان نزل بها :

يا أم مشوى عدمت وجهك أنقذني رب العلا من مصرك
ولذع برغوث أراه مهلكي أبيت ليلى دائب التحكك

* تحكك الأجر عند المبرك *

وقد أبان الله تعالى مكة والبيت حين قال : (ان أول بيت وضع للناس للذي ببكة
مباركا وهدى للعالمين) .

يقول : فاذا غزيت - وهي أم القرى وفيها البيت الحرام الذي هو شرفكم -
فقد غزى جميعكم .

وأما قوله :

وأما التي قلتم فتلك نبوة وليس بكم صون الحرام المستر
[وقلتم لقاح لا نوذى اتاوة فاعطاء أريان من الفرأسر]

فالقاح : البلد الذي لا يؤدى الى الملوك الأريان . والأريان : هو الخراج ،
وهو الاتاوة . وفي ذلك يقول عبيد بن الأبرص :

أبوا دين الملوك فيهم لقاح اذا ندبوا الى حرب أجابوا

قال : فقلتم انا لقاح ولسنا نوذى الخراج والأريان .

قال : فاعطاء الخراج أهون من الفرار واسلام الدار وأنتم مثل عدد من جاءكم

المرار الكثيرة .

وأما قوله :

وليس بها مشتى ولا متصيف ولا كجواثا مأوها يتفجر

يقول : ليس في النخلة على مكة رغبة ، ولولا ذلك لغزاها أهل اليمن وغيرهم .
وليس بها مشتى ولا متصيف ، لانهم يتبردون بالطائف ويتدفون بجدة . وجواثا :
عين بالبحرين . وليس بمكة شي يداني ذلك .
وقال :

ولا مرتع للعين أو متقنص ولكن تجرا والتجارة تحقـر

يقول : ليس بها متنزعات ، وصيدها حرام ، وانما بها تجار والتجار يحقرون .
يقول : هم عند الناس في حد الضعف ولا يستجيز ملك أخذ الذي به يتميشون ،
ولا يكون ما يؤخذ منهم يقوم بنوائب الملوك ، وهم قوم ليس عندهم امتناع . ولذلك
يقول الشاعر معاوية بن أوس ، وهو جاهلي :

وزق سبات لدى متجـر أسود كالرجل الأسحم
ضربت بفيه على نحـره وقائمه كيد الأجدم

الى التاجر العربي الشحيح ح أو خمر ذى النطف الطمطم

أراد بهذا كله قريشا . يقول : هم تجار وقد اعتصموا بالبيت ، وإذا خرجوا
علقوا عليهم المقل ولحاء الشجر حتى يعرفوا فلا يقتلهم أحد .
وأما قوله :

ألسنت كليبيا وأمك نـعجـة لكم في سمان الضأن عار ومفخر

فان بني كليب يرمون باتيان الضأن ، وكذلك بنو الأعرج ، وسليم . وأشجع
ترص باتيان المعز .

وقال النجاشي :

ولو شتمتني من قريش قبيلة سوى ناقة المعزى سليم وأشجع

وقال الفرزدق :

ولست مضحيا ما دمت حيا بشاة من حلوبة أعرجي

فما أدرى اذا أنفقت مالي لعل الشاة تبقر عن صبي

وقال الآخر :

إذا أحببت أن تغلي أتاناً فدل الدارمي على شرها
يقبل ظهرها ويكاد لولا قحول الظهر يدنو من قفاها
وود الدارمي لو أن فاه إذا نال الحمارة نال فاهها
وقال عبد بن رشيد :

قبيلة سوء خيرهم مثل شرهم ترى منهم للضأن فحلا وراعيها
إذا جليت فيهم عروس لبعليها ترى النعجة البقعا أبكى البواكيا

ولذلك قال الأخطل :
فانق بضأنك يا جرير فانما
ولذلك قال الحيقطان :

ألسن كليبيا وأمك نعجة لكم في سمان الضأن عار ومفخر
أما العار فالذي شاع عليهم من ذكر النعاج . وأما المفخر يقول : إذا فخروا
فخروا بالشاء ، ولا يبلغون إلى حد الأبل .

ومن مفاخر السودان والزنج والحش مع ما ذكرنا من قصيدة الحيقطان ، أن جرير
بن الخطفي لما هجا بني تغلب ٧ و ٨ قال :

لا تطلبن خولة في تغلب فالزنج أكرم منهم أخوالا
غضب سنيح بن رباح شار ، فهجا جريرا ، وفخر عليه بالزنج فقال :

ما بال كلب من كليب سينا أن لم يوازن حاجبا وعقالا
ان لمرأ جعل المرافعة وابنها مثل الفرزدق جائر قد فالالا
والزنج لو لاقيتهم في صفهم لاقيت ثم جاحجا أبطالا
فسل ابن عمرو حين رام رماحهم أراى رماح الزنج ثم طوالا
فجموا زيادا بابنه وتنازلوا لما دعوا لنزال ثم نزالا
ومرطين خيولهم بفنائهم وربطت حولك شيها وسخالا
كان ابن ندبة فيكم من نجلنا وخفاف المتحمل الأثقالا
وابنا زبيبة : عنتر وهراسة ما ان نرى فيكم لهم أشالا
سل ابن جيفر حين رام بلادنا فرأى يفتزتهم عليه خبالا
وسليك الليث المزيهر إذا عدا والقرم عباس علوك فمالا
هذا ابن خازم ابن عجلي منهم غلب القبائل نجدة ونوالا
أبناء كل نجية لنجبيية أسد تربع عندها الأشبالا

فلنحن أنجب من كليب خوولة ولأنت ألام منهم أخوالا
وينو الحباب مطاعن ومطاعم عند الشتاء اذا تهب شمالا

أما ابن عمرو الذي ذكر ، فهو حفص بن زياد بن عمرو العتكي ، كان خليفة أبيه على شرطة الحجاج ، فغلب رياح شار الزنجي على القرات ، فتوجه اليه حفص بن زياد فقتله رياح وقتل أصحابه واستباح عسكره .

وأما ابن جيفر فهو النعمان بن جيفر بن عباد بن جيفر بن الجلندي . كان غزا بلاد الزنج فقتلوه وغنموا عسكره .

ثم ذكر أبناء الزنجيات حين نزعوا الى الزنج في البسالة والألفة . فذكر خفاف بن ندبة ، وعباس بن مرداس ، وابني شداد ، عنزة الفوارس وأخاه هراسة ، وسليك بن السلكة . فيروا أسد الرجال ، وأشدهم قلوبا وأشجعهم بأسا ، ويهم يضرب المثل .

ومنهم : عبد الله بن خازم السلمي ، وينو الحباب ، عمير بن الحباب وأخوته . وكان أيضا منهم : الجحاف بن حكيم .

وهم أيضا يفخرون ببراج أخى بلال وحاله وصلاحه .

وفخرون بعامر بن فهيرة ، بدرى استشهد يوم بئر ممونة ، فرآه الناس قد رفعه الله بين السماء والأرض ، فليس له في الأرض قبر .

ومنهم : آل ياسر .

قالوا : ومنا الغداف صاحب عبيد الله بن الحر . لم يكن في الأرض أشد منه .

كان يقطع على القافلة وحده بما فيها من السمة والخفراء .

وكعبويه صاحب المنيرة بن الفزر ، كان مثالا في الشجاعة .

ويقولون : ومنا مريج الأشم ، غلام أبي بحر القائد ، الذي كان قدم من

الشم أيام قتيبة بن مسلم ، وكان لا يرام لقاؤه ، وأمره مشهور .

قالوا : ومنا المخلول وبنوه ، وهم من الخول ، ليس في الأرض أعرف ولا أنقص

ولا أعلم بالبادية منهم .

قالوا : ومنا أنلع ، الذي قطع على القواهل بخراسان وحده عشرين سنة • قالوا :
وانما قتله مالك بن الرب ، لانه وطئه في جوف الليل وهو سكران خاثر • والشاهد
على قولنا قول ابنه :

أمالك لولا السكر أيقنت أنه أخو الورد أو يرى على الأسد الورد

قالوا : ونحن قد ملكنا بلاد الصرب من لدن الحبشة الى مكة ، وجرت أحكامنا
في ذلك أجمع • وهزمتنا ذا نواس ، وقتلنا أقيال حمير • وأنتم لم تملكوا بلادنا • وقد
قال شاعركم :

وخرب غمدانا وهدم سقفه رياط بأجناد وصولته هصـ
أطافت به الأحبوش ليلا فقوضوا بنا شدة الأقيال في سالف الدهر
بجمع من اليكسم سود كأنهم أسود الشرى اجتابت جلودا من النمر

قالوا : ومنا كباجلا ، لم يصعد نهر سليمان ولا قاتل في المخارجات أحد قط

يشبهه •

قالوا : ومنا الاريمون الذين خرجوا بالفرات أيام سوار بن عبد الله القاضي ، فأجلوا

أهل الفرات عن منازلهم ، وقتلوا من أهل الأبله مقتلة عظيمة •

قالوا : ومنا الذي ضرب عنق عيسى بن جعفر بعمان ، بمنجل بحراني ، بعد
أن لم يجسر عليه أحد •

قالوا : والناس مجمعون على أنه ليس في الأرض أمة السخاء فيها أم ، وعليها

أغلب من الزنج • وهاتان الخلتان لم توجدا قط الا في كرم •

وهي أطبع الخلق على الرقص الموقع الموزون ، والضرب بالطبل على الايقاع الموزون ،
من غير تأديب ولا تعليم •

وليس في الأرض أحسن حلوقا منهم • وليس في الأرض لغة أخف على اللسان

من لغتهم ، ولا في الأرض قم أذرب السنة ، ولا أقل تمطيظا منهم •

وليس في الأرض قم الا وأنت تصيب فيهم الأثر والفأفأ والمعبي ، ومن في لسانه

حبسة ، غيرهم •

والرجل منهم يخطب عند الملك بالزنج من لدن طلوع الشمس الى غروبها ، فلا

يستعين بالتفاته ولا بسكة حتى يفرغ من كلامه .

وليس في الارض أمة في شدة الابدان وقوة الأسراع منهم فيهما . وان الرجل ليرفع الحجر الثقيل الذي تعجز عنه الجماعة من الأعراب وغيرهم . وهم شجعاء أشداء الابدان أسخياء . وهذه هي خصال الشرف .

[والزنجي] مع حسن الخلق وقلة الأذى ، لا تراه أبدا الا طيب النفس ، ضحوك السنن ، حسن الظن . وهذا هو الشرف .

وقد قال ناس : انهم صاروا أسخياء لضعف عقولهم ، ولقصر روياتهم ، ولجهلهم بالعواقب .

فقلنا لهم ، بئس ما أثبتتم على السخاء والأثرة ، وينبغي في هذا القياس أن يكون أوفر الناس عقلا وأكثر الناس علما أبخل الناس بخلا وأقلهم خيرا .

وقد رأينا الصقالبة أبخل من الروم ، والروم أبعد روية وأشد عقولا . وعلى قياس قولكم أن قد كان ينبغي أن تكون الصقالبة أسخى أنفسا وأصح أكفا منهم .

وقد رأينا النساء أضعف من الرجال عقولا ، والصبيان أضعف عقولا منهم ، وهم أبخل من النساء ، والنساء أضعف عقولا من الرجال . ولو كان العقل كلما كان أشد كان صاحبه أبخل ، كان ينبغي أن يكون الصبي أكرم الناس خصالا . ولا تعلم فسي الارض شرا من صبي : هو أذنب الناس وأثم الناس ، وأشره الناس وأبخل الناس ، وأقل الناس خيرا وأقسى الناس قسوة .

وانما يخرج الصبي من هذه الخلال أولا فأولا ، على قدر ما يزداد من العقل فيزداد من الأنفال الجميلة .

فكيف صار قلة العقل هو سبب سخاء الزنج ، وقد أقررت لهم بالسخاء ثم ادعيتهم ما لا يعرف . وقد وقفناكم على ادحاض حجتكم في ذلك بالقياس الصحيح .

وهذا القول يوجب أن يكون الجبان أعقل من الشجاع ، والنادر أعقل من الوفي . وينبغي أن يكون الجزوع أعقل من الصبور . فهذا ما لا حجة فيه لكم ، بل ذلك هبة في الناس من الله . والعقل هبة ، وحسن الخلق هبة ، والسخاء والشجاعة كذلك .

وقد قالت الزنج للمرب : من جهلكم أنكم رأيتونا لكم أنفأ في الجاهلية فسي نسائكم ، فلما جاء عدل الاسلام رأيتم ذلك فاسدا ، و [ما] بنا الرغبة عنكم . مع

أن البادية منا ملأى ممن قد تزج ورأس وساد ، ومنع الدمار ، وكفكم من العدو .
قال : وقد ضربتم بنا الأمثال وعظمت أمر ملوكنا ، وقد تموهم في كثير من
المواضع على ملوككم . ولو لم تروا الفضل لنا في ذلك عليكم لما فعلتم .

وقال النمر بن تولب :

أتى ملكه ما أتى تيمما وأبرهة الملك الأعظما

فرقمه على ملوك قومه .

وقال لبيد بن ربيعة :

لو كان حي في الحياة مخلدا في الدهر أدركه أبو يكسم

وهذا شيء من وصف الفضل لم يوصف أحد بمثله .

قالوا : وما قدمتم به ملوكنا على ملوككم قوله ،

غلب الليالي خلف آل محرق وكما فحلن بتبع وبهرق
وغلبن أبرهة الذي ألفتيه قد كان خلد فوق غرفة موكل

فقدم أبرهة وأراد التسوية .

قالوا : ومن الحبشة عكيم الحبشي ، وكان أفصح من المجاج . وكان علماء أهل

الشم يأخذون عنه كما أخذ علماء أهل العراق من المنتجع بن نبيان .

وكان المنتجع سنديا في أذنه خربة ، وقع إلى البادية وهو صبي ، فخرج أفصح

من رؤية .

ولما قال حكيم بن عياش الكلبي :

لا تفخرن بخال من بني أسد فان أكرم منها الزنج والنوب

اعتز عليه عكيم الحبشي ، فقال :

ويوم غمدان كما الأسد ويوم يثرب كما فحلة العرب
وليلة الفيل إذ طارت قلوبهم وكلهم هارب موف على قتوب
منا النجاشي وذو العقصين صهرم وجد أبرهة الحامي أبي طلب
هبني غفرت لعدنان تهكمهم فما لحمير والقوال في النسب
حمارة جمعت من كل محبرة جمع الشبيكة نون الزاخر اللجب

غمدان : حصن كان ينزله الملك الذي يكون على اليمن ، وكان عجميا ، فلما ملكت الحبشة اليمن أخربته الا بقايا هدمها عثمان بن عفان رضي الله عنه في الاسلام . وقال : " ينبغي لمآثر الجاهلية ان تحى " . وكان في الحصن مصنعة عليها قبة من طلق ، وفيها يقول خلف الأحمر :

ومصنعة الطلق أودى بهـ
عوادى الأحابيش بالصيدين

وفيها يقول قدامة حكيم المشرق ، وكان صاحب كيميا* :

فأوقد فيها ناره ولو أنهـ
أقامت كعمر الدهر لم تنصم

لان الطلق لو أوقد عليه ألف عام لم يسخن . وبه يتطلى النفاطون اذا أرادوا الدخول في النار .

وقال لبيد :

أصاح ترى بريقا هب وهـ
كصباح الشعيلة في الذبال
أرئت له وأنجد بعد هـ
وأصحابي على شعب الرحال
يضيء ربابه في العزن حبـ
قيامًا بالحرب واللال

وقال ذلك لبيد لانهم اذا أقبلوا بحرايبهم ورماحهم وقسيهم وسيوفهم ، وراياتهم ، وخيولهم وفيلولهم ، مع سواد ألوانهم وضخم أبدانهم - رأيت هؤلاء لم تر مثله ولم تسمع به ، ولم تتوهمه .

وأما قوله :

* ويوم يشرب كـا فحلة المـرب *

فان مسرف بن عقبة المري ، حين كان أباح المدينة ، زعموا أنه قد كان هناك

أمر قبيح من السودان والجند ، وفي ذلك يقول شاعر من شعراء مصر :

فسائل مسرف المري عنكـ
غداة أباح للجند المـذارى
فمازجكم على حنق زنـج
وفز الشام كالاسد الضـواري
ودافع وهرز والفرس عنكـ
ورأس الحبش يحكم في نـمار
فأفسد نسلكم بسواد لـون
وأير مثل غريول الحمـار

فذكر اباحة الحبش لليمن كما ذكر اباحة مسرف للمدينة .

وأما قوله :

حمارة جمعت من كل محزوة جمع الشبيكة نون الزاخر اللجب
فانه ذهب الى ما تقول الرواة أن حمير كانت حمارة •
وأما الشبيكة فأراد الشبيكة •

وقال السودان : فهذا الفضل فينا ، ولم يصل النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم قط
الا على جنازة أو قبر ، الا النجاشي فانه صلى عليه وهو بالمدينة وقبر النجاشي بالحبيشة •
قالوا : والنجاشي هو كان زوج أم حبيبة بنت أبي سفيان من النبي صلى الله
عليه وسلم ، ودعا خالد بن سعيد فجعله وليها ، وأصدق عن النبي صلى الله عليه
وسلم أربعمائة دينار •

قالوا : وثلاثة أشياء جاءكم من قبلنا • منها الخالية ، وهي أطيب الطيب وأفخره
وأكرمه • ومنها النعش وهو أستر للنساء وأصون للحرم • ومنها المصحف ، وهو أوقى
لما فيه وأحصن له ، وأبهى وأنبأ •

قالوا : ونحن أهول في الصدور وأملا للعيون ، كما أن السوداء أهول في العيون
وأملا للصدور من المبيضة ، وكما أن الليل أهول من النهار •

قالوا : والسواد أبدا أهول • وإن العرب لتصف الابل فتقول : الصهب سرع ،
والحمر غزر ، والسود بهى • فهذا في الابل •

قالوا : ودهم الخيل أبهى وأقوى ، والبقر السود أحسن وأبهى ، وجلودها
أثمن وأنفع وأبقى • والحمر السود أثمن وأحسن وأقوى • وسود الشاء أدم الباناء
وأكثر زيدا ، والدبس أغزر من الحمر •

وكل جبل وكل حجر اذا كان أسود كان أصلب صلابة وأشد ييوسة • والاسود
الاسود لا يقوم له شيء •

وليس من التمر شيء أحلى حلاوة من الاسود ، ولا أعم منفعة ولا أبقى على الدهر •
والنخيل أقوى ما تكون اذا كانت سود الجدوع •

وجاء : * عليكم بالسواد الاعظم * . وقال الأنصاري :

أدين وما ديني علي بمنهم ولكن على الشم الطوال القراح
على كل خوار كان جذوعها طلين بقار أو يدم ذبائح

قالوا : وأحسن الخضرة ما ضارع السواد . قال الله جل وعلا : (ومن دونهما جنتان) ، ثم قال لما وصفهما وشوق اليهما : (مدهامتان) قال ابن عباس : خضراوان من الري سوداوان .

وليس في الأرض عود أحسن خشباً ولا أغلى ثمناً ، ولا أثقل وزناً ولا أسلم من القوادح ، ولا أجدر أن يثقب فيه الخط من الآبنوس . ولقد بلغ من اكتنازه والتنازه وملوسته وشدة تداخله ، أنه يرسب في الماء دون جميع الحديدان والخشب . ولقد غلب بذلك بعض الحجارة ، إذ صار يرسب وذلك الحجر لا يرسب .

والإنسان أحسن ما يكون في المين ما دام أسود الشعر . وكذلك شعورهم في الجنة .

وأكرم ما في الإنسان حدقاته ، وهما سوداوان . وأكرم الأكحال الأثمد ، وهو أسود . ولذلك جاء أن الله يدخل جميع المؤمنين الجنة جرداً مرداً مكحلين .

وأفنع ما في الإنسان له بده التي بها تصلح معدته ، وينهضم طعامه ، وبصلاح ذلك قام بدنه ، والكبد سوداء .

وأنفس ما في الإنسان وأعزه سوداء قلبه ، وهي علقة سوداء تكون في جوف فؤاده ، تقوم في القلب مقام الدماغ من الرأس .

ومن أطيب ما في المرأة وأشبه شفتيها للتقبيل ، وأحسن ما يكونان إذا ضارعتا السواد .

وقال ذو الرمة :

لمياء في شفتيها حوة لمس وفي الثآليل وفي أنيابها شنب

وأطيب الظل وأبرده ما كان أسود . وقال الرازي :

* سود غرابيب كأظلال الحجر *

وقال حميد بن ثور :

ظللنا الى كهف وظلت ركابنا الى مستكفات لهن غروب
الى شجر ألى الظلال كأنه رواهب أحرمن الشراب عذوب

وجعل الله الليل سكا وجاما ، والنهار للكسب والكد .

والذي يدل على أن السواد في وجه آخر مقرون بالشدة والصرامة ، والهيـج
والحركة ، انتشار الحيات والمقارب وشدة سمومها بالليل ، وهيج السباع واستكلابها
بالليل . وتحرك الاوجاع وظهور الغيلان ، هذه كلها بالليل .

قال : وأشبهنا الليل من هذا الوجه .

قالوا : وأبلغ ما تكون القائلة وأشفاهها للنفس ، وأسرع لمجيئها اذا أردتها ،
وأبطأ لذهابها اذا كرهتها ، ما كان منها في الظلمة ، عند اسبال الستور واغلاق
البواب .

قالوا : وليس لون أرسخ في جوهره واثبت في حسنه من سواد .

وقد جرى المثل في تبعيد الشيء : " لا ترى ذلك حتى يبصر القار ، وحتى
يشيب الضراب " .

وهو العرعر الملاء عند الحكماء .

وأكرم العطر المسك والعنبر ، وهما أودان .

وأصلب الأحجار سودها . وقال أبو دهبيل الجمحي يمدح الأزرق المخزومي ،
وهو عبد الله بن عبد شمس بن المخيرة :

فان شكرك عندي لا انتقضاء له ما دام بالجزع من لبنان جلمود
أنت الممدح والمغلى به ثمننا اذ لا يعاتب صخر الجندل السود

والعرب تفخر بسواد اللون . فان قال : فعلام ذلك وهي تقول : فلان
هجان ، وأزهر وأبيض ، وأغر ؟ قلنا : ليس تريد بهذا بياض الجلد ، انما تريد
به كرم الجوهر ونقاؤه . وقد فخرت خضر محارب بأنها سود ، والسود عند العرب
الخضر . وقال الشماخ بن ضرار :

وراحت رواحا من زرود فنازعت زبالة جلبابا من الليل أخضرا
وقال الراجز :

حتى انتضاني الصبح من ليل خضر مثل انتضاء البطل السيف الذكر
وهم يسمون الحديد أخضر لأنه صلب ، لأن الأخضر أسود .

وقال الحارث بن حلزة :

اذ رفعنا الجمال من سفح البحر رين سيرا حتى نهاها الحساء
فهزمتنا جمع ابن أم قطام وله فارسية خضرا

وقال المحاري وهو يفخر بأنه من الخضر :

في خضر قيس نماني كل ذي فخر صعب المقادة آبي الضيم شعشاع

وبنو المغيرة خضر بني مخزوم . قال عمر بن عبد الله بن أبي ربيعة بن المغيرة

المخزومي - ويقال انها للفضل بن العباس اللهيبي :

وأنا الأخضر من يعرفني أخضر الجلدة في بيت العرب
من يساجلني يساجل ماجدا يملاء الدلو الى عقد الكرب

وخضر غسان بنو جفنة الملوك ، قال الخساني :

ان الخضامة الخضر الذين ودرا أهل البريص نماني منهم الحكم

وقد ذكر حسان أو غيره الخضر من بني عكيم حين قال :

ولست من بني هاشم في بيت مكرمة ولا بني جمع الخضر الجلاء سيد

قالوا : وكان ولد عبد المطلب العشرة السادة دلمأ ضخما ، نظر اليهم عامر بن

الطفيل يطوفون كأنهم جمال جون ، فقال : بهؤلاء تمنع السدانة .

وكان عبد الله بن عباس أدلم ضخما . وآل أبي طالب أشرف الخلق ، وهم سود

وأدم ودلم .

قالوا : وقال النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم : " بعثت الى الأحمر والأصفر " .

وقد علمت أنه لا يقال للزنج والحبشة والنوبة بيض ولا حمر ، وليس لهم اسم
الا السود .

وقد علمنا أن الله عز وجل بعث نبيه [الى الناس] كافة ، والى العرب والمجم
جميعا . فاذا قال : " بعثت الى الأحمر والأسود " ولسنا عنده حمر ولا بيض ،
فقد بعث الينا ، فانما عنانا بقوله " الأسود " . ولا يخرج الناس من هذين
الاسمين ، فان كانت العرب من الأحمر ، فقد دخلت في عداد الروم والصقالبة
وفارس وخراسان . وان كانت من السود ، فقد اشتق لها هذا الاسم من اسمنا .
وانما قيل لهم وهم آدم وسمر سود ، حين دخلوا معنا في جملتنا ، كما يجعل العرب
الاناث من الذكور ذكورا .

واذا كان النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم يعلم أن الزنج والحبشة والنوبة ليسوا بحمر
ولا بيض ، وأنهم سود ، وقد بعثه الله تعالى الى الأسود والأحمر ، فقد جعلنا
والعرب سوا ، ونكون نحن السود دونهم . فان كان اسم أسود وقع علينا فنحن
السودان الخالص ، والعرب أشباه الخالص . فنحن المتقدمون في الدعوة . واذا كان
اسمهم محمولا على اسمنا ، اذ كما وحدنا يقال لنا سود ، ولا يقال لهم سود الا ان
يكونوا معنا .

قالوا : وأنتم ترون كثرة العدد مجدا ، ونحن أكثر الناس عددا وولدا .

قالوا : ونحن صنفان ، النمل والكلاب .

قالوا : ولو عدلتم بالنمل العرب كلها لأريت عليها ، فكيف اذا قرنت البيه
الكلاب ؟ ثم كيف اذا ضمتم اليها الحبشة والنوبة وفزان ومرو وزغاوة وغير ذلك من
أنواع السودان ؟

وليست قحطان من عدنان في شيء . ونحن بالحبشة أشبه ، وأرحامنا بهم أمس
من عدنان بقحطان . وان ذكرتم اختلاف اللغات ، فان لغة عجز هوازن ، وقد
تختلف اللغات والأصل واحد ، وقد تتفق والنجر مختلف . ومن دخل أوائل خراسان
وأواخرها ، وأوائل الجبال وفارس وأواخرها ، علم أن اللغات قد تختلف لاختلاف طبائع

البلدان والأصل واحد .

قالوا : وأنتم لم تروا الزنج الذين هم الزنج قط ، وإنما رأيتم السبي يجي من سواحل قنبلة وغياضها وأوديتها ، ومن مهنتنا وسفلتنا وعبيدنا ، وليس لأهل قنبلة جمال ولا عقول . وقنبلة : اسم الموضع الذي ترفون منه سفنكم الى ساحله . لأن الزنج ضريان : قنبلة ولنجومية ، كما أن العرب ضريان : قحطان وعدنان . وأنتم لم تروا من أهل لنجومية أحدا قط ، لا من السواحل ولا من أهل الجوف ، ولو رأيتموهم نسبتم الجمال والكمال .

فان قلتم : وكيف ونحن لم نر زنجيا قط له عقل صبي أو امرأة ؟ قلنا لكم : ومتى رأيتم من سبي السند والهند قوما لهم عقول وعلم وأدب وأخلاق حتى تطلبوا ذلك فيما سقط اليكم من الزنج . وقد تعلمون ما في الهند من الحساب وعلم النجوم وأسرار الطب ، والخرط والنجر ، والتصاوير والصناعات الكثيرة المجبية ، فكيف لم يتفق لكم مع كثرة ما سبيتم منهم واحد على هذه الصفة ، أو بعشر هذه الصفة ؟ فان قلتم : أهل الشرف والعقل والعلم انما ينزلون الواسطة ، ويقرب دار الملك ، وهو "لا حاشية وأعلاج وأكرة ، ونزال السواحل والآجام والفيوض والجزائر ، من أكار ومن صياد .

قلنا : وذلك من رأيتم ومن لم تروا منا . وجوابنا هو جوابكم لنا . قالوا : ولو أن الزنجي والزنجية اذا تناكحا بقيت أولادهما بعد الحيض والاحتلام ببلاد العراق ، كانوا قد غلبوا على الدار بالعدد والجلد ، والعلم والتدبير ، ولكن ولد الهندي والهندية ، والرومي والرومية ، والخراساني والخراسانية ، يبقون فيكم وفي بلادكم كبقا آبائهم وأمهاتهم ، ولا يبقى ولد الزنجين بعد الحيض والاحتلام . على أنا لا نصيب في عشرة آلاف ، واحد يبلغ ما ذكرنا ، الا أن يضرب الزنجي فسي غير الزنجيات ، والزنجية في غير الزنج . ولولا أن الزنجي والزنجية قليلا ما يربدان من الفرائب والضرب ، لكنا على حال سنرى لرجال الزنج نسلا كثيرا . ولكن الزنجية لا تكاد تنشط لغير الزنجي .

قالوا : وكذلك البيضان منكم ، لا يكادون ينشطون لطلب النسل من الزنجيات .

والزنجية أيضا من الزنجي أسرع لقاها منها من الأبيض .

قالوا ، وأنتم لا تكادون تعدون ممن ولد له من صلبه مائة ولد الا أن يكون خليفة ،
فيكون ذلك لكثرة الطروقة ، ولا تجدون ذلك في سائركم . والزنج لا تستكثر هذا ولا
تستعظمه ، لكثرة في بلادهم ، لان الزنجية تلد نحوا من خمسين بطنا في نحو من
خمسعين عاما ، في كل بطن اثنين ، فيكون ذلك أكثر من تسعين . لانه يقال ان النساء

لا يلدن اذا بلغن الستين الا ما يحكى عن نساء قريش خاصة .

والزنج أحرص من خلق الله على نساءهم ، ونسأؤهم لهم كذلك ، وهن أطيب من
غيرهن .

قالوا ، فتأملوا قولنا واحتاجنا ، فانا قد رويناه الأخبار وقلنا الأشعار ، وعرفناكم
وعرفنا الأم .

وقد كان الفرزدق أعلم الناس بالنساء ، وكان قد جرب الأجناس كلها فلم يجد
مثلهن ، ولذلك تزوج أم مكية الزنجية وأقام عليها ، وترك النساء ، للذي وجد عندها .
وفي ذلك يقول :

يا رب خود من بنات الزنج تمشي بتنور شديد الوهج
* أختم مثل القدح الخلعج *

وكانت دنانير بنت كعبوية الزنجي عند أعشى سليم ، وكانت شديدة السواد ، فرآها
يوما وقد خضبت يديها بالحناء ، واكتحلت بالاشد ، فقال :

تخضب كما بتكت من زندها فتخضب الحناء من مسودها
كأنها والكحل في مودها تكحل عينيها ببعض جلددها

فلما سمعت ذلك قالت :

وأفج من لوني سواد عجانه على بشر كالقلب أر هو أنصع

نسموه أسود ، وصاح به الصبيان فطلقها . وقد كان صبيحة عرسها قال :

* ان الدنانير تكون سودا *

فقلت ،

بياض الرأس أفتح من سوادى وشيب الحاجبين هو الفصح

فأمسك عنها حينئذ عاودها ، فلما فضحته طلقها .

قالوا ، وإن نظر البيضان الى نساء السودان بخير عين الشهوة فكذلك السودان في نساء البيضان . على أن الشهوات عادات وأكثرها تقليد . من ذلك أن أهل البصرة أشهى النساء عندهم الهنديات وبنات الهنديات والأغوار . واليمن أشهى النساء عندهم الحبشيات وبنات الحبشيات . وأهل الشام أشهى النساء عندهم الروميات وبنات الروميات . وكل قوم فانما يشتهون جلبهم وسبيهم . إلا الشاذ ، وليس على الشاذ قياس .

قالوا ، وأطيب الأمواه نكهة ، وأشدّها عذوبة ، وأكثرها ريقا ، أفواه الزنج . والكلاب من بين السباع أطيب أفواها منها .

قالوا ، والسواد ملائم للعين ، وإذا اعتلت فخبف عليها لم يكن لها دواء خير من القمود في الظلمة وفي يد صاحبها خرقة سوداء . فالسواد للابصار ، وخير ما في الانسان البصر .

وقالوا ، والسودان أكثر من البيضان ، لأن أكثر ما يعد البيضان فارس والجبّال وخراسان ، والرمم والصقالبة وفرنجة والأير ، وشيئا بعد ذلك قليلا غير كثير . والسودان يعدون الزنج والحبشة ، وفزان وبربر ، والقبط والنوبة ، وزغاوة ومرو ، والسند والهند ، والقمار والدببلا ، والصين وما صين . والبحر أكثر من البر ، وجزائر البحر ما بين الصين والزنج مطوّاة سودانا ، كسرنديب ، وكله ، وأمل ، وزايج وجزائرها الى الهند الى الصين الى كابل وتلك السواحل .

قالوا ، وكان الأعشى الاشتيام يقول ، السودان أكثر من البيضان ، والمخر أكثر من الوحل ، والرمل أكثر من التراب ، والماء المالح أكثر من العذب .

قالوا ، ومنا العرب لا من البيضان ؛ لقرب ألوانهم من ألواننا . والهند أسفر ألوانا من العرب ، وهم من السودان . ولأن النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم قال ،

" بعثت الى الأحمر والأسود " . وقد علم الناس أن العرب ليست بحمر كما ذكرنا
قبل هذا .

قال : فهذا المفخر لنا وللعرب على جميع البيضان ان أحبت ذلك العرب ؛ وان
كرهته فان المفخر لنا بالذي ذكرنا على الجميع .

قالوا : ولو لم نكركم الا بالزايج وحدها لفضلناكم بهم فضلا مبينا ؛ وذلك ان
ملك الزايج ان غضب على أهل مملكة ولم يتقوه بالخراج بعث ألف سنبوقة في كل سنبوقة
ألف رجل على أن [لا] يجلدونهم ولا يقاتلونهم ، ولكن يأمرهم أن يقيموا أبدا فيهم
حتى يتقوهم بالخراج ، فيكون ما يأكلون ويشربون ويفدون ويلبسون ، أضر عليهم من
مقدار الخراج المزار الكثيرة . فان اتقوهم بالخراج والا أرسل اليهم ألف سنبوقة أخرى ،
فلا يجد ذلك الملك بدا من أن يتقيه بكل ما طلب ، ولا يأمن أن يغضب فيأتي
عليه وعلى أهل مملكته .

قالوا : ولقد نزل ملك الزايج على خليج مرة والخليج فراسخ في فراسخ ، فبينما هو
على مائدته وفي سرادقه على شاطئ الخليج ، ان سمع صارخة فقال : ما هذا ؟
وقطع الأكل . قالوا : امرأة سقط ابنها في هذا الخليج فأكله التمساح . قال :
وفي مكان أنا فيه شيء يشاركني في قتل الناس ! ثم وثب فاذا هو في الخليج . فلما
رأوه الناس سقطوا عن آخرهم ، فحضره وهو فراسخ في فراسخ ، حتى أخذوا كل
تمساح فيه أخذ يد .

فيقال : ان أهل الزايج وأغباب أكثر من شطر أهل الأرض .

قالوا : وآخر العمران كله سودان ، وما استدار من أقاصي العمران أكثر من أهل
الواسطة ، كطوق الرحي الذي يلي الهواء ، الذي هو أوسع وأكثر ذرعا مما قصر عنه
من فلك الرحي ولنعتبر ذلك بالجنح المطيف ، لا يرى أحد ذرعه مع قلة عرضه ،
ونجده أكثر ذرعا من نفس الدار .

وليس خلف الزايج بيضان ، وكذلك جميع بلاد السودان الساكنة في الأطراف وفي
آخر أطواق العمران .

قالوا : فهذا دليل على أنا أكثر ، وإذا كنا أكثر كما أنخر . وقد قال شاعركم :
ولست بالأكثر منه حصصى وانما العزة للكائس

قالوا : والقبط جنس من السودان وقد طلب منهم خليل الرحمن [الولد] فولد
له منهم نبي عظيم الشأن ، وهو أبو العرب اسماعيل عليه السلام . وطلب النبي صلى
الله عليه وسلم منهم الولد ، وولد له ابراهيم ، وكناه به جبريل .

قالوا : والحجر الأسود من الجنة . والنحاس اذا اشتد سواده كان أتمن
وأجود . فمن استنكر لون السواد فما في فرنجة والروم والصقالبة من افراط سبوطه
الشعر والرقه والصهوية ، والحمرة في شعر الرأس واللحية ، وبياض الحواجب والأشعار ،
أقبح وأسج . وليس في السودان مغرب ، ليس المغرب الا فيكم . ولا سوا من لم
تنضجه الأرحام وما جازت به حد التمام .

قالوا : ولنا بعد معرفة بالتفلسف والنظر ، ونحن أثقف الناس . ولنا في الأسرار
حجة . ونحن نقول : ان الله تعالى لم يجعلنا سودا تشويها بخلقنا ، ولكن البلد
فعل ذلك بنا . والحجة في ذلك أن في العرب قبائل سودا كبني سليم بن منصور .
وكل من نزل الحرة من غير بني سليم كلهم سود . وانهم ليتخذون الممالك للرعى
والسقاء ، والمهنة والخدمة ، من الأشبانيين ومن الروم نساءهم ، فما يتوالدون ثلاثة
أبطن حتى تنقلهم الحرة الى ألوان بني سليم . ولقد بلغ من أمر تلك الحرة
أن ظباءها ونعامها ، وهو امها وذبابها ، وثمانيتها وشاءها وحميرها ، وخيلها ، وطيرها
كلها سود . والسواد والبياض انما هما من قبل خلقة البلدة ، وما طبع الله عليه الماء
والترية ، ومن قبل قرب الشمس وبمدها ، وشدة حرها ولينها . وليس ذلك من قبل
منسوخ ولا عقوبة ، ولا تشويه ولا تقصير .

على أن بلاد بني سليم تجري بلاد الترك . ومن رأى ابلهم ودوابهم وكل
شيء لهم تركى رآه شيئاً واحداً . وكل شيء لهم تركى المنظر . وربما رأى الفزاة
دون المواضع أخلط غنم الروم فلا يخفى عليهم غنم الروم من غنم الشام ، للرومية التي
يرونها فيها .

الم يأتيها أني صحت وأنني
 تخشعت حتى ما أعام من عزم
 وأطرق أطراق الشجاع ، ولو يرى
 مساعا لنابيه الشجاع لقد أنم
 أرادت عرارا بالهوان ومن يــــرد
 عرارا لعلمي بالهوان فقد ظلم
 وإن عرارا أن يكن غير واضح
 فاني أحب الجون ذا المنكب العمم
 فان كنت مني أو تحبين شيمــــتي
 فكوني له كالسمن ريت لله الأدم
 ولا فيبيني مثل ما بان راكــب
 تزود خمسا ليس نسي سيره أتم

وأما الهند فوجدناهم يقدمون في النجوم والحساب ، ولهم الخط الهندي خاصة ،
 ويقدمون في الطب ، ولهم أسرار الطب وعلاج فاحش الأُدواء خاصة . ولهم خرط
 التماثيل ونحت الصور بالأصباغ تتخذ في المحارب وأشباه ذلك . ولهم الشطرنج ،
 وهي أشرف لعبة وأكثرها تدبيرا وفطنة . ولهم السيوف القلعية ، وهم ألعب الناس
 بها وأحذقهم ضربا بها . ولهم الرقى النافذة في السموم وفي الأوجاع . ولهم
 غناء معجب . ولهم الككلكة ، وهي وتر واحد يمد على قرعة فيقوم مقام أوتار العود
 والصنج . ولهم ضرب الرقص والخفة ، ولهم الثقافة عند الثقافة خاصة ، ولهم معرفة
 المناصفة ، ولهم السحر والتدخين والدعاكية . ولهم خط جامع لحروف اللغات ، وخطوط
 أيضا كثيرة ، ولهم شعر كثير وخطب طوال ، وطب في الفلسفة والأدب . وعنهم
 أخذ كتاب كلية ودمنة . ولهم رأى ونجدة ، وليس لأحد من أهل الصبر ما لهم .
 ولهم من النبي الحسن والأخلاق المحمودة مثل الأُخلة والقرن والسواك ، والاحتباء ،
 والفرق والخضاب . وفيهم جمال وطلع واعتدال وطيب عرق . وإلى نسائهم يضرب
 الأمثال . ومن عندهم جاءوا الملوك بالمواد الهندي الذي لا يعدله عود . ومن
 عندهم خرج علم الفكر ، وما إذا تكلم به على السم لم يضر . وأصل حساب النجوم
 من عندهم أخذته الناس خاصة . وآدم عليه السلام إنما هبط من الجنة فصار ببلادهم .
 قالوا : ومن مفاخر الزنج حسن الحلق ، وجودة الصوت . وانك لتجد ذلك في

القيان اذا كن من بنات السند .

وخصلة أخرى : أنه لا يوجد في المبيد أطبخ من السندي ، هو أطبخ على طيب الطبخ كله .

ومن مفاخرهم أن الصيارفة لا يولون أكستهم وبيوت صروفهم الا السند وأولاد السند ؛ لأنهم وجدوهم أنفذ في أمور الصرف ، وأحفظ وآمن . ولا يكاد أحد أن يجد صاحب كيس صيرفي ومفاتيحه ابن رومي ولا ابن خراساني .

ولقد بلغ من تبرك التجار بهم أن صيارفة البصرة وينادرة البرهبارات ، لم رأوا ما كسب فرج أبو رجح السندي لمولاه من المال والأرضين اشترى كل امي منهم غلاما سنديا ، طمعا فيما كسب أبو رجح لولاه .

قال ، وكان عبد الملك بن مروان يقول : " الأُدغم سيد أهل المشرق " يعني عبيد الله بن أبي بكر . وكان أشد السودان سوادا . وإياه يعني عبد الله بن خازم حيث يقول ،

* حبشي حبشته حبشه *

فهذا جملة ما حضرنا من مفاخر السودان . وقد قلنا قبل هذا في مفاخر قحطان ، وسنقول في نخر عدنان على قحطان في كثير ما قالوا ان شاء الله .

--*-*-*-*