

## **The Development of Animal Totem Worship among Arabs Before Islam**

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**Abstract---** This research aims to address the animal totem worship of Arabs before Islam, as one of the main features in the religious aspect. The religious factor played an important role in ancient societies, as we find religion as a phenomenon and a social need that accompanies people throughout their lives, and among these societies is the Arabian Peninsula community before Islam. Who was concerned with the worship and sanctification of animals to obtain blessing, and then taking animal religious symbols instead, and this phenomenon was not widespread among the Arabs only, but in the countries of the ancient world even and it continues until now in the countries of Australia, South America, Africa and India. Therefore, in this modest research, we will try to identify the ancient Arab view of sacred animals and how that view developed.

**Keywords---** Totem, Before Islam, Animals.

### **I. Introduction**

Totemism is one of the religious phenomena prevalent among the Arabs before Islam. It is one of the ancient ways of worship and a form of primitive beliefs known to humans, including the Arabs before Islam. Totemism, with its religious orientation, was prevalent in the tribes of the Arabian Peninsula before Islam. This brief research has been divided into two main axes. In the first, we dealt with the nature of totemism and its beginning among peoples and nations, showing the sanctification and worship of the totem among Arab tribes before Islam. As for the second axis, we dealt with the divisions and types of the totem in terms of the religious and social aspect of the Arab tribes before Islam. In our research, we have relied on many sources and references that dealt with the subject in some detail, especially with regard to the subject of the second axis, and there is no space here to mention it.

### **II. The First Beginnings of Totemism among the Arabs before Islam**

Totemism is one of the oldest, if not the oldest, ways of worship, and peoples who are considered to be among the most primitive in the world and far from the causes of civilization walk on it, as evidenced by the elevation of its owners into brutality.

Totemism came from the derivation of one of the Amerindian languages from the word ototemom, which are tribes that live in North America (1).

In the terminology, the totem refers to beings that are respected by some savage tribes, and each member of the tribe believes in a lineage relationship between him and one of them, which he calls a totem (2).

The word totem was coined at the end of the seventeenth century AD in a book published by (Ji Lang) in 1791, who is a descendant of the ancient Americans (3), as he was serving as a translator between the whites and the American Indians in North America (4).

The totem is a form of primitive beliefs that humans knew in the Old Stone Age, which is the sanctification or worship of a bird, plant, inanimate or any natural phenomenon (lightning - thunder - rain - flood) by a certain group (tribe - clan - family). It is considered by its protective deity, and believes that its members descended from it or are spiritually related to it, and then it became a symbol of its unity and existence, and later this symbol developed in modern times into images of animals or birds such as the eagle, eagle, deer, and others, which some peoples and societies made their symbols (5) Including the Arab community before Islam.

Scholars differed about the beginning of totemism, the time of its appearance, its purposes, its causes, theories, and considerations, and it emerged from these divergent differences that the beginning of totemism was unlimited and could not be determined because of its depth in history, and all that is known about this phenomenon is that it represents a barbaric nation in the role of its primitiveness that sanctifies animals and plants(6).

Therefore, totemism began with primitive peoples, and we see its effects with the Arabs before Islam, but we do not know how it originated in the pre-Islamic era.(7).

The first to connect totemism with human history is the Scottish scientist MacLean (Mac Linnan), who published several articles in which he explained that totemism is not only a religion, but that it is the religion that inspires

several beliefs and rituals whose effects were found in the advanced religions. He even claimed that what we see are traces of the worship of animals and plants. Arising from totemism itself (8).

Among the indications of ancient Arab totemism is that they used to name their tribes after animals, such as: Banu Asad (9) - Banu Fahd (10) - Banu Kalb - Banu Thawr - Banu Dieb - Banu Yarubu (11), and many other names.

Before Islam, the Arabs sanctified the animal and worshiped it, as the people of the totem sanctify it and worship it. A gift from the gifts of an animal god, rather the Arab before Islam used to sanctify the animal and worship it in order to obtain blessing for it (12).

One of the researchers refers to the passage of the Arabs before Islam through the totemic stage, through the study of some aspects in the life of the tribes in the Arabian Peninsula, such as some names and the sanctification of some natural phenomena such as stones, animals, planets and some Arab myths and the spread of the use of parts of animals in the process of medicine. that the Arab tribes went through, as their economic activity depended on hunting and grazing (13).

Several animal names were mentioned as nicknames for Arab tribes before Islam, and to justify these names are two opinions: The first is that these names, according to the claim of some orientalist, have religious meanings, and that they are related to the worship of animals, as is seen in the totemic doctrine, and the second is on the claim of the lineages of Arabs that these names were titles. On well-known historical people, they passed in sequence to their successors, and then each of them became a nickname for a clan or tribe. E (14) grandfather of Quda'ah(15).

As one of the researchers sees that naming these animal names is one of the natural rules observed by other nations, and perhaps the Arabs before Islam were more adherent to them because of their cruelty and cruelty, in addition to the names of wars and others that abounded in their view such as war, victory, aggression, arrow, rock and the like (16). One of the Bedouins: "You did not give your sons human names like a dog and a wolf, and your servants with the best of them, like Marzuq and Rabah? He said: We name our sons for our enemies and our slaves for ourselves" (17).

The orientalist also infer from naming some tribes after the names of the gods they worshiped, that it was not a rare matter for the Arabs. They worshiped it before Islam, and of this kind, Banu Ghanm and Nehm, all of which were taken from the names of the gods that were worshiped by those tribes, so they claimed from this that the animals to which some Arab tribes are attributed before Islam were originally worshiped by them (18).

The Arabs before Islam naming their men after the names of animals is a natural matter that is supported by reducing these names for the sake of endearment, as they say: Dhu'ayb, Usayd, and Kulaib. Strange thing (19).

We can conclude that most likely these names were nicknames applied to all nations and not exclusively to the Arabs, and not as the orientalist claimed that the names of their tribes came in the form of ancient animal worship and sanctification. And the girl is beautiful and gentle, and they see her as a deer or a dove, or perhaps the man, if a male is born to him, goes out exposed to the omen. Guardianship and loyalty, so why is it not meant in this sense, if they did not have totemism in their minds.

The most accurate and critical thing, and what drew the attention of most researchers, and we agree with them as well, is that most orientalist, including Smith, did not refer in their research to historical Arab sources in this matter, so their research and books need accurate reviews and response to them in a scientific language far from fanaticism, because everything is managed in their minds, and what they claim is to slander the lineage of the Arabs (20).

Also, Jurji Zaidan opposed this theory which says that the origin of the Arabs goes back to the totem for naming their tribes after the names of animals, mentioning that naming one of their tribes Banu Bakr, for example, explains the son of the camel, but it has another meaning, which is (the virgin), the cloud and the generosity, even if we prefer its first meaning, which is the son of the camel. Since there was something in the naming of totemism, because the Arabs before Islam were allowed to name an animal and worship it, the camel or (camel) would have been more important than others, due to the old covenant with them and its importance in their lives. The Hebrews were in their early roles naming in this style, so there were many animal names in their names, such as their saying: Rabbi (lion), Shawwal (fox) etc. 00 as well as the English, Greeks, Romans and others (21).

The issue of the use of nicknames among Arabs before Islam is a well-known issue and was common among most peoples and nations, and the Arabs are especially mentioned, due to their survival on nomadism and by virtue of their homes that they took among wild beasts and other animals, and also because of their necessary need for these animals in their daily lives, some of which lived with them in the dwelling itself.

There are also those who point out that these nicknames were attached to the original name, then the name went away and the nickname remained, because the Arabs are innate in the nickname and the technique, and this is clear from reviewing their lexicons, and indicates that the Adnanite tribes used to have more animal names than the Qahtaniyah tribes, because of the inhabitation of these tribes In the deserts of Najd and Hijaz, among the beasts and insects, they singled out each animal with a nature that they attributed to it, such as the arrogance of the fox, the

courage of the lion, and the anger of the tiger. (bullying), as on the other hand they used to call animals by people's names and nicknames them, so the lion is called Abu Al-Harith, the dog is Abu Khaled, and so on (22).

### III. Second: The Totem Divisions in Terms of its Religious Symbolism

First - the totem of the tribe: It is a general totem that members of a tribe share in its sanctification or worship, and they are named after him and believe that he is their supreme ancestor. That totem(23), and the difference between it and other totems is that this totem shared in the clan is inherited by a person from his mother or father (24).

### IV. Second - The Personal Totem

It means that each member of the tribe has his own totem from which he takes his name and protection and is mostly an animal. This person is that the characteristics of his totem are transmitted to him, so if the totem is a punishment, the person is distinguished by the strength of looking from afar, and if the totem is a bear, it is believed that it is wounded in combat because it is slow to move like a totem, and if the animal falls ill, the person becomes ill, and this type of totem is chosen by the person in a religious ceremony, Or it may be chosen for him from his birth, or he may pass from the father or the personal uncle to the son, and this is in some tribes, but not all (25).

Thirdly - the sexual totem: it means the specialization of the males of the tribe with a totem specific to them and the females with a totem specific to them, and it is not the totem of the tribe as well as other than the personal totem (26), and this means that it may be the husband has his own totem, and the woman has her own totem that differs from the totem of her husband and the totem of her tribe.

Totemism for the Arabs before Islam is based on two considerations: a religious consideration and a social consideration, and the tribes differ from each other with these considerations according to the local environment. Three manifestations:

1. Mutual cooperation: the tribe or people of the Arabs before Islam was divided into clans, bellies, clans and the like, and the authority of some sheikhs over the Arab tribes was limited, because the Arabs were people of solution and nomads who changed their elders by changing their places (27). By the tribe's affiliation with him rather than others from his people is that his name is known for his leadership, bravery, many children or others, so his sons and all his descendants are affiliated to him, and he may be attributed to him other than his descendants from his clan such as his brothers and towards them, so it is said so-and-so Al-Ta'i, and if one of them is famous also for one of the foregoing reasons His sons were attributed to him and made a second tribe (28), but a man from Bani Kilab could be attributed to Bani Asad because of his bravery. Brothers and sisters cooperate in thick and thin, as they said, "Help your brother whether he is an oppressor or the oppressed." People used to prevail between the bellies of one tribe if their bellies divided, like the enmity between the Aws and the Khazraj, and Abd Shams and Hashem, and sometimes the Arab tribes helped the oppressed against their bellies, as it is mentioned that the individual was fighting s By his own state, this also violates the totemic law because it obliges the owners of one totem to cooperate over the owners of the other totem. If war breaks out, the man fights on behalf of his wife, and the child on behalf of his father and mother (29).
2. External marriage: We found that the Arab did not look at external marriage in terms of Sharia, because those looking for motherhood were forced to accept the existence of four ties in the pre-Islamic era: Sharia marriage (30), the marriage of Istibah (31) and another marriage in which many people gather. These marriages do not restrict the man or the woman not to marry from within their tribe. The customary law among Arabs before Islam was for a man to marry from within his tribe, and this custom is rooted in their morals for generations and continues to this day. Bedouins still prefer the oldest cousins in the right to marry. with his cousin (32).

If these sayings indicate anything, they indicate the internal marriage of the Arabs before Islam, i.e. from within his clan or tribe, and these sayings contradict the totemic law that obligates external marriage.

External marriage among primitive tribes is one of the most important features of the totem society, which means that followers of the same totem cannot establish sexual relations between them, in other words that the youth of the tribe must marry, but not to the daughters of the tribe, but to the daughters of another clan(33) from outside their tribe(33) This is what is meant by external marriage (34).

(Freud)takes a careful look to show that external marriage constitutes an integral part of the totemic system, which forbids a man from sexual intercourse with any woman of his group. An absolute prohibition against sexual intercourse (35).

The reason for marrying from outside the tribe is that totem owners believe that intermarriage from the same tribe is harmful to health until the bones corrode, and they punish those who do it with death or painful torment, so they take women from other tribes by conquest or consent or the like (36).

In sum, this strict prohibition is very strange, and we do not find any premises or evidence for it that indicate external marriage among Arabs before Islam, but we do not want to obligate to say that the Arabs restricted

marriage to within the tribe always and forever, rather we find that they were not very adherent to the ritual of marriage as companions Totem in savage tribes such as Australia and America.

One of the researchers mentions a text in the matter of marriage among the Arabs, "They punished the adulterer with death, and the adulterer in their view is the one who had intercourse with a woman from outside his clan" (37). It is obligatory in the totemic law.

#### V. Conclusion

1. After completing this research entitled (The Development of Animal Totem Worship among Arabs Before Islam), we reached several conclusions, which we summarize as follows:
2. Totemic worship is one of the worships associated with ancient pagan religions, and it was clearly linked to the religion of the Arabs before Islam.
3. Signs of totemic worship appeared since the beginning of the emergence of religion in primitive societies, although it is not possible to accurately determine its beginning.
4. Through the study, it became clear to us, the existence of animal totem worship among the Arabs before Islam. They believed that their lives were linked to this animal deity, but rather they worshiped him to obtain blessing only.
5. Also, one of the basics of the totem is external marriage, meaning that the youth of the totem tribe must marry, but not to the daughters of the tribe because it prevents the establishment of sexual relations between them, but from the daughters of another clan, and this is the opposite of what the Arabs have, as the usual among them is the internal marriage between Cousins or clan, and so far these customs still prevail.
6. It is clear from the texts that totemism among the Arabs before Islam, was present with its religious symbolism, in contrast to the social orientation, which was not available in all its conditions in the antiquities of the Arabs before Islam.

#### Margins

- [1] Marei: A Dictionary of Gods and Mythical Beings in the Ancient Near East, p. 3310.
- [2] Shalhat: Towards a New Theory in Religious Sociology (Totism - Judaism - Christianity - Islam), p. 111-112.
- [3] Al-Hashemi: History and Philosophy of Religions, p. 81.
- [4] Khan: Arab Myths before Islam, p. 55.
- [5] Marei: A Dictionary of Gods and Mythical Beings, p. 331.
- [6] Khan: Arab Myths before Islam, pg. 59.
- [7] Khan: Arab Myths, p. 61.
- [8] Al-Hashimi: History and Philosophy of Religions, p. 82.
- [9] Banu Asad: An Arab tribe of Mudariyah, Adnaniyya, attributed to Asad bin Khuzayma bin Mudar bin Nizar, see: Ibn Habib: The Various Tribes and Their Compounds, pg. 67; Al-Baladhuri: Sentences from Ansab Al-Ashraf, p. 36; Al-Qalqashandi: The End of the Lord in Knowing the Genealogy of the Arabs, p. 38.
- [10] Banu Fahd: It is one of the stomachs of the Arab tribe of Banu Ka'b, and it is also one of the branches of the (Khalid) tribe, the oldest of the Arab tribes. See: Ali: Al-Mofassal, Part 8, p. 120; Kahala: Dictionary of Ancient and Modern Arab Tribes, pg. 327.
- [11] Banu Yarubu': It is one of the tribes of Tamim al-Adnani, and these are Banu Yarbu' bin Hanzala bin Malik bin Zaid bin Manat bin Tamim. Al-Qalqashandi: Nihat Al-Arb, pg. 450.
- [12] Khan: Arabian Myths, 83.
- [13] Al-Zawari: A Brief History of the Arabian Peninsula Before Islam, pg. 48.
- [14] Kalb Bin Wabra: His name is Kalb Bin Wabra Bin Taghlib Bin Tha'labah Bin Helwan Bin Al-Haf Bin Quda'ah. See: Al-Zarkali: Media, Part 5, p. 230.
- [15] Al-Qalqashandi: Subh Al-Asha, vol. 1, p. 368; Khan: Arab Myths, p. 67.
- [16] Zaidan: Ansab of the Ancient Arabs, pg. 45.
- [17] Al-Dumairi: The Life of the Great Animal, Volume 2, pg. 378.
- [18] Khan: Arab Myths, pp. 69-70.
- [19] Zidan: The Genealogy of the Ancient Arabs, pg. 46.
- [20] Salem: Totemism of the Arabs, pg. 30.
- [21] Zidane: Genealogy of the Ancient Arabs, pg. 43.
- [22] Zidane: Ansab Al-Arab, pg. 47-48.
- [23] Shalhat: Towards a New Theory in Religious Sociology, p. 113.
- [24] Al-Hashimi: History and Philosophy of Religions, pg. 97.
- [25] Al-Hashimi: History of Religions, pp. 96-97.

- [26] Shalhat: Towards a New Theory in Religious Sociology, p. 116.
- [27] Khan: Arab Myths, pp. 61-62.
- [28] Al-Qalqashandi: Subh Al-Asha, Part 1, pg. 362.
- [29] Khan: Arab Myths, pp. 62-63.
- [30] Legitimate marriage: It is the marriage that takes place with the consent of the woman and through the mediation of the guardian and by declaration and two witnesses; see: Ibn Baz: Majmoo' Fatwas of the scholar Abdulaziz Ibn Baz, vol. 20, p. 269.
- [31] Nikah al-Istibah': It is that a man used to say to his wife, if she became pure from her menstruation, "Send to so-and-so, and I will intercede with him".
- [32] Khan: Arab Myths Before Islam, p. 63.
- [33] Al-Majidi: Science of Religions, p. 184.
- [34] Shali: A Brief History of Religions, p. 26.
- [35] Freud: The Totem and the Forbidden, p. 14.
- [36] Shalhat: Towards a New Theory in Religious Sociology, p. 117.
- [37] Khan: Arab Legends, p. 63.

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