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See also: ABROGATION; ĀDAM, UPON HIM PEACE; ANONYMOUS MENTIONS; CHILDREN OF ISRĀʿĪL; COMPANIONS OF THE PROPHET; DĀWŪD, UPON HIM PEACE; KAʿBA; MADINA; MAKKA; MOSQUE; THE NAME, THE NAMING, THE NAMED; NIGHT JOURNEY AND ASCENSION; HAJJ; QIBLA; SACRED PRECINCTS; SULAYMĀN, UPON HIM PEACE; SYRO-PALESTINE; WEIGHTS AND MEASURES.

MUZAFFAR IQBAL
NASEER AHMAD

al-Aʿrāb

See ARABIC; BEDOUINS

ARABIC

This article comprises the following sections: i. Arabs and Arabic; ii. History of the Arabic Language; iii. The Qurʾān and Arabic; iv. Seven Modes; v. Arabicized Words in the Qurʾān; vi. The Universal Prophethood of Muḥammad, upon him blessings and peace, and Arabic; vii. Inimitability of the Qurʾān (*Iʿjāz al-Qurʾān*) and Arabic; viii. Arabic and Exegetical Disciplines; ix. Bibliography.

This article concerns the Arabic language in reference to the Qurʾān and as discussed in the exegetical tradition. For other aspects of Qurʾānic language, see COMPILATION OF THE QURʾĀN; INIMITABILITY OF THE QURʾĀN; PARABLES OF THE QURʾĀN; RHETORIC AND ELOQUENCE; SCRIPT OF THE QURʾĀN.

According to Ibn Fāris (d. 395/1004), the root ʿ-r-b has three original meanings: (i) *ibāna* and *iṣṣāh*, meaning elucidation, clarification; (ii) to be full of vitality and naturally cheerful (*al-nashāṭ wa ṭīb al-nafs*); and (iii) a certain disorder in the body or a limb. One of these three meanings must obtain for each of the root's derivatives. As examples, he cites respectively (i) the Prophetic hadith “a remarrying woman

vocally expresses her consent” (*al-thayyib yuʿrib ʿanhā lisānuhā*); (ii) the Qurʾānic verse describing the Paradise companions of the righteous as *devoted peers of equal age* (*ʿuruban atrāba*) (Q 56:37); and (iii) an idiomatic expression for a stomach ache (*ʿaribat maʿdatuh*) (*Maqāyīs*, sub ʿ-r-b).

Arabs and Arabic

Classical dictionaries and exegetical works describe Arabic as the language spoken by the Arabs. This pragmatic definition is then explicated by emphasizing the intimate relation between language and people (see LANGUAGE AND SPEECH). The phrase *rajul ʿarabī* (“Arabic man”) describes a man who is of established Arab lineage, whether or not he is proficient in the Arabic language. The plural *al-ʿarab* is formed by removing the attributive final letter *yāʾ*, just as the plural *al-yahūd* (“the Jews”) is formed from the attributive phrase *rajul yahūdī* (“a Jewish man”). A *muʿrib* is someone who speaks Arabic fluently, whether or not they are of Arab lineage. The word *aʿrābī* (pl. *aʿrāb* and *aʿarīb*) signifies the Bedouin (*q.v.*), the nomadic desert-dweller following the courses of the rain in search of fresh herbage, whether he is of the Arabs proper or of their clients (*q.v.*); those settled in townships are the *ʿarab*, whether or not they are fluent in Arabic. Finally, a distinction is drawn between the Arabs “proper” (the so-called *ʿarab ʿarība*) and the “Arabicized/naturalized” Arabs (*ʿarab mustaʿriba* and *mutaʿarriba*), who became Arab after having been non-Arab (*ʿajam*), whether through genealogical filiation or through proficiency in Arabic (Azharī; Jawharī, *Ṣiḥāḥ*; Ibn Manẓūr). The difference between Arab and non-Arab is not reducible to a matter of either lineage or language, which are rather closely bound.

Some contend that the Arabs received their name because they were descended from Yaʿrub b. Qaḥṭān, forefather of the Yemenites, “the first whose tongue Allah caused to speak the language of the Arabs.” Others hold that Yaʿrub was the first to convert (*naqal*) the earlier, primordial language of Syriac (*suryānī*) into Arabic, and that they were thus named after what he did. The lexicographer al-Azharī (d. 369/980) and others are of the view that Arabs are named after their land, al-ʿArabāt. Iṣḥāq b. al-Faraj defines ʿAraba as the open country (*bāḥa*) of the Arabs, being also the abode (*q.v.*) of Prophet Ismāʿīl, upon him peace, the “Father of Eloquence” (*Abū l-faṣāḥa*)—for the descendants of Ismāʿīl multiplied and spread across the Arabian Peninsula from ʿAraba, where he was raised, while the Quraysh remained there. ʿAraba