

THE UNIVERSITY OF HULL

IRQAH: A VILLAGE COMMUNITY IN NAJD

being a Thesis submitted for the Degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

by

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To the soul of my father who was not only interested in my education, but who taught me many things about practical life; and to Faisal whom I wish a successful career in his lifetime.

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INTRODUCTION

I selected Irqah village as the object of my thesis after difficult circumstances had prevented me from conducting a study of the Ḥarāḍ Project for Bedouin Settlement. After I had lived there for more than two months I was suddenly not allowed to continue. In addition to another two months which I had spent preparing myself for that particular field trip, I had to spend a similar period in Riyadh trying to overcome the difficulties.

My selection of the village of Irqah as a substitute was not accidental or haphazard. It was a result of a very careful scrutiny not only by me, but also by my supervisor in the Department of Sociology and Social Anthropology of the University of Hull. There were two options for me: either to go back home without realising the purpose for which I had come to this country, or attempt some other field while acknowledging the risk of similar untoward circumstances.

* The village of Irqah was selected as suitable. Why Irqah in particular when there are many other communities in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia worthy of study? * I wanted to avoid the possibility of facing circumstances similar to those which prevented me from doing field work on the Ḥarāḍ Project. Further, (I had some previous acquaintance with the village and some of its people, particularly the Amir, during my work for the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs. The village had a Community Development Centre of the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs which I thought would be a suitable means of introducing myself to the villagers, and one which would prevent them becoming suspicious about my stay among them, and would ensure a favourable response on their part. I thought that the small size of the village would give me an advantage in the task of getting into close contact with the inhabitants. Finally the vicinity of the village to Riyadh would itself give rise to some interesting research questions.]

These are the main factors in my choice of Irqah village. The research itself was not free from obstacles and challenges, of which some are related to the nature of the study itself and others to the nature of the villagers.

The difficulties of the nature of the study stemmed from the fact of going to the field without a particular fieldwork method in mind. Undoubtedly I knew that I was going to collect ethnographic data about the village, its people, and its social structure. But how would this be carried out? Would it be through observation and ordinary personal contact with the villagers, would it be through a comprehensive survey, or would it be done through combining the two approaches?

I was convinced of the possibility and convenience of the first approach after having gained the villagers' confidence. But at the same time it would not acquaint me with other aspects of their lives, of the kind which cannot be brought up in ordinary discussion. It was necessary then to combine the two approaches, although there were many dangers in formulating questions which would not give offence, and which would be readily answered. Accordingly my questionnaire was as simple as possible so that questions could be answered either by Yes or No. To this I consulted experts of Diryah Centre for Applied Research and Studies. Subsequently the questionnaire passed through the following stages. First, drafting the questions that were included in the questionnaire in a primary form. The experts of Diryah Centre twice suggested useful amendments. Having agreed on its final form it was necessary to discuss it with both the Amir and the Judge of the village before it was printed. The Amir suggested that any question relating to ownership of live-stock or poultry should be eliminated because the villagers disapproved of such questions. The Judge strongly emphasised that the questions should have a religious slant in their concepts and contents, for as he said:

Sociology has been imported from the West and that the West has taken its research methods from the Arabs. Therefore, if a person adheres to religion and its traditions he will be convinced and confident in the Islamic social approach as regards fate and conduct. That Islam, as represented in the Qur'an and Hadith, is most capable of remedying many social problems as well as of helping man to be useful in this world and the hereafter.

I tried to convince him that I was in a total agreement with him, that this sort of study had nothing to do with religion, and that social studies were

not new to Islamic thought for Ibn Khaldūn and al-Farabi were among the pioneers of sociology.

The next step concerned the printing of the questionnaire. Since it was not possible for the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs to pay its cost, due to routine regulations, I was able to have it printed by the trainees of the Printing Section of the Vocational Training Centre on condition that I provided the necessary material.

Having completed the process of filling out the questionnaire from the villagers, I was confronted with the difficulty of sorting it out. Would I take it with me to be sorted out in England though it was written in Arabic? I discussed the matter with the Director-General of Diriyah Centre who promised to arrange for it to be sorted out provided that I should not expect it to be done quickly.

The difficulties concerning the nature of the villagers were mainly due to the fact that Irqah lies in the centre of Najd which is well known for its strict conservatism and fanaticism. ^H [The villagers, especially the elderly, are always suspicious of strange people who are not connected with one of the government agencies in the village. My presence in the village caused their inquisitiveness and made them ask whether I was newly appointed clerk for the Community Development Centre. In order that I should avoid their suspicion I thought it was necessary first of all to make close acquaintance with the village Judge and the Head of Religious Guidance Centre, as these represent the religious leadership. Therefore, I kept visiting the first in the Court and the other at his home so that I could gain the villagers' confidence through the prominent religious people. At the same time I was very careful to observe performance of prayers in different mosques in order not to attach myself to any particular one. Gradually some of the villagers relaxed to my presence among them. But that relaxation was not free from suspicion or disdain. Their suspicion derived from their being not quite sure about the purpose of my research and whether it was related to some government agency. Assuming that it was assigned by a government agency,

what would result from it in the future? Their disdain stemmed from the fact that some of them were not convinced that my work had no government connection. It was hard for them to be convinced that while I get a government salary I spent my time conducting the field work as an end in itself, to the extent indeed that some of them used to call me the crazy researcher (al-mubahith al-muhabil). Some others used to answer my enquiry saying "May God provide you with the means of subsistence" (Allah yarzigak) which is the answer to beggars.

That does not mean that most of the villagers were not very cooperative. In fact some of them were extremely helpful. But they all were astonished at the length of time I stayed with them, to the extent that whenever I met one of them asked me whether I was not finished yet, and what else I want to know. Even the responsible officials of the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs were perplexed about the duration I spent in the field, to the extent that some of them thought that I intended not going back to England.

Perhaps such attitudes, whether on the part of the villagers themselves or those of the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, are attributable to their unfamiliarity with the nature of this sort of anthropological study. They thought that my research was a mere data collection which would not take more than two or three months at the most.

These are some of the difficulties which were related to my approach and the nature of the villagers. What are then the findings of the field work and its result?

I wish to stress that there is neither any sort of anthropological studies on the village itself or on other similar villages in Najd, or even in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. It follows that the ethnography here presented is new. It follows, in addition, that there were no closely related studies to help me as a guideline.

Throughout the chapters of the thesis I have tried an ethnographic account of the village, with special emphasis on religion and its effects on other aspects of the village life. In order to demonstrate the role

played by religion I have tried, as far as possible, to explain the meaning of religious words and terms on the one hand, and the way religious rites - whether obligatory or recommended - are performed on the other hand. I must admit that this task was not so easy due to obstacles of translation. Some religious expressions are not easy to understand by educated people let alone the illiterate. For example I heard, during the address at the Sacrificial 'Eid delivered by the Judge, some words which I could not understand. I have not yet found a strict equivalent word for (la'awa'a) which I translated as "misfortune".

The main difficulties in describing Islamic rites arise because Islamic worship comprises saying and action-saying is represented in invocation either by reading verses from the Qur'ān or texts of Ḥadīth. And action is represented in performing the rites accordingly. Obscurity in my interpretation of some religious rites is again due to the difficulties in translating religious concepts from Arabic into English. As regards some Qur'ānic verses included in the thesis, I have used a translated text of the Qur'ān by Abdullah Yusuf Ali.

Some may argue that describing religious rites and behaviour through mere observation is sufficient, or is at least easier than making further elaboration on religious concepts and terms. For the task of translation might lead to other dangers of misrepresentation. This could be true in describing religious rites in communities where certain individuals are specialised in their performance through secret methods known only to them while others are spectators and not participants. But the situation in a conservative Islamic community like that of Irqah village is different. For religious leaders (Imams) do not perform worship without the participation of the followers (ma'mumīn), but they all participate collectively in performing religious rites. For instance, an Imam takes the lead and his followers take part the same way. Thus it is not enough to say that the villagers perform such and such religious rites without mentioning what they actually say.

Furthermore, religion involves almost every aspect of the village life and custom. Individual habits and customs as well as health, economic activities and education are all profoundly affected by religion. Natural phenomena, like rainfall and eclipses of the sun and moon are explained in religious terms. Such phenomena take place according to God's will, through which He intimidates His people whenever they deviate from His commands. And while changes are proceeding in the village, the religious institution is largely unaffected by change.

In the meantime, the effects of environmental factors on the social life of the villagers have been dealt with as briefly as possible. Environmental factors, like scarcity of water, have always caused hardship, for subsistence particularly in the past was dependent on agricultural products. A community cannot be fully understood without indicating the way its members adapt themselves to its environment. In other words,

...no culture is wholly intelligible without reference to the non-cultural or so-called environmental factors with which it is in relation and which condition it. 1

In the village of Irqah religion, agricultural activities and health habits, etc., are in fact a phase of its environment. According to R.A. Rappaport,

religious ritual and the supernatural orders towards which they are directed cannot be assumed a priori to be mere epiphenomena. Ritual way, and doubtless frequently does, ...validate and intensify the relationship which integrate the social unit, or symbolize the relationship which bind the social unit to its environment. 2

The village is noticeably a religious community, and I emphasise this in my presentation by giving first an account of the formal religious duties. Subsequent chapters indicate the place of religion in other aspects of village life. An account of education, which follows, contrasts with the

-
1. Alfred L. Kroeber, "Relations of Environmental and Cultural Factors". In Andrew P. Vayda (ed.), Environmental and Cultural Behaviour. Ecological Studies in Cultural Anthropology, (Garden City, N.Y.: The Natural History Press, 1969). p.330.
 2. Roy A. Rappaport "Ritual Regulation of Environmental Relations Among a New Guinea People". Ibid., p.199.

conservatism of the religion, the possibility of progressiveness which schooling and the media give rise to. Next follows discussion of the physical aspects of the village and means of making a living - agriculture, and other economic activities. A chapter on village history precedes the analysis of groupings within the village and family organisation. This enables the reader then to appreciate many features of the administrative organisations existing in the village like the Emirate and the Shariā Court. Finally I examine the prospect of change in the light of the data presented, particularly the impact of religion and education.

This thesis is a result of eleven months' field work from September 1973 to August 1974, during which I lived among the villagers and participated in the occasions of marriage and the various religious rites. Also I could visit most of them in their houses though some of the Bedouin were reluctant to let me close to their huts because they suspected that I might run into their women.

But not all what is observed or heard can be written, because many of the villagers took my word that our conversations were to be friendly and confidential, not to be circulated. Nevertheless, throughout the chapters of this thesis I have tried to be accurate and honest in putting forward and representing my data. I have not relied on a particular source but I compared different sources which were contradictory in many cases. But it should be stressed that it was not really possible for me to get in touch with the village women except one whom I referred to in Chapter VI. Thus my data in this respect are drawn from many reliable informants who, on many occasions, refused to give detailed answers since they thought that the world of women ought not to be discussed with outsiders.

The village under study is a typical community of its type in the Najd region of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. I consider that its culture and structure does not differ substantially from other villages of that region. As is justified by the fact that this is a pioneering study of a Saudi Arabian village community, the thesis inevitably has an ethnographic slant.

As far as expressions cited in this work are concerned, they are transliterated according to the way they are pronounced locally apart from religious terms which are transliterated in accordance with their usage in classical Arabic.

CHAPTER I

THE RELIGIOUS DUTIES OF THE VILLAGERS

Iraqah village, like any other rural community in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, is pious to an extent that makes it difficult to separate religious from other aspects of the lives, and of the values and ideals of its people.

Religion imposes a strict way of life and governs the thoughts and the actions of the villagers.¹ There is a direct relation between religion and social structure, and this is seen in the villagers' belief that the regular performance of religious rites contributes to the well-being of the community and to the maintenance of social order.² Piety gives a person a good reputation and a morally esteemed social position since respect and appreciation depend on regular fulfilment of religious rites.

Villagers engage in intensive practice of religious teachings, particularly the elderly, who believe strongly that deviation from religion or neglect of rites is dangerous since it brings forth anger and revenge from God.

The history and environment of the village help to strengthen their religious beliefs, which are mainly based on faith in God and fear of the unknown that is known only to Him. Most of the village people used to be farmers depending entirely on the irregular rainfall for their living. The rainfall depends on the will of God, who orders it to fall on those obeying His commands as represented in Islam. Plentiful rain is a proof of God's satisfaction and forgiveness which is in turn a result of the villagers' observation to their religious rites, whereas lack of rain is an indication of God's anger which is a consequence of their disobedience and their failure to pursue their religious rites in accordance with

1. Cf. Abdulla Lutfiyya, Baytīn. A Jordanian Village. A Study of Social Institutions in a Folk Community (The Hague: Mouton, 1966), p.38.

2. Cf. M.N.Srinivas, Religion and Society among the Coorgs of South India (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1952), p.ix.

Islamic teachings. Whatever the circumstances it is God that they have to thank for prosperity, and from whom they have to beg forgiveness during difficult times. Since Irqah is a small village, its people are well acquainted with each other and it is easy to know who is performing his religious rites and who is not.

The villagers consider that disasters arising from human as well as from natural causes are derived from the will of God. The fierce fighting in which the village was involved caused the death of many of its people and destruction of their wealth and the loss of their properties. They believe that these wars were the result of human evil, namely the disobedience to God and the failure to pursue the teachings of Islam at that time.

In this chapter I describe how the villagers, who belong to the Hanbali School of Sunnite Islam, conceive and practise their religious rites. Hanbalism is the fourth orthodox school of Sunnite division of Islam which grew up from the teaching of Ahmad Ibn Hanbal (241/855). Its doctrine is based on a very strict puritanical practice of Islam according to the Qur'an and the Hadith without further interpretation. It therefore unquestionably rejects innovation, saint-worship, pilgrimage to shrines and the use of beads during prayers, on the grounds that such practice is alien to the pure principles of Islam as revealed in the Qur'an and practised by the Prophet. It considers that photography and other secular innovations are inconsistent with its doctrine. The Wahhabi religious reform,³ is a puritan revival of Hanbalism and, therefore, it is not an orthodox school by itself and the people of Najd never referred to themselves as Wahhabis.

Islam means obediency, yielding and submission, and conventionally it means submission of man to God by following His commands, avoiding His

3. See Chapter Six.

prescriptions, and following the preachings of the Prophet Muhammad.⁴ "Islam, as a technical term to denote the system of beliefs and rituals based on the Kur'ān", according to the definition of Shorter Encyclopaedia of Islam, "is derived from the recurrent use of the verb aslama ("submit" sc. oneself) in the Kur'ān to denote the characteristic attitude of the true believer in relation to God".⁵ The basis of Islam, from a ritual point of view, can be summarised in the following:

1. Belief in a supreme power, that is God, the creator and the regulator of the whole world.
2. Differentiation between lawful ḥalāl acts and unlawful ḥarām acts according to the revelation of the Qur'ān, the Hadīth, and the Sunna.
3. The performance of the five pillars of Islam, that is:
 - a) The creed (shahādah), "There is no God but Allah and Muhammad is His Prophet".
 - b) The traditional canonical prayer of worship (iqāmat as-salāt) which every Muslim is supposed to perform in a prescribed manner five times a day.
 - c) Almsgiving (aitā az-zakāt) which, as a religious obligation, must be given at the rate of a tithe of any production whether property or money investment. There is a great difference, therefore, between Zakāt and other voluntary contributions.
 - d) The fast during the month of Ramadan (ṣawm ramadan), the ninth month of the Muslim calendar which every adult Muslim must observe.⁶

4. Muhammad A. Talas, Ta'rikh al-Ummah al-Arabiyyah: aṣr al-inbithāq, Vol. II (Beirut: Maktabat al-Andalus, 1957), p. 2.

5. H.A.R. Gibb and J.A. Krämers, Shorter Encyclopaedia of Islam (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1961) p. 176.

6. Some writers, viz. A. Lutfiyya in his book Baytīn, and G.A. Lipski in his book Saudi Arabia, wrongly state that Ramadan fast comes after Zakāt.

- e) The Pilgrimage to the Holy Place in Mecca (ḥāj bait Allah al-ḥāram), which every adult Muslim must achieve once in his lifetime provided that he or she is physically and financially capable of doing so.

These five pillars of Islam loom large in the thinking and behaviour of the villagers in their worship, their everyday transactions, and their ordinary conversation, and indeed in all sorts of relationships existing in the village.

The first thing that directs the attention of a stranger is the religious salutation which the villagers expect from each other whether they are acquaintances or not. The religious salutation takes different forms such as "Peace be upon you", or "Peace by upon you, and the mercy of God". Some may add "The Mercy of God and His blessing" as a gesture of warmer welcome and appreciation. Neglect of the salutation or of its reply, "And peace be upon you", either causes agitation and dissatisfaction to both parties, or indicates that there is some sort of misunderstanding between them. If the passers-by are acquaintances, the salutation becomes longer where thanks to God and the fear of His anger is repeated as follows:

- A. Peace be upon you.
- B. And Peace be upon you, and the mercy of God.
- A. How are you, God lengthen your age.
- B. God lengthen your age, I am very well, thanks to God who is to be praised in all circumstances, I hope you are well.
- A. Thanks to God, I am prosperous and healthy, may God offer us His grace.

Salutation continues in such a way with the name of God frequently repeated, until one says, "In the security of God" and the other replies, "In the care of God and His attention".

In the course of ordinary conversation repeated mention is made of God in phrases like "There is no God but Allah", or "There is no God but Allah, and Muhammad is His Prophet". One frequently interrupts one's talk to say,

"I request your forgiveness Oh Almighty God", or "The will is that of God", and sometimes, "There is neither might nor power but that of God", according to the direction of the discussion and whether it requires expressions of thanks to God or of fear of Him. In case of misunderstanding or dispute the contending parties address each other with such expressions, "Fear of God, you do not fear God", or "May God take my right from you". Before drinking or eating everyone says "In the name of God, the merciful, the compassionate", and straight after eating or drinking everyone says "Thanks to God, God of the people". When someone belches, he has to thank God for furnishing him with something which has filled him. Also when someone sneezes he has to thank God for that method of making him get rid of his discomfort. At the same time those who are present have to say to him "God offers you His mercy", while he further replies, "May God guide you", or, "May God guide you and alleviate your worries".

It is frequently heard that a person repeats praise to God or requests His forgiveness openly. During the first day of 'Eid al-Fitr, the Festival celebrating the end of Ramadan, I went to congratulate an elderly man in his house where our conversation proceeded as follows:

- May every coming year find you enjoying the best of life.
- I wish you the same, may God repeat this occasion while we and you are in prosperity, good health, and forgiveness from sins.
- May it be so.
- I am going to Riyadh today.
- Why do you want to go to Riyadh?
- To congratulate some of my relatives there for the occasion of the 'Eid. I want to go to see them for this purpose today because I am intending to fast the six,⁷ because fasting of these days is a virtue and because I am seeking the reward of God. Since I am poor and therefore not in a position to pay charity, I will do that in place of fasting.

During my stay with him he kept repeating, "There is no God but Allah, Muhammad is His Prophet. God of the East and West, there is no God but you, praise be to you, as I am amongst the unjust".

7. Six days of the month of Shawwāl, the fasting of which will be explained later in this chapter.

When I visited Shaikh Abdul Rahman Ibn Rawwaf, in his house on a rainy night, he was repeating "There is no God but Allah, Oh God, make it fall with prosperity and blessing". I said to him "This is only the start of a magnum bonum". His reply was "God is generous, but the reason we are deprived of rain is because of many prohibited acts committed by the people. Had they been obedient to God and pursued the teaching of the Qur'ān, God would have given them much prosperity". Throughout my stay with him, he was looking at the sky while saying loudly, "There is no God but Allah, Thanks to Allah for His generous giving, Oh God make it an indication of your satisfaction upon us".

These are but a few examples demonstrating how religiously orientated is ordinary conversation in the village. The main religious rites which I will now describe have a direct connection with the structure that can be explained and analysed. I will also describe some occasional rituals, in order to make clear the part of religion in the determination of villagers' behaviour and in the moral unity of the village.

The Five Daily Prayers:

Ṣalah in the Arabic language means call for blessing, and in Islamic law it means certain sayings and actions starting with God's greatness and ending by calling for peace. It is called prayer for it comprises the call for blessing. It was imposed on Muslims on the eve of the Prophet's ascent to heaven, to be performed five times during a day and night.⁸ It is the second Pillar of Islam whose performance is a duty of both adult males and females according to the Qur'ān, Sunna, and Consensus (ijmā').⁹

There are essential conditions required for attending prayers: namely, a worshipper must be a Muslim, sane, rational, and free from all kinds of

8. Shaikh Manṣūr al-Bahūni, al-Rauḍ al-Murbie': Sharḥ Zād al-Mustanga', Vol.I (Riyadh: Maktabat al-Riyadh al-Hadītha, 1970) p.118.

9. Shaikh Salih al-Bilahi al-Salsabīl fi Ma'rifāt al-Dalīl: Hashiyah 'Ala Zād al-Mustanga', Vol.I (Riyadh: Maṭabie' Najd al-Tijariyah, 1966), p.56.

pollution. Also it should be performed at a specified time¹⁰ as well as facing Mecca with the intention (niyah) of saying prayer.¹¹

Although the obligatory nature of prayers is confirmed in the Qur'ān, Sunna and Ijmā', the Qur'ān does not, in fact, specify the manner of their performance.¹² Hence, prayers as they are practised by Muslims, have been pursued according to the Prophet Muhammad who explained the manner of praying which has been followed by Muslims ever since.

Since prayer is the second Pillar of Islam and a religious obligation, those who abandon it are considered unbelievers and should be punished accordingly.

Certain procedures have to be followed before each prayer. Thus when the time of a prayer is due, the Muezzin (Muddhdhin), the caller for prayer, announces the call for prayer adhān, which means in ordinary language notification,¹³ but in Islamic law "notification of the due time for prayer".¹⁴ The Muezzin usually calls for prayer from a minaret, shouting "God is Great" four times, "I testify that there is no God but Allah and that Muhammad is the Prophet of God, come to prayer, come to success, God is great", repeating each phrase twice, then he ends the adhān by saying, "There is no God but Allah". The minarets of all eight mosques in the village are furnished with microphones.

On the call for prayer, or a few minutes before, all shops are closed and gatherings on streets and in houses disperse for prayer, men in the mosques and women in their houses. Before attending prayer everyone must purify himself by washing first hands then private parts, then rinsing the mouth with water, sniffing some water into the nose, and again washing hands

10. Shaikh al-Bahūni, op.cit., pp.131-33.

11. Ibid., pp.139, 156 and 160.

12. A.S.Tritton, Islam Belief and Practices (London: Hutchinson's University Library, 1951), p.24.

13. Athān, or adhān, is "announcement" a technical term for the call to the divine service of Friday and the five daily Salats. See Gibb and Krämer, op.cit., p.16.

14. Shaikh al-Bahūni, op.cit., p.123.

and face. Then he rubs water on head and ears and lastly washes the feet. A person who has not broken wind since a previous prayer is considered clean, unless he has eaten camel meat or beef, in which case he is supposed to do his ablutions again in the same way except for the private parts.

Some ten minutes or so after the call for prayer the villagers gather inside the mosque, where everyone first ought to perform separately two bows and four kneelings as a gesture of greeting to the mosque (tahiyat al-masjid). While waiting for the prayer to start everyone of the gathering utters in a loud voice texts from the Qur'an either from memory or reading; many copies of the Qur'an are kept in every mosque. If one cannot read one sits silently or praises God in a low voice.

When the prayer leader, the Imam, enters the mosque he says to the Muezzin in a loud voice "declare the prayer", informs the gathering that they should stand up. The Muezzin then stands up saying loudly "God is great, God is great, I testify that there is no God but Allah, I testify that there is no God but Allah, I testify that Muhammed is the Prophet of God, Come to prayer, Come to success, prayer has started, prayer has started, God is great. There is no God but Allah". During this time the Imam takes the lead among the parallel lines of worshippers, which vary in number with the size of the congregation. When the Imam takes the lead he looks to the right and to the left saying "Straighten your lines". Sometimes he adds "Do not leave gaps in your lines". Then he starts the prayer saying, "God is great" and reads the first ext of the Qur'an al-Fatiha, at the end of which prayer performers say in a loud voice "Amen". Afterwards he reads a text or part of a text from the Qur'an. The Imam then kneels down while saying "God is great" for a period of time allowing every one to say "My God is far above" three times in a low voice. After that he stands up saying in a loud voice "God hears him who praised Him" while his followers do the same saying "Our God, praise is to You". The Imam bows saying loudly "God is great" for a while allowing his followers to say "Praise is to you my might God" three times. At the end of every prayer,

the whole gathering sit on their heels saying in low voices the greetings (tahīyat) which consist of the following request:

Greetings are to God, prayers and glory. Peace be upon you Oh Prophet as well as mercies and blessing of God. I testify that there is no God but Allah, and that Muhammad is His slave and messenger. Oh God pray for Muhammad and the Muhammads as you have prayed for Ibrahim and the Ibrahims that you are praiseworthy and glorious. Oh God bless Muhammad and the Muhammads as you have blessed Ibrahim and the Ibrahims. I seek the protection of God from the torture of hell, the torture of the grave, the fascination of life and death and the fascination of the pretended Christ.

Finally the Imam looks right and left while saying "Peace be upon you, His mercy and his blessings" and the worshippers follow suit in word and motion. These greetings are said in every prayer whether obligatory or voluntary.

Having finished the prayer as such mentioned, the Imam faces the congregation repeating loudly, while everyone is sitting on his heels, "Oh God, you are peace and peace is from you, you are blessed and supreme, Oh the owner of glory and generosity". Gradually their voices become lower and everyone says in a very low voice "Praise is to God, thanks is to God, God is great", thirty-three times. Then the gathering disperses. Those who want to continue worshipping stay in the mosque to pray at their convenience or to read from the Qur'ān.

Each obligatory prayer has a specific time and determined number of kneelings. The dawn Prayer (Ṣalat al-fajr or ṣubḥ) at about five o'clock in the morning, consists of two kneelings and four bows. The noon prayer (ṣalat al-zuhr) is performed at about twelve o'clock and consists of four kneelings and eight bows. The afternoon prayer (ṣalat al-'aṣr) is performed at about four o'clock in the same way as the noon prayer. The sunset prayer (ṣalat al-maghrib) is performed at about 6.30 p.m. It comprises three kneelings and six bows. Finally the night prayer (ṣalat al-'isha) is performed at about eight o'clock, with four kneelings and eight bows. (The times of the prayers vary slightly according to the times of sunrise and sunset.) Each of these prayers takes about forty minutes from the call to prayer to its end. Another difference between the prayers relates

to the reciting of the Qur'ān. During daytime prayers, the noon and afternoon, the Imam recites the fātiḥa and other texts from the Qur'ān in a low voice, whereas in the other three he recites them in a loud voice. There is no explanation for this rite since it is a ritual matter that does not need be expounded according to the Judge (Shaikh) of the village. Some of the five daily prayers can be cut short and amalgamated in case of travelling and emergency. It is permitted to shorten (qaṣr) the number of kneelings in the prayers of noon, afternoon and night prayers to two instead of four. But the other two prayers evening and dawn are not cut short. Also it is allowed to perform two prayers consecutively. This is called amalgamation (jam'), and it can be performed at the proper time of the earlier or of the later one. Cutting short and amalgamation can be practised on a long journey or on the occasion of disasters which necessitate devotion to humanitarian matters. During the period of my field work the villagers amalgamated prayers three times due to plentiful rainfall which filled the streets with mud, impeding the trip to and from mosques, especially at night.

The mosques do not contain any statues or pictures, or any sort of decoration. Such things are considered inimical to the concept of Islam. Mosques are very simply constructed and furnished. The village mosques all have two floors: a basement called khalwah which is used for prayer in winter because it has a covered roof and no openings except for two doors leading to it down several steps. The two doors are located in the northern and southern sides. The first floor comprises two sections: the front section is called maṣabīḥ and has a covered roof. This section is used for prayer when the weather is moderately hot or cold and when it is severely hot during summers, particularly during noon and afternoon prayers. The second section is called sarḥah and is used for prayer at night during summer, and in the daytime during winter.

Furnishings are generally reed mats called hiṣr (sing. haṣīr). Some mosques are furnished with cotton carpets called boṣṭ (sing. bsāṭṭ)

which are usually spread on the reed mats. Copies of the Qur'ān are either placed on racks constructed on each pillar of the mosque, or in wooden boxes which were distributed by the Community Development Centre to some mosques as part of the summer programme of the village youth. The only modern equipment, recently introduced to every mosque, is a number of electric ceiling fans which are provided either by well-wishers or by the Ministry of Pilgrimage and Wakfs which undertakes the maintenance and improvement of mosques all over the country.

Apart from the religious function of the mosques, they are in fact used for other social purposes: for example, they serve as places for social gatherings where worshippers meet at prayer times. Village affairs are frequently discussed there especially after a prayer.

Also the Imams use the mosques for moral and social guidance. They read Ḥadīths dealing with different aspects of life immediately after afternoon prayers, except on Fridays. The mosques were and still are used for feeding the poor during the month of Ramaḍān, where Ramaḍān breakfast (faṭūr) and the dawn meal (saḥūr), are taken. Lastly in the past they were used for teaching boys the rudiments of writing and religious subjects under the supervision of Imams, and were used as sleeping places for strangers who had no relatives or friends in the village.

The five daily prayers are of a very special significance in the village not only for their religious vitality, but because performance is a criterion for evaluating the worthiness of the individual. An individual is regarded as worthy as long as he continues to perform the prayers with the congregation in the mosque. Villagers who also wish to praise a man usually say that he is a virtuous person since he never misses a mosque prayer. It is attending prayers with others that counts. Prayers are unquestionably a religious obligation, but their performance with the congregation (jamā'a) in the mosque is a community obligation, since neither the Qur'ān nor the Sunna explicitly indicates that it is obligatory. No one can claim that

mosques are the only places for performing prayers, or that prayers performed individually at home are not religiously rewarding or acceptable. The only difference between a prayer performed with others in the mosque, and a prayer performed individually at home is that the reward of the former is held to be twenty-seven times greater according to the Prophet's saying.¹⁵ It is therefore religiously permissible for a Muslim to perform prayers at home without excuse.

Nevertheless if someone does absent himself without reasonable excuse, such as illness, he becomes liable to a punishment specified by the judge and carried out by the Amir. Punishment graduates from verbal warning to flogging or both flogging and imprisonment according to the number of absences.

It is easy to check absentees because the village is small and there are many mosques in relation to the number of adult males. Accordingly the villagers know each other and in case of absence the reason will be found out and judged acceptable or not. Immediately after the dawn prayer, the Imam in each section counts the names and later questions the absentees. If one of them does not give a satisfactory reason for his absence, then the Imam notifies the head of Religious Guidance Centre¹⁶ who summons the absentee and asks him to state his reason so that he can decide whether he is liable to warning or punishment. In case of repeated absence the head of Religious Guidance Centre advises the judge who writes to the Amir informing him that that person has repeatedly absented himself from dawn prayer, and has to be arrested and punished. The judge specifies whether the punishment is going to be flogging or imprisonment or both. The Amir executes whatever punishment the judge specifies. Usually flogging is carried out in front of the largest mosque where Friday prayer is performed, as a warning to others. But I did not witness anyone being flogged in that

15. Ibid., p.235.

16. See p.214.

place during the period of my field work. All the floggings I have seen took place in the Emirate.

While I was visiting the village Amir in his office, his cousin, a clerk in the Emirate, entered and said that Falih, one of the Emirate men (Khowiya), was seeking a wanted person for not performing dawn prayer regularly in the mosque. The Amir ordered another one of his men to help in arresting him. After a short time they brought him. He was a man of nearly twenty-two. The Amir addressed him, saying "You are living in Irqah, but not praying with the group in the mosque", and went on "You are undisciplined since you do not fear Allah nor respect his worshippers". The Amir by that was reminding him of what he had said when the Imam warned him about his attendance: "If you do not leave off chasing me for dawn prayer I will pluck your eye out".

The Amir then presented a letter he received from the judge in which he asked him to arrest the man and make him serve fifteen days' imprisonment and receive thirty lashes. The Amir added that he did not intend to execute the punishment but would send him to Riyadh Police Authority. Accordingly the Amir dictated a letter to the Chief of Riyadh Police asking him to execute the punishment specified by the judge, adding that he had previously imprisoned and flogged the same man for the same reason.

While two of the Amir's men were getting ready to take him to Riyadh police in the Emirate car, the head of the Religious Guidance Centre entered the Emirate office and discussed the matter with the Amir, interrupting the discussion with expressions of rebuke to the man. Finally they both agreed that the Amir would execute the flogging this time, but if there was another occasion he should be sent to Riyadh Police. They agreed on this in an effort to resolve the problems of the village within the village itself.

Immediately two of the Amir's men got hold of the man's legs and made him lie on the floor. The Amir brought a heavy date-palm branch and flogged him on the back severely while the man was screaming and requesting one of

the Amir's men to intervene and stop the flogging. The man whom he requested stood up and appealed to the Amir to stop the flogging promising that he would guarantee that he would perform prayers regularly with the congregation. The Amir then stopped the flogging and the man went out from the Emirate building crying painfully.

In another case the judge gave his orders to the Amir to flog both the Emirate's driver and his brother, the messenger of the village dispensary, for not performing dawn prayer regularly in the mosque. The Amir accordingly summoned them to the Emirate office and reprimanded them. He further added they were the more eligible to be punished as they descend from respected village people known for their observance of religious rites as well as for their piety. He went on to say that their punishment should be double as one of them was the driver of the Emirate which inflicts punishments on religious disobedients. He concluded his reprimand saying that he would carry out this time the judgement passed by the judge, which was only flogging; but if they repeated their negligence, their punishment would be more severe. Then he ordered his men to make them lie on the floor and he flogged them himself, each one about twelve painful lashes.

The obligatory performance of prayers with others in mosques is not explicit in Islam. Neither the Qur'ān nor the Sunna has specified any punishment that can be applied to those who do not attend mosques for prayers. Thus whatsoever punishment a judge passes in this respect is a matter that depends entirely on his religious assiduity and understanding.

I put to the village judge the question of the legality of punishing those who do not perform prayers with others in mosques. His reply was that prayers are obligatory as they are the second pillar of Islam; their obligatory performance with others in mosque is a matter understood from the Qur'ān and the Ḥadīth as the Prophet once said that he had resolved to set fire to the houses of those who heard the call for prayers but absented themselves. He added that there was no specific punishment for not performing prayers with the congregation. Such a person ought to be leniently

advised first, then reprimanded and punished, since giving up prayers in mosques means suspending the main function of the mosques which are constructed for the performance of prayers.

According to Shaikh 'Abdul 'Aziz Ibn Bāz, vice-president of the Islamic University at al-Medina., prayer with a group in a mosque is an obligation pursuant to what has been mentioned in the Qur'ān, the Ḥadīth, and the Sunna, as it is difficult to know who is actually performing prayers at home, whereas in mosques the matter is readily checked.¹⁷

At any rate, in the village of Irqah, group prayer in mosques is an obligation that has to be preserved by all adult males. He who neglects it is liable to punishment and hatred of the villagers, which in both cases causes damage to his reputation.

Adult women are obliged, in just exactly the same way men are obliged, to perform the five daily prayers. They may do so in the mosque behind the men, but prayer at home is preferable so as to avoid any sort of contact with men. In Irqah women never attend mosques except during Ramaḍān.

Children of both sexes are accustomed to perform prayers from the age of seven and they are punished for neglect at the age of ten. In view of that, boys are always seen in mosques performing prayers even during night and dawn prayers.

Friday Prayer (Ṣalat al-Jum'a)

Friday Prayer is of vital importance religiously and socially. Its religious importance stems from the fact that it is an obligatory prayer like the five daily prayers. It has been called Jum'a because it gathers a large number of worshippers on the preferred day of the week, the Day of Jum'a, or because Adam had gathered his people on that day.¹⁸

17. Shaikh 'Abdul 'Aziz Ibn Bāz "Ḥukm al-Ṣalat fi al-Jam'a" Majallāt al-Manhāl, Vol.VII (August, 1973), pp.408-9.

18. Shaikh al-Bahūni, op.cit., p.283. Friday is the day of "general assembly", see Gibb and Krämers, op.cit., p.92.

Friday prayer is mandatory when there are forty men living in a permanent place such as villages and towns. It is not mandatory wherever settlement is temporary such as tents.¹⁹ Its social importance derives from the gathering of a large number of worshippers in the largest mosque of the settlement where religious matters together with secular affairs are discussed in two separate addresses delivered by the Imam.

Friday prayer differs ritually from the five daily prayers as regards time of performance, number of kneelings, and the way it is performed. It takes place usually at noon and should not be delayed beyond one p.m. It has only two kneelings with four bows when the Imam reads the Fātiḥa and other texts of the Qur'ān loudly. When the worshippers have gathered and before the prayer is performed, the Imam, who is usually the village judge, delivers two addresses separated from each other by about two minutes pause. The two addresses usually deal with religious questions, e.g. obedience to God, or attending the five daily prayers, as well as other questions concerning village affairs, for example appealing to God for rain. The two addresses deal also with social problems such as back-biting.

Friday prayer differs also from the five daily prayers as far as the call for prayer is concerned, for it requires two adhāns, one at about eleven a.m. and the other at the moment the Imam enters the prayer niche miḥrāb. The Friday prayer is not obligatory for women, who pray an ordinary noon prayer at home.

It is characteristic of Friday prayer that adult men as well as boys prepare themselves for it by washing, wearing clean clothes, and using perfumes and incense. Further they hurry to the mosque as soon as possible to increase their reward, and double their recompense, in accordance with a Ḥadīth of the Prophet that says "He who washes himself on Friday, the way

19. Ibid, p.289

he washes himself of the major ritual impurity (janāba),²⁰ and then goes to the mosque at the first hour, he is considered as if he had made an offering of a she-camel. He who goes at the second hour is considered as if he had made an offering of a cow. He who goes at the third hour is considered as if he had made an offering of a horned ram. He who goes at the fourth hour is considered as if he had made an offering of a chicken. He who goes at the fifth hour is considered as if he had made an offering of an egg....".²¹

I now give an example of an address delivered during my field work by the judge at one of the Friday prayers. This particular address dealt with backbiting, which is one of the social problems of the village. Most of these addresses are already published in religious books; the Imams therefore only have to select the appropriate one, making some amendments whenever necessary.

A Jum'a Prayer Address

In the name of God the Merciful the Compassionate. Thanks to God, the generous, the magnanimous, who has extended His grace to all mankind. I thank Him, the almighty, for His grace which grows and increases with gratefulness, and I testify that there is no God but Allah who is sole with no partner, a testimony which I hope for servility (zulfa) and salvation (najah) during interrogation on the Day of Judgement, and I testify that Muhammad is His serf and prophet who struggled to the best of his ability for the sake of God. Oh God pray for him, his relatives, and his companions who suppressed those of iniquity and corruption, oh God I request a lot of your graciousness.

"Now then, oh People of God, avoid what He has prohibited and obey His orders by word and deed; some of which He, owner of glory and honour, has outlawed when He says in the Holy Qur'an addressing the true believers 'Oh ye who believe: Avoid suspicion as much (as possible): for suspicion in some cases is like a sin: And spy not on each other, Nor speak ill of each other Behind their backs. Would any of you like to eat The flesh of his dead Brother? Nay, ye would Abhor it...'

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20. Janāba is the state acquired through sexual intercourse, or dreaming of such things. Any adult person involved in it must cleanse himself or herself before performing any religious rituals. I translated it "the major ritual impurity" according to Shorter Encyclopaedia of Islam, p.87. A. Lutfiyya, in his book Baytin, translates it as "sidedness".
21. Shaikh Salih al-Bilahi, al-Salsabil fi Ma'rifat al-Dalil. op.cit., p.136.

Thus, He, owner of glory and honour, has forbidden backbiting and analogy of it is made to that of eating the flesh of a dead brother. This is a disgusting thing to do, and is denied and refused by the perfect nature. Does human nature accept that? No, it does neither accept it nor permit it. Where are those who backbite others and slander their dignity? Have they become so despicable to the extent of descending to this very low state? Do they realise what backbiting means?

The Prophet Muhammad, God bless him and grant him salvation, once asked his companions about what is meant by backbiting. When they said that God, and His prophet are the most conversant, he said it means mentioning your Muslim brother by what he dislikes. When some of them said but oh Prophet of God what if what is said about a brother is true, he said if it is true you are guilty of backbiting him, and if it is not true you have falsified him.

He who seeks safety for himself must watch his saying before being presented for judgement on the Day of Resurrection. It is then that a person's recorded pages of action will be opened and every particle of weight is accounted for. Hence everyone should be careful about suspicious situations in order he might commit unlawful acts.

Those whose hearts become intoxicated and eyes become blinded from the enjoyment of hearing the private life of others are committing slander - like a hungry person's enjoyment of delicious food - have they forgotten what the Prophet has said, 'He who believes in God and the Day of Resurrection has either to say something good or keep silent'. He has also said, 'When I ascended to heaven I passed by people with copper nails scratching their faces and chests. When I asked Gabriel who were those people, he said they were those who slandered others' dignity'.

It is enough for us to remember what 'Aisha related when she said, "Oh Prophet of God it is enough for you that Safiyyah is such and such - some mentioned that she said that Safiyyah was short - the prophet said to me you have said a word which if it was mixed with the sea water it could blend it".

That was only a single word which had a strong reaction from the Prophet because he considered it a sort of backbiting that always produces bad results. Some of these results are disobedience to God, the owner of honour and loftness, liability of a backbiter to His punishment, and people's despise for him as well as the problems he creates among others.

Where are those with conscious hearts that are aware of objectives, the prohibition of backbiting which aim at creating a good Islamic community, that has no room for rancour or backbiting amongst its members?

Oh people of God obey what He has commanded and prevent your community from this infection whether at home or at work or at the level of the community. Oh people substitute backbiting with what gives you good return religiously and secularly both which are conducive to true thriving and success.

I seek protection by God from the accursed Satan. He, the almighty says 'Then shall anyone who has done an atom's weight of good. And anyone who has done an atom's weight of evil, shall see it'.

The Fast During the Month of Ramaḍan (Şawm Ramaḍan)²²

Fast in the Arabic language means abstinence, and in Islamic law it means deliberate abstinence from special things, that break the fast, at a certain time from a particular person.²³ The fast of Ramaḍan is the fourth of the five pillars of Islam which is obligatory to all adult Muslims, male and female. It was imposed in the second year of the Prophet Muhammad's migration to Medina, where the orders of God regarding the fast were revealed in the following verse of the Qur'ān:

Oh ye who believe! Fasting is prescribed to you as it was prescribed to those before you, that ye may (learn) self restraint. (Fasting) for a fixed number of days; But, if any of you is ill, or on a journey the prescribed number (should be made up) from days later. 24

The month of Ramaḍan is of a profound sacredness in the village for its ritual significance is not limited to the sphere of religion, but it effects every aspect of social life in the village. The coming of Ramaḍan means an overall change in the daily routine of life and patterns of behaviour. This sort of change differs in its concepts and appearance from the months that precede or follow Ramaḍan.

When the Central Religious Authorities assert that the month of Ramaḍan is due, the Government announces it through the mass media and with

22. The name Ramaḍan refers to the heat of summer according to Gibb and Krāmers, op.cit., p.504 and p.468.

23. Shaikh al-Bahūni, op.cit., p.195.

24. Abdullah Yusuf Ali, The Holy Qur-An Text, Translation and Commentary, (Beirut: Dal Al Arabia Publishing, Printing and Distribution, 1968) p.72.

the firing of guns. The villagers, adult and young, welcome this delightful occasion. Adults congratulate each other saying, "a blessed month, every year may you be well" (al-shahar mubarak, kull 'am wa antum bi khair). Some add, "May God make us and you among those who fast it and pray during it this time and other times to come" (Ja'alana Allah wa 'iyyikum min suwwamuh ha al-zaman wa kull zaman). Such congratulations are constantly heard at home and on the street. Young people fire their toy guns bought for the occasion while screaming loudly with each shot. From then on the ordinary life of the villagers changes gradually as some of them dash to the local market or to Riyadh to do last-minute shopping; others visit their relatives and friends to offer their good wishes.

Ramadan affects the day's work of the villagers as working hours become less. It affects very considerably the daily routine of the villagers, as they become less active during daytime and very active at night.

Throughout Ramadan the villagers wake at about four o'clock in the morning to have their sahur meal of jarish (crushed grain cooked in water and sour milk), dates, coffee, and tea and sour milk if available. Fasting starts immediately at the first sign of dawn. It implies abstention from all kinds of food and drink or anything that enters the stomach, as well as any sort of connection with wives that might lead to kissing or sexual intercourse. After the sahur meal the Muezzin announces that the dawn prayer is due. Men and boys go to the mosques to pray. Afterwards most of them return home to sleep or deal with private matters, although some stay in mosques reciting the Qur'an. Those who have government posts go to work at about ten, and interrupt their work for noon prayer. At about two o'clock they return home to take a nap or do domestic work, while others recite the Qur'an at home until it is time for the afternoon prayer, at about 3.30 p.m. Meanwhile housewives prepare the breakfast. When the afternoon prayer is finished some go home and engage in private affairs or recite the Qur'an. Others stay and recite the Qur'an in the mosques.

Those who cannot read the Qur'ān gather on the streets to converse about general matters mostly of a religious nature; the discussion is interspersed with thanks to God or requests for His forgiveness. Shortly before sunset all disperse to their homes for breakfast. Men in each household sit around the dining mat and women gather in a separate place of their own awaiting for the sunset call for prayer, or gunfire announcing the end of fast. Then they have dates and coffee, while saying

In the name of God, the merciful, the compassionate,
oh God for you I have fasted and with your substance
I have broken my fast. Praise and thanks be to you.
O God accept from me as you are the hearer and the
all-knowing.

Then men and boys go to mosques for evening prayer and return straight home for dinner which usually consists of local dishes called gorṣān very large thin chappattis mixed with stew, margog a sort of chappatti cooked rare in stew, and jarish as well as rice similar to Spanish rice. Dinner may vary according to the financial situation of each household. After dinner the villagers stay at home drinking tea and coffee and talking with members of their household about the virtue of the fast and prayer until the night prayer and the Tarawīḥ prayers (see below) are due, for which men and boys go to the mosques. Some women may also go to the mosques for tarawīḥ prayer whenever their domestic circumstances allow.

Tarawīḥ Prayer (Ṣalat al-tarawīḥ)

Tarawīḥ prayer is a voluntary prayer performed every night during Ramaḍān. This means that its doer is rewarded, but if he refrains he is not liable to punishment. It consists of twenty kneeling. Each kneeling consists of two bows. Every two kneeling are performed separately as if they were an independent prayer. It is completed with one kneeling called witr²⁵ in which the Imam requests the blessing and forgiveness of God between the kneeling and the first bow in a loud voice while the prayer performers repeat the word (Amen) each time he pauses.

Women may go to mosques to perform this prayer. They do so behind the

25. Witr is the odd number of kneeling (rak'as) which are performed at night. See Shorter Encyclopaedia of Islam, p.634.

men in a private section partitioned with curtains so that men cannot see them.

At the end of the tarawīḥ prayer the villagers disperse, some of them go home either to seep or to attend to private affairs, some others go to visit relatives or friends, and some gather on the streets to gossip until the time for the sahūr meal. During the last ten days of the month the villagers multiply their efforts at worshipping God. They believe that these ten days are specially sacred because the Night of Power (lailat al-qadar) is expected to be on the twenty-seventh of the month. The qiyām prayer also begins in the last ten days of the month. On these days the Imams perform ten kneelings of the tarawīḥ immediately after night prayer, and perform in lieu of the other ten what is known as the qiyām prayer. It is part of the tarawīḥ but is characterised with intensity of worship as well as lengthy reciting of the Qur'ān and prolonged kneelings and bowings to give the people time to worship God as much as possible. The Imams perform it in two parts: the first four kneelings are performed with the tarawīḥ prayer and the second four start at about midnight and finish shortly before the sahūr meal. Some elderly people perform the qiyām seated. The significance of the last ten days stems from the villagers' belief that God responds to the appeals of His people for forgiveness and repentance from all sins. If God responds to an appeal on the Night of Power He forgives also all previous and later sins and the supplicant is to be rewarded by entering Paradise on the Appointed Day. That is the main ritual reason for the exceptional importance of the last ten days of Ramaḍan. It requires intensive worshipping, that leads to permanent happiness in paradise, the great reward of God.

Besides the multiplication of religious efforts, various kinds of charity become frequent particularly during the last ten days of the month, such as voluntary charity and the obligatory zākāt. Also the villagers serve dates, coffee and food in mosques at breakfast and sahūr for the poor who have no houses of their own, especially for those who come

from outside the village looking for charity. The most attractive thing to a stranger is the generous offerings of tea, coffee, incense and perfume during the tarawih and qiyam prayers, in which the villagers compete by preparing and sending them to mosques every night during this month in the hope of being rewarded by God for their benevolent generosity.

All the villagers, men, women and children - as well as embryos - are obliged to pay zakaat al-fitr, which must be given to the poor on the 'Eid eve by the head of each household on behalf of all its members. This sort of zakaat is customarily composed of about three kilograms of wheat or barley. It cannot be paid in cash because it is considered to be a zakaat for the body, not for money.

The villagers' behaviour and actions are profoundly dominated by religious motives. Adults keep praising and thanking God or reciting the Qur'an loudly, whether at home or passing through the streets. Some seclude themselves in mosques, ya'takifon, particularly during the last ten days of the month, for worshipping and reciting the Qur'an. Some boast about the number of times they complete recitation of the Qur'an throughout the month of Ramadan.

The social significance of this month is equally important. Social relationships are characterised by forgiveness and a friendly atmosphere in word and deed. The villagers try to avoid disputes or conflicts in order not to damage their fasting. Thus if someone loses his temper he controls himself saying, "Oh God, I am fasting" (Allahumma anni sa'im). On the other hand other people reprimand him saying "Fast, do not injure your fast" (sum, la tajrah şiyamak). The month is characterised by generosity and offering for the sake of religious reward according to a Hadith that says, "He who feeds a fasting person will have equal reward to that of the fasting person".

A person who does not fast during Ramadan, because of sickness or other reasons, must make up the number of days before the following Ramadan. Also women must make up the days they miss during their periods, when they are

not allowed to fast, because then they are not immaculate.

Festival of the Breaking of the Fast (Eid al-Fitr)

The ceremonies at the beginning of Ramaḍān mean rejoicing for a sacred month which indicates devotion to God and His worship, generosity in offering charities to the poor, and generous behaviour towards others. Those at the end are a demonstration of pleasure and gratification for completing the fast during that sacred month and for the prospect that God has absolved the sinners and rewarded the good each according to his acts. The villagers do not conceive that the Festival ceremonies (Eid al-Fitr) demonstrate pleasure that the month is over, but rather happiness for the completion of fasting pursuant to God's orders and the recommendations of the Prophet Muhammad.

Since Muslims follow lunar months, Ramaḍān may be twenty-nine or thirty days, according to the lunar mansion. As such its beginning and end are asserted in accordance with the knowledge of those conversant with the mansions. If someone claims that he has seen the new moon he has to be checked by his local judge in order to know whether he is trustworthy or otherwise. He must be guaranteed by two witnesses, known for their good reputation, who can testify that the man who has seen the crescent is reliable. Once this formality has been completed the judge sends a telegram to the Central Authorities which make enquiries from other sources. When it is finally asserted that the new moon has been definitely seen by reliable people, the Central Government immediately announces the news through the mass media and the firing of guns. This customary procedure for verifying the end of the month of Ramaḍān is exactly the same as that followed for its commencement.

Then the 'Eid begins the following day which is a day of rejoicing for everyone in the village. The children enjoy themselves on this occasion more than adults, as they start their celebration of the Eid a day before, on 'Roaming Day' (yaum al-ḥuwāma). Children of both sexes wear their new

clothes (ḥudom or malābis al-ʿeid) which they buy for the occasion, and roam about their relatives and friends asking to be given their feast gift, ʿeidiyyah, as they say, I want my feast gift (abi'eidi). Those who wish, give them a token gift which may be money or sweets and nuts. It is a custom that the children gather in groups during that day wearing their bright new clothes while waiting for passers-by to give them ʿeidiyyah which everyone boasts of collecting most of.

On the early morning of the 'Eid the villagers, men and women as well as children, wear their new clothes, or the best clothes in the possession of those who cannot afford new ones. And then men, boys and some elderly women go to perform the 'Eid prayer in the Wadi because the village has no specified mosque for 'Eid prayers.

The 'Eid prayer is performed at sunrise on the morning of the Day of the 'Eid. It differs from the five daily prayers and the Friday prayer in that there is no call for prayer (adhān) or announcement for its performance (iqāmā). It is not an individual but a collective obligation. In other words it is not necessary for every adult male to attend as long as it is performed by some, but it should not be abandoned by all.²⁶ It is performed before the address, contrary to Friday prayer. It is distinguished by its number of takbīrat (takbīr: Allahu Akbar),²⁷ twelve altogether, seven said at the first kneeling and five at the second kneeling.

When the villagers gather in the Wadi, men sit in parallel lines and women desirous of attending the prayer sit about two hundred yards behind them; the Imam takes the lead. Then everyone stands up as the Imam starts the prayer saying loudly,

26. The difference between the two is that the individual obligation is bound to be performed (farḍ 'ain). Whereas the collective obligation (farḍ kifaya) is performed ~~by a sufficient number of people when-~~ ever its performance is demanded. See Shaikh al-Bilahi, op.cit., p.138.

27. Takbīr (pl. takbīrat) means exclamation. It is the first words which are said at the beginning of each prayer and at the time of kneeling or bowing; it is also repeated at each call for prayer as well as at each time of announcing the due time of a prayer (iqāmā). See Gibb and Kramers, op.cit., p.561.

"God is great, God is great, very Great. Many thanks to God. Praise and thanks to God every morning and every evening. God has prayed for our master Muhammad, the illiterate prophet, and the Muhammads and He has saluted him very much".

The Imam repeats this takbīr seven times at the first kneeling, and five times at the second. At the end of the prayer he gives two separate addresses dealing with the virtues of fasting and the way zākāt 'eid al-fitr is paid. Meanwhile he repeats once again the takbīr nine times at the beginning of the first address and seven times at the beginning of the second.

Once the prayer's rites are finished the villagers embrace each other saying "every year may you be well, or you are from the victorious years to come" (kull 'ām wa antum bi khair, min al-'aidīn al-faizīn). The other party replies "May God make this occasion return while we and you are well" (Allah yueyduh alaina wa alaikum be khair).

Afterwards everyone heads for the section where he lives, greeting everyone he meets on the way. The 'Eid meal is served on the main street of each section (ḥayy or ḥarah). Those streets are furnished with cotton carpets on which dining mats sufar (sing. sufrah) are spread. The 'Eid dishes mostly consists of jarīsh, served in a rounded large flat dish called ṣaḥn, with ghee in a hole in the middle or in a small bowl (badiyah) placed in the middle. During the meal the host adds some ghee to the food at the positions where those present are eating from. Some dishes are made of rice cooked with onions, tomato and meat. The meal is prepared by those wishing to participate cooking and bringing whatever dish they like. Each person should move about and taste all the dishes; and housewives prepare their dishes as well as possible so that they may gain the reputation of fine cooks.

After the meal the villagers disperse to congratulate their relatives and friends in their houses where coffee, tea, and incense are constantly served. Women and girls have the 'Eid meal in their houses as they are supposed to prepare coffee and tea for their husbands' guests. Later on

they go out to congratulate each other wearing their best clothes and jewels.

Normally on this occasion some men sing and dance (ārdāh) together, but such popular ceremonies have at present been prohibited all over the kingdom as a gesture of sympathy with the Egyptians and Syrians in their war against Israel.

The 'Eid ceremonies continue for three days, but after the first day the ordinary way of life gradually begins to return.

Fast of the Six (the Six Days of Shawwāl)

Besides the fast during the month of Ramaḍān voluntary fasts are kept by most of the villagers, especially the elderly people. But the fast of the Six is considered to be of greater virtue and quite a number of the villagers observe it.

The fast of the Six means a fast of six days of the month of Shawwāl that follows Ramaḍān, preferably immediately after 'Eid day. The ritual significance was indicated by the prophet Muhammad in a Ḥadīth saying "He who fasts Ramaḍān and follows it with six days of Shawwāl is considered as if he had fasted his whole life". For this reason most of the villagers keep fasting the six days in the hope of religious reward equal to that of fast for the lifetime.

The Sacrificial Feast ('Eid al-Adha)

This feast is celebrated on the day the pilgrims complete the final ritual of the pilgrimage.²⁸ It is a gesture of religious and sympathetic participation on the part of those who have not gone on the pilgrimage. This 'Eid is celebrated on the day the pilgrims return from 'Arafāt to Mena on the tenth of the month of Zu al-hijjah, the last month of the Islamic calendar.

28. al-Hāj in Arabic means object or aim and in Islamic Teaching it means aiming at Mecca for certain rituals at certain times. It is the fifth pillar of Islam that must be performed by every adult Muslim once in his life provided that he is capable of doing so physically and financially. A Muslim who is ill, or who died before performing the pilgrimage, has it performed on his or her behalf. Adult women are not allowed to perform the pilgrimage without being accompanied by a son, a brother or a husband. The companion is called Maḥram.

Such religious sympathy is not limited to the day of the 'Eid, but is demonstrated in the actions and behaviour of the villagers from the first month of Zu al-hijjah. From that day they worship God and request His forgiveness just as the pilgrims pursue it while performing the pilgrimage rites. During the nine days of the month of Zu al-hijjah before the 'Eid, the villagers, especially the elderly people, repeat loudly the phrases of takbīr that the pilgrims repeat, "God is great, God is great, very great. Many thanks to God. Praise and thanks to God every morning and every evening. God has prayed for our master Muhammad, the illiterate prophet, and the Muhammads as He has saluted him very much".

One important aspect of this religious sympathy is the fasting of 'Arafāt Day, the ninth day of the month of Zu al-hijjah on which all pilgrims assemble in 'Arafāt for the main rites of the pilgrimage. This fast is the most confirmed of the voluntary fasts for these other than the pilgrims, pursuant to a Ḥadīth saying "Fasting of 'Arafāt Day is considered by God as a day of forgiveness from sins for the year preceding it and the year after it".

The prayer at the Sacrificial Feast, Ṣalat 'Eid al-Aḍḥa, is the same as the one at 'Eid al-Fitr. However, while the addresses of 'Eid al-Fitr emphasise the virtues of the fast and charity, those of the Eid al-Aḍḥa emphasise the virtues of sacrifices (ḍaḥāyā, sing. ḍaḥīya), their rules, and the way they are distributed. Nevertheless, the Sacrificial Feast itself differs slightly from 'Eid al-Fitr in the sense that the former is dominated by religious appearance, while the signs of pleasure and rejoicing are apparent in the latter. This difference could be attributed to the following factors. The 'Eid al-Fitr is a licence for lifting restrictions on prohibited acts such as eating, drinking and sexual intercourse with wives which the villagers had been deprived of during the daytime throughout the month of Ramadan. The pleasure and rejoicing for 'Eid al-Fitr are an individual and social expression of life returning to normal. The 'Eid al-Aḍḥa occurs at an ordinary period of life. In reality it is an expression

of religious sympathy with the pilgrims. So the villagers do not care to buy new clothes for this 'Eid, and visits of congratulations are not so frequent.

Some whole families and part of others are away from the village on pilgrimage during the Sacrificial 'Eid, and the anxiety of their relatives arising from the dangers of Pilgrimage lessens the pleasure and rejoicing of this Eid. There were over a hundred pilgrims from the village during the period of my field work, or about 8% of the population. Then also the villagers are busily engaged in slaughtering their sacrificial animals and arranging for their distribution immediately after the 'Eid prayer. This business occupies them until the fourth day of the 'Eid, and leaves little time for rejoicing and pleasure.

The villagers make for their houses straight after the 'Eid prayer to have the 'Eid meal on the village streets. Immediately they see to their sacrifices. Each household unless very poor, sacrifices at least one sheep or goat on this occasion.

There are two kinds of sacrifices or immolation. The first is a voluntary one, a Sunna, recommended by the prophet. It is offered on behalf of the sacrificant and chosen relatives or on behalf of dead parents as well as grandparents and other relatives. The second is entailed (daḥāyā wakf). This kind of sacrifice is obligatory; it arises out of the bequest of property, for example houses or farms invested. Income is used by the sacrificant on the purchase of sacrificial animals. These entailed sacrifices continue as long as the properties are in existence. The responsibility for such properties is transferred from one person to another within the lineage of the bequeather. Such sacrifices represent a large percentage of those offered in the village. Indeed one villager slaughtered six sheep and a she-camel on account of his entailed properties.

The offering of sacrifices, whether voluntary or obligatory, has certain conditions. A sacrificial animal should be fully grown, it should be free from any sort of illness, and have complete limbs, without lameness

or cuts. The sacrificial animals must be sheep, goats, cattle or camels; for this purpose camels or cattle are worth seven times the value of sheep or goats. Certain other conditions that are religiously prescribed with sheep or cattle the animal is made to lie down on its left side facing the Holy Land. When it is being slaughtered the person slaughtering or offering it must say, "In the name of God and God is great, Oh God it is from you and to you. Oh God accept this sacrifice from so and so". With a camel it is preferably slaughtered while it is standing with its left leg tied up; this manner of camel sacrifice is a Sunna. But it can also be done while it is resting on the ground.

The meat of every sacrifice has to be divided into three parts; one for the use of the family offering it, one to be distributed amongst relatives and friends, and one to be distributed among poor people. It is forbidden to sell any part of a sacrifice; even its skin should not be given to the slaughterer as a charge in return for his work.

A great deal of time is thus spent in slaughtering sacrificial animals and distributing the meat, in receiving shares from relatives' or neighbours' sacrifices, and in making arrangements for storing the meat. The method of storing, tagfir, is to cut the meat into long thin slices, adding a large quantity of salt, then hang it on ropes in a room to dry. When dry, this meat is called gofr and is used for cooking. Villagers with refrigerators may store some of the meat in them while they store the rest dried. The fat of sacrifices is rendered and then used for cooking purposes.

The sacrificial 'Eid is distinguished by generosity, shown in the way the meat is distributed. The villagers, rich or poor, have the same opportunity for eating meat. The occasion is also a source of additional income for some of the villagers who do slaughtering in the village or in Riyadh. About 30 of the villagers do this work during this Eid, including Salih, the messenger of the Community Development Centre.

This 'Eid, the Sacrificial Feast, is less of an occasion for pleasure and rejoicing; those present are busy with their sacrifices. Others have

gone to Mecca on an obligatory pilgrimage, or an additional pilgrimage to gain more mercy and satisfaction from God. Still others go to Mecca to perform the pilgrimage on behalf of incapacitated or dead people. In the latter case, delegated pilgrimage (hajjat wakālāh), the person entrusted, who must be an adult male, is paid all expenses. Most of the persons so delegated undertake the assignment for a combination of reasons. They are mostly elderly people without government posts or regular business which would necessitate their staying in the village. They regard pilgrimage on behalf of others as a sort of free pleasure trip. Indeed they save money from the sum paid to them for accomplishing their assignment. Also the undertaking of such religious work gives them the satisfaction of being praised for their piety. They find happiness in talking about the adventures of the pilgrimage for a long time with their families and with the gatherings of the villagers on the village streets.

Finally some of them, especially the poor, bring with them whatever they can carry of the redemption meat, though they do not like to admit that frankly. But it is evident that they still do so in view of the fact concerning the improvement of transport which has greatly shortened the length of time between Mecca and the village thus facilitating the bringing of meat while it is fresh.

The Little Pilgrimage ('Umra)

The little pilgrimage, 'Umra, resembles the pilgrimage in many respects, and like the pilgrimage, it is among the rites that every adult Muslim should perform once in a lifetime. 'Umra in Arabic means a visit, and in Islamic law it means a visit to the Holy House, al-Ka'ba, in a particular way.²⁹ Like the pilgrimage it is an obligatory rite. But the difference between the two is that the pilgrimage is performed at a certain time of the year and cannot be considered perfect without standing in 'Arafāt and

29. Shaikh al-Bahūni, op.cit., p.453

offering a redemption. Apart from that it is performed just exactly in the same way of the pilgrimage.

Though 'Umra is an obligatory rite once in a lifetime, most of the villagers perform it regularly during the last ten days of Ramaḍan because it is considered equivalent to a pilgrimage, as far as its reward is concerned, when it is performed during this month, according to what has been recommended by the Prophet. Also those who undertake the 'Umra from the village hope to be in Mecca on the Night of Power, so that God may forgive their sins and accept their prayers. The number of villagers on the 'Umra during the last ten days of Ramaḍan, at the time of my field work, was about fifty, including the Amir, the judge, and their families. Most of those had in fact performed the 'Umra many times before.

Prayer for Rain (Ṣalat al-Istisgā)

The prayer for rain (Ṣalat al-Istisgā) differs from other prayers in its signification and rituals as follows. It has no specified time for its performance, which is only due in case of a lack of rain or delayed start of rains. It is neither an obligatory rite nor is it a collective obligation.³⁰ But it is a confirmed Sunna carried out by the Prophet under certain circumstances.

Istisgā prayer is the call for water in severe drought resulting from shortage of rainfall or depletion of wells. It is like the 'Eid prayer except that it has only one address. It is performed where the 'Eid prayers are performed, without announcement, but the villagers are advised of the time of its performance. It was performed in the village once during the period of my field work, although rain was requested many times during Friday addresses.

The most interesting part of the address given by the judge at the prayer for rain which I observed was "Oh God let rain water us, make it

30. See the Prayer of 'Eid al-Fitr.

plenty, rainy, pleasant, wholesome, copious, spreading, flowing, and continuous. Oh God let rain water us and do not make us among the despondents. Oh God a watering of mercy not of torture, tribulation, destruction or drowning. Oh God that the people and the country are confronting misfortune (la'awa'a), fatigue and hardship what cannot be complained about but to you. Oh God let our vegetation grow, release the udder, water us from the blessing of Heaven and give us a great deal of your blessing. Oh God relieve us from hunger, and nakedness, and recover us from every sort of tribulation that can only be recovered by you. Oh God we request your forgiveness as you are the forgiving so give us flowing rains".

The address also encouraged the worshippers to offer charity and maintain their religious rites, because God withheld the rain on account of many prohibited acts by which their disobedience to Him had been demonstrated.

Having finished the rites, the judge turned over his cloak (meshlah) as a gesture of hope for changing their condition from drought to a plentiful rainfall, and the worshippers followed suit.

Eclipse Prayer (Ṣalat al-Kusūf)

The Eclipse Prayer is a sunna which some well-informed religious jurists have extracted from God's revelation in the Qur'ān which reads "Among His signs are the Night and the Day, and the Sun and the Moon. Adore not the sun and the moon, but adore God, who created them, If it is Him ye wish to serve". Also the Prophet says "That the sun and the moon are two signs of God's signs. They do not eclipse for someone's death or life. When one of them eclipses hurry to prayer until God reveals the matter".

On an eclipse of the sun or the moon, the eclipse prayer is performed in congregation. It differs from other prayers. It requires neither a call for prayer and iqāmā, nor an address. It consists of two kneelings when the Imam recites the first chapter of the Qur'ān and one of its long chapters, then he kneels for a very long time. He raises his head and reads

again the first chapter of the Qur'ān and a chapter slightly shorter than the first one. Once he finishes he bows two prolonged bows during which he and his followers worship God each on his own. The second kneeling is performed like the first one except that the duration of recitation of the Qur'ān, kneeling and bowing are to be less than the first.

The prayer, as described above, was performed in the village on the early morning of 5 June 1974 on an eclipse of the moon. In fact the villagers would have known nothing about it, except that an educated villager happened to read the forecast in a newspaper. When he saw the eclipse he told neighbours who ran into the streets calling loudly for the prayer in the traditional way, "The prayer is in congregation (al-ṣalat jāmi'a)". The villagers who had not gone to bed at that time got ready for the prayer. The Muezzin soon hurried to the microphones on the minarets. The prayer was performed in the Friday mosque, where quite a large number gathered. During the prayer, which continued for almost two hours, some of the congregation were crying with fear. This fear is attributed to the belief that an eclipse is a sign of God's anger with His people. They also believe that the eclipse of the sun or the moon is an indication of the end of the world. When the worshippers left the mosque at about 2 a.m. the eclipse was over which made them relax believing that God had accepted their prayer and returned the moon to its natural state.

The Eclipse Prayer is impressive, it is performed for a natural phenomenon which villagers understand only in terms of religious rites. These natural phenomena are a reminder from God to His people of their neglect in observing their religious duties.

Funeral and other Rites

Funeral ceremonies are characterised by simplicity. When someone is about to die, his relatives already begin to make preparations for a quick burial. The first step is to inform relatives who do not share the same household. They all gather where the dying person is, weeping in low voices, except for the women who express their mourning by screaming. If men cannot

calm them down, they ask them to go to another house with their young children. At the same time, the close relatives of the dying person gather around him and turn his face towards the gibla, the Holy Place, and then one of them prompts him with the Shahādah: "I witness that there is no God but Allah and that Muhammad is His Prophet" (ashhad an la ilaha illa Allah wa anna Muhammad rasūl Allah) and to get him to utter it, so that they can be his last words. If the process of dying is prolonged a special chapter of the Qur'ān, Surat Yā-Sīn, is to be read for it is thought to help the emergence of the spirit, according to what has been related to the Prophet. Also the Fātiḥa is read to bless the dying person. Once he is dead a relative closes his eyes and straightens his limbs while saying "In the name of God and according to the death of His Prophet", (bism Allah wa'ala wafāt rasūl Allah). In the meantime, relatives look for someone to wash the body if no relative is willing to do so. Others bring the shroud, kafan, and the requisites of washing, kulfah, while others still bring the bed on which the body is to be washed and the bed on which it is to be carried to the mosque and the graveyard. The first bed, maḥammah, and the second one which is a sort of bier, na'ash, are made of tamarisk. There is no difference between the two except that the former has four legs. Both are Wakf and are placed in mosques to be used free of charge.

During the process of washing the body is placed on the maḥammah. It is washed with water and powder of the leaves of nabk trees, sidr, mixed with water. The person who washes the dead body starts with the normal ablutions as for prayer, and then washes the body and head with water and sidr three times, using much water and pressing its belly to let out any waste. Such washing takes place in a roofed place so that the body is not seen by unwanted people. Of course, a male dead body is washed by a male and a female by a female. The body is then moved to the bier to be wrapped in the shroud, which consists of three pieces of white fabric. One piece of the fabric is to be sewn from its top end for the head, and then is

spread over the bier. When the body is placed over it the other two pieces are spread on the right and left. Then the body is wrapped with three strings from the same fabric, one at the neck, the second at the chest, and the third at the ankles. These are untied when the body is placed in the grave where its face is to be uncovered facing the Holy Place. First however, the body and shroud are given incense. Then the kulfah, a mixture of powdered aromatic plant (raihan), musk (misk), and camphor (kafor), is put on the neck, nose, eyes and armpits, and on the ends of the hands and feet. Also the waste hole is obstructed with cotton, the nails are trimmed, and if the dead person is a male his moustache is to be trimmed as well.

When washing and shrouding are completed, the body is carried on the bier to the mosque by relatives and friends, who take over from each other throughout the way. There the Imam performs the prayer for the dead person, standing at the chest if it is a male, or at its waist if it is a female.

The prayer for the dead is performed with neither call for prayer nor kneeling or bowing. The Imam recites the first chapter of the Qur'an and other prayers inaudibly except for the takbir which he announces loudly. It consists only of four takbirat. The Imam starts by saying "God is great" four times. After the first he says "I seek the protection by God from the accused Satan. In the name of God the Merciful the Compassionate". Then he reads Fātiha. After the second he makes the following prayer,

"I testify that there is no God but Allah and that Muhammad is His prophet. Oh God Pray for Muhammad and the Muhammads as you have prayed for Ibrahim and the Ibrahims that you are praiseworthy and glorious".

After the third takbir he says

"Oh God forgive our living and our dead, our present and our absent, our young and our old, our male and our female; that you know our resort and our rest place since you are omnipotent. Oh God make whom you have left alive among us live according to Islam and Sunna, and whom you have made die have them die according to them...".

He continues saying the rest of this request in which he prays God to forgive the dead. Finally the Imam pronounces the fourth and last takbir and immediately looks to the right only while saying "Please be upon you and the Mercy of God".

Others who stand behind the Imam in parallel lines repeat inaudibly the same prayer if they are conversant with it, or say whatever prayer they know. If one of the mourners could not perform the prayer in the mosque he may do so on the grave after the burial.

When the rites of the prayer for the dead have been finished, the body is carried to the cemetery where the grave has been dug. If the grave is not ready the people wait until it is, while some of them help in the digging and others engage themselves in mixing earth with water to be used in covering the grave. The grave, gabr, is a hole of about a metre in depth. At the bottom of the eastern side of the hole an inner chamber (lihā) is dug equal to the length of the first hole. The size of the inner chamber should be just equal to the size of the dead body where it is to be placed facing the Holy Place. When it is placed in the inner chamber a small piece of mud brick is put under its head, the fabric bands are released, and only the face is uncovered. Then the chamber where the dead body is, is covered with mud bricks and the openings between them are obstructed with mud from the grave earth. Finally the grave is refilled with the rest of the same earth where everyone of the attendants tries to participate in this operation because it is a Sunna. There should be no extra earth since the height of the grave must not exceed one span above the ground level except for two marks of stones or bricks at the front and rear edges of the grave. The grave is to be sprinkled with water. Any sort of building, decoration, or even writing is believed to be inconsistent with the tradition of Islam. A female corpse is to be placed in the tomb by one of her close relatives whom she used to meet without being veiled, i.e. her husband, a son or a brother. Also a female's grave should be covered while her body is being placed in the tomb in order not to be seen by the mourners. After the ceremony some of those present may read the first chapter of the Qur'ān or say some request on the grave, each on his own. Lastly they depart to their own affairs or to condole other people in their houses. Usually condolence is expressed through hugging and kissing of either heads

or foreheads and noses of the close relatives of the dead person, particularly the elderly. Among various expressions of condolence is that the consoler says "May God enlarge your reward", (azzam Allah ajrak). The consoled replies saying "May God accept your wishes" (Allah yatagabbal da'awatak). Women neither allowed to pray over the dead body in the mosque nor to attend the funeral ceremonies. Furthermore, they are not allowed to visit their relatives' graveyards, which men may do whenever they wish.

It is a custom that some relatives and friends of the dead person offer his family cooked meals for three days or more. Such offering is a way of helping the dead person's family which is being engaged with receiving condolences.

I have mentioned that if none of the dead person's relatives are willing to wash the body, someone specialised in this work is to be brought from Riyadh since there is no one performing such work in the village. This person usually charges 100 SR, about £11.80. As regards grave-diggers, there are two villagers who do this sort of work as a part time job. One of them is a messenger belonging to the Community Development Centre, and the other shares with his brother one of the village shops. Each of them charges 30 SR, about £3.19, for a single grave. The cemetery is a free land allotted to this purpose by the Government.

Funeral ceremonies ought to be done as quickly as possible without delay except when the death takes place at late hours of the night.

Circumcision is a religious obligation for males according to a confirmed Ḥadīth which reads "The features of natural religion are five: circumcision, the cutting of moustache, clipping of nails, the use of toothpick and tearing out of the hair of armpits."³¹

Circumcision of females is practised neither in the village nor in the Kingdom in general.

31. Cf. Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī and Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim. See also Shorter Encyclopaedia of Islam, p.254.

There is no special religious or social ceremony for circumcision. Some villagers used to prepare a meal for the occasion. Now male children are circumcised on the seventh day after their birth when they are given their names (yaum al-swama). The practise of having circumcision done on the day of naming a child has been recently introduced to the villagers who have been convinced that it is more convenient and leads to faster recovery.

An account of wedding rites is given in a later chapter.

In the preceding pages I have examined the main rituals that are practised in the village regularly at specific times, and some other rituals that are occasionally practised. Various other religious rites exist but have not been brought up. They are voluntary *rite*s practised individually, such as additional prayers after each of the five daily prayers, and it is not easy to know who maintains other voluntary rites, such as fasting of certain days of each month called the 'days of whiteness' (ayyam al-bayād).

One of the various sociological definitions of religion is "a belief in a supernatural power which distinguishes between right and wrong and which provides answers to some of life's ultimate problems".³² According to Rogers and Burdge, religion fulfils the following four functions: relief of fear and anxiety; self justification; explaining the unknown, and agency of social control.³³ It is possible to say that Islam, the religion of all the villagers, fulfils such functions that can be interpreted sociologically, while other of its functions cannot be explained in the same way because they refer to the relations between God and His people - relations the villagers neither fully understand nor explain in religious terms. Nevertheless Islam means to the villagers more than a

32. E.M.Rogers and A.J.Burdge, Social Change in Rural Sociology. (New York: Meredith Corporation 1972) p.198.

33. Ibid., p.202.

number of rituals, prescribed prayers, ablutions, prostration. It is a way of life, a direction to the higher values, and a guide for social and human behaviour.³⁴

The question of their religious functions apart, the various kinds of rituals practised in the village fulfil very significant social functions directly or indirectly. To begin with the well-known salutation, al-salam is a religious greeting, but it is in fact a means of making acquaintance among those who have no previous ties or relations thus removing many barriers and differences among individuals and groups. In other words it is a means of personal introduction leading to friendly acquaintance.

What has been said about the religious salutation can be as well said about the five daily prayers which constitute regular daily meetings where the villagers discuss, either before or after each prayer, different matters dealing with personal or public concerns having to do with the village affairs. Also Friday Prayer is a regular weekly circle, wider in its concept and meaning than the five daily prayers. The villagers gather every Friday in the largest mosque of the village, not only to perform the prayer, but also to deal with social questions, for example, encouragement to be charitable, or other problems that are of concern to the village.

Fasting during the month of Ramaḍan does not only imply worshipping of God. It makes the villagers feel a sense of equality that melts differentiation among them since all, rich and poor, suffer from the severity of the fast and the deprivation of other pleasures. Secondly various kinds of charity and acts of benevolence multiply during Ramaḍan. Most significantly the fasting enhances the village relationships in terms of cooperation and forgiveness to the extent that a stranger feels that the villagers constitute a single family.

34. I.Lichtenstadter, "An Arab-Egyptian Family", The Middle East Journal, Vol.6, No.4, (Autumn 1952) p.391.

The social side of religion appears strongly at the 'Eids when the villagers wear their best clothes and congratulate each other by embracing, an expression of friendship and intimacy. The traditional way of having the 'Eid meals on the village streets and the tasting of every dish served on these occasions are of special significance. So are sacrifices, for the way in which they are distributed provides everyone with the opportunity to obtain meat, rich and poor alike. The religion also directly provides some people with employment, for example the Muezzins and the Imams, who receive monthly salaries like other government officials. In the past these duties were carried out by volunteers from pious families or by persons receiving remuneration of dates and wheat from the village zākāt. Also all members of the Religious Guidance Centre have government posts with fixed monthly salaries. Finally the occasions of the 'Eids serve some economic purpose that is apparent in the multiplication of commercial transactions, as well as the business of sacrifices which is in fact a source of additional income to some villagers.

Looking at religion from another angle, we observe its relations with the environmental conditions in the village. The impact of environmental conditions on the rituals practised by the villagers can be clearly seen in various aspects of their religious and social life. Scarcity or delay in rainfall is, something which the villagers cannot comprehend except that it is the will of unknown forces - and they ask for rain. Charity and benevolence are religious acts aiming first of all at mitigating the severity of environmental circumstances on the needy.

The reaction between religion and the environmental conditions could be interpreted from the villagers' concept of worshipping God. According to the belief held by the villagers worshipping does not merely lead to gaining God's satisfaction, but it leads as well to Paradise which is a permanent place where every sort of pleasure and enjoyment that cannot be obtained in this world are amply available. Paradise has whatever human beings wish including beautiful women, ḥūr 'eiyn, the best drinks, and the

most delicious milk and food. In Paradise there is no hard work or any sort of worries but rest and relaxation as well as response to every wish of the believer. Therefore, the villagers always express their hope of getting what they are deprived of in this world when they go to Paradise. It is frequently heard that "there is nothing good in this world, but compensation will be in the other life" (al-dunya hathy ma fiha khair, lakin al-'awaq fi al-akhirah), or "what we deserve, if God wills it, will be in the other life" (haggana in shāa Allah, fi al-akhirah).

Mentioning the name of God at each meal, "in the name of God the Merciful and the Compassionate" (bism Allah al-rahman al-rahim), and thanking Him afterwards, "Thanks to God, God of the People" (al-ḥamd li Allah rubb al-'alamin), relate to the environmental. For the villagers believe that mentioning God's name at each meal increases blessing to the food prepared for eating, whereas thanking Him helps making the eater satisfied even if the good is not virtually enough. These religious customs derive from past times when food was scarcer. Yet to mention the name of God and to thank Him increase whatever the quantity of food may be.

Furthermore, when someone is confronted with danger or when a child falls on the ground the name of God has to be mentioned over him, such as "in the name of God on you the Merciful and the Compassionate", (bism Allah 'alaik al-rahman al-rahim). The use of the Qur'ān in treating illness either by al-'azimah (see p.61) or expecoration, naṭh, is a sort of religious remedy because the villagers ignore the diagnosis of diseases as they believe any sort of disease is the will of God who is the only one capable of curing it.

Fear of the evil eye and envy are feelings caused by environmental effects, for these are held to derive from feelings of a deprived person who is agitated by the good health, wealth, or other pleasures of life enjoyed by the person he envies. Therefore the villagers insist that the person whose attention is attracted by another's good health or prosperity should mention the name of God. Once again the villagers frequently repeat

the name of God in phrases such as "there is no God but Allah" (la ilaha illa Allah) or "What God wishes" (ma sh'a Allah) when referring to a person who has achieved success. When someone notices that a friend or a relative seems to be in good health, he begins his compliment saying "What God wishes" (you are in good health). Also when someone keeps good news dark his friends and relatives blame him and say that he is afraid of their envy.

Throughout the preceding pages I have examined the main rituals and tried to make as clear as possible the meaning of some religious terms in the Arabic language and in Islamic law. I have omitted some lesser details not because they are unimportant, but because they are not binding on the villagers and may only occur from time to time and be performed individually. I have described only what I observed. I would add that villagers showed a lack of interest in being asked religious questions - since religion is the will of God which must be obeyed, regardless of its implications. In other words it is an affair of public affirmation, in which the end is presented in the performance of the ritual itself,³⁵ and is not open to questioning.

Finally I should point out that in the village, like any other place in the Kingdom, there are no shrines of any kind because to believe in their validity is contrary to the concept of Islam. All shrines that existed in the Kingdom after the success of Shaikh Muhammed Ibn Abdul Wahhab's Religious Reform were demolished, including the Shrine of Irqan in Irqah.

35. Max Gluckman, Politics, Law and Ritual in Tribal Society. (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1967) p.28.

CHAPTER II

EDUCATION

In Saudi Arabia the principal object of education is to orient pupils in the religion of Islam. The school is thus not a mere educational institution; it is a religious institution as well. In fact religious subjects take precedence over others. Failure in a religious subject cannot be compensated for by good marks in another subject, although the opposite is true.

There are no figures available for the Kingdom, but the illiteracy rate is high in the village, especially among females, due to poor educational institutions and hardship of life which prevented many of the village people from pursuing proper education. Most of the illiterate are over forty. Even if some of them do want to learn how to read and write there is no adult education programme apart from a few classes for women organised by the Community Development Centre. The village has never had a public library.

Educational facilities are available from sources of different kinds. Religious education is given in the mosques, the Imam reads from religious books, and explains what he reads, after aṣr prayers except on Fridays. Adult education programmes, as well as others dealing with housekeeping and health, are available through radio and television.

Then there are the specialised institutions, the boys' primary school, the girls' primary school, and some of the educational programmes of the Community Development Centre.

Before 1926 there was no formal education on the Kingdom level. Each town and village attended to its own education, but this was poor in both quality and quantity. Only in the cities of Mecca, Jeddah, and Medina was education a little more advanced as a result of direct contact with the outside world. The traditional school (madrasah and sometimes kuttab) had one classroom. Some individuals did however open public schools on their own initiative and responsibility.

The traditional system of education had no rules specifying age of pupils, or curriculum. The pupils used to gather either in a corner of a mosque or in a schoolroom, under the supervision of one man whose qualification was rote knowledge of the Qur'ān, and being conversant with principles of reading and writing and a very limited knowledge of simple arithmetic. This man used to be given various titles such as Muṭawwa', Ustādh, and Shaikh. He was fully responsible for administering and educating his pupils, who used to sit around him on the ground. There used to be two periods of schooling, from 8 a.m. to noon and from 4 p.m. to about 5.30 p.m. This traditional system of education was poor in concept and significance since it was limited primarily to memorizing the Qur'ān, and to some principles of reading and writing through the repetition of letters of the alphabet, together with some arithmetic. The only educational tool was a wooden board, lōh, on which the teacher wrote in black ink the lessons which his pupils were supposed to learn. When the lesson was learnt by heart the board was washed for the teacher to write a new one and so on. When a pupil had learnt the alphabet by heart he went on to read the Qur'ān from beginning to end. This was the limit of education at that time. When a pupil had finished his guardian would make a celebration called zaffat al-khatmah where teacher, pupils and relatives of the graduate were invited for a meal. If a pupil was desirous of pursuing further learning he would either return to the same school to learn the Qur'ān by heart through the same teacher or through an Imam who was in most cases responsible for the school.

Fees were paid in two ways. These were fees in kind, dates or wheat given to the teacher at different times of the year and on completion of memorizing the Qur'ān, and fees in the form of money such as a few silver coins, paid at first enrolment, after the completion of each part of the Qur'ān, and upon graduation.

This traditional system was virtually limited to males. Girls' educational opportunity was far smaller. A few girls were taught by female

teachers only, memorizing the Qur'ān to be aware of religious duties. The family played an important role in disciplining boys and girls in religious teachings and community values.

In Irqah, under the old system of education, there was a one-room, one-teacher school where the pupils memorized the Qur'ān, and learned some of the Ḥadīth, and orthography. The teacher used to get entrance fees (dkhālāh), a silver coin; one or two silver coins on completion of every three sections of the Qur'ān; an unfixed sum of silver coins on completion of the whole Qur'ān, and fees in kind - dates and wheat at harvest. The girls were less fortunate than the boys: education for girls was not socially acceptable. From the age of ten they were obliged to remain in the house and were not allowed to go out unless it was absolutely necessary. However, there was a woman teacher who used to teach a very few of the village girls how to memorize the Qur'ān in her house.

The government's initiative in education has gone through three stages. The first stage was during the reign of King Abdul Aziz who issued orders for establishing the Directorate-General of Education in 1926. That government body took control of all existing local schools and promised to open government schools which would be more efficient. The second stage was during the reign of King Saud who sanctioned the promotion of the Directorate-General of Education to a Ministry in 1954. This occurred as a response to the increasing needs for educated people to fill government posts throughout the country. The third stage was the establishment of the Presidency-General for Girls' Education in 1960 to supervise the existing girls' schools and to open public government schools for girls at national level.

As a consequence of this development, there are today two government public schools in Irqah, a boys' primary school and a girls' primary school. Although primary education is officially compulsory, there is no law to enforce it. Post-primary education at various levels is available in Riyadh.

1. Boys' Education

The Boys' Primary school was opened by the then Directorate-General of

Education in 1949, after fierce opposition from the village Amir and some fanatical villagers. The opposition was based on the grounds that it was an unwelcome innovation which served no religious purpose, but confused pupils' minds with subjects unrelated to the Qur'an and the Sunna.

The Ministry of Education sponsors all the costs of the school including text books. The subjects taught are the same as in other government primary schools, and are shown on the two tables below. The first table illustrates the overall and the second the detailed plan at primary level.

TABLE 1: BOYS' PRIMARY EDUCATION: OVERALL PLAN

Subjects	Hours per week					
	I Year	II Year	III Year	IV Year	V Year	VI Year
Religious Subjects	12	12	12	12	9	9
Arabic Language Subjects	9	9	11	10	9	9
Social Science Subjects	-	-	-	2	3	3
Maths and Geometry Subjects	4	4	6	5	7	6
Sciences & Health Subjects	2	2	2	2	3	4
Drawing & Manual Works	3	3	2	2	2	2
Physical Education	2	2	2	2	2	2
TOTAL	32	32	35	35	35	35

TABLE 2: BOYS' PRIMARY EDUCATION: DETAILED PLAN

Subjects		Hours per week					
		I Year	II Year	III Year	IV Year	V Year	VI Year
Religious Subjects	Qur'an	8	8	8	7	3	4+ ⁺
	Intonation	-	-	-	1	1	-
	Monotheism	2	2' ^x	2' ^x	2' ^x	2	2
	Jurisprudence	2	2' ^x	2' ^x	2' ^x	2	2
	Hadīth	-	-	-	-	1	1
TOTAL		12	12	12	12	9	9
Arabic Languages Subjects	Spelling and Writing	7	7	-	-	-	-
	Reading	-	-	3	2	2	2
	Canticles and Poems	2	2	2	2	1	1
	Dictation	-	-	3	2	2	2
	Calligraphy	-	-	1	1	1	1
	Expression and Composition	-	-	2	2	1	1
	Grammar	-	-	-	1	2	2
TOTAL		9	9	11	10	9	9
Social Sciences	Geography	-	-	-	1	1½	1½
	History	-	-	-	1	1½	1½
	TOTAL	-	-	-	2	3	3
Mathematics		4	4	6	5	6	5
Geometry		-	-	-	-	1	1
TOTAL		4	4	6	5	7	6
Science and Health Education		2	2	2	2	3	4
Drawing and Manual Work		3	3	2	2	2	2
Physical Education		2	2	2	2	2	2
GRAND TOTAL		32	32	35	35	35	35

+⁺ One hour is to be used for memorizing the Qur'an by heart.

x The surplus time is to be used for memorizing the Qur'an by heart and intonation.

Primary education lasts six years; the school week is six days, Saturdays to Thursdays; the total weekly schooling is thirty-five hours except first and second years which are three hours less; daily school hours are six hours except Thursdays when it is five.

Religious subjects have the most hours. They are considered the most important objective of the school. The foreword to the Primary Education Curriculum for boys' schools emphasises its importance. It reads:

Contemporary nations are very much concerned with their children's intellectual tendencies that they may be in conformity with the beliefs and the basic identity of their society. These nations are, therefore, profoundly keen to bring up their children from a tender age in accordance with their religious faith. For a child's innate nature is like a plain sheet of paper which gets affected by various factors of his surroundings, i.e. the family, the school and the community at large. But the school in particular, with its knowledge, arts and discipline as well as the ability of its teachers, is more effective in leaving its mark on the children. Furthermore, it considerably influences the directions of their future lives which might either lead to good conduct or deviation.

The Muslim nation is the nation of the Muhammadan message which has been the horizon of human life ever since it was revealed by Muhammad. Since then it has washed out the darkness of polytheism and laid out the basis of a true faith and respectable life which aim at realising peace and happiness to human sufferings. Consequently the religion of Islam has provided human needs of good faith, good conduct and virtuous community which is integrated by love for God and ruled by His Shari'a.

The Saudi state in the Arabian Peninsula supports the religious reform initiated by the reformer Shaikh Muhammad Ibn Abdul Wahhab for the purpose of clarifying the perfect bases of Islam and the adherence to its Shari'a. Hence it is not surprising that its King Faisal Ibn Saud has been very much concerned with the curricula of education in order to preserve the essence of Islam and to maintain his state whose foundation was an outcome of declaring the word of God and adopting His Shari'a.

Primary education is the basic stage in bringing up the nation's children in an integrated way educationally, intellectually and physically, morally and socially. This sort of education makes them well prepared for maintaining their religious beliefs and meeting the needs of their future lives. 1

1. Wazarat al-Ma'arif, Manhaj al-ta'lim al-ibtida'i Madaris al-Banin, 1968, pp.5-6.

It is apparent from this quotation that the most significant functions of the school are in fact religious ones which have other dimensions beyond the framework of academic education. These dimensions are included in various texts of the school books.

The preface of the plan for primary education emphasises that:

The curricula deal with religious, moral, social, industrial, agricultural, sanitary, economic and recreational subjects having direct connection with the pupil's environment and community. It is through this framework of education that he can develop his personality in order to be a good citizen in accordance with the teachings of Islam. As such these curricula are in line with the developments that have been adopted in our society within the conceptual framework of our values and understandings which derive from our true religion of Islam.' 2

But a glance at the Tables 1 and 2 shows that none of them includes subjects relating to agriculture or industry for instance. Some of the instructions about the method of teaching religious subjects indicate the special importance given to religious education.

The aim of studying religion is to make all sayings and acts of man in conformity with the pure shariā and in accordance with the true religion of Islam. Thus religious beliefs must be deeply rooted and mixed in the blood and mind of man so that such beliefs are to be demonstrated through his morals, his behaviour and his deeds of all kinds. Hence pupils are to understand the facts of Islam and its sacred principles. They are to be aware of their obligations towards their God (rabbohum), themselves, and their nation. They are to make an ideal of what they read about the biography of prophets and similar other personalities.... They are to make use of their learning in order to be capable of gaining God's satisfaction and His plentiful rewards.' 3

Such concentration on rooting religion deeply in the pupil's mind is found in instructions about all school subjects. The pupils, particularly in their earlier years, are not capable of absorbing all the religious subjects they are supposed to learn. But the main target of education at all levels, including the primary, suits the prevailing social structure on the one hand, and the policy of the State concerning its call for Islamic solidarity which has been initiated by King Faisal on the other hand.

2. Ibid., p.6.

3. Ibid., p.11.

Iraqah primary school for boys was opened in 1949. Most boys aged six, and some aged five, attend the school. Up to 1973, 175 pupils had passed through it. In the session 1973-74 there were 174 pupils distributed as the following tables shows:

TABLE 3: BOYS' PRIMARY SCHOOL PUPILS 1973-1974

School Years	No. of Class	No. of Rooms	State of Registration				TOTAL
			Newly Accepted	Ele- vated	Failure (1)	Failure (2)	
I	2	2	31	-	13	1	45
II	2	2	-	36	3	-	39
III	1	1	-	20	10	-	30
IV	1	1	-	23	8	-	31
V	1	1	-	11	1	-	12
VI	1	1	-	1	-	-	17
TOTAL	8	8	31	37	35	1	174

The percentage of failures is fairly high compared with the number of students, especially during the first year of enrolment in the school. As the table shows the number of first year pupils was 45, whereas the number of sixth year pupils was only 17. No pupil is officially allowed to remain in the school when he is over fifteen, but should be transferred to a night school. Since there is no night school at the village, the school lets some pupils over fifteen remain.

TABLE 4: SHOWING AGE OF PUPILS AT THE VILLAGE SCHOOL FOR BOYS

<u>Age</u>	<u>No. of pupils</u>
6 -	1
6 - 7	26
7 - 8	33
8 - 9	25
9 - 10	17
10 - 11	7
11 - 12	19
12 - 13	21
13 - 14	7
14 - 15	10
15 - 16	3
16 - 17	1
17 - 18	4
TOTAL	<u>174</u>

The school staff consists of the headmaster, who is from the village itself and has an intermediate school certificate; seven teachers, three of them from the village, graduates of the Secondary Institute for Teachers' Training in Riyadh. Three of the other four graduated from the Primary Institute for Teachers' Training. The seventh teacher, a brother of the village Judge, graduated from the Shari'a College, a four-year religious college. In addition there are three non-Saudi teachers. One is an Egyptian who graduated from a higher teacher's training institute. The remaining two are Jordanian, one with a B.A. degree, the other with a high school certificate of literature. There are three servants from among the village people, one of whom is a messenger.

Iraqah primary school for boys, as an educational institution, concentrates on inculcating the school subjects mechanically according to the Ministry of Education regulations, without trying to develop personalities. There is no connection between the school and the village outside the

regular school hours. It is closed at noon everyday. It is closed also during summers, when its activities are paralysed. The Ministry of Education has asserted that each primary school should set up a fathers-teachers association.⁴ But there is not one in Irqah.

The relation between the administration and the teaching staff on the one hand and the pupils on the other hand, is characterised by rigidity and fear. The relation lacks an amicable atmosphere even outside the school. Punishment by flogging takes place though the Ministry of Education prohibits it. There are always two sticks in the headmaster's office, one on his desk and the other on the wall. When I asked him whether he used them he told me that any sort of punishment in the form of beating is forbidden, but he could not avoid it in the case of undisciplined pupils. On one occasion a pupil entered his office saying that a teacher wanted a stick to punish two pupils who were quarrelling. The headmaster refused but told him to ask the teacher to send the quarrelling pupils to him. He only rebuked them verbally in a very polite manner. On another occasion the physical education teacher presented in the headmaster's office four pupils whom he wanted flogged for being troublemakers and for calling each other by girls' names. While the teacher was waiting he kept saying that he was concerned with their good behaviour more than their education. The headmaster interrupted and told the pupils that they must be wise and polite. He told the elder one that he was a man, being as tall as the headmaster himself, and that such misbehaviour gave guests and visitors a bad impression of the school; then he dismissed them. Had it not been for my presence he would no doubt have flogged them.

In its present condition the boys' primary school neither helps to develop the personalities nor creates an atmosphere where the talents can grow. This is because pupils are supposed to memorize the subjects decided

4. Wazarāt al-Ma'ārif, al-Nizām al-Dakhilī li al-Madrasāh al-Ibtidā'iyah, 1964, p.15.

upon by the Ministry of Education even if they do not understand them, and they are not allowed to discuss them with their teachers since they have to accept what they are taught unquestioningly. The school is considerably hampered by lack of facilities and educational aids. This is particularly reflected in attempts to pursue such subjects as science.

It is true that pupils are supposed to take part in various societies formed according to Ministry regulations. Each society bears the name of an Arabian historical personality and specialises in certain activities. The Khalid Ibn al-Waleed Society is concerned with various activities including health education, picnics, drawing, handwork and handwriting. The Tariqu Ibn Ziyad Society attends to School broadcasting, ceremonies, speeches and writing. The Sa'ad Ibn Ma'ath Society specialises in social activities and Islamic Education. But pupils have virtually no spare time to participate in their activities. During school hours they have to attend their classrooms which they do not leave except for short breaks after every forty-five minutes. They go home shortly before noon prayer. There is no extra time for society activities since the school is not open again until the following day. The only occasions when pupils participate is when the school has some visitors from the Ministry of Education.

The school library is very small and consists of only religious and history books and has no books suitable for the pupils age and education level.

Some of the classes consist of pupils whose ages range from eighteen to twelve years or less. The younger ones have to stand up when writing or copying their assignments from the blackboard because the school desks are too high for them on the one hand, and because older ones always sit in front of them. The classrooms are crowded and inadequately lit.

2. Girls' Education:

The government established the Presidency-General for Girls' Education at Kingdom level in 1960. The village primary school for girls was opened in 1961-62 as a joint project between the local authority and the Presidency-

General for Girls' Education. The local authority, represented by the Amir, who was enthusiastic for the school, managed to convince a few prominent figures to arrange for financial aid from the Cooperative Society to cover the rent of the school building and the salaries of wives of the boys' primary school teachers who were appointed as teaching staff. The Presidency-General attended only to the supervision aspects of the school. At the beginning most of the villagers rejected the idea of a girls' school although its sponsors and the Community Development Centre had explained its aims. (It was in fact the UN advisor for Community Development, Dr. Salah Abd, who initiated the idea of the school and made the preliminary arrangement for its opening). Most villagers were reluctant to allow their daughters to attend the school. Gradually they came to realise that girls' education was desirable so long as it was based on religious grounds. The school remained a joint project until 1966 when it came fully under the sponsorship of the Presidency-General for girls' Education in all aspects, financially, administratively and educationally.

The basic objectives of the school and its educational activities since it has been a government school in 1966 are explained as follows:

Women are full sisters of men whose education for understanding their role in life is not less significant than that of men. For a man and a woman constitute the family which is the basis of every society. It is only in the domain of the family as legalised by Islam that children of the nation are to be brought up. Therefore, the aim of educating the girl is to make her prepared as a good mother capable of taking the responsibility of bringing up Muslim generations in the right direction. In order for her to achieve this goal she is to be educated in housekeeping as well as in manual work, i.e., sewing, knitting.

It is only within the Islamic framework of education which does not expose the Muslim girl to disrespect and immorality that the Kingdom, under His Majesty's leadership, has been concerned with girls' education....Accordingly His Majesty's government has given high priority to the preparation of educational curricula that are capable of bringing up our girls in accordance with the virtuous aims of Islam, and to furnish them with every sort of knowledge which they need as Muslim women who should maintain their chastity and strictly adhere to what Islam has preserved for them. 5

5. al-Ri'āṣah al-'Ammāh li Ta'līm al-Banāt, Manhāj al-Madrasāh al-Ibtidā'īyah, 1968, pp.5-6.

The function of the girls' primary school is similar to that of the boys' in its concentration on religious education. Meanwhile, the curricula of the girls' school emphasises some other subjects which are related to girls education as the following tables show.

TABLE 5: GIRLS PRIMARY EDUCATION: OVERALL PLAN

Subjects	Hours per week					
	I Year	II Year	III Year	IV Year	V Year	VI Year
Religious subjects	14	14	13	11	10	9
Arabic Language	5	9	11	10	10	9
Social Sciences	-	-	-	2	2	2
Sciences & Health Educations	2	2	2	2	2	3
Maths & Geometry	5	4	5	4	5	5
Art Education	2	3	3	3	3	3
Domestic Science	-	-	-	3	3	4
TOTAL	28	32	34	35	35	35

TABLE 6: GIRLS PRIMARY EDUCATION: DETAILED PLAN

Subjects	I Year	II Year	III Year	IV Year	V Year	VI Year
Qur'an	10(A)	10	9	6	4	3
Ḥadīth	-	-	-	-	1	1
Explanation	-	-	-	-	-	1
Intonation	-	-	-	1	1	-
Monotheism	2(A)	2(B)	2(B)	2(B)	2	2
Jurisprudence	2(A)	2(B)	2(B)	2(B)	2	2
Reading	4	4	4	3	2	2
Dictation	-	3	3	2	2	2
Caligraphy	-	1	1	1	1	1
Canticles and poems	1	1	1	1	1	1
Expression	-	-	2	2	2	1
Grammar	-	-	-	1	2	2
Social Sciences	-	-	-	2	2	2
Sciences & Health Education	2	2	2	2	2	2
Mathematics	5	4	5	4	4	4
Geometry	-	-	-	-	1	1
Art Education	2	3	3	3	3	3
Domestic Science	-	-	-	3	3	4
TOTAL	28	32	34	35	35	35

(A) All these hours are to be used in teaching the alphabet during the first half of the school year.

(B) The surplus of these hours is to be used in memorizing the Qur'an by heart and intonation.

It is apparent from the tables that religious education is given priority during the first years of schooling.

The number of girls attending the school gradually rose during the period between 1966 and 1974.

TABLE 7: NUMBERS ATTENDING THE GIRLS' PRIMARY SCHOOL 1966-1974

Date	I Year	II Year	III Year	IV Year	V Year	VI Year	TOTAL
1966	25	21	6	6	5	5	68
1967	39	14	15	6	3	6	83
1968	50	18	8	13	5	3	97
1969	35	31	10	9	8	4	97
1970	36	37	29	8	11	6	127
1971	25	39	30	23	8	9	134
1972	26	28	40	33	9	8	144
1973	35	25	25	38	24	12	159

The table clearly indicates the increase particularly in the first school years. At the same time the number of girl pupils promoted to advanced years shrinks. This wastage could be attributed to repeated failures followed by giving up of school, or to the fact that families do not approve of school-going once girls have reached the age of puberty. The number of girl pupils reaching the final year is very small. Villagers do not encourage their girls to continue their schooling once they can read the Qur'ān and be aware of their religious duties. As their ultimate hope is for a girl to get married and become a housewife, her education is of minor importance to them. At any rate, about forty girls have completed their primary schooling from the village school.

The school staff consists of the headmistress, a Saudi not resident in the village; a supervisor who is a Saudi; nine teachers, one of them a Saudi, four from Jordan, two from Palestine, and two from Egypt. Two of the Jordanians are wives of teachers in the boys' primary school. Then there are two maidservants from the village itself, and male messenger and a watchman also from the village. The messenger is the husband of one of the maids and the watchman has just divorced the other.

As in all girls' schools, dress is a uniform with colour and design chosen by the Presidency-General for Girls' Education. Families are obliged to provide this uniform, as well as other requirements such as notebooks. The Presidency-General for Girls' Education covers the remaining costs including text books which are distributed free of charge every year. Nevertheless, some villagers complain about the high costs involved in sending their girls to school. Some exaggerate the rising price of school articles as an expression of their dependence upon the government, which they considered should be responsible for everything.

The girls' primary school does not differ from the boys' in its main function. This is to inculcate school subjects without consideration for development of personalities or talents. There is no connection between the school and the village, and no form of mothers-teachers association.

It was difficult for me to become acquainted with the school activities. No man is allowed at the front door of the school without good reason, except the school messenger and watchman. When I was talking with the school messenger he told me I should not remain, otherwise the headmistress would complain about him to the Presidency-General for Girls' Education. No man is allowed to talk to any woman of the school whether teachers, maids, or pupils. The school messenger refused to hand the headmistress a letter from me in which I asked her to let me bring my wife to meet her to get information about the school. However I convinced him of the contents of the letter and he hesitantly agreed to take it in. She replied through the messenger that the school was not allowed to receive female visitors, for whatever purpose. Later I sent the headmistress, through the school messenger, some written questions. She replied this time to the effect that she could not answer them because any information concerning the school had to be obtained through the Presidency-General for Girls' Education. Having eventually contacted the Presidency-General for Girls' Education many times I was only able to obtain some statistics, most of which were of little use for my purposes.

There are no friendly relations, and no social contact between the women teachers from other Arab countries and the village women. The male teachers are not much better placed since the only constant contact they have with the male villagers is at prayer time in the mosques.

At Irqah there are no schools for education beyond primary level. Those who want it have to go to Riyadh. The only facility provided for them is transport. The Ministry of Education provides the male pupils with a daily bus; the Presidency-General for Girls' Education provides the female pupils with similar transport under the supervision of a man and a woman who are responsible for the girls' safety. The Ministry of Education and the Presidency-General for Girls' Education each provides one bus which goes to both Diriyah and Irqah. The Ministry bus first collects male pupils at Diriyah and then passed through Irqah to collect male pupils there. The Presidency-General's bus does the same for girls.

I could not acquaint myself with exact figures relating to boys and girls going to post-primary education, although it is safe to say that most boys and some girls pursue it. The majority of both attend institutions that pay monthly allowances. Even at post-primary level, religious education continues to dominate.

The preceding account on the theme of education has shown that the school gives considerable priority to religious subjects and regards others as having secondary importance. Nevertheless, one should not overlook the significance of the school as providing the framework for a general education. After leaving, a pupil can acquire further education through reading material not related to school subjects, and through access to the mass media, particularly radio. The next section will take medicine as an example where knowledge, belief and behaviour derive from the material sources as well as those made available through education, the media, and government innovation.

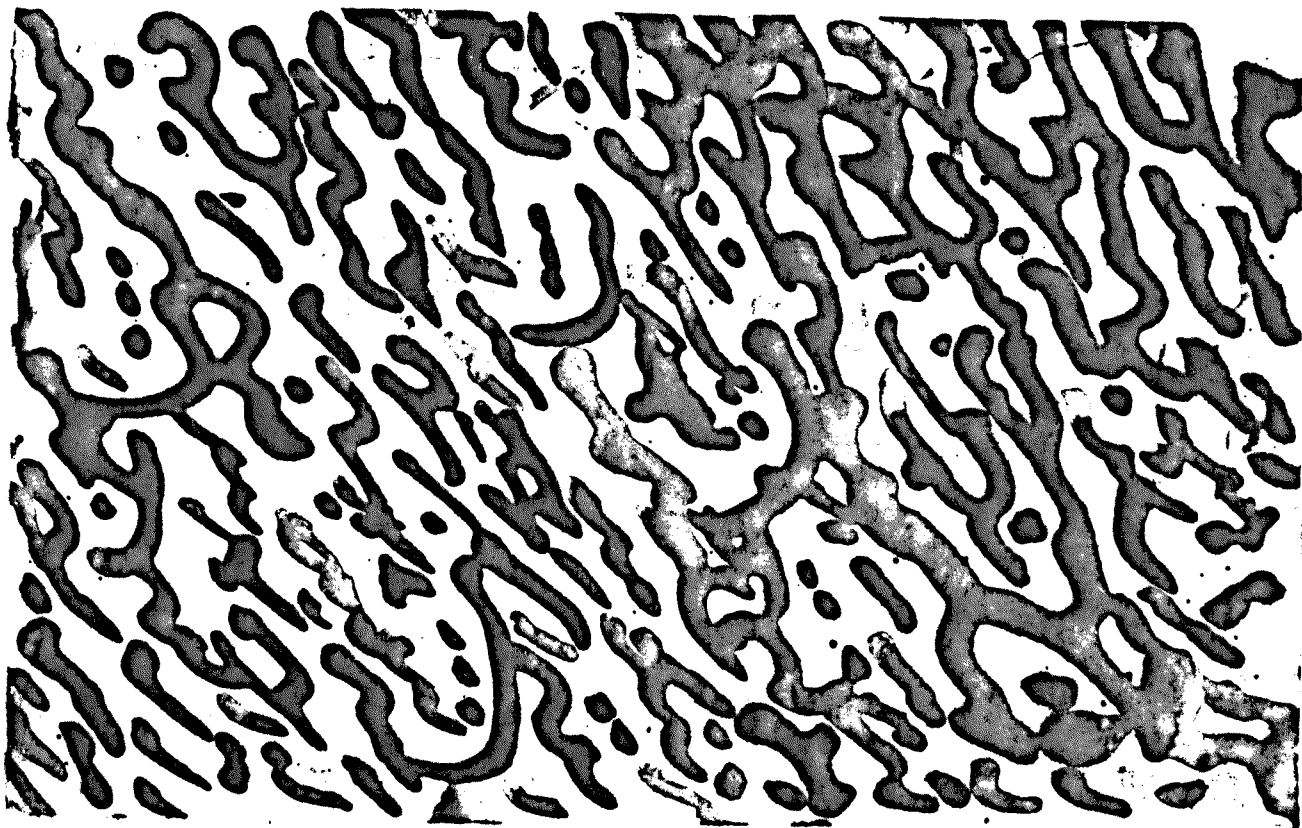
3. Medical Knowledge

Although health services are available, the villagers treat most of

the diseases by traditional methods. There is a dispensary in the village and hospitals in nearby Riyadh, but the villagers prefer the local treatment and believe it is more effective.

Many kinds of local treatment are used, including the following: spells, verses of the Qur'ān intended to treat various psychological disorders, especially the one known as ḍayyiq al-ṣadr. These spells are of two kinds. With naftḥ (expectoration) a person of good standing in religious affairs reads directly to the sick person certain verses of the Qur'ān and some of the Prophet's sayings, or reads them into a cup of water, or water mixed with saffron, which the sick person drinks seven times. The second, al-'azimah, is in the form of verses from the Qur'ān or sayings of the Prophet written in liquid saffron on a plate or a sheet of paper (the use of plates has become rare). If the writing is on a plate it is washed off with water which is then given to the sick person to drink, and if it is on a paper it is put for a while in a cup of water until the saffron colours the water, and then given to the patient to drink. The patient repeats al-'azimah seven times.

Al-'azimah is written by a specialist conversant with religious affairs and known for his piety, but he need not be a judge, or shaikh, nor even be very highly informed in religious matters. Naturally the writer of al-'azimah charges for his services. The charge has recently risen to 15 SR, about £1.70, though for the treatment to be more effective, it is preferable that no actual agreement is made. Today the villagers always mentioned that the writing of al-'azimah has become a business transaction because its writer fixes its charges, and prepares a supply in advance of demand. It is impossible for the uninitiated to read the script in which al-'azimah is written, and so it is impossible to ensure that what is written is what the writer says it is.



An example of al-'azimah script

Expectoration was used by the prophet Muhammad and some Muslims continue to practise it. Thus it has been related that the prophet said "The opening Chapter of the Qur'ān, al-Fātiḥa is an antidote for every poison".⁶ Also 'A'isha, the Prophet's wife, mentioned that

"Whenever the prophet felt any sort of illness he used to read to himself the Mu'awwithat, the second and third chapters of the Qur'ān, and expectorate. When his pain increased I used to read to him while rubbing the location of the pain with his hand hoping for its blessing".⁷

According to the village Judge there are many Ḥadīths indicating that the Prophet used the Qur'ān as a means of seeking recovery and of

6. Ismael Ibn Kathīr, Tafsīr Ibn Kathīr, Vol.1. (Beirut: Dār al-Andalus li al-Tiba'ah wa al-Nashr, 1966), p.17.

7. Muslim H.al-Goshairi, Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim, Vol.VII. (Cairo: Muṭbaat Muhammad Ali Ṣobaiḥ, 1334^{AH}), p.16.

encountering the evil eye and witchcraft. The prophet used expectoration either at the point of the pain or in a cup of water given to the patient. The use of al-'azimah on a plate or a sheet of paper was not transmitted from the prophet, and therefore the village Judge does not believe in it. But he is convinced that allergic diseases are cured by the reading out of some verses or chapters of the Qur'ān.

The use of the two kinds of spells is widespread in Najd, including the City of Riyadh, because the people believe that the Qur'ān has power to cure sicknesses, particularly deriving from the evil eye and witchcraft. Although Hafiz Wahba mentions these, he does not mention either al-'azimah or the method of expectoration.⁸

Cautery (al-kawī) is the use of burning as a means of treatment. An iron is made hot, and then placed on the part of the body where the pain is. Cautery is often used for the treatment of eye ailment, fevers, bad cold and smallpox. But its use for smallpox has become very rare due to vaccination.

The villagers believe that local techniques for bone-setting (tajbīr) are more successful than the modern methods employed by doctors in hospitals.

Cupping (hijāmah) is used for eliminating head faintness, once the decomposed blood being taken out of the body, according to the beliefs held by the villagers.

Numerous locally made medicines are in use. These are of various kinds of evil smelling and bitter-tasting substances such as asafoetida (hītīt), aloes (ṣabir) and gentian (murr). These are mainly used for the treatment of diseases of stomach and eye. The following plants are grasses also used: Wild rue (ḥarmal) in a desert shrub with a very bitter taste, whose leaves are used for the treatment of malaria, gout and diseases of stomach and eye. Wormwood (shīḥ) in a dry plant used for the treatment of gout and diabetes. Ishriqū is a green plant similar to spinach but its taste is very bitter. It is used for the treatment of indigestion and

8. Hafiz Wahba, Jazirāt al-Arab fi al-Qarn al-Ishtīn. (Cairo: Lajnat al-Tibṣah wa al-Tarjamāh wa al-Nashr, 1956). p.119.

cleansing of the stomach.

The villagers' belief in these is attributed to what the Prophet has said:

Cure could be obtained in three: a drink of honey, a wound for cupping and a burning of fire, but I do not recommend my people to use cautery. 9

Knowledge of most of the commonly used local medicines is passed from generation to generation, particularly asafoetida, aloes, and gentian which are used for stomach and eye treatments, and which are available in almost every house. At the same time in the village there is a specialist in cautery, bone-setting and massage. This specialist, whose name is Mas'ūd, is a Bedouin from Qaḥṭān tribe working as a guard at the Ministry well. He told me he professed the following methods of treatment: for al-Shā'ib, which is a sort of severe headache, he uses cautery alone, and selects the spot for cautery by pressing the head at different places and cauterizes where it is most painful. He uses the same treatment for jaundice (shghār). The cautery is a ring-like mark on the wrists of both hands. I saw some villagers whom Mas'ūd had treated for this disease. The disease of al-janb which he says is a sickness resulting from the ribs being stuck to the lung, is again treated by cautery on the place of pain. He also uses it for lesser ailments, like indigestion, and "the mother of boys" (umm al-ṣbyān), which is a painful swelling one side of the face near the ears.

One of his specialities is bone-setting, particularly fractured bones of arms and legs. He rubs the broken limb with a mixture of ghee or fat or olive oil together with washing blue if it is available. The fractured part is set with sticks and bandages. Finally Mas'ūd told me that he practises joints massage, against pain, using fenugreek (ḥilbah) and salt.

As regards diagnosis, Mas'ūd told me that he learned this through keen observation (firāsah) because these diseases are, according to him,

9. Muhammad S. al-Bukhārī, Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī, Vol. VII. (Cairo: Muṭba'at Muhammad Ali Ṣabah, n.d.) p.159.

ordinary matters that are dealt with by simple thought (tahajjis), Like shooting, the cure may or may not hit the target. He added that such matters were entirely dependent on the will of God, and one must accept the result.

He estimates that he cauterises eight or ten people a year, with perhaps two to four cases of bone-setting. He has no special instruments, and for cautery uses any available piece of iron such as a large nail, a knife, or a scythe. According to Mas'ūd, he has no fixed charge, and prefers to leave the question to the discretion of the patient himself. But in fact he usually fixes the charge in advance, as the father of a child whose arm was set told me that Mas'ūd asked for 200 SR, about £23, paid in advance.

The Ministry of Health opened a dispensary at Irqah in 1961. This renders medical services to the extent of first aid and the control of epidemic diseases, such as malaria, cholera and smallpox. The dispensary staff consists of a general practitioner, a nurse, and a pharmacist. There are also a sanitary expert and a visiting nurse appointed by the same Ministry but these are administratively connected with the Community Development Centre.

The villagers have become interested in the dispensary health services, since all medical services including drugs and treatment are free, and they have an increasing awareness of the value of vaccination against cholera and smallpox, and other epidemic diseases.

Such factors have convinced the villagers of the vitality of medical services through the dispensary. But perhaps more important is the high cost of the traditional treatment. The villagers are also becoming aware that the health services can treat effectively some diseases which cannot be cured by other means. Apart from diseases listed in Table 8, malnutrition is common according to the dispensary doctor and the sanitary expert. The table shows that gastro-intestinal complaints are the most reported; this arises from the impurity of the drinking water.

TABLE 8: CATEGORIES OF DISPENSARY OUTPATIENT VISITS OVER A PERIOD OF NINE MONTHS

Diseases	Outpatients' Visits			
	Male	Female	Child	Total
Communicable	-	-	-	-
Cardio-Vascular	65	160	20	245
Mental and Psychiatric	-	-	-	-
Chest	350	725	600	1675
Gastro-Intestinal	365	1165	1080	2510
Genito-Urinary system	24	50	50	124
Gynecology and obstetric	-	395	-	395
Skin and cellular tissue	190	185	230	605
Muscular-skeletal system	-	-	-	-
Trachoma	15	-	-	15
Other eye diseases	260	405	1180	1845
E.N.T.	256	201	495	952
Mouth and Dental	146	176	565	887
Wounds, Fractures and Burns	38	5	36	79
Minor Surgery	-	-	-	-
Others	248	102	302	652
TOTAL	1967	3569	4558	9094

Village women consider that children might be a target of the evil eye, resulting from someone's fascination for their beauty or good health. If they suspect a person they try to get him to mention the name of God and lightly spit on the child, or after washing a cup or a glass the suspect has used, they give the water to the child to drink. Or they can collect some pips of fruits or dates the suspect has eaten, wash them, and have the child drink the water. If there is no suspect, a woman can do these things with her relatives and friends.

Even when the villagers take advice from the dispensary doctor, they (and particularly the women) do not follow the treatment prescribed either because they cannot read, and depend on their memory to follow instructions, or else because they simply disregard the instructions, and stop taking treatment as soon as their health improves slightly. This itself could lead to dissatisfaction with modern methods and a return to the familiar, traditional medicines.

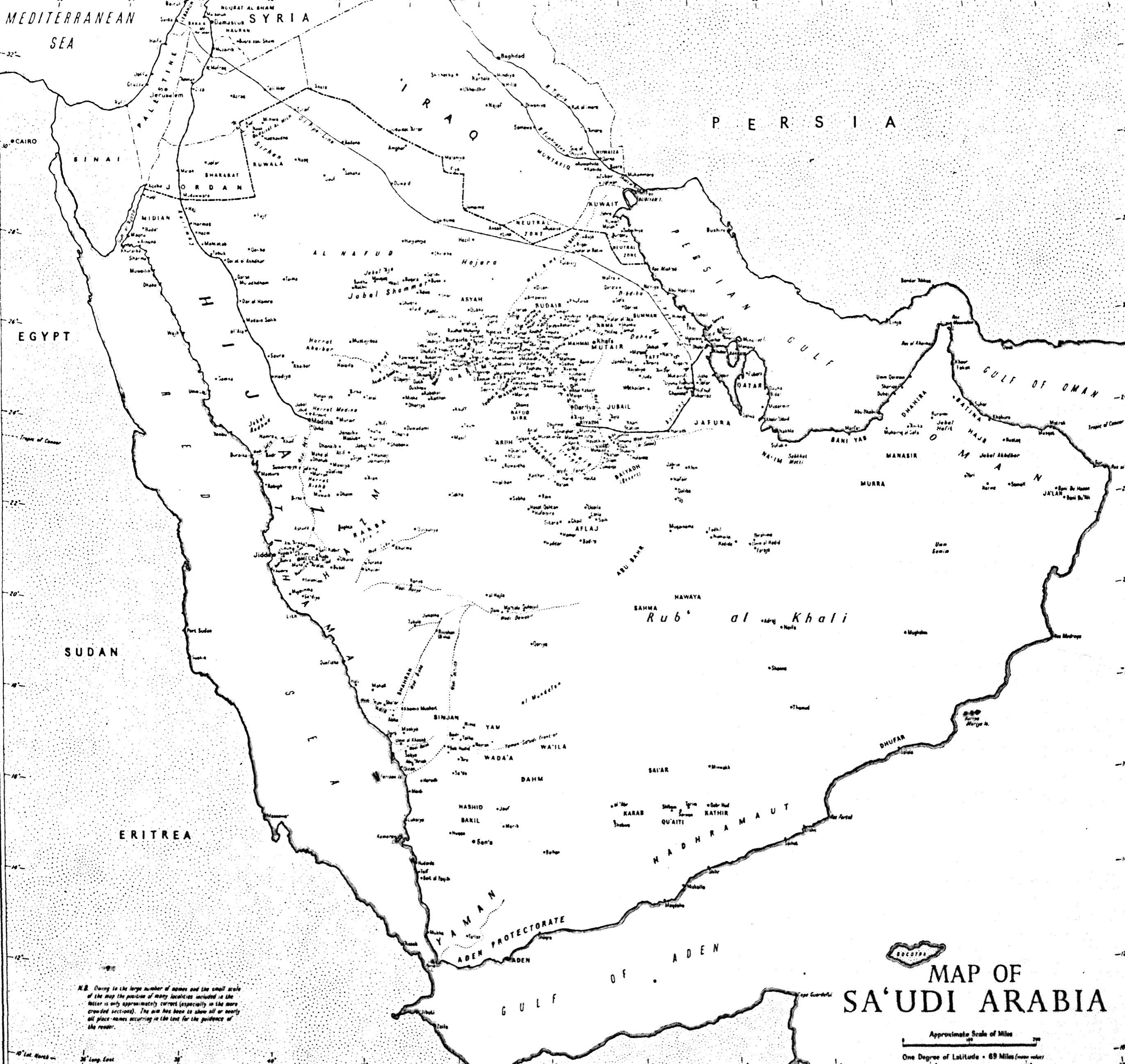
In these first two chapters I have tried to convey something of the weight of religious ideas and practices in mosque and school, and in the daily lives of the villagers, and to suggest at the same time there is ready access to a fast changing life through the influence of education and the media. In later chapters the co-existence of old ideas with newer imported ones, will be seen to have important repercussions on some features of the village structure. I now turn specifically to consider the village, first of all in its material aspects.

MEDITERRANEAN SEA

CAIRO
EGYPT

SUDAN

ERITREA



N.B. Owing to the large number of names and the small scale of the map the position of many localities included in the latter is only approximately correct (especially in the more crowded sections). The aim has been to show all or nearly all place-names occurring in the text for the guidance of the reader.

MAP OF SAUDI ARABIA

Approximate Scale of Miles
One Degree of Latitude = 69 Miles (more or less)

CHAPTER III

POSITION AND MAIN FEATURES OF THE VILLAGE

1. Setting and Climate

The kingdom of Saudi Arabia occupies some 865,000 square miles and it takes up nearly four-fifths of the Arabian Peninsula. It lies within the high tension rotation area which makes it generally within the scope of the dry north-west winds.¹ Its climate, therefore, is dry and its average rainfall is four inches per annum except for the region of Asir.

The kingdom is divided into the following geographical regions: the Western Highlands, the Western Hills, Najd, al-Aḥsa, the Northern Region, the Great Nafūd, and the Empty Quarter. What concerns us here is the Najd Region where the village of Irqah is situated. Najd lies between Ḥijaz in the west, and al-Aḥsa, Bahrain and Qaṭar to the east, the Desert of Syria to the north, and Dahna Desert to the south. Its area is about 12,000 square miles.²

Though the Najd Region³ is a desert plateau, it contains many fertile places which produce grain such as wheat, barley and maize, as well as fruits and dates. It also contains some valleys, waterfalls and high hills. As regards the type of soil, Najd is in three divisions: Wadi al-Rumah which has a chalky, sandy soil punctuated with some sandy but fertile oases; Tuwayqu Mountain which is composed of chalky land; and the fertile land which slopes from Tuwayqu Mountain down towards Southern Najd.

This division of Najd is rich in oases and in water resources which descend from Tuwayqu and Wadi Ḥanīfa, the length of which is about 250 miles starting from Wadi al-Khamrah where the waters of Central Tuwayqu

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1. Mahmoud Ṭaha Abū al-'Ala, Jugrafiyāt Shibhū Jazīrat al-'Arab, Vol.I, al-Mumlakāh al-'Arabīyah al-Saudiyah (Cairo: Lajnat al-Bayan al-'Arabi, 1965), p.58.
 2. Fuad Hamza, Gabb-Jazīrat al-'Arab, (Riyadh: Maktabat al-Nasr al-Ḥadītha, 1968), p.22.
 3. Najd in Arabic Language means highland. It is sometimes called al-'Arid or al-Yamamah.

Mountains are drained.⁴ After approximately 30 miles, it reaches the village of al-'Eyyaina, then heads eastwards to the village of al-Jibailah, and turns south-east passing through Diryah and Irqah towards Riyadh. Wadi Ḥanīfa Dam, lies between Riyadh and Irqah, south-east of the latter. Irqah lies on Wadi Ḥanīfa at latitude 34°38" north and longitude 48°43" east approximately.

About 50 years ago the traveller Philby described the site in the following words:

"The oasis of Arqa extends from side to side of the valley to a breadth of a quarter mile and for about half a mile upstream, the torrent bed cleaving through the midst of it. Retaining walls of masonry surmounted with clay contain the stream on either side, and the village proper lies on the right bank thereof. The village is of old and dilapidated appearance, but is walled and provided with a few watch-towers, while a few isolated houses are embedded in the dense palm groves of the left bank." 5

The site of Irqah is characterized by the following features. It is well known for its exuberant resources and soil fertility. There is good protection against floods, which may take place during heavy rainfall: the village buildings are located on a mountain plateau west of the Wadi, while its farms lie on both banks. Protection was also provided against raids and attacks on the village, in its past history.

The village soil is of two sorts: the first is sandy soil which is the prevailing kind. The second is a yellow soil which is found in a few areas near the mountains and storm-water drains.

The climate is continental as it is cold in winter and very hot in summer. Months of cold season are December, January and February. Temperature during this cold season rises in the daytime to over 20°C on most winter's days, although it decreases at night until it reaches freezing point or occasionally lower. It increases gradually until it reaches its maximum during July and August, then it starts to decrease gradually. The

4. M.A.Talas, Ta'rikh al-Ummah al-Arabiyyah, op.cit., p.28.

5. H.St.Philby. Arabia of the Wahhabis, (New York: ARNO Press, 1973), p.70. (First edition published in 1928).

average temperature rises during seven months of the year to over 25°C, and to over 30°C during the months of May to September. In general the average yearly temperature is over 20°C but the summer maximum is 45°C.

Humidity is low throughout the year. It reaches its maximum during the winter months averaging between 20 and 50% during the period from November to February. In summer it reaches its minimum, averaging less than 20%, while it becomes relatively moderate in autumn during October. During spring from March to May it averages between 20 and 40% approximately.

Rainfall is irregular, varying considerably from year to year. There may be a long time between falls. The season often begins in October and ends in May. Most of the rain falls during the evening - especially spring rain which follows on many occasions a few warm and dry days - when the climate changes suddenly as clouds gather and storms blow up. After a very short while the clouds and rain vanish and the climate becomes fine as it returns to its normal state. Sometimes rainfall may continue for several days, giving rise to heavy storm-water, cutting the village off from neighbouring areas, including Riyadh, especially before the construction of the bridge over the wadi. In 1971 communication with the village was completely cut off and many people were prevented from going to work for three days. In the years 1973-74 rain did not fall in the regular season, thus causing many agricultural wells to dry up. But in the summer of 1974 the rain was very plentiful and Wadi Hanīfa flowed twice. Nevertheless summer rain does not help to increase the water of agricultural wells because of turn-off and evaporation.

The purpose of Wadi Hanīfa dam is to catch the occasional flow of the Wadi so that the water will seep into the ground and replenish the wells in the area. It was constructed by the Ministry of Agriculture in the nineteen fifties for this purpose.

The irregularity of rainfall gives the village people great concern about the rainy seasons and they assess the prospects of rainfall by looking at the movement of clouds and winds. And when it rains they rejoice and

transmit the good news, hoping for prosperity, good pasture and good products.

Although the villagers use the Islamic calendar as regards prayers, pilgrimage, etc., they use the Zodiacal system for agricultural purposes.

TABLE 9: SHOWING ZODIAC AND THE CORRESPONDING SOLAR MONTHS

Name of Zodiac	The Period of Corresponding Solar months	Season
Burj al-Haml, Aries	From 21 March to 20 April	Spring
Burj al-Thaur, Taurus	From 21 April to 20 May	Spring
Burj al-Jauzā', Gemini	From 21 May to 21 June	Spring
Burj al-Saraṭan, Cancer	From 22 June to 20 July	Summer
Burj al-Asad, Leo	From 21 July to 21 August	Summer
Burj al-Sunbulah, Virgo	From 21 August to 21 September	Summer
Burj al-Mīzān, Libra	From 22 September to 20 October	Autumn
Burj al-'Aqrab, Scorpio	From 21 October to 20 November	Autumn
Burj al-Qaus, Sagittarius	From 21 November to 20 December	Autumn
Burj al-Jady, Capricorn	From 21 December to 20 January	Winter
Burj al-Dalw, Aquarius	From 21 January to 19 February	Winter
Burj al-Ḥūt, Pisces	From 20 February to 20 March	Winter

Some items of material culture derive directly from the kind of climate. Men dress themselves in very loose and roomy garments, mostly white, in order to allow some ventilation to the body and to mitigate the severe heat of the summer. Or it may be woollen garments or made of thick material of dark colour for protecting the body from cold weather without reflecting the sun's rays. The head-dresses have many protective functions against the weather effects during winter and summer. In winter they protect the head from severe cold, and in summer from severity of heat. The cloth ghotrah which is dressed over the cap (ṭaqiyyah), covering the neck and shoulders, protects head, ears and neck from cold weather during winter and

from severe heat and hot winds during summer. Also the robe (meshlah), which covers the entire body, is of light wool in summer, and heavy wool in winter, when it is sometimes used also for covering the whole body during sleep. Winter footwear is thick leather shoes (kanadir sing. kindarah) and woollen socks (shurrāb), while in summer a thin shoe or open slippers (n'āl) are worn. For the service of food, in summer a large round shallow dish (ṣaḥan) is used. In winter heat is preserved by the use of a deep, round bowl (badiyah).

Secondly the design of houses and the material used are a reflection of the climate. All the village houses are built of mud but sometimes stones are used in foundations, except for some new houses in which bricks have been used. Roofs are composed of timber of athil (tamarisk) and palm trunks and fronds (jarīd or khūṣ), because these materials do not conduct heat. Also the thick mud walls represent one of the protecting factors against climatic effects in both winter and summer.

Most of the village houses have one storey and none has more than two. Houses are closed from the outside but have a few small windows overlooking an interior courtyard in the middle of the house called baṭn al-bait or al-ḥawi which are intended for ventilation and light during daytime. The roofs are usually used for sleeping at night during the summer.

Village houses in general are connected with one another so as to minimise the effect of the sun, and to help prevent strong winds; in past times the arrangement was helpful for defence. The use of modern equipment, particularly fans, refrigeration and heaters, and new designs, have helped to make new and rebuilt houses more comfortable.

2. Housing

Of the 240 houses, 159 are occupied, whereas 81 are unoccupied because they are old or unsuitable for dwelling as a result of the widening of the village streets.⁶

6. See Table 10, page 79.

In fact the design of the village houses and the material used for their building have not changed much. New houses do not differ markedly from the old ones, except for some increase in the number of the windows, some alteration in their entrances, and the use of new building materials like cement and imported roof timber. Also most of the old houses are composed of two storeys while the new ones are mostly composed of one storey. The only noticeable difference is that the new houses are ready wired for electricity and are a bit more sanitary.

Nearly all the houses, new and old, are built of mud and sun-dried bricks (libin), which are locally made of mud with a large quantity of chopped straw (tibn). Some of the foundations are built of stone and mud or cement, so that their walls are protected from the effects of heavy rainfall.

Old house roofs consist of tamarisk wood, and branches of date-palms, whereas new house roofs consist of imported timber and boards. In both cases the upper surfaces of the roofs are covered with mud. Only tops of the roofs of the newly built houses are coated with cement. House walls are plastered with mud mixed with chopped straw which helps to keep the walls from being scored. The interior plastering of the houses is the same, except that some are coated with a white gypsum plaster (jişş); this is particularly true of guest rooms of the old houses. As regards the new houses they are mostly coated with plaster all over except the kitchens. Most of the old house floors are coated with mud except that some rooms, for example the guest room, have the floors coated with a layer of cement. New house floors are mostly coated with cement.

All houses, old and new, consist of the following accommodation. The guest room (diwaniyyah or majlis), is the most important part of each house since it is the place for receiving guests, especially male guests. Housewives maintain its cleanliness and try to keep it in good order. The ceiling of this room is commonly left plain, with no painting or plastering. But in some of the new houses it is painted with one colour, and in some

old houses it is covered with white fabric so that the old timbers are hidden. The guest-room furniture is composed of a number of rugs, the quantity of which differs in accordance with the economic standard of each family. They may be very expensive Persian rugs (zawāli, sing. zoliyyah) or ordinary cotton rugs (bisṭ sing. bsāṭ). Some kind of large and thick square cushions are placed around the walls of this room. Each of these cushions (masnadah, pl. masānid) is 1 x $\frac{1}{2}$ metre in size, and about five inches thick. Also the guest-room furniture includes a number of couches covered with fixed fabric and decorated with small mirrors in the side. On the top and both sides of each couch are three attached cushions. These couches (marāki, sing. marka) are for the guests to lean on.

The guest-room used to be the only place for making tea and coffee with a special built-in coffee-hearth (wejar) with built-in shelves for coffee and teapots as well as other used utensils. The wejar is usually decorated with white plaster. But the practice of building the wejar in the guest-room has nearly ceased except for a limited number of old houses. At present most of the houses have rooms for making tea and coffee which are also used in each house as family rooms, especially during winter where members of the household gather round the wejar fire entertaining themselves while drinking tea and coffee.

There is a store-room, makhzan, one of the house rooms being allotted to storage of foodstuffs, rice, dates, etc.

The number of bedrooms (ghoraf num) varies according to the size of the house and the number of people in the household. The furniture in these rooms is generally speaking very simple except for that of newly married couples, whose bedrooms are furnished with bedroom units. Children of both sexes sleep with their parents until they reach the age of approximately ten, not because of lack of sufficient room, but for the fear of devils in which parents believe.

The toilet is called by different names, but ḥammam is the most commonly used term. There is a difference between the toilets of old houses and those

of new houses. Nearly all the old houses have two toilets, one in the ground floor and the other in the upper floor. Also each of the newly built houses has two toilets; usually there is a very small one under the stairs to the roof which is for use by male guests, while the other is located at the back of the house for use by the family. Besides these kinds of toilets each house, new or old, has an ablution, particularly in the upper storey. Also a few of the new houses have more than two toilets.

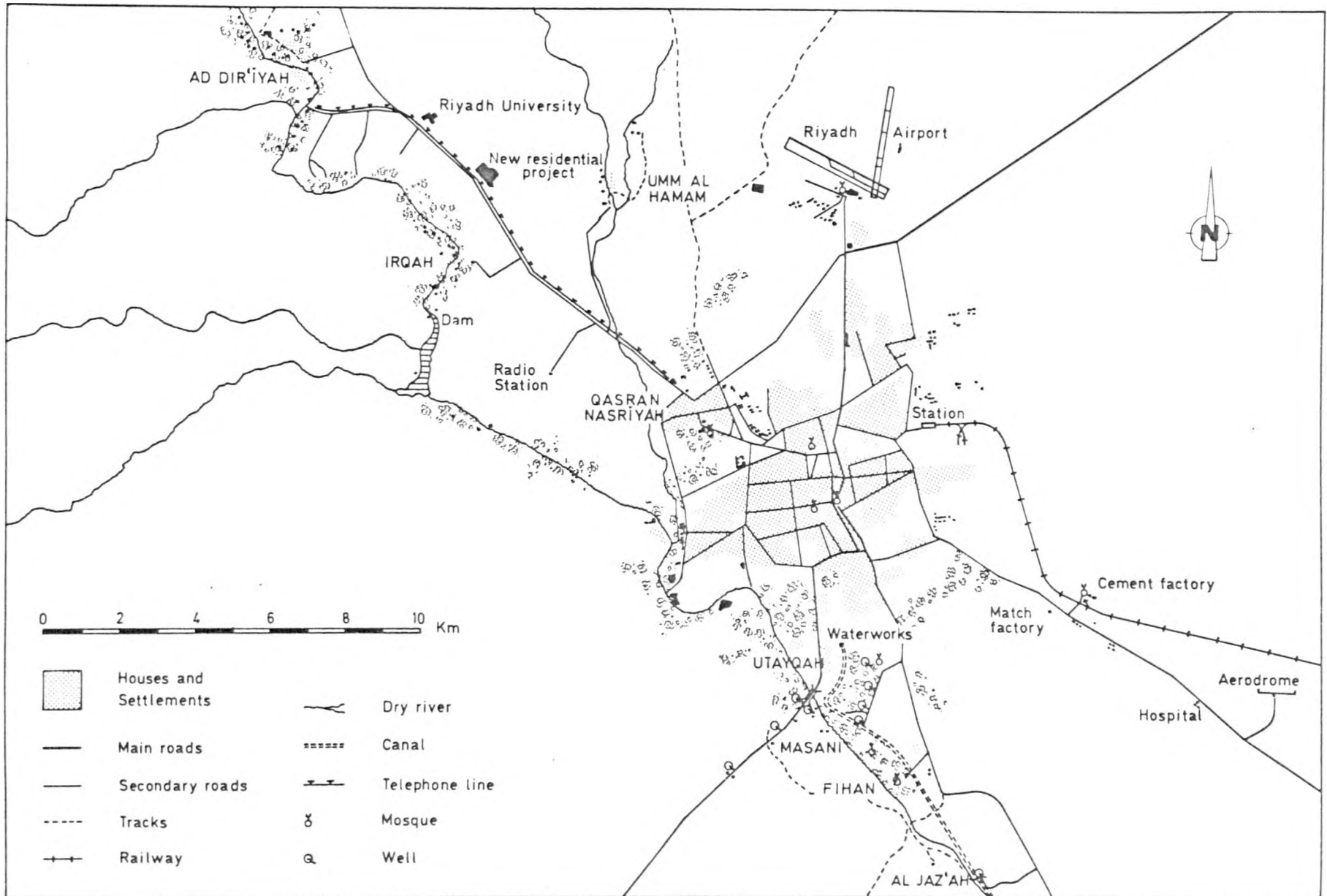
An open area (baṭn al-bait), lies at the centre of each house. It is used for various purposes, particularly for ventilation and lighting. It is also used for the daily activities of the household during summer and when the climate is moderate.

The kitchen, maṭbakh, lies always at the rear part of each house near the animal shed, and it is mostly situated near the traditional toilet in old houses.

There are always two stairs (daraj). A front stairs at the main entrance lead to the upper storey. The other stairs are usually situated somewhere at the centre of the house. The front stairs, in houses composed of two storeys where the guest room is usually in the upper floor, are for the use of guests.

Generally speaking, the village houses - especially the old ones - lack sanitary conditions in respect of ventilation and disposal of waste. Ventilation is poor because windows overlooking streets are always kept closed and sometimes obstructed with fitted cloths so that women's voices are not audible in the street. Besides the bad ventilation, most village houses are built of mud and few of the floors have cement, thus giving dust inside the house.

An animal enclosure (ḥosh) exists in nearly every house for the milking of sheep and goats. The enclosure is usually situated at the inner side of the house next to the kitchen. Animal waste is left until it is removed to be used as natural fertilizer, so the enclosure usually smells and



attracts flies and other insects.

The design of the village houses is a reflection of environmental and social requirements. The environmental requirements are clearly seen in the materials used for building construction as well as the open area in the centre of each house which fits the climatic conditions. The social requirements of privacy for each sex are apparent in the way a house is designed, where the guest room is always in the front so that guests enter and leave without being exposed to any contact with women. The kitchen is always in the rear so that women can do their daily and occasional cooking without being seen or heard by guests. The two diagrams below illustrate typical designs of old and new houses.

3. Village Sections

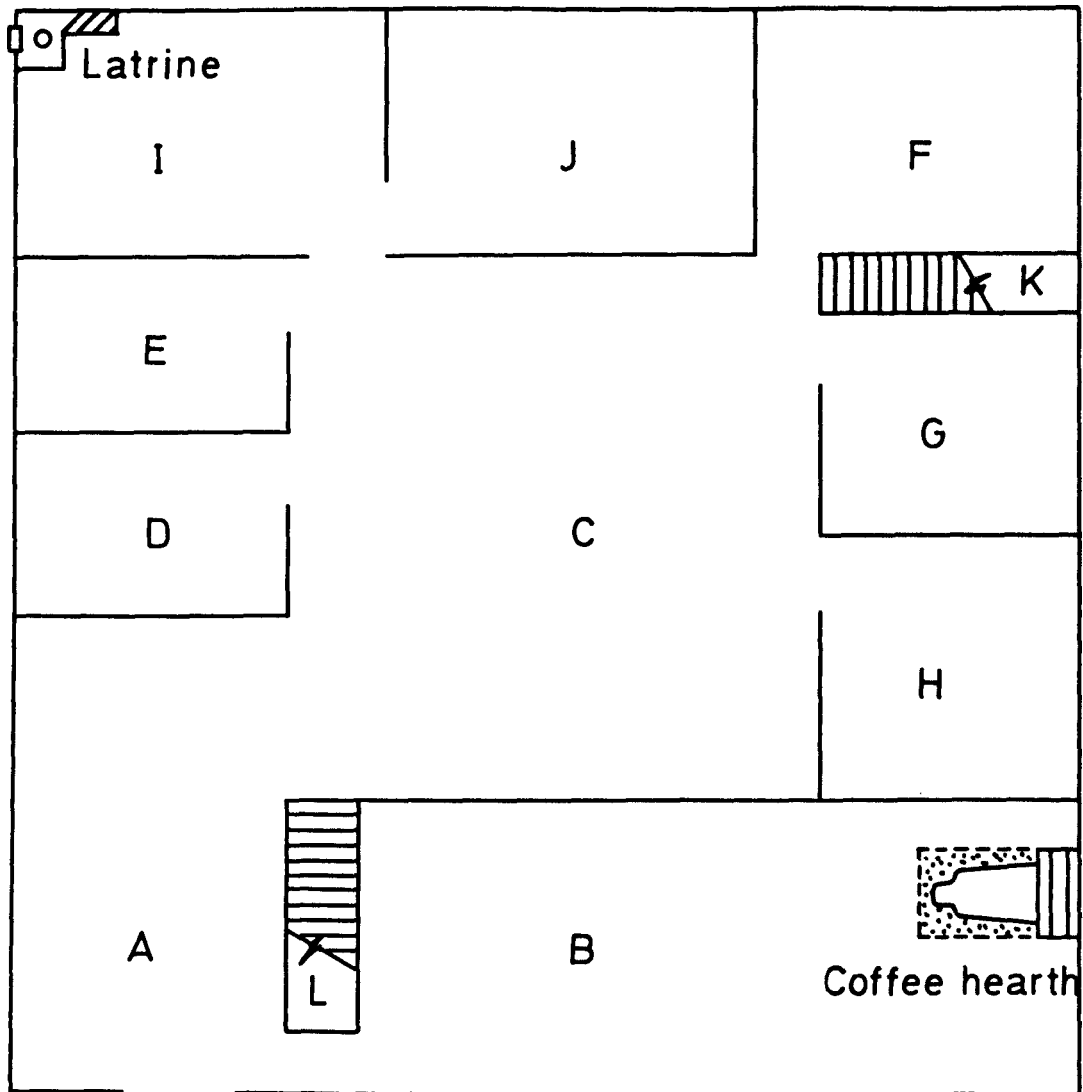
Irqah lies on Wadi Ḥanīfa north-west of the city of Riyadh. The area occupied by the village buildings is about $\frac{2}{4} \times \frac{2}{4}$ kilometre or a little more. The village farms extend for about three kilometres along the banks of the Wadi.

The distance from the village to the north-west outskirts of Riyadh city is about 12 kilometres. The village is connected with Riyadh, and other parts of the country, by a very minor surfaced road, about $1\frac{1}{2}$ kilometres long, which joins Riyadh-Diryah road which has been widened and re-surfaced in connection with new Riyadh University buildings. These are about $2\frac{1}{2}$ kilometres from the village towards Diryah. There are also some recent residential projects lying on the Riyadh-Diryah road not far from the village. Among those are a number of groups of villas which will be occupied by employees of the Royal Radar Unit.

The main buildings of the village, government agencies, schools, etc., are assembled at the west side of the Wadi on the edge of a mountain plateau punctuated by small flood drains (ṣunu' sing. ṣun'), that carry their water to Wadi Ḥanīfa on occasions of heavy rainfall. These public buildings, and the eight mosques, will be mentioned in subsequent chapters.

The village is divided into 12 sections (aḥyā, sing. ḥayy), four of them are agricultural as they lie on the Wadi banks. These are al-Khanagah

Diagram 1. Typical design of Old House

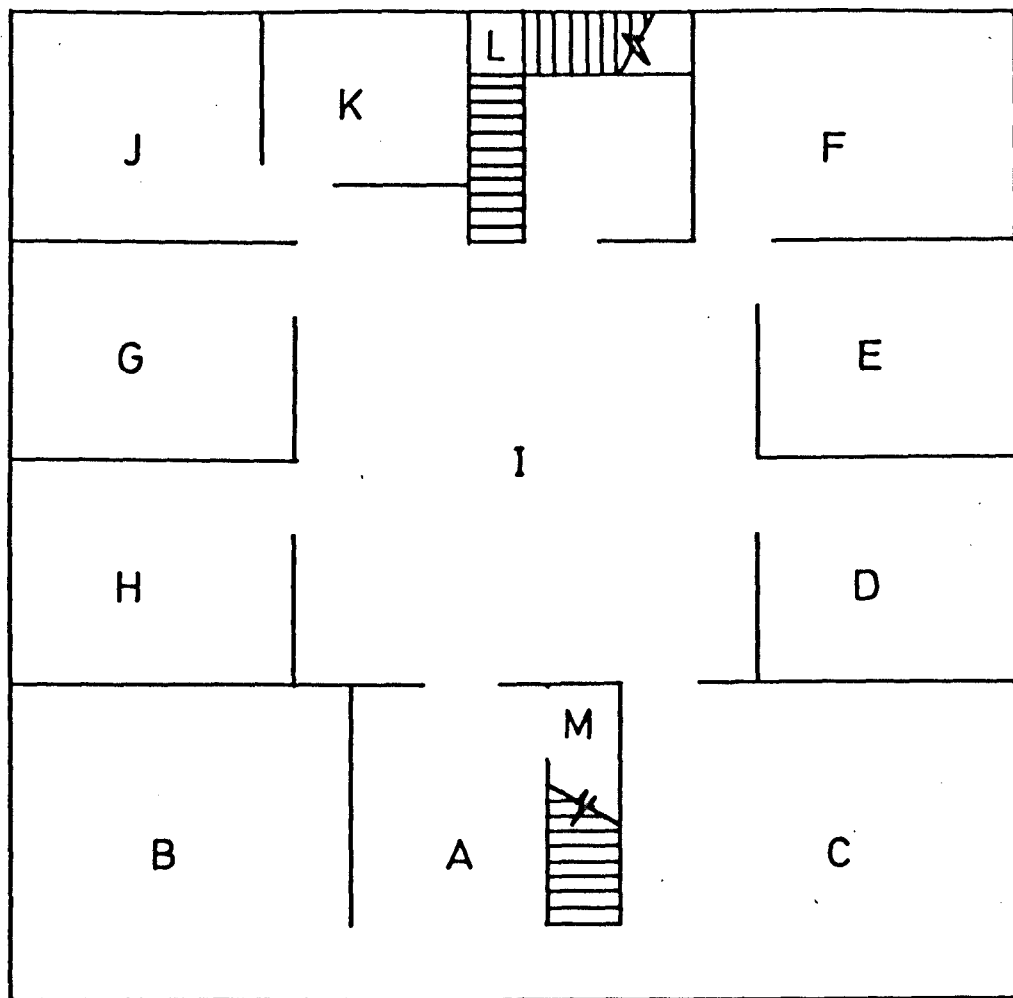


Main Gate

- A Entrance
- B Guest Room
- C Open area (baṭn al-bait). There are roofed passages on two or three sides of it
- D,E,F,G,H, Rooms; one is used as a store-room
- I Animal enclosure
- J Kitchen
- K,L Stairs with ablutions underneath

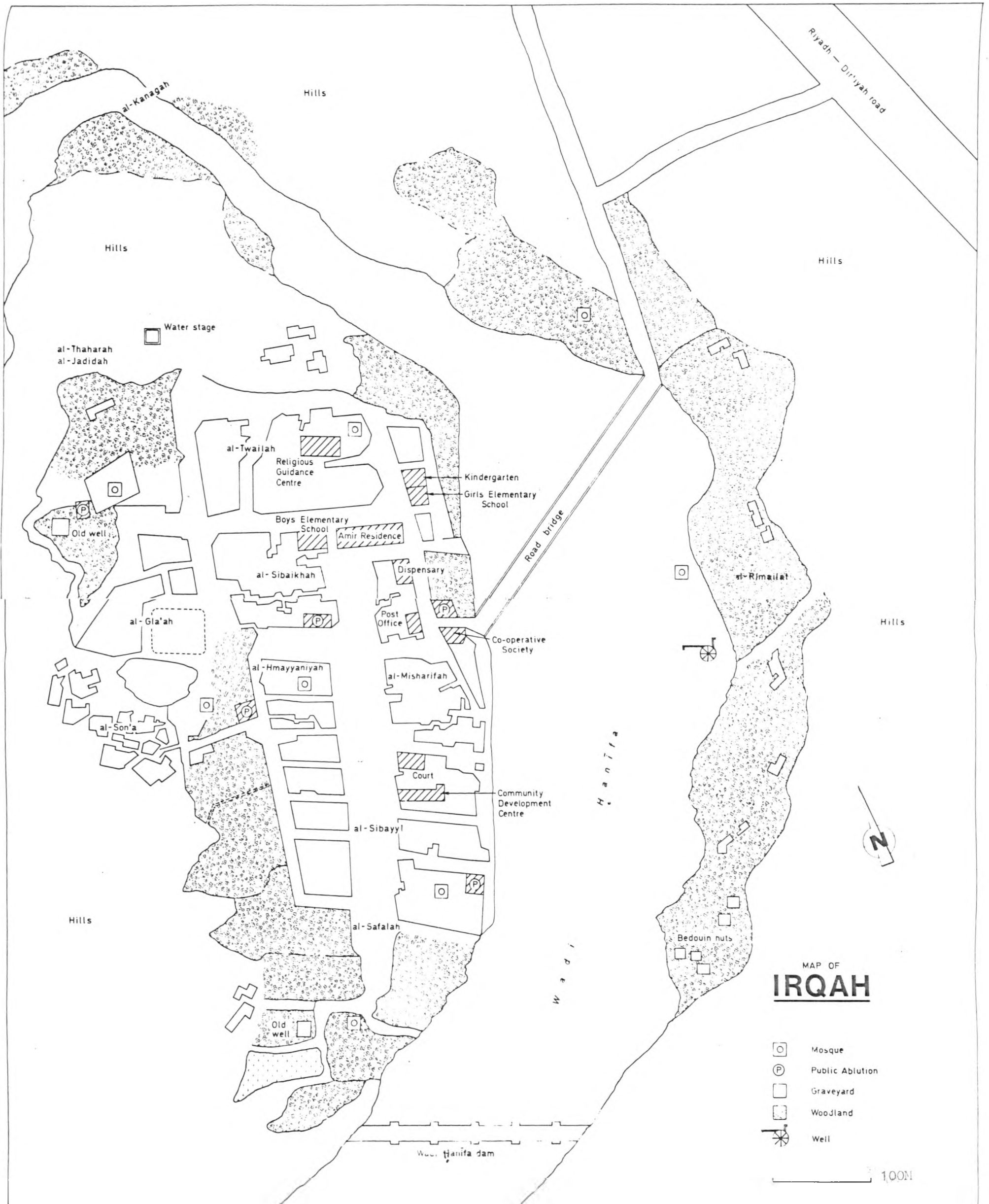
Usually the second storey consists of a guest room, bed-room, and open area used for sleeping purposes and other family activities during summer

Diagram 2. Typical design of New House



Main Gate.

- A Entrance
- B Guest Room
- C Dining Room; may also be used as a family living room
- D,E,F,G,H Rooms; one is used as a store-room. H is used as a family living room where the Coffee hearth is built in
- I Open area (batn al-bait) which has two or three roofed passages
- J Animal enclosure
- K Kitchen
- L,M Stairs with ablutions underneath, the front one for guests and the other for family use



MAP OF
IRQAH

- Mosque
- Ⓟ Public Ablution
- Graveyard
- ▨ Woodland
- ⊕ Well



100M

in the north, al-Rimailat in the east, al-Safalah in the west, and the section of Wadi Hanīfa Dam which is situated at the south.

The other eight sections are residential areas although there exist some small farms and date-palms scattered here and there. These sections are, as a matter of fact, small ones; the smallest has six houses only. The largest has 63 houses of which 25 are uninhabited due to being very old or being partly demolished as a result of the widening of the village streets.

Al-Twailah, al-Hmayyaniyah and al-Thaharah al-Jadidah, particularly the last one, are new sections. There is also a new section at the west end of the village which is not named yet where some Bedouin live in houses not completely constructed. There are newly built and rebuilt houses in all other sections.

At present there are no demarcations identifying the sections from one another. Villagers do not know exactly where the boundaries of each section begin and end due to the recent widening of the streets. The Community Development Centre numbered houses of each section for the purpose of conducting the 1971 survey. Since then some new houses have been built and some other old ones have been rebuilt. In any case villagers do not recognise the Centre's numbering and most of them are not aware of it.

The village streets are not surfaced. Their powdery earth adds to the dust in summer and during the rainy seasons turns the streets into muddy tracts making passage difficult.

There is no sewage system. About twenty-two houses still have old latrines, (berj pl. broj). These are extremely insanitary and smell badly for the waste is kept for a long time until it is removed to be used as natural fertilizer. The other village houses have relatively sanitary latrines though appropriate sanitary requirements are not properly maintained. Because wastes are drained into sinks or sewers (balalei', sing. balla'ah), covered pits are dug either inside or outside the houses. When a sewer is full its contents are removed by tank cars. Such sewers smell badly, especially in summer.

Ordinary waste is either thrown on to the streets or collected in a cardboard box at the door of the house so that the village cleaners take it away to rubbish bins. Water used for washing kitchen utensils containing leftover food goes onto the streets. Villagers believe that this used water should not be drained into the sewers. It is either drained on to the streets directly from the houses or collected and thrown on to the streets by women or young children. Furthermore, some villagers deliberately let their waste water drain to streets so that their sewers do not get filled up. Members of the Local Committee decided that the village Amir should write to Riyadh Municipality in order to penalize those who act in this way.

The total of houses and farms amounts to 306, including occupied and unoccupied houses, government offices, mosques, public ablutions and neglected farms. Table 10 illustrates how these are distributed over the twelve sections of the village. The table shows that:

1. Most of the occupied houses of the village are concentrated in the new sections, particularly al-Twailah, or those old ones which have been rebuilt like al-Sibaikhah, and al-Sibayyl where the government agencies are.
2. Most of the unoccupied houses of the village are in the old section like al-Sun' and in sections like al-Gla'ah affected by street widening.
3. The farms of the village are concentrated at al-Khanagah, al-Rimailat, al-Safalah, and Wadi Hanifa Dam. These are the four agricultural sections lying at the two banks of the Wadi, from the north and south sides of the village.

However, this number does not constitute the total village houses as there are new localities at the western part of the village which have no particular name. A group of Bedouin live in houses in the process of construction which get completed as they find the necessary money. These houses have neither electricity nor water. Also there are houses being renewed in different sections of the village.

TABLE 10: SHOWING THE DISTRIBUTION OF VILLAGE BUILDINGS AND FARMS BY SECTION

Section Name	No. of Houses		No. of Mosques	No. of Gov- ernment Buildings	No. of shops	No. of Public ablutions	No. of Farms		Total
	Occupied	Not Occupied					Producing	Not Producing	
al-Safalah		1	1				6		8
al-Sibayyl	24	2	1	1					28
al-Gla'ah	30	25	1		2	5			63
al-Mishairfah	7	7			3				17
al-Sibaikhah	23	10	1	3					37
al-Twail'ah	20			4					24
al-Hmayyaniyah	9	1	1						11
al-Sun'	12	33	1			1		1	48
al-Thaharah) al-Jadidah)	5	1							6
al-Khanagah							12	7	19
al-Rimailat	19	1	2				3	4	29
Wadi Hanifa Dam							6		6
	159	81	8	8	5	6	27	12	306

The section of al-Sun' consists of two parts. One of them contains the oldest of the dilapidated houses of the village and is completely lacking life except for one man occupying a house with his sheep and goats. This old part of al-Sun' is called al-Thihairah and is not included in the above table. The inhabited section of al-Sun' and the section of al-Rimailat are the habitation centres of the village Bedouin. They live there because the rent is low, and for the convenience of their movement with livestock, for it is as if they were actually living in the desert.

In past times the inhabitants of each of the village sections, except for the agricultural ones and the Bedouin habitations, used to boast of being more courageous and better than all the others, and the youths of one section used to fight with those of the others, which sometimes resulted in injuries. This phenomenon has disappeared though some still boast that the section where he lives is the best of all.

Once when talking to a group of the villagers at the door of Sha'ab Grocery immediately after the return of the village pilgrims from Mecca, I found among those present a man, a soldier in the Army, who said to the owner as a mere joke that he had been to perform his Pilgrimage (he had not been). The owner of the Grocery said that the man had not gone on Pilgrimage. I said that I had not seen him during the Eid because he had not had the Eid meal in the street where the village Amir lives. The man said that he had the Eid meal at his own quarter, al-Sibayyl. Then the Grocery owner said "the names of al-Sibayyl's are not perfect because they resemble the names of women". He meant to despise the people of al-Sibayyl. The man said that al-Sibaikhah, where the Grocery is, was a subject of a poem which he could not recite because the poet's words were so rude. He was referring to a poet, a villager, who once delivered some poetry in which he cursed the people of al-Sibaikhah because one of its inhabitants named Ajlān, was sarcastic towards the people of al-Sibayyl while he was passing through, as he said:

Whose street is this we pounded,
as the fenugreek is pounded in his dinner?

The poet delivered the following verse in which he cursed the people of al-Sibaikhah and pleased those of al-Sibayyl where he still lives:

They talk of Ajlān as an associate of lazy gods,
in a dead lane with a neighbouring tired dog.
The people of al-Sibaikhah are all hermaphrodites,
and their Amir is like a mule they ride on.
They have no religion, no good life as they are
weak and poor, and the courageous of them is always
prostrated,
Their superior is like a pernicious dog,
tied up with a chain under a grape tree.
The people of al-Sibayyl are like young falcons,
they always do their best for others.
Their neighbour is never oppressed,
and they would buy honour if it was for sale.

The poet's name is Abdul Rahman Ibn Ḥmaid (he had cursed members of the Religious Guidance Centre as will be seen later). The other man, also a poet, said that Ibn Ḥmaid had composed the poem cursing the Amir and his cousin the head of the Religious Guidance Centre, because they flogged and imprisoned him for not observing prayers. The man told me that he remembers only the following stanzas:

The people of al-Sibaikh are all hermaphrodites,
and their Amir is like a mule they ride on.
And Abu Ḥamad⁷ is like a pernicious dog,
Tied up with a chain under a grape tree.

4. Public Utilities

In 1960 there was still no electricity or drinking water inside the houses. The streets were narrow, twisty, and unlit allowing only the passage of camels and donkeys which were used as a means of transport inside and outside the village. Today there are some public utilities in the village, although its streets are still dirty and dusty or muddy, and not yet properly lit. There are some lights at mosque doors and minarets, and some owners light the doors of their houses. The Amir conveyed to me that

7. Abu Ḥamad is the nickname of Abdul Rahman Ibn Rawwaf, the head of the Religious Guidance Centre. Ibn Ḥmaid denied that he is the one who delivered these verses and that he was flogged or imprisoned.

he has written to Riyadh Emirate about lighting the village streets; and that his letter has been transmitted to Riyadh Municipality but no action has been taken so far.

There is no cleansing department but two men, not village people, appointed by Riyadh Municipality, work under the supervision of the sanitary expert of the Community Development Centre.

Among other things which the village lacks is a butchery for the time being. The villagers purchase their meat from Riyadh City. There used to be a butcher - not originally from the village - who slaughtered a camel each Friday and sold it instantly to people of the village. Later the Cooperative Society, upon its establishment in the village, made an agreement with a butcher from outside to open a butchery. It offered him a long of 600 SR, about £74. Each day he slaughtered two sheep and in addition brought about 70 kilos of camel meat from Riyadh. After a year he closed up his business not because it was not profitable but because he was in debt to Riyadh meat merchants. He still has not settled the Cooperative Society's debt. Meanwhile the Amir, who is the chairman of the Cooperative Society, is looking for another butcher to replace him.

There used to be a village barber, the cousin of the butcher of the time, who inherited his occupation from his ancestors. He used to do his barbering at the door of his house. After his death there was no one of his family to take over his profession. Now the village has no barber's shop. It is doubtful if one is needed because older people believe that styling of the hair and shaving the beard is not recommended from a religious point of view. Therefore, the majority of them wear their beards in a clumsy way and cut their hair with a razor. The others, particularly the educated and the youth, go to Riyadh whenever they need the services of barbers. Moreover, barbering is one of the despised occupations although there is a village man who graduated from the barbering section of the Vocational Training Centre in Riyadh and works as a barber in the Royal Guard.

The village lacks a police post, and a prison. The Amir relies on his men (khowiyya sing. khawi)⁸ to carry out the duty of police in preserving security in the village. Nevertheless, he has asked for a police post. As far as the lack of a prison is concerned, although there is no separate one, there is within the Emirate Building a room where prisoners are looked after by one of the Emirate men, and served meals and drinks from the Amir's house who is compensated by the Emirate of Riyadh for these services. In fact the village needs neither a police post nor a prison. The villagers seldom lay themselves open to arrest, and the short distance between the village and Riyadh would facilitate the arrival of security bodies if it were necessary, although that has never happened in the history of the village.

Introduction of Drinking Water System. Formerly the only means of getting domestic water was collecting it from public wells in the streets or from private wells in some houses. Women used to draw water from the wells and carry it to their houses in brass containers called saḥal (sing. saḥlah). Well-off families used to employ men specialized in this kind of work called rawwāyah (sing. rawwāy). The wage of a rawwāy was paid daily in cash according to the quantity of water needed that differed from one day to another, or paid monthly in kind in the form of two waznah of dates and one ṣā' of wheat.⁹

In 1957 Shaikh Hasan Shorbatly, a very rich merchant in the country, was invited by one of King Saud's men to the latter's farm at the village. Among those attending were some notables of Irqah who had moved to Riyadh but still maintained their farms there. During the visit one of these raised the problem of the depletion of drinking water. Shorbatly then gave

8. For more detail about khowiyya see p. 110.

9. Waznah is equal to 2 kilos, and so is the ṣā'. These old measures were used in Najd area.

the matter his attention and agreed to construct at his own expense, a deep well for the domestic water supply. At the same time he asked one of the merchants, Abdul Aziz al-Jumaih, to carry out the project and send him the bills. Thus a well was bored and water was supplied to most of the village houses under the supervision of al-Jumaih, who died before submitting the bills. After his death his brother Muhammad handed them over, but Shortbatly refused to settle them alleging that he did not remember undertaking to carry out the project at his own expense, and saying he assumed that the deceased, might have meant to do so as a beneficent act.

Muhammed al-Jumaih therefore contacted the then Mayor of Riyadh and explained the circumstances. The latter submitted it to King Saud who ordered that the total cost of the project should be paid from state finance. But unfortunately this well dried up completely about three years later.

In 1961 the Ministry of Agriculture and Water undertook to drill an artesian well to replenish the water resources of Riyadh. After the project was completed the Ministry refused to supply the village with drinking water in spite of the desperate need, on the grounds that the well had been specially constructed for Riyadh city. Then the village people as well as its Amir requested King Saud to supply their water needs from it. He therefore ordered that their request should be granted in that year. Accordingly, the Ministry of Agriculture and Water made some repairs to the old water pipes and built a new water storage tank. Thus most of the village houses have been supplied with water. The villagers do not pay any charge for the water they consume. Nevertheless, the water supplied to houses is not adequately purified and causes health problems. Some villagers use small tanks to purify water so that the earth mixed with it precipitates at the bottom. But such purification is not wholly reliable. Some villagers collect the rain water pouring down from their roofs, store

it in containers and use it for making tea and coffee. They believe that such run-off is clearer and more tastier than the ordinary water, though the rain water is coloured with mud and soil.

When the Central Laboratory of Riyadh Central Hospital tested the village water at the request of the Community Development Centre, the test showed that the water was unfit for human consumption. The following steps were recommended in 1972: sterilization of the water through adding one kilo of chlorodine each three days; monthly washing and cleaning of the storage tank; installation of a filter at the bottom of the upper tank to eliminate foreign objects; and installation of an automatic sterilizer at the bottom of the upper reservoir.¹⁰ These recommendations have not been implemented.

Introduction of Electricity. Formerly the villagers used paraffin for lighting. Although the village was included in the concession to the Riyadh Electric Company in 1965, it was the Ministry of Agriculture that took the initiative in requesting the Company to connect electric current to the new deep well bored to replenish that city's resources of drinking water. Then when the current was connected up, the villagers and their Amir demanded light for the village. Thus had it not been for the well the village would probably have been without electric light until now.

Although electricity is now available in the village, some of the village houses do not have it, either because the owners are poor and unable to pay for the wiring, or because the houses are old and unsuitable for electricity. One of the benefactors of the village has volunteered to pay the cost of wiring one villager's house; and another paid the charge for connecting the current. Some of the dwellings have not been supplied with electricity because they are huts and tents or black tents occupied by Bedouin who consider their residence in the village to be temporary.

10. Minutes of the Local Committee.

The Post Office. Among the public utilities recently introduced is the Post Office, which was inaugurated by the Ministry of Communication in 1966, when the increasing number of government agencies needed it for official delivery and collection. The Post Office also sells postage stamps, receives and distributes private letters, and collects private letters going out from the village.

Before a post office had been established, people used to send and receive their limited number of letters not through mail services, but by the hand of persons travelling to the destination. Thus some replies would take months. Sometimes people used the addresses of their relatives or friends living in Riyadh. The directors of government agencies in the village used to communicate personally in order to deliver and receive their official correspondence. When the Post Office was opened such correspondence became its concern.

At the beginning the Ministry of Communication rented a small shop at £20 per year. But later the Ministry cancelled the rent and asked the man responsible to arrange an office on his own like other people responsible for mail services in other villages. His contract with the Ministry obliges him to do so.

At present a man, whose left arm is amputated, carries out the duties of mail services for a monthly salary of 425 SR, about £50. These duties consist of selling stamps, receiving in-coming mail and delivering same, and handing over out-going mail to an agent responsible for collecting from several villages including Irqah.

Mail services in the village are virtually limited to the small quantity of official letters. There are on average four pieces of official mail, and one piece of private mail, a day. Villagers rarely send personal letters through the post office. There is no particular place or fixed time for receipt of out-going letters. Once when I was sitting with the postman in one of the main streets, an Egyptian teacher, at the boys' primary school, came with a letter to be sent to Egypt. He handed it to the postman, and

asked him to be sure not to lose it. The postman collects letters while he is sitting with others or while he meets them passing by, for his office is his father's house, where he lives, and which he only uses for exchanging in-coming or handing out-going mail with the agent.

Apart from official letters, the only thing that is delivered regularly is a number of local daily newspapers published in different parts of the country which are distributed free of charge for the government agencies in the village. But despite the short distance between the village and Riyadh, those newspapers are not delivered there on the day they are published, but on the next day, and sometimes a number of issues are delivered together.

The main reason for the slow services of the post office is that the heads of government agencies prefer personal contact with their offices, while the villagers prefer to send their private letters, if they have any, from Riyadh in order to guarantee quicker despatch.

5. The Village Market

The village market consists of the Cooperative Society, three small shops, and a bakery. Their activities - apart from the Cooperative Society which will be examined later - are described in the following pages.

The Peoples' Grocery. This is a very tiny shop on whose inside wall is written Baggalat al-Sha'ab (the People's Grocery). But as a matter of fact it does contain goods that can be called grocery. Its owner is an ageing man who opened it up in 1972 with a capital of 300 SR, about £36, which he obtained as a loan from a Palestinian working in the General Auditing Bureau in Riyadh but living in the village with his wife who teaches at Ireqah Girls' School. The amount he got was in fact 400 SR, about £48, of which he spent 300 SR on the goods he purchased and the rent of the shop. The remaining 100 SR was spent on his family needs.

The contents of the shop are small quantities of soap, sewing materials, sweets, biscuits, school articles, soft drinks, paraffin, some fruit, and onions. I estimated the whole contents of the shop at about 200 SR,

nearly £23.

The shop does not open at a fixed time. Usually its owner opens it at any time he chooses, and he may close it for a whole day unless he has fodder for sale, and then it may be opened until sunset prayers. It does not, in any case, open at night because it has no electric light. Fodder is not a permanent commodity but it depends on the circumstances of the shop's owner and his benefits from its sale. Thus he may sell it once in a month or on two consecutive days.

According to the owner, the income of the shop ranges between 2 and 10 SR per day, about 25p to £1. He makes no profit from the shop; he opened it to fill his time because he has no specific work, and has not been accepted in any government post due to his old age. Therefore, he considers he gains profit if he can cover the rent, which amounts to 100 SR, about £12, a year.

The shop is a meeting place for many of the older or unemployed villagers. They usually gather either inside or at the door to gossip and talk to pass the time, or acquaint themselves with those arriving in the village or departing from it, for the shop lies on a street overlooking the main entrance. The shop never lacks notices concerning activities of government agencies, especially the Community Development Centre and the Committee dealing with payment of social security pensions. The owner's wife, who is blind, sells at her house similar goods to women and children but not to men.

Al-Ma'ili's Shop: This shop, which does not differ much from the Sha'ab Grocery, is owned by two brothers; one of them works as a messenger in the Court, and the other is a Muezzin. They opened the shop about 1958, with a capital of 150 SR, about £12 at that time. Most of the goods used to be tea, sugar and cardamon, but these are no longer sold, as villagers prefer to buy them at the Cooperative Society especially because it gives long-term credit. The goods now comprise soap, some limited household requisites, some school articles and fruits as well as some vegetables such as potatoes and pumpkins. The only goods peculiar to their shop are men's underwear and socks.

The present capital of the shop is about 500 SR, nearly £60. Its daily income fluctuates between 15 and 20 SR, about £1 to £2, but sometimes it is a bit more during certain occasions such as the Eids and school openings. It is more successful than the Sha'ab Grocery, although it is located at an insignificant street corner. This is because its owners sell on a month's credit, and because vegetables and fruits are always available as they are among its main commodities. It brings a reasonable profit.

The Bakery. There is one bakery in the village. It is owned by the Cooperative Society but leased to two Yemenis, who run its business for themselves. It makes local bread three times a day: in the morning, which is the most active period as its average sale is about 300 loaves, and in the afternoon and the evening, with 150 loaves at each baking.

As regards the bakery's capital it is about 1,100 SR, nearly £1300, including fittings. But about one-third of its capital is still a debt which has not yet been repaid.

The two Yemenis constitute the sixth consecutive Yemeni management of the bakery since it was built by the Cooperative Society. No villager has ever taken the work on. Such work is despised; it does not suit their social tradition although it is profitable and does not need great skill or experience.

Next to the bakery is a small shop also run by the two Yemenis. It has tinned food and household requisites such as soap and light cleaning necessities. It also sells cigarettes secretly in spite of the warning given by the Amir and the head of the Religious Guidance Centre. This shop is the most successful in the village after the Cooperative Society. Being next to the bakery it is always open except during the five daily prayers, and its owners have no social or family obligations which might prevent them from opening it.

In addition to those three shops, the bakery, and the Cooperative Society, there are some women who sell in their houses or on visits to other

housewives. There are about six vendor women (dallalat, sing. dallalah) whose clients are women and young children, and whose goods are mostly housewives' requisites, sweets and biscuits. One of these vendor women is a deaf and dumb girl aged 18 years. Her father looks after her business as he brings the goods she sells from Riyadh.

The features of the village have changed during the last years as a result of widening its old streets and opening new ones suitable for motor traffic. This has nourished economic activity in the field of residential and agricultural property. Many of the old houses of the village have been rebuilt and their sanitary conditions improved.

Also the construction of the bridge in 1972 has had a significant effect on the villagers. It facilitated the crossing and also it has made easy the continuity of communication between the village and other parts of the country in case of storm-water flooding the Wadi.

There are, at present, some government projects being carried out, such as the construction of the Elementary School for Boys according to the same conditions and specifications of those of modern schools built in main cities. Lastly there are new plans to open other streets in the near future.

6. Recreational Facilities

The village has no social clubs or even coffee houses, except for one boys' club belonging to the Community Development Centre. This club is open only during school vacations and its activities are limited to table tennis, and one or two picnics per year. The cost of its picnics are paid for by the Centre, the Cooperative Society and token contributions from its members.

Thus informal groups are the common type of gathering for entertainment and passing time, facilities for which are otherwise hardly available. Men gather at mosque doors after prayers and at street corners. At the main entrance of the village especially elderly people and those without regular work always gather in separate groups. The number of gatherings

increasés in the afternoons when most of the villagers finish their official work, particularly after the prayer at about 4.00 p.m. Informal groups are not confined to street gatherings, but also include visits which are a very distinctive feature.

Topics of conversation and discussion during such gatherings vary with current incidents. Thus they can include comments about strangers and the reasons for their coming to the village, or questions relating to some expected charity and who is entitled to it. On other occasions they can include the religious festivals. The conversation always includes news of the King and his movements. But much of the talk deals with two main topics. The first one is concerned with religious questions, obedience to God and the following of His commands according to what has been revealed in the Qur'ān, or the importance of the five daily prayers and so on. The second one deals with sex and sexual ability, which they exaggerate extremely. Men constantly contemplate marrying a new wife because the present one has become undesirable due to prolonged marriage and the increasing number of children, who do not give them enough opportunity for sexual intercourse.

Gatherings during house visits are characterized by being very friendly; dates, coffee and tea are served. Topics of conversation turn to be more personal than social. It happens frequently that some officials of government agencies leave their place of work to meet in the house of one of them, or in the house of another government employee whose work does not necessitate a fixed time.

The nature of men's informal gatherings does not differ from the past except in one thing: some of the villagers used to form special groups each of which would meet every evening at its members' houses in turn. There they used to gossip and have a regular reader to read some Ḥadīth books while tea and coffee were served. Such gatherings met between sunset prayers and evening prayers. But this kind of gathering has almost vanished due to the spread of radio and television.

According to some of my informants, women's gatherings differ from

those of men as regards place, time and topics of conversation therein. They usually meet in groups at a house of one of them in the mornings while their husbands are at work and their children are at school, or after afternoon prayers when they have finished their housework. Their talk includes, among other things, the affairs of their houses and the problems of their children. The most interesting subject to them is marriages that have taken place or are going to take place in the village, as well as the amount of bride-wealth and the quality of jahaz and sobaḥa.¹¹ The weddings are their best chance of enjoying entertainment, for which they have very few opportunities.

Picnics are of special importance to the villagers particularly during rainy seasons when the land is grassy. Mostly men go on picnics far from the village. They take tents and stay there for weekends or during the Eid holidays. Sometimes some related families will go on picnics together. But men prefer to go alone in order to avoid the possibility of their women being seen by other men.

Iraqah is a small, compact village in a comparatively well watered part of a desert country, and its economic base was largely oasis agriculture. As the next chapter will show, agriculture has given way as the dominant mode of livelihood, to others which arise from its absorption in the new Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the proximity of the capital, Riyadh.

11. See the section on Marriage in Chapter VI.

CHAPTER IV

MODES OF LIVELIHOOD

1. Agriculture

Iraqah was, in the past, an agricultural village, with agriculture as the only means of livelihood. Most of its people used to work directly in agriculture as a main occupation, or indirectly in occupations related to it such as carpentry, tanning, and leather work required for equipment used in all agricultural processes.

There were, and there still are, two kinds of land tenure and farming: the first is private ownership and wakf holding, and the second is sharecropping (kdadah). The private owner, or the one in charge of a wakf holding, carries out the work of cultivating himself, cooperating with adult male members of his household or hiring agricultural workers to help him whenever necessary. Sharecropping is based on division of crops between the landlord or the one in charge of a wakf holding and the cultivator (kaddād, pl. kaddādyīn). The landlord or the one in charge of a wakf holding leases to the cultivator his farm, including what it contains of date-palms and fruit trees, for one year or more. Against that the cultivator (before the introduction of mechanical pumps) provided the animals (dabash), mostly donkeys or bulls and sometimes camels, required for hauling water from the wells and for ploughing. He provided agricultural workers if his household was too small, and he provided seeds and local fertilizers (samād) etc. The proportion of the crop paid to the landlord varied from about a third to about a half.

After the adoption of mechanical pumps in the village, the landlord became responsible for providing one or two pumps - according to the size of the farm - to raise water from the farm's wells, and fuel to run them, in return for half the produce.

In the past, the sharecroppers were in a very depressed situation. They were unable to meet the financial burden of farming; and further, they could not be sure of obtaining profit or even subsistence on account

of uncontrollable factors such as crop pests and diseases, and wells which were dry through lack of rain. Consequently, they used to pawn their crops for succeeding years to the landlords themselves or other creditors cheaply, sometimes for less than half the normal price, though they could not guarantee production to cover the loans, and this would lead them into increasing debt. Such an undertaking seems intolerable when it is realized that most of their agricultural output was for the consumption of their households and little surplus was left for sale or barter. Dates and grain were the principal products and the traditional staple foodstuffs.

The techniques used at all the agricultural stages were rather primitive. Since the village has neither permanent rivers nor springs, irrigation of farms depends totally on wells (golbān sing. galīb) which receive their supply from seepage of rainwater underground. Water was drawn from the wells by the old process called šadar, which was a primitive system consisting of wooden wheels at the top of the well on two walls facing each other. Skin containers called ghrub (sing. gharb) were hung on each wheel. Animals were used for raising the containers, which emptied their loads into two neighbouring basins. One basin received water from the container (lizyy), and this was immediately transferred to the other basin (jabiyah). Here a large quantity of water was collected and then distributed to sections of the farm that were to be irrigated.

This system was abandoned on the introduction of mechanical pumps about 1950. Since then some wealthy landlords have purchased pumps for their farms. At the same time King Abdul Aziz ordered that the hire of pumps should be provided to those who could not afford to purchase them, but later King Saud revoked these loans because the villagers could not keep up with their instalments.

In the past, concentration was on two kinds of agricultural product; grain and dates. Also maize and millet as well as some fruit, particularly grapes and melons, were produced in small quantities. Lucerne (gatt) was a main item among the agricultural products as it was the principal animal

fodder.

Date-palms are the most valuable element of farms to the extent that a farm that has no date-palms is not regarded as a real farm. The attention given to date-palms is due not only to the vital nature of their product to the villagers, but also to the special care a date-palm needs in its formative years. The most suitable time to plant it is between the end of Scorpio and the beginning of Sagittarius - during November and December. It must be irrigated daily for about forty days, then once every two days for another forty days, and lastly once every four or five days for another forty days. After that it should not be left more than twenty days without watering. A nursery plant (khīsa) is planted in a hole about one meter deep in sandy soil. Two months later natural fertilizer is added to its soil.

Usually a date-palm starts to bear about four years after planting. Male date-palms (faḥḥal) pollenate the females (nakhīl) during the season of Scorpio (October-November). When it is pollinated its fruit is tied up or left alone after being placed properly over its branches (usban). Fruits when green are called bisr (sing. bisrah), and have a bitter taste. After some time their colour changes to yellow or red and their taste becomes sweet and acceptable. Later on when dates are half ripe or more they are mature, and called rḥab. Finally when fully ripe they are tamr, and they are left till dry and then collected for sale or storage. The stage of mature dates is in fact the most pleasant time for these fruits to be eaten as they are very delicious and enjoyable. The period required for ripening dates is about seven months.

The following are some of the best known varieties: nbout-saif, is the best kind for quality and taste and the most expensive. Khīlāṣ is classified below them in taste and value. Sellaj, though it still has a delicious taste, is considered to be of lower quality than the first two. Mnify and ṣaqi, while tasty, are not of such good quality as khīlāṣ for example, particularly ṣaqi which is dry. Date-palms give many benefits.

Dates used to be a staple food throughout the year. These are still served at every meal. For dates are eaten in the morning for breakfast and always served with lunch and dinner. They are always served to guests with coffee. The first thing to be offered is a dish of dates called gadū'a. Also dates are eaten any time a person feels hungry. They are so valuable that villagers describe them as "knee-nails" (al-tamr masamīr al-rukāb). Trunks and branches of date-palms, particularly branches stripped of their leaves and fronds were, and still are, used for various purposes in house building such as roofs, doors and windows. Fronds are used for making mats such as ground covers (ḥiṣr sing. ḥaṣīr) and dining mats (sufar sing. sufrah) as well as containers for light transport or storage of food-stuffs. The fibres of date-palms are used for making ropes. Finally, the trunks and branches were used as the main fuel for domestic cooking; some households still use such fuel.

Most of these benefits of date-palms, together with others relating to the traditional system of hauling water from agricultural wells, and to jmalah, the use of camels for heavy transport, have become less important recently. Timber and other material for houses are imported, and the related crafts are disappearing.

Winter is the season for cultivation of all sorts of wheat locally called ṣamma, lgaimi and ḥabb. These differ in quality; and are eaten in different ways. Thus ṣamma and ḥabb are used for making bread and a local dish called gorṣan, while lgaimi is only used for making jarīsh. Summer cultivation consists mainly of maize and millet which are used in winter. But cultivation of such crops is about to disappear due to the great effort they need for cleaning and cooking. Also during summer some fruits are produced on a small scale such as grapes, figs, pomegranates, as well as melons and water melons. Other crops are cultivated throughout the year in limited quantities such as vegetables, particularly tomatoes, egg plants, pepper, okra, leeks, and radishes. Lucerne is cultivated throughout the year.

Ploughing is done in two ways. The first is by hand with the use of spades called masahy (sing. mashat). The second method is by the use of a tool called mihraṭhah which consists of two wooden shafts ending in a curved piece of metal that is pushed in the soil. This tool is drawn by one or two animals, donkeys or sometimes bulls. For threshing, some still use the old system of treading (dwas), where donkeys or cattle are tied side by side and walk around a piece of timber fixed to the ground. The crops of grain, millet and maize are spread around the stake and the hooves of the animals tread on them as they circle round. Winnowing is done by men and women with the use of winnowing trays called manakhil (sing. mankhil). But these methods are in the process of disappearing.

The village farmers prefer natural fertilizer of human waste, although artificial fertilizer is available. They believe strongly that natural fertilizer is more useful as it remains effective longer.

I turn now to discuss in further detail the value and number of farms, the system of land tenure, some aspects of change in agricultural activities, and the value of agricultural properties at the present time.

The number of farms is small due to the limited area of suitable land, and the scarcity of water. It is not possible to give accurate figures regarding the size of each farm and the number of date-palms and fruit trees, for official or unofficial statistics are not available, and landlords and farmers either do not know or pretend ignorance. Whatever the situation might be, it is a fact that no one knows the exact size of his farm but only its boundaries with adjacent farms. The following tables show the total number of the village farms and categories of cultivators according to my own survey and these have been confirmed by the knowledge of certain villagers.

TABLE 11: CATEGORIES OF FARMS

Type of Ownership	Number
Private Ownership	30
Wakf holdings	8
Joint Private Ownership and Wakf	5
Unknown	2
Total	45

TABLE 12: CATEGORIES OF OWNERS AND CULTIVATORS

Owners and Cultivators	Number
Resident owners	7
Sharecroppers	4
Agents:	
a) Resident Saudis	6
b) non-resident Saudis	1
Yemenis	7
Total	25
Abandoned farms	20
Total	45

In private ownership, landlords have undisputed right of action. But with wakf holdings the situation is different. The administration of a wakf holding is governed by religious conditions which the person responsible for it cannot transcend. His responsibility is limited to the sphere of administering the wakf, but he has no right to sell it, as if it was his own property, since the sale of a wakf holding should be done through a judge with the consent of other relatives having the same right of administration. In that case the price must be used for purchasing another property to be used for the same purposes of wakf. Upon the death of a wakf holding's

agent, a next-of-kin of the endower takes over, and so on. The income of a wakf holding is divided among the living close kin of the endower after assessing the amount bequeathed by the endower himself. This is an annual sum which may go on the cost of one or more sacrifices, of lighting a mosque or mosques, or of food for the village guests who have no relatives there especially during the month of Ramadan.

According to Table 11, there are thirty farms privately owned, eight farms of wakf holdings, and five farms of joint ownership between private owners and wakf holdings. These five are partly owned either through inheritance or purchase and partly wakf holdings according to the bequest of the endower.

Table 12, shows that only twenty-five farms are in production while the other twenty have been abandoned. The reason for abandonment is lack of water. Of the twenty-five productive farms, only seven are occupied by resident owners. Of the remaining eighteen four are operated by sharecroppers, and the rest are looked after by agents.

The system of sharecropping was prevalent in the village, but it has declined recently for obvious reasons. The term for it, kdadah derives from the word kadd, fatigue, indicating that sharecropping requires great effort and hard work. The scarcity of water needed for agriculture has undoubtedly brought about a shift from agriculture to easier and more rewarding work. There are only four sharecroppers. At present the system of sharecropping is conducted on a half and half basis. the four sharecroppers were, however, reluctant to give accurate statements of their incomes either because they get pensions from the Department of Social Security, claiming to be poor, or because they think that whoever asks about such matters has some connection with a government enquiry that might lead to financial aids to the needy.

As a result of scarcity of water in many of the wells, and the shift of shrecroppers away from agriculture, absentee landlords have become interested in hiring Yemeni labourers to do the work their farms need, and

to look after sheep and goats which they all maintain. As Table 12 shows, seven farms are being looked after by Yemeni labourers.

Agricultural activities have recently changed considerably since agriculture is no longer an occupation of most of the villagers, or the only reliable means of livelihood. I discuss this change later and here I point out two factors relevant to the question of agricultural changes. One factor is the depletion of many of the agricultural wells as a result of scarcity of rainfall during the last decades. This has forced some landlords and sharecroppers to abandon a considerable number of farms. The number of these is now twenty.

Irregular rainfall and scarcity of water are general in the kingdom. The old system of irrigation was adequate for the agricultural needs of the time. The average depth of agricultural wells was about 150 feet. In case of drought the farmers used to dig a few extra feet and this would get them through until rainfall started. But the economic development of the kingdom after the discovery of oil has spontaneously brought about development in other fields including agriculture. Consequently the village cultivators abandoned for good the old method of drawing water and use pumps instead which, of course, have increased the quantity of water raised from the well. They could then expand their cultivation either by increasing their production or by bringing new land under cultivation. Also some new farms have been reclaimed for commercial purposes. Gradually the quantity of water of the agricultural wells began to lessen. Whereas the average depth of agricultural wells was about 150 feet when the village cultivators were using the şadar system it is now more than 250 feet. In some cases no water can be found even at 400 feet. The dam has not helped the situation. The existence of a deep well of 3,000 feet in the village, belonging to the Ministry of Agriculture and Water, seems also to have had an adverse effect on the agricultural wells.

The second factor is a direct result of the first: the shifting of most of the village cultivators, owners, as well as sharecroppers, from agriculture to other occupations, particularly government posts, in the

village or in Riyadh in the early sixties.

The spread of the use of pumps does not necessarily imply that other methods of agriculture have also improved. The old tools are still used except on some farms belonging to well-to-do people who can borrow or hire agricultural machinery. Also landlords of these farms make use of the expertise of some Palestinian experts whenever their advice is needed.

Farms that have a relatively good water supply sell their produce in Riyadh. At the same time the villagers mostly purchase their grocery needs there or from the small village shops whose owners bring the goods from Riyadh. The only thing that may be purchased from within the village is animal fodder particularly lucerne from certain farms. Otherwise it is purchased from the Sha'ab Grocery, whose owners bring it from Riyadh whenever possible.

In view of these changes, it might be expected that the price of farms and other lands suitable for cultivation would have been reduced. In fact the opposite has occurred. The price of farms has increased dramatically. There is intensive demand for agricultural properties in Irqah, because well-to-do people from Riyadh have become interested in buying farms there to use as weekend and leisure resorts. Such people are able to go deep for water as they can pay for it from the sale of their farm's agricultural produce. Also investment in agricultural properties, like any other property, has been definitely profitable in a short time. Property investment companies and merchants have moreover been recently making heavy demands for agricultural properties which have on them suitable areas for residential developments. This has followed the expansion of Riyadh's outskirts towards the village; the improvements of the Riyadh-Diriyah road and of the branch road to Irqah; the project for new buildings of Riyadh University only two kilometres away; and the project for a new estate of sixty-seven modern villas next to the buildings of Riyadh University to be rented as a commercial proposition.

The value of the village agricultural properties may appear to be

exaggerated, bearing in mind the small size of the farms. But the explanation is as follows. Almost every farm receives water during rainfall from wide areas surrounding it, especially from high ground above Wadi Hanīfa. These are water-courses or runlets (msayyl). Every landowner has the right to safeguard his farm's water-courses. But he cannot legally claim ownership of them since these water-courses are owned by the state.

Accordingly there is the area of the farm owned by a landowner on the one hand, and there is the area of the water-courses or runlets. This latter is owned by the State not the farmer, who simply uses its rain-water. Meanwhile, the head of the State has, of course, the right of bestowing the water-courses of a particular farm on its landlord, who would then receive an official document of ownership. It is the area of the water-courses which is particularly desirable for residential plots. If the purchaser of a farm obtains documents to the ownership of its water-courses, he can sell the farm including its water-courses for a very high price. This sort of selling and buying of agricultural properties has become the main topic of conversation amongst the villagers.

These two main factors, together with the enormous revenues of capital pouring into the country from oil production, have resulted in a great rise in the price of agricultural properties, especially those with water-courses. Two of the cases involving big sums will be illustrated.

Property (A) was planted by a village ordinary cultivator. In about 1960 he sold it to X for 160,000 SR, about £18,823. The latter spent about 80,000 SR, nearly £9,411 on its improvement. Later on he bestowed it on Y who, in return, compensated the bestower with a sum of 400,000 SR, about £47,058. At the same time he returned the property to him. Having got his property back and the compensation, he could now claim the ownership of the same property's water-courses which he estimated at about four square kilometers towards and beyond the Riyadh-Diriyah road. As he was able to obtain a document to that effect, he sold the farm property and its water-courses to a property investment company for ten million SR, about £1,184,111.

Property (B) is an old-standing wakf whose previous price was unknown. It was sold for a price amounting to 1,400,000 SR, about £118,411, although it was small and unproductive due to the depletion of its well. But the person who purchased it intended to obtain a document to its water-courses which lie at the north-east of the Riyadh-Diriyah road where business in land fit for residential purposes is very flourishing. Since its buyer is capable of getting an ownership document to its runlets, its price will definitely increase.

The constant rising price of residential lands in the kingdom, particularly around main cities like Riyadh, has attracted property investors to speculate in the village, as the two cases show.

The people involved in obtaining documents to the masayyl of farms they buy, as well as the investors, do not belong to the village. Therefore, they are interested neither in buying the existing size of a farm which is cultivated or at least suitable for cultivation, nor in farms that have no access to runlets. Their primary interest is in the runlets, which are suitable for residential sites. During the time of my field work, five farms were sold mainly for this purpose and three other transactions were in progress.

This sort of property transaction poses the question, whether the huge resulting wealth has a great impact on the villagers. The impact is in fact very limited for various reasons some of which are: (1) Most of the village farms are owned by absentee landlords who are not from the village itself; i.e., Property (A); (2) Other farms are wakf property, e.g., property (B) whose price has to be reinvested in other properties; and (3) other farms are owned by individual families. For example, A. al-Rauwaf who invested the price of a part of his farm in properties in Riyadh. The only effect it has is that it has contributed very considerably to the increase in price of the village houses, and the rate of rent.

But the foregoing does not imply that Irqah has lost its agricultural characteristics, since the majority of its people are farmers through

inheritance and extremely fond of agricultural work. Also the depletion of the wells in some farms does not mean that wells of other farms are liable to depletion, as there are still some that have adequate water for flourishing cultivation which fetches a good income. At the same time there are some wells where water is available during winter rains. Though such water is not adequate for long-term cultivation, it helps at least these landowners maintain the wells if only for the production of dates, since the price of this product has been rising steadily.

There is another category of landowners who insist on retaining their farms despite the depletion of their wells, hoping for God's mercy of plentiful rainfall at any time. They also, at the same time, expect the government to provide their farms with water from the Ministry well which has been drilled in the village for supplying Riyadh with drinking water. Their expectation is not based on a vacuum, since the government watered most of the village farms from that well for almost three years between 1967 and 1970 during a prolonged drought. But that was halted after the exuberant rainfall of 1970. Also the government has already agreed to water some farms in the neighbouring village of Diryah. And since the average rainfall was very low during the last two years the village Amir and the leading figures made a request to his Majesty the King, who ordered that the village farms should be provided with water from the Ministry well, but nothing was done. It seems that the Ministry feared it might lead to a shortage of drinking water for Riyadh which is in desperate need.

There is another important factor encouraging landowners and farmers to maintain the business of agriculture. The government gives aid to cultivators throughout the Kingdom by means of the Agricultural Credit Bank, through subsidies for crop and fodder cultivation, or by making available agricultural machinery and fertilizers at a discount price of about 90% of the total imported cost. Perhaps the most important decisions the government has taken in this respect are:

1. A subsidy encouraging cultivators to cultivate grain at the rate of five piastres, (about six pence) per kilo, and rice at six piastres per kilo (resolution of the Council of Ministers No.688 $\frac{26}{27}/t$ - 1393 (1973));
2. A subsidy on concentrated fodder for poultry at 50% of the total imported cost (same resolution);
3. A subsidy on agricultural machinery at the rate of 45% of the total imported cost (Council of Ministers' resolutions No.52 dated 19/1/1393 (1973) and No.105 dated 9/2/1394 (1974)). This subsidy is supervised by the Agricultural Credit Bank;
4. Fertilizer subsidy at the rate of 50% of the imported cost (resolution of the Council of Ministers No.516 dated $\frac{20}{21}/4/1394$ (1974)).
This subsidy is managed through a joint committee of the Agricultural Credit Bank, Ministry of Agriculture and Water, Ministry of Finance and National Economy, and Ministry of Commerce and Industry;
5. A subsidy for pumps and machines at the rate of 20% of the total cost (resolution of the Council of Ministers No.515 dated $\frac{7}{8}/4/1394$ (1974)). This subsidy is operated through the Agricultural Credit Bank;
6. A subsidy to make available stored fodder for meeting situations of drought emergency at the rate of 90% of the total imported cost, in addition to similar subsidy to increase the production of maize (Council of Ministers resolution No.1418 dated 22/11/1393 (1973)). This subsidy is managed through a joint committee from the Ministry of Finance and National Economy and the Ministry of Agriculture and Water.

The government aims, from these resolutions, first to realise abundant local agricultural production in an effort to reduce the percentage of imported food which is too expensive for most of the low income people, and second to encourage cultivators to maintain farming by helping them financially.

As far as the village of Irqah is concerned, it is obvious that the greatest difficulty in making use of these subsidies is the scarcity of water. The subsidies, in spite of their importance, will not be of utility to the village as long as the wells suffer from depletion or scarcity of water, and this problem should accordingly be given a first priority. As regards other cultivators with sufficient water, the subsidies are not urgently needed, since they are financially able to maintain their farms on their own. Finally, these subsidies have been decided upon in the last two years, by means of a complex procedure through the numerous circles attending to their administration. We may end up by questioning once again

whether they are likely to attain their short-run aims.

I will now examine Irqah economic activities in four main dimensions: other traditional occupations, women's work, economic development of the Kingdom and the village economy, and social securities and charities.

2. Other Traditional Occupations

Irqah's occupational structure was, and still is, characterised by diversity. It is true that agriculture used to be the main career for most of the village people, and that agricultural output, especially dates and grain, were the principal subsistence. But agricultural work was not capable of absorbing every adult male capable of work, for the following reasons.

Firstly, the land suitable for cultivation is restricted to the two banks of Wadi Hanīfa. In the Wadi itself the soil is not good enough and it is exposed to dangers of the flooding during rainy seasons; and the banks are bounded by stony hills unfit for cultivation. Nor can village cultivation extend further along the banks, since the village is directly bounded with Diryah on the north-west and some farms on the outskirts of Riyadh to the south-east where the dam is, (see the village map).

Secondly, the cultivated land area is divided into small farms cultivated by extended households. Some of these farms used to be cultivated by the households of their owners, whereas some others were leased to sharecroppers. Meanwhile, farming production was hardly enough for both categories, particularly the sharecroppers who faced financial difficulties in maintaining the farms they cultivated.

A number of specialised craftsmen used to practise various kinds of agriculture-related crafts such as carpentry (nijāra) and leather work (khraḥāh). But opportunities for such specialisation were limited because the cultivators made the repairs needed for their equipment in most cases themselves.

Three other types of work were practised by a considerable number of the villagers. Two of these have disappeared as they are no longer needed,

whereas the third is still practised on a limited scale. Camel transport (jmalah)¹ used to be next in importance to agriculture in terms of the number of villagers who practised it. Camel transport was permanent work for about eighty people of the village. Their work was mostly done in Riyadh. But camel transport has given way to motor transport.

The second type of occupation prevailing in the past was called al-janb. This was the work of digging out boles of trees called 'ā'qūl from the earth. These boles contain a substance (rṭa) used in tanning, especially of skins that were to be used for the cool storage of water for domestic use, and of skins used for drawing water. I estimate that about twenty people professed this sort of work, which was so profitable that the villagers used to call it "the small horn of gold" (grain al-thahab). Those who did this work benefited from it in two ways: by selling the tanning substance and by making use of the trunks as domestic firewood.

The substance was mostly sold in Riyadh, though some was sold in the village to Bedouin families who were engaged in tanning. But more people practised al-janb than tanning. Both of these occupations have died out. The occupations were traditionally despised, to the extent that the village Amir did not appreciate my enquiry about them and recommended me not to mention them in this work.

The third occupation that was practised, and still is in a small way, was stone cutting. It was profitable work for more than thirty villagers. Stone cutting flourished when King Saud, then Crown Prince, was building his palace, al-Naṣiriyyah. But the number of stone cutters has been declining recently, because of the newly introduced commercial stone-cutting factories. As a result they are now fewer than five, and even they do not consider it as full-time work.

Cultivation, camel transport, the work of al-janb and tanning, and

1. Particularly use of camels for heavy transport, such as building materials.

stone-cutting, were the main traditional occupations. New economic development has profoundly affected the traditional occupational structure and led to new occupations which will be discussed later.

3. Women's Work

Despite a clear-cut division of labour between the sexes, most of the village women used to carry out duties of economic return to the household. Some used to bring water for domestic needs from public wells, while others gathered firewood from outside the village. Also wives and daughters of cultivators were accustomed to take an effective part in light agricultural work, thus saving the head of the household the trouble of hiring labourers. It is apparent from the above that, although the primary activities of women were devoted to their family affairs and bringing up children, they were at the same time performing other activities which brought direct economic returns.

Nowadays women need not do their traditional work of bringing fuel and water, because gas and paraffin have largely replaced wood and water has been connected up to most of the village houses. Some cultivators' wives still participate in agricultural tasks such as reaping and cleaning crops for storage or sale, and some women still collect fodder from certain farms for the needs of their livestock. Also most women of the Bedouin families living in the village tend their sheep and goats at the outskirts.

This also does not mean that there are no working women. Six fill permanent government posts: two are teachers, and the other four are maid-servants at the school for girls and the nursery. There are, as well, six women undertaking very limited commercial activities in their houses, with women and young children only as their customers.

Yet the idea of women's work outside the household has not been fully accepted, and the division of labour between sexes has not been greatly affected by economic changes that are taking place in the village.

Work for women is still scarce but its significance is becoming manifest in the villagers' feeling that it is not something to be ashamed of,

as long as a woman's financial circumstances necessitate her working.

4. The Economic Development of the Kingdom and the Village Economy

The economic development of the Kingdom, resulting from the state revenues of oil, has substantially affected the traditional economic activities of the village. Since agriculture no longer provides a sufficient basis of subsistence for the farmers, and since the significance of other traditional careers has diminished, the villagers have been forced to seek employment in other pursuits, particularly government posts, since about the beginning of the sixties. In other words, the economic activities of the village do not have an autonomous existence, but are related to the economy of the wider region.²

At present, the village economic activities have become diversified as the following table illustrates:

TABLE 13: DISTRIBUTION OF THE HOUSEHOLD HEADS ACCORDING TO THEIR OCCUPATIONS

<u>Type of Work</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>%</u>
Government employees	82	54.30
Private firms' employees	4	2.65
Merchants	4	2.65
Farmers	16	10.60
Drivers	9	5.30
Labourers	14	9.27
Others	6	3.97
Unemployed	17	11.26
<hr/>		
Total	151	100.00
<hr/>		

This table clearly shows that government posts (which are held either in the village itself or in Riyadh), represent the highest percentage of the working household heads. In fact, this sophisticated attraction of

2. Cf. André Beteille, Caste, Class and Power. Changing Patterns of Stratification in a Tanjore Village. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1965) p.103.

government posts has social and economic manifestations that could be summarised as follows. A government post, whatever its significance might be, lends its occupant social prestige due to its connection with the central authority, to work for which is considered as an honourable duty. To be known of as working for the government is something which is highly valued. A person holding a government post does not hesitate to say proudly that he is a government employee, anā muwazzaf hukūma, even if his job is of a minor nature such as that of a messenger or servant.

This pride in holding a post related to the central authority has historical roots. For in the distant past most of the government posts were of a military nature, and employees were organised as khowiyya (sing. khawi) which implies men who were carrying government rifles. The main duty of these khowiyya was military, above all during the stages of the establishment of the Kingdom at the beginning of King Abdul Aziz's era. Although the concept of khowiyya has almost vanished since the formation of the organised army, there still exist some groups of them attached to the Emirates of villages and small towns and this is true of Irqah Emirate.³ These surviving groups of khowiyya are regarded as policemen in the traditional way. There is also a small number of khowiyya working in Riyadh as a special Royal Guard symbolising the traditional army of khowiyya. Members of this special group still wear the old costumes and carry swords, daggers, and rifles.

The primary function of khowiyya was limited to carrying out the central authorities' orders to mobilise themselves for attack or defence against neighbouring Emirates before the establishment of the Kingdom. But at present their duty, particularly in villages and small towns where there are no police posts, has been limited to carrying out Amirs' orders for the punishment of those who disregard the central authorities' instructions, or who neglect the performance of their religious rites.

3. See The Emirate in Chapter VIII.

The khowiyya have declined in importance since the reign of King Abdul Aziz. There is great administrative development and vast expansion in public services, and increasing demand for filling new posts in the government hierarchical structure. But the villagers now retain the same idea about government posts, particularly among those of limited education. Thus they still conceive that a person occupying a government post has some sort of connection with the government in the same way that the khowiyya had with the central authority.

Government posts secure regular monthly incomes for their occupants. This financial security, with its continuity and gradual increase, has led the villagers to abandon their previous agricultural and professional works, or at least consider them as secondary ones, for the sake of getting government jobs. Consequently a government job is regarded as far as its financial security is concerned, to be as good as income from property. Taking these considerations together it is understandable why the villagers welcome government utilities in the village; even though they do not serve their objectives satisfactorily they open up employment opportunities. A villager said that although one of the government agencies in the village - he was referring to the Community Development Centre - was no longer useful for the services it rendered it was still useful to the villagers, some of whom rented their properties to it, while others filled its posts. Government posts offer an opportunity for those filling them to do additional work for financial gain such as part-time agricultural work, limited business activities, and car hiring, after the official working day, which in all government offices is less than six hours. In fact all government agencies in the village work fewer hours, particularly the administrative staff who leave their place of work at any time they want, or who may not come to work for a whole day. All they need to do is to prove their coming in and going out in the attendance book.

These factors have prompted the villagers to prefer government jobs to others that afford higher earnings. For instance, a villager has given up

his professional job as house builder to become a government messenger in the Girls' School, though his income from his previous work was three times as high. Meanwhile the villagers are not interested in working for private enterprises despite the fact that these pay higher salaries because their work requires longer hours.

If we consider the nature of government jobs occupied by most of the villagers we find that they are mostly messengers' and similar, as the following table illustrates.

TABLE 14: THE TYPE AND NATURE OF GOVERNMENT JOBS OCCUPIED BY HEADS OF HOUSEHOLDS IN THE VILLAGE

Administrative		Clerical		Khawiy		Soldier		Driver		Messenger		Others		Total	
No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
4	2.5	6	4	5	3	9	6	4	2.5	22	14	32	22.3	82	54.30

The biggest category is that of messengers. The "Others" group consists of various categories such as members of the Religious Guidance Centre (6), teachers (10), Muezzins (8) and Imams (8).

Here I should like to stress that since the unit of my survey is the individual household, the two tables above do not by any means cover all government posts in the village for the following reasons. The tables represent the present government jobs held by heads of households only, which means that there is a variable number of other government jobs in households, which are not included in these tables. For reasons which will be explained later, the household heads say that they do not know anything about the jobs of male members of their households, sons or brothers, because they are hesitant about giving reliable information. These tables do not include the six females filling government posts as they are not heads of households.

Quite a number of villagers fill two government posts with salaries for each. The village Judge is also the Imam of the Friday mosque where he heads Friday prayers, the five daily prayers and other occasional prayers. He does not perform his Imamship as a voluntary or religious duty, but as a

job for which he gets paid a monthly salary. The village Amir is also the Omda, a position which he fills independently of his Amirship, with independent salary of course. Last but not least, five out of the six members of the Religious Guidance Centre are also Imams of Mosques.

Nevertheless, I made an estimate of all government posts including those of the six females and of those holding two government jobs, and I found that the total number of government posts in the village amounts to 137 jobs.

Villagers working for the government seem to be better off than the others, to go by their dress and the furnishings of their homes. Some of them rebuilt their old houses or renewed them. Furthermore, most of them own private cars or cars for hire which they use for their own transport, as well as making additional income from them in their spare time. Generally speaking this category of villagers, except some of the messengers, constitutes a stratum as far as salaried income is concerned.

Considering agriculture as an economic activity we find that its economic value has declined since it no longer provides a sufficient basis of subsistence for the farmers. Consequently most of the village cultivators have been compelled to give up farming and have either sold their farms or sought employment in non-agricultural works, particularly government jobs. The number of household heads engaged mainly in agriculture at present is only sixteen, including landlords, sharecroppers and agricultural labourers, according to the following table. This is a mere ten percent, and is a good indication of the extent of the shift from agriculture to other occupations which has been taking place in the village. The number of those working in

TABLE 15: DISTRIBUTION OF HOUSEHOLD HEADS ENGAGING IN AGRICULTURE AS MAIN OCCUPATION

Farming Landlord		Sharecropper		Labourer		Total	
No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
5	3.5	3	2	8	5	16	10

agriculture exceeds this figure, which represents only those who are practising it as a main occupation. A good number of the villagers practise

agriculture as a secondary occupation and consider themselves not primarily cultivators but rather government employees who find spare time to do this other work. On the other hand, there are a few landlords who although not resident in the village take care of their farms themselves or through agents.

It was not easy to know the accurate income from agriculture as a main or secondary occupation. Villagers are always reluctant to mention it; there are no records and no income tax. It is true that they pay zākāh every year, which is a tithe of the total production, but this sort of payment is based on random estimates carried out through a joint committee from the village Emirate, the village court, and Riyadh Emirate. Thus when they are asked about their income they give unconsidered estimates which are far from correct; they find personal questions unseemly. Agents of absentee landlords are not in a position to give reliable figures because they do not know or because they feel that giving such information might lead to unfavourable terms with the landlords they work for.

Agriculture as an economic activity could be roughly divided into three divisions:

1. Farms of absentee landowners, i.e. members of the Royal Family and rich people, whose produce, mainly fruit and vegetables, is rewarding. It is rewarding because it is sold in Riyadh for very good prices, especially when agricultural products of other neighbouring villages lag in arrival at Riyadh markets.
2. Farms of landowners practising agriculture as a secondary occupation. These farms do not produce sufficiently because the owners are busy with their government jobs which means they are not dependent on agriculture for earning their living. Their annual income from dates is a good supplement to their salaries.
3. Farms of full-time agricultural owners. Most of these cultivators do not produce adequately either because of insufficient water or for lack of finance for equipment and labour, whose payment cannot be delayed until crops are sold. In spite of their financial handicap they insist on retaining their farms, hoping to sell them for high prices as they are well aware of the increased price of farm properties in the village.

On the other hand, a few farms in this category are profitable: these are located near Wadi Hanīfa dam where plenty of water is available.

Also their price is high. (The Deputy Minister of the Ministry of Agriculture recently bought a farm there for 750,000 SR, equivalent to about £88,230).

As Table 13 has shown, the number of builders and stone-cutters is fourteen or 9.27% of the total working heads of the village households. Ten of the fourteen are local building workers and the remaining four are stone-cutters. This number does not represent the actual labourers ('amil) in the village, because the villagers do not appreciate being called labourers as they consider the word to be degrading. They prefer, instead, the word mutasabbib which is applied to persons having unspecialised small businesses. Some prefer being unemployed rather than engaging in work where they would be classified as labourers. One villager who has been unemployed for a long time refuses to work as a street cleaner in the village though he is very poor, because he thinks that such work is degrading to him.

Accordingly the villagers do not take manual work that might classify them as 'amil, despite the availability of such work in the village and in Riyadh. People wishing to employ manual labour have to take on Yemeni workers for wages which amount to one and a half times the rate of pay of a messenger in a government institution. The villagers do not benefit from government construction projects in the village: when the Ministry of Education started to build a new elementary school for boys this was a good opportunity for villagers who were in need of work, but none of them took it. Some, who would not mind such work, do not take it because it might result in their being deprived of entitlement to a pension, which they get from the Department of Social Security provided they are not able to work.

Table 13 shows the small number of household heads engaging in commercial activity, there are only four. And their business is very limited. At the same time they have other sources of income, for two of them, the Ma'qili brothers who own a small shop, are government employees; one is a messenger in the Village Court and the other is a Muezzin. Ibn Mubaddal, the owner of the Sha'ab Grocery, is a part-time agricultural

worker. Furthermore they all get charity and Ibn Mubaddal in particular gets a pension from Social Security.

Nevertheless some individuals are engaged in property investment activities in a large scale; the village Amir and his cousin, pursue this business in the village and especially in Riyadh. Abudllah, the son of the Amir's cousin, told me that his father had been lately investing the price of part of their farm, which he had sold to a prince, in various estates in Riyadh and that their value had quadrupled in a short time.

A small number of household heads work for private firms in Riyadh. Villagers are reluctant to work for private firms, not because their pay is less than that of the government posts, but because they are subject to dismissal for being irregular in attendance or for reasons relating to each private firm's financial stability. It seems that the real reason is that the work of private firms requires longer daily hours, and lacks the prestige of government jobs.

Finally there are eight household heads whose main occupation is vehicle hiring, constituting 5.3% of the total working heads of the village households. Four of them own lorries, and the remaining four have cars for hire. Although this sort of work is profitable, especially when one takes into consideration the vast expansion of government and private constructional projects, and that cars for hire are the only means of transport to and from the village, it has been subject to competition from within the village and from outside. The villagers working on their lorries are in competition with other people from Riyadh and its outskirts. The four who own hire cars are in competition with other villagers who are government employees owning similar cars which they use during their spare time and whenever their work permits. There are thirty government employees who own cars for hire; among them are two teachers at the boys' school, and police, and National Guard working in Riyadh.

So far I have examined various types of occupation and I now consider the question of unemployment. In reality the percentage of unemployment is very low if we count only able-bodied males above the age of education. The

reason for the low rate of unemployment is that government posts have recently absorbed a large number of villagers. It is true that there are unemployed household heads who are over sixty, but these are not classified as unemployed for present purposes. Nevertheless the percentage of unemployment is 11.26%, constituting seventeen middle-aged household heads; two of them have been sick for a long time and therefore are unable to work, but the remaining fifteen have claimed on their identification cards that they are older than their real ages in order to get pensions from Social Security.

Throughout the foregoing discussion I have demonstrated various aspects of the village economic activities which provide relatively stable income. Also I have argued that these activities are diversified, and that such diversification is a result of new economic trends taking place on the Kingdom level. These activities do not however represent the only source of income. Many villagers accumulate additional income from various sources, though they tend to be reticent about them.

5. Social Security and Charities

Social Security (ḍamān ijtimā'i) is a government department which provides financial aid to individuals under certain conditions. Many of the village people receive pensions, paid twice a year, from the department. My survey showed that thirty-eight (24%) of the village households mentioned that they receive social security pensions, but in fact the number is much greater. According to a reliable source, the total number of households receiving pensions, directly or indirectly, is seventy-four. I mean by directly that the head of a household is entitled himself to the pension, and by indirectly that some households receive pensions for some orphans or widows among their members. Yet other villagers have applications under consideration.

These pensions are government financial aids to the needy among elderly people, disabled, orphans and widows. But the Kingdom has a different concept of social security from other countries, where the person who has paid

a percentage of his income from his work to his government is eligible to claim compensation in case of sickness, unemployment, etc. In the Kingdom, however, social security is applied neither to government employees nor employees, including industrial workers in the private sector. Government employees get their retirement pensions from a government organisation called the Central Organisation for Retirement Pensions, and the employees of private firms get theirs from a joint government and national agency known as the Central Organisation for Social Insurance.

The official considerations about social security are given in a document issued by the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs as follows:

a) Social

- i) that the individual is a member of the society which should help him when he is not able to help himself;
- ii) that the strength of the society stems from the strength of its members which necessitates its obligations to give each individual an adequate opportunity to work so that he can rely on himself to earn a living for himself and his family;
- iii) that the disabled members of the society have served their country when they were strong and therefore merit its help during their time of sickness and need;
- iv) that social security pensions maintain the dignity of its beneficiaries;
- v) that social security pensions are a right, and not some sort of discretionary grants or donations.

b) Economic

- i) that social security should guarantee its beneficiaries a minimum stable income;
- ii) that social security income should be made use of by a large number of eligible beneficiaries;
- iii) that this income should make a kind of balance in the purchasing power among categories and individuals of the society.

c) Legislative

- i) that the State is responsible for its subjects as it has replaced the family and the tribe in respect of caring for the needy among them;
- ii) that the State renders social services to its subjects including the services of social security;

- iii) That the State aims at having useful citizens which social security realises;
- iv) that the State's duty is to help every individual who has become unable to help himself, in order to guarantee that he lives the remainder of his life in dignity;
- v) that some of the beneficiaries of social security would deviate from normal behaviour without it". 4

The amount of aid is small - 30 SR (about £3.90) per month for every eligible head of family, plus 120 SR (about £14.20) per year for every child and wife or wives, provided that the number of children does not exceed four and the number of wives does not exceed two. (The amount of aid was tripled to 360 SR at the end of the period of my fieldwork).

Social security is basically a kind of financial aid rendered by the State to certain categories of its subjects. But in a society like that of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia it is a double-edged sword. No doubt the offer of help to the disabled, orphans and widows, etc., is a social necessity. But those who have been responsible for drawing up the system of the Kingdom's Social Security cannot have realised some of the consequences.

For Iraqh one can notice the phenomenon of the villagers' dependence through their attitudes towards the Social Security pensions. This sort of dependence stems from their conviction that Social Security pensions are a gift from the government initiated by the will of God regardless of whether a person is eligible or not. Instead of being a means of helping the needy to help themselves, social security pensions have encouraged this sort of dependence on the government.⁵

I have mentioned that the villagers are very cautious about giving information about their incomes or properties. Some pretend to be poor

4. Wazārat al-'Amal wa ash-Shu'ūn al-Ijtima'iyah Mas'hāt ad-Ḍamān al-Ijtima'i. Injazāt ad-Ḍamān al-ijtima'i fi 'Ashr Sanawat. n.d. pp.11-12.

5. Ibid., pp.46-7.

or unemployed. Those who do not receive pensions from social security believe that any research must have been set up by a government agency in order to find out their needs, even though they have regular jobs. Those who are already receiving pensions from social security claim to be poor and needy because they fear that otherwise their pensions could be suspended.

For these reasons many of the villagers thought that I was carrying out an assignment for the Department of Social Security though I always tried to explain that my work had nothing to do with any government agency. One of the village Bedouin brought me his identification card because he was expecting a charity from the Charitable Society of Riyadh, and thought that I was entrusted with its distribution. Another person produced documents proving that his furniture had been burned in a fire. He tried to convince me that the present furniture of his house belonged to his wife whom he had married three years previously. This man has a government messenger's post in Riyadh. Again, one of the village people who is living in Riyadh greeted me very warmly. When I asked him whether he was still living in Riyadh, he said he still kept his house in the village, and although it had been rented to a tenant he still considers himself from the village regardless of his stay in Riyadh. Then he took me away from the main street and told me he had come from Riyadh because the Department of Social Security wanted to investigate whether he still lived in the village or not. He asked me to conduct the proposed investigation as he thought I was the representative of that department. Most of them used to speak to me about the result of my research in terms such as "Now we have got nothing from the papers you have written", or "May God make the papers you are writing useful to us so that we get benefits from them".

Many problems arose in the form of forged documents. For instance, some applicants claim to be far older than they are; some claim that married daughters are not married or that remarried women are still divorced. Some add their grandchildren to their identification cards as if they were

their real children, if their fathers are not eligible. Also some of them move to very old houses in order to have their cases investigated there and then return to their permanent houses. These give rise to subsequent problems. Exaggeration of age results in difficulty in obtaining employment. A villager told me that his real age was 48, while his registered age was 74. Another villager complained to me that he was not able to support his large family since the pension he got from the Department of Social Security was not sufficient, nor would he get a job because his registered age was 75 while his real age was about 50. The addition of grandchildren's names to the cards will come to the surface when these grandchildren grow up and have to face the consequences. They realise these already, but they can do nothing about it since any attempt to regularise the situation might confront them with serious legal difficulties.

All this indicates that the villagers, like other villagers in the Kingdom, are over-burdening the government. They always expect her to provide them with everything.⁶

Besides the pensions of the Department of Social Security, the government distributes annual alms among the poor of the village people as nominated by the Amir, the Judge, and some of the prominent men. These are traditional alms whose history goes back to the reign of King Abdul Aziz. They are very small and favouritism plays its role in distribution. According to the distribution list most of the village households get their share even though some do not need it since they are not poor. Nevertheless, they consider that as these are government alms they ought to be entitled to receive them. Ninety-two heads of households, and thirty-one orphans and widows belonging to various households, receive these alms. If we count income to orphans and widows as income to their households, we find

6. Ali Mahjoub, Dirasah Ijtima'iyah-Iqtisadiyah li Garyatai al-Jumum wa al-Diryah (Sers Ellaian, February 1964), p.32.

that the total number of households receiving these alms is 123, or nearly four-fifths of all the households in the village.

The main purpose of the Riyadh Charitable Society, which has been established recently under the auspices of Prince Salman, the Amir of Riyadh, is to offer financial aid particularly to those affected by disaster or calamity, and to those who have been imprisoned for not being able to pay off their debts; there is also annual aid to the needy including the village poor. In fact this Society's aid is distributed to those who are in real need; the distribution list includes thirty-six household heads and twenty-five orphans and widows. This aid is the highest. payments varying from £47 to £83.

It has been customary procedure for some businessmen and investors to distribute the zākāt of their annual income according to their own knowledge, without direct interference from the government. A good number of Irqah households receive alms of this sort whether from wealthy people in the village or from others in Riyadh especially those who are originally from the village. I have been told by a reliable source that Shaikh Abdul Rahman Ibn Rawwaf, head of the Religious Guidance Centre, collects zākāt from wealthy people in Mecca every year when he goes there to perform the little pilgrimage ('Umrah) during the month of Ramaḍan, and he distributes it among the village poor as soon as he returns. However, it is not easy to discover who usually receives alms of this kind or the amount of money they get, for two reasons: they do not wish anyone to know since it is harmful to personal dignity; and as a charitable aid it ought to be confidential.

It appears also that the village zākāt of dates and grapes is distributed among the village poor but I was unable to find information relating to its amount and the way it is distributed.

The Cooperative Society, since it has been established in the village, distributes two kinds of charitable aids. The first one is the zākāt of its annual income which is 2.5% of its net profit according to Islamic Juris-

prudence. Forty household heads and thirty orphans and widows get shares from the zākat of the Cooperative Society. The second kind is aid from the social services' fund. Some of the villagers receive aid from this fund when they are affected by disaster such as fire, or for special eventualities, for example, at the wedding of a poor villager, or when a poor household has to have house repairs done. According to the budget of the Cooperative Society for the year 1973-74, the number of households receiving such aid was twenty-one, the amount varying from about 100 to 700 SR, £12 to £83.

These various financial aids constitute additional income for a considerable number of the village households. Meanwhile, there are other households that accumulate additional income through secondary occupations carried out either by heads or other members of these households during their spare time. I have previously referred to some of these, particularly the widespread use of cars for hire by many of the villagers filling government posts in the village or in Riyadh. Other households get education allowances paid for sons or daughters who are enrolling in some educational institutions. Finally, most of the village households, and particularly the Bedouins, breed sheep and goats which bring in good return.

Despite all this, poverty exists in the village, though no one can estimate it accurately since it is not possible to assess the actual income of each household. The phenomenon may be attributed to the fact that women and unmarried daughters, as well as children of school age, are eventually a heavy economic burden on heads of households of low income who comprise the majority of the village people; and that the increased cost of living in recent years makes increasing incomes of both primary and secondary occupations inadequate for meeting household needs due to its multiple requirements.

I have tried to bring out the main characteristics of the village economy arguing that it had never been dependent on agriculture alone but it was always rather a mixture of agriculture and various occupations some

of which have disappeared since the discovery of oil which has speeded up the Kingdom's economic development. I have also mentioned that work in government institutions has attracted most of the villagers to the extent of abandoning their previous occupations not because government salaries are higher, but because a government job secures a stable monthly income in addition to some sort of social prestige and plenty of spare time. Working for the government has become an objective not only of adult villagers, but also of young children who aim to enter government works on completion of their schooling.

The reasons for the difficulty experienced in making out actual incomes are themselves interesting. Household heads consider them to be secret and do not even reveal them to their wives. Any attempt to enquire about such matters is regarded as an unwarranted intrusion. Some household heads claim that they are poor because they believe that any sort of investigation has to do with proposed government aid. One night I was talking with the head of a Bedouin household at his wooden hut with a paraffin lamp alight. He told me that he owed nothing at all and that he had no income of any sort, whether salary or government aid. I noticed a pick-up van parked at his house and asked if it was his. He denied it. When I asked him about his means of livelihood, he simply replied with the following lines:

My livelihood comes to me even if every living being
tries to obstruct it,
and others' livelihood, oh people, never comes to me.
And I am being supported by the Provider of reptiles
in their burrow,
Which neither met lightning nor expected rain.

Later I gathered that he was a regular soldier in the National Guard, practised sheep and goat breeding, and was the owner of the van. Furthermore, I found out that he got a social security pension, when one day I saw him driving in the car to collect it.

Some household heads on the contrary exaggerate their income in order to pretend that they are not actually poor or needy. One villager, for instance

told me that he was financially well-off, and that he loaned money to others. In fact, the condition of his house and his furniture indicated that his financial situation was fairly good, and he plies his own car for hire. However, his name is included among those who receive government alms while his mother receives a social security pension and other charity.

To sum up the foregoing: activities are diversified, and most households' sources of income include essential income from main occupations and additional income from secondary occupations, as well as private and government alms including social security pensions. Despite these various sources, income from secondary occupations is not regular and cannot be depended upon, and the sums of the various alms, apart from social security pensions, are very small and distributed only once a year. Furthermore, the majority of government employees belong to the group of messengers and servants whose salaries are not sufficient to support their households. Finally, the villagers, whether they are poor or rich, are interested in saving rather than spending, a phenomenon that might be attributed to their past which had been characterised by poverty and hardship.

CHAPTER V

HISTORY OF THE VILLAGE

The village has now to be seen in the historical setting. Although for the most part occupying a peripheral position in respect of the major historical events of the region, yet it lies close to both Diryah, the original home of the Saudis, and the centre of development of the Wahhabi movement, and Riyadh, the subsequent capital of Najd and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. This chapter discusses the village's historical relations.

Before the rise of Islam the population of Najd consisted of various tribes grouped around Musailimah al-Kaththab.¹ After its emergence these tribes were incorporated within the Islamic unity. They remained so after the Prophet's death, during the dynasties of Abu-Baku and 'Umar. During the conflict between Ali and Mu'āwiyah the inhabitants supported the former against the latter. During the Ummayyad dynasty the region was neglected due to the poor communications between Dmasacus and Najd. During the 'Abbasid dynasty it was completely separated from Baghdad. It was then that Najd was once again divided into tribally organised small Emirates fighting each other. Palgrave said:

...the entire Najd had been rent away, and never returned to the enfeebled rulers of the north. Left in headless anarchy, each district now grouped itself around its own chiefs and nobles, to pass henceforward centuries of feud and rivalry, in all the liberty of misrule, not unmixed with intervals of vigour and of brilliant though transient prosperity. 2

In other words, Najd returned to the same general conditions as had obtained before the rise of Islam. From then until the Turkish interest in the area, which began about 1578, the history of Najd was very obscure. The historian Ibn Bishr, in the introduction to his book, attributed the lack of written history of the area to the negligence of the Najd natives. He wrote:

1. William G. Palgrave, Central and Eastern Arabia, Vol.1, (London: Macmillan and Co., 1865), p.240.

2. Ibid., p.245.

Be informed that the inhabitants of Najd and their learned men then and now did not pay attention to the history of their countries, to those who built them, to the sort of events that took place, or to those who migrated from and immigrated to them, except for a few things written by some learned men which are not very important. If they wanted to mention a date they said the year when so-and-so, the son of so-and-so was killed without mentioning the reason for his killing. If they pointed out a battle or an event they said that year that incident occurred without referring to its nature or place. We know that from Adam until now there have been great killings, but we want to know the facts, the reasons, and all strange and unusual things involved. But their history lacks all that." 3

It seems that the way of life at that time provided no opportunity for the care and devotion necessary for the writing of history. Ibn Bishr wrote:

...be informed, God bless you, that this island of Najd is the home of differences, evil, killing and hostility among the inhabitants of villages, towns, and the illiterate tribes. They fight in the centre of houses and market places, and wars among them are continuous which cut-off travelling routes in the past and present. Thus good people were conquered by the evil ones. 4

During the period of the Turkish Empire the Wahhabi religious reform movement emerged. In 1745 Muḥammad Ibn Abdul Wahhāb appealed to Muḥammad Ibn Saud, the Amir of Diryah, for support in order to preach Islam according to the Qur'ān and the Sunna, and to denounce the practice of worshipping tombs and shrines which was wide-spread in the area at that time. Since then Najd has been the very domain of the Wahhabi reform movement, which has been met with opposition and rivalry from within and without. The rivalry from within took place between the successive Amirs of the Saud house, who adopted the Wahhabi reforms, and other Najd Amirs. The rivalry from outside came with the Turks' invasion and the military support they gave to the Sauds' rivals, particularly the Sharifs of the Ḥajaz and the Rashids of Ḥail.⁵

3. Shaikh 'Uthman Ibn Bishr, 'Unwān al-Majd fi Ta'rīkh Najd, Vol.1. (Beirut: Muṭba'at Ṣadir, 1967), p.14.

4. Ibid., p.242.

5. The struggle between the Saud house and both of the Sharifs and the Rashids is of historical significance for the history of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, but has in fact little relevance to the village history.

The Saud dynasty can be historically divided into three periods. The first period started with the agreement between Muhammad Ibn Abdul Wahhāb and Muhammad Ibn Saud in 1745 and ended in 1818. It was during this period that Muhammad Ibn Saud established the Sauds' authority over Arabia including the Hijaz. Philby said:

It was indeed to him that that cause owed its being; and it was to it that he and his successors owed their title to fame. It may be said with complete truth that but for him Wahhabism would never have had its day. It was he who provided the stage for a renaissance of Islam. 6

The second period started with the reign of Prince Turki in 1819 and it ended in 1900. The third period was with the rule of King Abdul Aziz in 1902 and onwards.

During the first two periods the Saud dynasty had its ups and downs. Its great difficulties were not only caused by the contentious jealousy and rivalry of the Amirs of other Emirates of Najd, but also by the Turkish invasion. In the course of the village history some examples will be cited.

It was not until 1932 that King Abdul Aziz incorporated most of Arabia into what is now known as the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. The unity of Arabia was achieved after great effort and severe warfare which Najd had been involved in ever since the emergence of the Wahhabi reform movement. Throughout his struggle, King Abdul Aziz aimed at restoring his forefathers' Emirate from foreign invasion and maintaining its identity with the religion of Islam in accordance with the preaching and practice of Wahhabism.

Indeed the successive Amirs of the Saudi house have maintained the distinct ideology of the religious reform movement of Ibn Abdul Wahhāb, whose main theme is the preaching and practice of Islam strictly according to the teachings of the Qur'an and the Sunna without innovation. Wahhabism was accepted by the local population for two reasons. The first one is that

6. H.St.John Philby, Saudi Arabia. (Beirut: Lebanon Bookshop, 1963) p.59.

it is a religious reform within Islam, the religion of the inhabitants, and it was therefore, not regarded as new or unfamiliar, though they knew little about it. The second one is that the people of Arabia were ignorant, and divided into tribally organised communities in a state of hostility. These are the main factors which favoured the growth of Wahhabism which has gradually developed into political organisation. Its development process could be similar to the Sanusi of Cyrenaica of whom Evans-Pritchard wrote:

The order became more and more a political organisation which directed, administratively, economically, and politically, the entire Bedouin population, and morally, the entire population of Cyrenaica, Bedouin and townsmen alike. 7

The development of Ibn Abdul Wahhāb's religious reform movement into political revolt was brought about by the fact that it identified itself with the people of Najd and its guidance sprang from Islam. From there it developed into a unique political organisation which still unites the majority of the population of Arabian Peninsula into a single nation.

Prior to the development of Saudi authority, the country was divided into small Emirates engaging in fierce warfare. The Turkish invasion had helped to inflame the situation by encouraging disputing parties to go on fighting. Raiding was constant among tribes, villages, and towns. Famine and poverty were caused not only by warfare, but also by insufficiency of natural resources. While the people there have always accepted the authority of the Saud house which promised salvation and morality on the basis of the Wahhabist movement, it was eventually during the reign of King Abdul Aziz that the people came to feel some sense of prosperity as well, after the discovery of oil in 1935. That eventuality has meant that the people of Saudi Arabia remain content with the authority of the Saud house not only because they have united the country and brought

7. E.E.Evans-Pritchard, The Sanusi of Cyrenaica (Oxford: The Clarendon, 1949), p.223.

about peace and order, but also because they have brought wealth and prosperity. They accept that authority for moral and material gains.

Now I turn to examine the village of Irqah against this general background. In the village there are old monuments which could be an indication of its deep historical roots. There are two graveyards (one of which has now disappeared). They both faced Jerusalem, which may prove that the village was in existence before the emergence of Islam and that it might have been known by another name. There are also old monuments, but not as old as the two graveyards, in the form of forts, some of which still exist. However, its history has not been recorded for two reasons. Firstly it is one of the small villages of Najd without particular significance in the history of the area either as the birthplace of great historical personalities, or for its military power. Secondly it lies midway between Diryah, the former capital of the Saudis, which is old and famous, and Riyadh the present capital. Nevertheless, it is possible to find some historical events recorded by a few historians, notably Ibn Bishr, regarding battles in which Irqah inhabitants took part. Those events occurred after the rise of Wahhabism and the support given to it by Muhammad Ibn Saud. Those historical events, which he referred to, have direct links with the history of the Saud house.

The name of Irqah has been mentioned in the works of a few old historians namely Ibn Bishr, to whom I have referred, and Ibn Ghannam.³ Also a few modern writers refer to it in their works. Muneir al-Ajlani, for example, mentions its sites with no reference to its history.⁹ Philby too has mentioned its geographical site in one of his works,¹⁰ and

3. Hasan Ibn Ghannam, Ta'rikh Najd: al-Musamma Saadat al-Afkar wa al-Afham li Murtad Hal al-Imam wa Ghazawat Thawi al-Islam. Vol.1 (Riyadh: al-Maktabah al-Ahliyyah, 1949). passim.

9. Muneir al-Ajlani, Ta'rikh al-Bilad al-Saudiyyah. (Cairo: Dar al-Kitab al-Arabi, n.d.) p.384.

10. Philby, Arabia of the Wahhabis. (loc.cit).

has frequently referred to its history which he drew from the work of Ibn Bishr.¹¹

Perhaps Ibn Bishr was the first to record events in which the inhabitants of Irqah took part alongside those of Diryah in fighting the enemies of the Sauds. He explains how Irqah was involved in the rivalry between Muhammad Ibn Saud, Amir of Diryah, and Dahham Ibn Dawwas. The latter was a son of a one-time ruler of Manfūḥa village near Riyadh. With five of his brothers, he took refuge in Riyadh after their eldest brother's assassination by one of their cousins. The ruler of Riyadh, his brother-in-law, was also assassinated by a slave who took refuge in Manfūḥa where he was put to death. Dahham then took charge of Riyadh. The trouble between Dahham of Riyadh and Muhammad Ibn Saud of Diryah started immediately after the rise of the Wahhabi reform movement. Irqah participated with Diryah in fighting Dahham: the "battle of slaves" (al-Ābīd) took place in 1746 when Muhammad Ibn Saud attacked Riyadh, where Dahham suffered most of the casualties.¹² The "battle of Hayir", 1765, is another example of Irqah's involvement in Diryah's cause. It occurred when a raiding party of the 'Ajman tribe was severely beaten by Abdul Aziz, the son of Muhammad Ibn Saud of Diryah. The survivors of that battle escaped to Najran, in the south-west of the Arabian Peninsula, where they asked other tribes to join them in attacking Diryah, which was defeated. Twenty-three men of Irqah were among the casualties.¹³

The Turkish interest in the region of Najd developed before the rise of the Wahhabi religious reform movement, and their struggle with the house of Saud continued until 1912. The worst of that struggle was in 1818 when the Turks, under the leadership of Ibrahim Pasha, destroyed Diryah the capital,

11. Philby, Saudi Arabia, op.cit., passim.

12. Ibn Bishr, op.cit., pp.27-8.

13. Ibid., p.44.

and ended the first period of the dynasty. Many members of the Saud house were captured or fled. Prince Turki Ibn Abdullah Ibn Saud was able to escape and in due course began to restore his forefathers' Emirate. On their way to Diryah the Turks attacked the village of Irqah killing thirty men and forcing many others to flee to Diryah. They also set fire to a considerable number of the village date palms.¹⁴ In 1823 Prince Turki went to Irqah accompanied by thirty unarmed men to begin his attempt to recapture Riyadh and the rest of the Saudi Emirate from the Turkish occupation for it had started to fall apart after his father's death. Irqah people gave him their support while he stayed with them.¹⁵

According to information he drew from the work of Ibn Bishr, Ahmed Ali mentions that when Amirs of other towns heard of his arrival at Irqah they joined him there and participated with him in attacking Riyadh. But they could not defeat the Turks who made Prince Turki and his supporters retreat to Irqah where they besieged them for some time.

Ahmed Ali continues:

"The skirmishes between Turki and the Turks continued until the year 1240/1824. Then Imam Turki besieged Riyadh once again from all directions. When the siege had continued for a long time the leader of the Turkish regiments, Abu Ali al-Bahlawi al-Maghrabi, was compelled to ask for reconciliation. Turki agreed providing that he (the Turkish leader) and his regiment should depart from Najd. He sent his uncle's son Mashari Ibn Nasir to take charge of the affairs in Riyadh until withdrawal was completed".¹⁶

What has been said so far concerns the written history of Irqah which historians have related to the development of the rule of Al Saud whose history has been coupled with that of the Wahhabi reform movement. But what was the state of affairs before then? For lack of sources, I tried to enquire from some of the elders of the village. Some remembered nothing beyond what Ibn Beshir has mentioned; some remembered incomplete events

14. Ibid., pp.251-2.

15. Ibid., pp.200-1.

16. Ahmad Ali, Al Saud. (Beirut: Dār al-'Ibād li al-Ṭiba'ah wa al-Nashr, 1957). p.86.

which still others were sceptical about.

Shaikh Abdul Rahman Ibn Rawwaf, the cousin of the village Amir and head of the Religious Guidance Centre, is perhaps the most authoritative of the village elders. He told me that Irqah used to be called Irqan, and Irqan was the person who established the village and gave it his name. After his death, a shrine was built on his tomb which the natives used to visit asking for help at difficult times and in cases of illness and sterility. Later on, Shaikh Muhammad Ibn Abdul Wahhab gave orders to demolish the shrine and built a mosque in its place. Most of the elderly people confirm this story. Shaikh Abdul Rahman goes on to say that the Hilalāt¹⁷ moved from Rawdat Sudair, a village in central Najd, to Diryah, about 1610. But they took up residence in a place situated between the present Irqah and Diryah where they established another part of the village. To this they gave the name Irqah which came to supersede the name Irqan. Gradually the Hilalāt became the village Amirs, and they remained so until recently. Shaikh Salih al-Hilali, the oldest survivor of the Hilalāt people in the village confirmed this.

Shaikh Abdul Rahman Ibn Rawwaf could not explain how the Hilalāt managed to establish their authority in the village except to say that the first of them to arrive was rich, confident, pious, and of good repute. Moreover, he was in a position to plant a lot of date palms which enabled him to be very generous, and so to gain the support of the villagers for nomination as village Amir. On the other hand, Shaikh Salih al-Hilali made the following statement. The first ancestor of the Hilalāt to settle down in the village was called 'Uthman or Hamad. He migrated from Rawdat Sudair and settled down in a place called al-Khanagah lying between Diryah and Irqah - this name now is given to one of the farming sections of the village. But the people of the village disapproved, and differences arose.

17. Throughout the discussion I have used the name Hilalāt as it has been said to me by my informants, while its usage in Classic Arabic is Hilaliyīn.

They asked the Amir of Diryah to try and settle the dispute. At the same time, 'Uthman or Ḥamad sent his womenfolk to the Amir of Diryah to inform him of their circumstances. The Amir of Diryah told them to settle down at Irqan, which was the name of Irqah at that time, to avoid problems with the inhabitants of al-Khanaga. Accordingly they did, and became the village Amirs. Shaikh Salih does not know how the Hilalāt established their power. All he says is that they had set themselves up in the Irqah area, where they planted many date palms and gradually they became its Amirs.

The following statement of Shaikh Muhammad Ibn Husain might seem to be correct. He mentioned to me that the village was called (and still bears the name) Irqah, which derives from the name of its Amir, Irqan. The Hilalāt from Rawdat Sudair had become guests of the Amir Saud of Diryah and asked him to give them land to live on. Saud gave them, therefore, a place by the name of Gumailan at the border of the village with Diryah (Gumailan is now neglected agricultural land owned by a member of the Royal Family).

But the Hilalāt were not pleased with that land so they migrated to Irqah and fought with its Amir, Irqan, who disapproved of their presence. The Hilalāt defeated him as a result of very fierce fighting in which many followers of Irqan were killed, in a battle known as Umm Goṣaibah (deriving from gaṣb, butchery). The Hilalāt, thereafter became Amirs of the village. Umm Goṣaibah is the name of a piece of neglected agricultural land known to the present villagers as the battlefield between the Hilalāt and Irqan; it is near the mosque where Irqan's shrine once was.

This statement of Shaikh Salih seems plausible, but it contradicts what villagers say about the existence of ruins known as the Shrine of Irqan. The shrine was inside a mosque still known as Irqan mosque. Mosque and shrine were demolished at the time of Muhammad Ibn Abdul Wahhāb and the mosque was rebuilt to exclude the area where the shrine had been. But the part which has been taken out of the area of the reconstructed mosque is still known as the shrine of Irqan. There are other villagers who believe that Irqan had killed a great number of his enemy in the battle of

Umm Goṣaibah.

It is apparent from these statements that the Hilalāt could have defeated Irqan's followers after his death, not before it, for the existence of a shrine in his name is an indication that he was not defeated by the Hilalāt while he was alive, otherwise he could not have built himself a shrine inside a mosque still bearing his name.

Oral traditions in the village also add detail to the written accounts of later periods. I have mentioned previously that Prince Turki gained the support of the people of Irqah in his effort to restore and reunite his forefathers' Emirate occupied by the Turks. Shaikh Abdul Rahman Ibn Rawwaf related the following story which reflects the support the people of Irqah gave him.

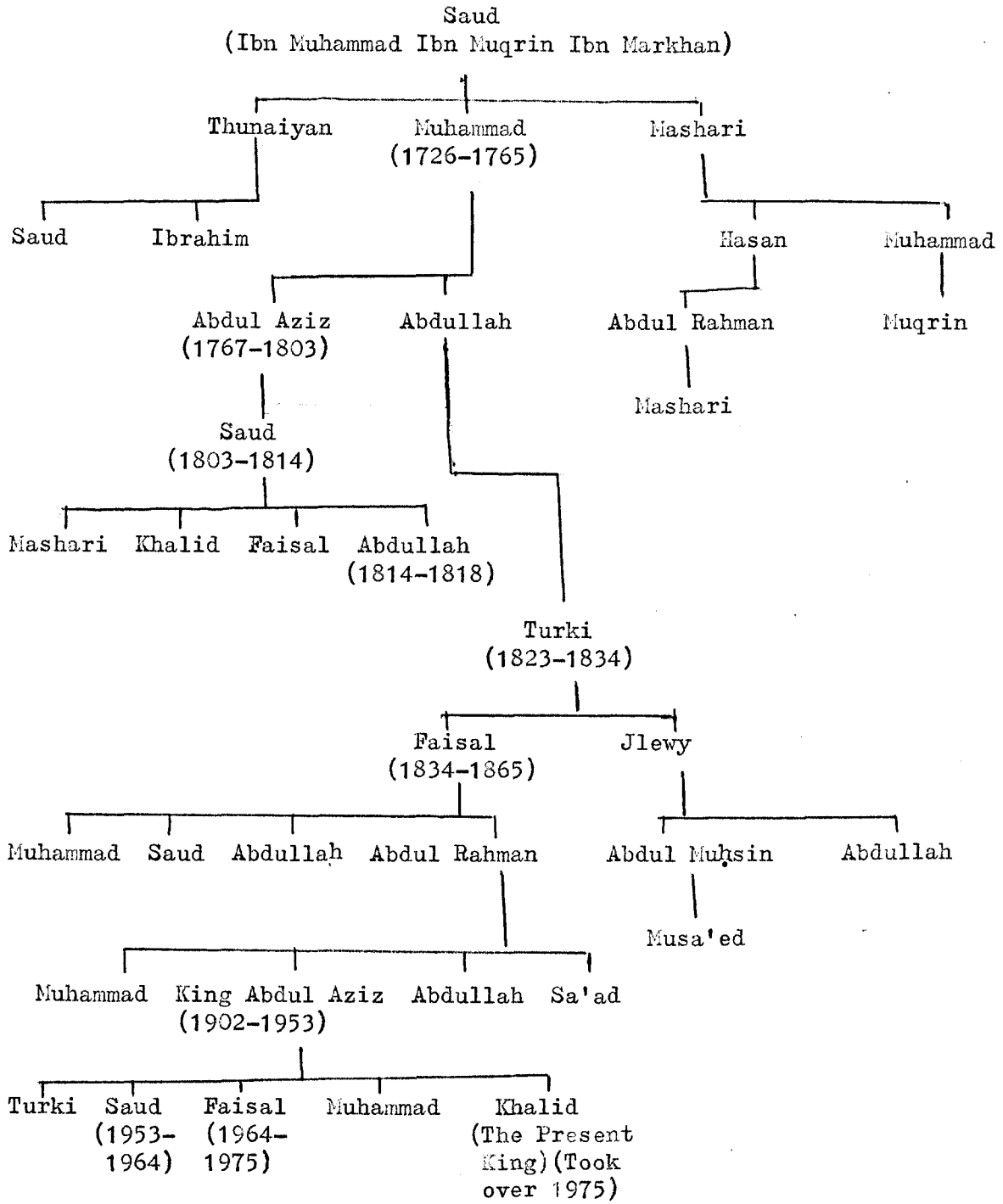
When Prince Turki reached Irqah he told his thirty men to stay beyond the village wall while he entered alone and aimed at the house of his old foster-mother. He asked her to go to the village Amir, of the Hilalāt family, requesting his permission to meet him. The Amir told her that he was on his way to the mosque for sunset prayers, and promised her that he could see him afterwards. The two men met at the Amir's house, where Turki told him that he was seeking help for relieving Riyadh of the Turkish occupation. The village Amir expressed his readiness, and explained to Turki the small size of the village and his fear that he - Prince Turki - might not achieve a victory and that the village and its people would be open to revenge by the Turks. In reply Prince Turki undertook to stay in Irqah and continue the fight until he was victorious or dead, and said that for that purpose he would consider himself "a brick from the village soil" until God gave him victory. The Amir said he would consult the elders of the village, and asked Turki meanwhile to stay in a room in his guesthouse. The Amir then requested his people to gather at his house to discuss an important matter. He told them that Prince Turki had sent him a letter seeking his support in fighting "al-askar" (the soldiers, i.e. the Turks). They replied that they were prepared to fight with him, but that they

feared defeat. The Amir of the village told them that he would inform Turki accordingly. But then the Amir stated that he feared that after he informed Prince Turki of their agreement they might change their minds. But they replied that they had given their word and they would stand by it whatever the circumstances. Then the Amir of the village asked Prince Turki to come out of the room where he was hiding, and the gathering undertook to help him to fight the Turks. Turki's men who were waiting outside were then allowed to enter the village.

Next day none of Irqah people went to Riyadh as they usually did. The Turks sent a horseman, khayyal, to find out why. The horseman was seen by a watchman on one of the forts. The watchman hurried up the village lanes shouting "There is no God but Allah" which was the usual way of warning the villagers of danger. When the people enquired about the news he told them of the horseman. One of the Amir's men (khawi) demanded the Amir to leave the horseman to him. (By custom the man who demanded the horseman would have the right to take his arms and horse if he killed or captured him). The Amir assented and the horseman was killed. After a while the watchman noticed another horseman, and again he shouted "There is no God but Allah". One of the Amir's men demanded him in the same way but the Amir refused, saying that he made a mistake in allowing the death of the first messenger. Meanwhile, he told his man he could take the horseman's property if he could capture him alive. His man agreed to that and, hiding in the wadi, he captured the messenger. When the Amir interrogated him, the messenger said that he was sent by the Turks to find out why none of them had come to Riyadh since the first messenger had not returned with the news. The Amir told him to go back to Riyadh and tell those who had sent him that Prince Turki was at Irqah and that with the support of its people, he would fight the Turks until they freed Riyadh and other parts of Al Saud's Emirate from their occupation.

This ends Shaikh Abdul Rahman's account. A similar statement was made to me by another villager differing only in the way Prince Turki made contact

GENEALOGICAL CHART OF THE SAUD HOUSE



with the Amir: in this version Turki headed directly to the house of the village Amir without getting in touch with the woman whom Shaikh Abdul Rahman mentioned.

A few villagers think that Irqah was a satellite of Diryah although it was administratively and militarily independent both during the historical development of the Saudis and after the establishment of the Kingdom during the reign of King Abdul Aziz. Such a contention seems to be incorrect for there was no treasury (bait māl) in the village, which it would have had, if it had been under the authority of Diryah. This proves its independence then. Also there has always been an Amir in the village appointed by the central government in Riyadh, ever since the establishment of the Kingdom. Nevertheless, this contention can be interpreted to mean that the village might have some sort of connection with Diryah perhaps as a result of a short-lived invasion. The people of Irqah even now do not like to be tied to Diryah through any government project, and prefer to have their own in the village itself.

Historical events, therefore, referred to by Ibn Bishr, and those stated to me by some of the elderly people of the village, have suggested that Irqah was a part of the Emirate of the Saud dynasty during their consecutive stages in the region, although it was independent in both military and administrative aspects since it had no treasury and no other authority appointed its rulers (Amirs) or its Judges (Qadis). These were from the village itself.

Since the establishment of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia by King Abdul Aziz in 1932,¹⁸ it has become totally connected with the central government in Riyadh in all administrative and military matters. King Abdul Aziz kept on the Hilalat, the traditional family of Amirs, to take care of its affairs under his authority. The Amir was Abdul Aziz Ibn Muhammad al-Hilali who was pious and well-informed on religious affairs, and was at the same time

18. Hamza, Galb Jazirat al-'Arab. op.cit., p.394.

the Imam of its Friday Mosque. Upon his death his nephew Abdullah Ibn Hamad al-Hilali, also a religious man, took over because the son of the deceased had moved to Diryah seeking religious learning. When Abdullah died his brother Hasan took over until his death in about 1944. These successions received the sanction of King Abdul Aziz. No one can recall dates of these Amirs.

In view of the fact that there was no qualified man from the Hilalat capable of running the Emirate after Hasan's death, the village people selected the present Amir Muhammad Ibn Rawwaf. Some villagers wrote to King Abdul Aziz expressing their desire and they received his sanction. Consequently, the King instructed him to take over the Emirate in 1944, and he is still the Amir.

The historical material available, for all its inadequacies, does show the very close connection that the village has had, since the inception of the Wahhabist religious reform movement, with the movement itself and with the Saudi house. It also serves to indicate the origin of some of the leading personalities of the village today. The next chapter discusses the families to which they belong in relation to the various strata and categories which make up the whole population of present-day villagers.

CHAPTER VI

1. The Village People

In this chapter I will be discussing the village people in reference to two sets of paired concepts, one being Ḥaḍar and Bedouin, and the other being Gabīliyyīn and Khaḍīriyyīn. Briefly the Ḥaḍar are the settled people of towns and villages, while the Bedouin are pastoral nomads; Gabīliyyīn are those whose genealogies connect them with the great Arabian tribes while Khaḍīriyyīn are those without such connection. All inhabitants of Irqah (less the foreigners) are either Ḥaḍar or Bedouin, and all are either Gabīliyyīn or Khaḍīriyyīn. All Bedouin settled in the village are Gabīliyyīn. Ḥaḍar are either Gabīliyyīn or Khaḍīriyyīn.

There is no published population census on the Kingdom level. There is, however, an unpublished survey of Irqah conducted by the Community Development Centre in 1970-71. I myself carried out a population survey. A comparison of my findings with those of the Centre show some minor differences. For instance, the Centre survey shows that the village population was 1031 comprising 158 households, while my figures were 1163 and 151 respectively. The difference in the number of households can be attributed to the fact that the survey carried out by the Centre included some Yemeni labourers who at the time were working on the construction of the village bridge and who left as soon as the work was completed. My survey shows that of the 1163 persons (about 7 individuals per household), 617 or 53% were males.

TABLE 16: NUMBER OF THE VILLAGE PEOPLE AND THE PERCENTAGE OF MALES AND FEMALES

Number of Population	Males		Females	
	No.	%	No.	%
1163	617	53	546	47

The survey revealed two facts about composition of the village people. The first is that the Khaḍīriyyīn represent the majority of households.

TABLE 17: THE PERCENTAGE OF HOUSEHOLD OF GABĪLIYĪN (BEDOUIN AND ḤAḌAR) AND KHADĪRIYĪN

Type of Household	Number of Household	%
ḤaḌar GabĪliyĪn	16	10.59
Bedouin GabĪliyĪn	47	31.13
KhadĪriyĪn	74	49.01
Others (from Arab countries)	14	9.27
Total	151	100.00

The other fact is that the number of the KhadĪriyĪn household heads born in the village is higher than that of the GabĪliyĪn (including both ḤaḌar and Bedouin) as the following table shows.

TABLE 18: PERCENTAGE OF HOUSEHOLD HEADS BORN IN THE VILLAGE

GABĪLIYĪN		KHADĪRIYĪN				OTHERS					
Born in Irqah	Born Out-side Irqah	Born in Irqah	Born Out-side Irqah	Born in Irqah	Born Out-side Irqah	Born in Irqah	Born Out-side Irqah				
No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%				
22	14.5	41	27.5	63	42	11	7	-	-	14	9.27

The table clearly indicates that a large number of the GabĪliyĪn household heads were not born in the village. Only 15 of the 22 born in the village represent the ḤaḌar GabĪliyĪn's household heads who were born in Irqah. The remaining 7 household heads of the 22 are heads of Bedouin households born in the village. Only one ḤaḌar GabĪliyĪ household of the 41 born outside Irqah is the household of the village Judge who is not from Irqah. The remaining 40 are household heads of the Bedouin sector. The table shows as well that the KhadĪriyĪn are attached to the village more than the GabĪliyĪn as the majority of them were born in the village, particularly if one takes

TABLE 19: HOUSEHOLD HEADS OF THE ḤAḌAR GABĪLIYĪN SECTOR BORN IN THE VILLAGE

Household name	Number
ĀL Rawwaf	2
ĀL Hilalāt	1
ĀL Zuhair	5
ĀL Murshid	1
ĀL Mubaddal	1
ĀL Mash'abi	2
ĀL Husain	1
ĀL Bakran	2
TOTAL	15

into consideration that the Bedouin sector do not consider themselves to be originally from the village.

As regards others, shown in the table, they include a number of household heads from other Arab countries working in the village. Thus the village people at the present time consist of three categories: (a) Ḥaḍar Gabīliyīn, (b) Khadīriyīn and (c) Bedouin Gabīliyīn. Categories (a) and (c) claim descent from well known Arabian tribes, although such claim seems to be based on little evidence.

Arab-genealogists agree that the Arabs are divided, in terms of origins, into three divisions:

1. The extinct Arabs (al-'arab al-bā'ida), that is the Arab nations which no longer exist, such as Ṭasm, Jadīs, and Imlaqu. 1
2. The pure or the genuine Arabs (al-'arab al-'ariba) that is the Arab descended from Yarob Ibn Yashjob Ibn Qaḥṭān,² whom genealogists consider to be the original inhabitants of the Arabian Peninsula. 3

1. Hamza, Galb Jazirāt al-'Arab, op.cit., p.92.

2. Ibid.

3. Abū al-'Ala, Jugrafiyat Shibhū Jazirāt al-'Arab. op.cit., p.133.

They are also called the Arabian Arabs⁴ and the True Arabs.⁵

3. The naturalized Arabs (al-'arab al-musta'ariba) are the Arabs descended from Isma'il. They are the 'Adnaniyyah⁶ who are less pure than the Genuine Arabs.⁷ They are called the Arabised⁸ and Arabicised Arabs.⁹

In spite of that villagers are not aware of these divisions and therefore do not know where to place themselves. As such it is not easy to specify whether the Gabīliyīn sector of the village people belong to the "Pure" or the "Naturalised" Arabs. Scarcity of historical detail about the village makes it difficult to identify its original inhabitants. The descendants of some of them went elsewhere as a result of wars or migration; and some others might have stopped using the names of the tribes or families to which they belong and adopted new and different names. The present-day village people are diversified as regards their acknowledged origins. Some have a "tribal" origin and others cannot trace their descent to any renowned Arab tribe. These are respectively the two categories of Gabīliyīn and Khaḍīriyīn.

There are oral records that some of the Gabīliyīn descend from ancestors who settled in the village at different periods. Let us take first, category (a), Ḥaḍar Gabīliyīn. This category consists of the following families: Āl Hilalāt, Āl Rawwaf, Āl Murshid, Āl Zuhair, Āl Husain, Āl Mubaddal, Āl Mash'abi, and Āl Bakran. Perhaps the Āl Hilalāt family are the oldest of these.¹⁰ According to the statement by Salih al-Hilali, the

4. Philip K.Hitti, History of the Arabs from the Earliest Times to the Present, 7th ed. (London:Macmillan & Co.Ltd. 1961) p.32.

5. H.A.R.Gibb, J.H.Kramers, E.Levi-Provencal, J.Schacht (eds.), The Encyclopaedia of Islam, New edition, Vol.1 (Leiden: E.J.Brill, 1960). p.544.

6. Hamza, Loc.cit.

7. Abū al-'Ala, Loc.cit.

8. Gibb, Loc.cit.

9. Hitti, Loc.cit.

10. I have given an account of the Hilalāt in the village history in respect of their previous authority there. Here they are mentioned in context of the present account of the village people as a whole.

last of Āl Hilalāt living in the village, and Abdul Rahman Ibn Rawwaf, the ancestors of the Hilalāt migrated to Irqah and settled there about 1610 and their migration was due to wars at their original home Raudat Sudair. The historian Muhammad Ibn 'Umar al-Fakhry¹¹ asserted that in 1065/1656 prominent members of Al Abū Hilal, Muhammad Ibn Jum'ah and others, were killed on al-Baḥa Day at Raudat Sudair where their ancestors had purchased land and where he and then his descendants had settled.¹¹ Also Philby refers to the fighting at Raudat Sudair and the circumstances facing Āl Hilalāt to migrate from it, when he says:

On his behalf Sharif Surur Ibn Zaid, possibly his brother or nephew, had conducted an extensive raid into Najd in 1697, to deal in particular with the sturdily independent, but always turbulent, Province of Sudair. Atrocities were committed at the village and oasis of al-Raudha, whence Surur turned upon Jalajil, where he was able to seize the fugitive Amir of Raudha, Madhi Ibn Jasir. Three of the founder families of al-Raudha were banished to Ushaiqir, but two of them returned almost in full strength only two years later. One of these, Al abu-Rajih of which Madhi Ibn Jasir was the leading personality, not only recovered its own section of the oasis but ejected the fourth family, Al abu-Hilal from its quarter share in the oasis after a fight between the latter's representatives in the town of Dakhila and Fauzan Ibn Zamil, the Chief of al-Tumaiyin, who was joined by Madhi Ibn Jasir.¹²

While the dates given by the various authorities vary, the writings of both al-Fakhry and Philby indicate that Āl Hilalāt or Āl abu-Hilal, as they used to be called, were forced to leave their home Raudat Sudair at a date not so much different from that at which Salih al-Hilali and Abdul Rahman al-Rawwaf stated they came to the village. The ancestors of Āl Rawwaf family, to which the present Amir belongs, migrated to it from al-Diyirah, a village about forty miles from the village, between 1180 and 1190/1764 and 1774, due to lack of water for agriculture.¹³ What is said about these two families,

11. Muhammad Ibn 'Umar al-Fakhry, T'arikh Najd. Makhtuṭ n.d. Riyadh University, No.48, pp.9-10.

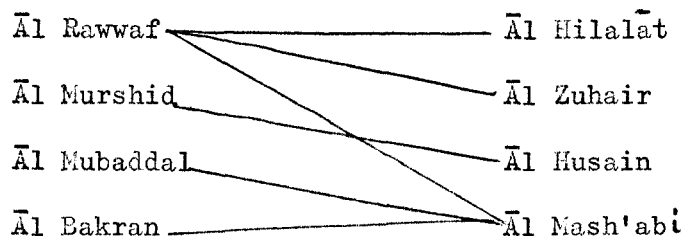
12. Philby, Saudi Arabia, op.cit., p.23.

13. A letter sent to the village Amir by one of his cousins on my request.

the Hilalat and the Rawwaf, can as well be said about others of the Ḥaḍar Gabīliyīn.

Member families of this category belong to a number of tribes. Āl Hilalat belong to the tribe of Benū Hilal, Āl Rawwaf, Āl Murshid and Āl Husain belong to Tamim tribe, and Āl Zuhair, Āl Mash'abi, Āl Bakran, and Āl Mubaddal belong to Qaḥṭan tribe. They marry among themselves so that although they do not all belong to one tribe, they are related to each other through affinal ties. That does not mean that there is always direct inter-marriage among all these families. Rather, an inter-marriage relation between Āl Rawwaf and Āl Hilalāt on one side, and between Āl Zuhair and Āl Rawwaf on the other side, leads eventually to indirect affinal relationships between Āl Hilalāt and Āl Rawwaf through Āl Zuhair. Such indirect relations come from the relations between the offspring of Āl Rawwaf and Āl Hilalāt because Āl Zuhair are the maternal uncles of the offspring of the two families. Here we can see what is meant by direct and indirect inter-marriage relations. Therefore, all of these families are in fact related to each other through affinal relationships either directly or indirectly, as the following diagram shows.

DIAGRAM 3 ILLUSTRATING MARRIAGE LINKS AMONG THE ḤAḌAR GABĪLIYĪN



Category (b) constitutes the Khadīriyīn, who make up a large part of the village population, who do not know their tribes or how their ancestors came to the village. The roots of their settlement there are not known. They comprise a variety of unrelated origins. In other words, they are not tribally originated or connected. There is no restriction on inter-marriage among them, but they are not allowed to marry into the two categories of the Gabīliyīn Ḥaḍar and Bedouin.

Besides the widespread affinal ties among the Khaḍīriyīn, there is another important factor strengthening their relationships, namely the relationship between a child and foster-mother. This is similar to his relationship with his real mother and the relationship of his foster-mother to her real children. The child becomes his foster-mother's son and her sons and daughters become his brothers and sisters so that he cannot marry any of her daughters, pursuant to the saying of the Prophet Muhammad "Suckling prohibits what birth prohibits".¹⁴

The reason for the widespread relationships through suckling among the Khaḍīriyīn is attributed to the fact that when the women used to go out in groups to gather firewood they had to leave their children in the care of other women until they returned. Those women looking after the children would suckle them while their mothers were away. Such relationships spread among the Khaḍīriyīn to the extent that some of them had to look for wives from outside the village because girls whom they could otherwise marry were their sisters in this way. Though the practice of wood-gathering had already vanished, fosterage still exists, but only with children whose mothers have died. Similar relationships exist also among the Gabīliyīn, but to a lesser extent.

Category (c) includes groups of Bedouin, all Gabīliyīn, belonging to various tribes mainly Subai', Qaḥṭān and Ajman. Some of them, e.g. Āl Jamhūr of the 'Ajman tribe and Falih and Salim of the Subai' tribe, settled in the village a long time ago while others settled at different times more recently.

Bedouin settlement in the village can be traced as far back as the rise of the military mobilisation of Bedouin during the process of the Kingdom's foundation at the beginning of the reign of King Abdul Aziz. At that time some Bedouin moved with their families to Riyadh and its vicinity.

14. Shaikh al-Bahūni, al-Raḍ al-Murbi', op.cit., Vol.3, p.219.

Gradually heads of some of these families abandoned nomadism as a way of life when they served in the state military organisation which required them to settle. Today there are some Bedouin families, such as Āl Jamhūr, as well as those of Falih and Salim, who regard the village as a permanent home, and they have built or purchased dwellings. Others have recently chosen to settle in it as a place conveniently near their place of work; accommodation is much cheaper than it is in Riyadh. Still others are compelled to resort to short-term settlement for a variety of reasons, such as being able to collect their social security pensions or other charities or alms; these do not have permanent residence in the village but use huts and tents on sites which they do not own. But all the Bedouin, regardless of the length of their stay there, remain attached to the distinctive Bedouin way of life.

The inhabited section of al-Ṣun' and the section of al-Rimailat¹⁵ are the dwelling centres of the village Bedouin. They live there because the rent is low, and for the convenience of their movement with their livestock, for it is as if they were actually living in the desert.

The difference between the Bedouins living at al-Ṣun' and those living at al-Rimailat is considerable. Those in al-Ṣun' live in mud houses and mingle with the villagers though their general way of life does not differ from that of the desert people. Those in al-Rimailat are completely isolated and do not mingle with the rest of the villagers.

Al-Rimailat section lies on the east bank of the Wadi. The section includes some farms on the Wadi bank and three groups of Bedouin. The first group lives between the farms at a small flooddrain. The other two groups live in an area called al-Thaharah (a hill above the flooddrain), one in the angle between the Irqah and the Riyadh-Diriyah road, and the other

15. See the village map, see also page 78.

beyond the latter. These have immigrated at different times, and did so firstly because they do not have to pay rent for the land they occupy. They built huts of timber, zinc and cardboard, but use also local black tents and imported tents. They do not pay rent, for the land is the property of the state or else of individuals who do not mind them as long as they remain the right to expel them at need. Secondly the heads of families of these groups at al-Rimailat and al-Thaharah are nomads who, however, have jobs at Riyadh in government agencies and so have to live nearby. Others of them have cars for hire. Living near their work in such a place gives them the advantage of being able to maintain the Bedouin way of life for their families, and they can move about for pasturage as if they were virtually living in the desert.

These localities lack the facilities of stable life as there is neither electricity nor water. Also the huts do not contain proper sanitary arrangements; the Bedouin simply use the open air.

There are no social or any other relations between these Bedouin and the village except for their contacts with the government circles, particularly the Emirate, the dispensary and the schools if their children are attending, though most of them do not allow their daughters to go to school. Some of them go to the village on certain annual occasions to receive social security pensions or to attend distributions of alms and charity. They have spaces marked as mosques where they congregate for prayers.

Their economic relations with the village are slight for two reasons. The first is that they do not depend on the village for their living because they are either government employees (particularly in the National Guard) or drivers of hire vehicles. The second reason is that most of them do not rely on the village for purchasing their needs. Most of them own cars, either private pick-ups or taxis, which they use for transport and for wandering in the desert whenever their work allows. They prefer to market in Riyadh where it is cheaper and where there is a better range and quality of goods.

Members of the Bedouin sector of the village people are bound together with tier of affection. They boast of their purity of origin and know themselves all to be Bedouin, and consider themselves to be more attached to the desert way of life. They regard themselves as being in the village but not of it. They feel themselves strangers in it and try to avoid stirring up differences with the natives, pursuant to the maxim "oh stranger be polite".

Most of the Bedouin living in the village form groups which are distinct both in their relationships and their way of life; their contacts with the village are necessitated by simply being there. They tend to associate with each other; their womenfolk are not restricted to wearing the heavy veil when they go out of their houses, and can make contact with men whenever necessary, and their dialects are different. It is therefore, easy to distinguish whether a male villager belongs to the Ḥaḍar or the Bedouin sector from his dialect, and to distinguish a female villager from the way she veils herself. Yet there are two sets of relationships that bring them together with the non-Bedouin. The first is that some of these Bedouin families have become adjusted to the village way of life due to their long stay; they have established one or two affinal ties with Ḥaḍar Gabīliyīn. Among these are for instance the Bedouin family of Āl Jamhūr, whose members descend from the 'Ajman tribe. They are affinally connected with Āl Murshid as the father of the family is married to a girl from Āl Jamhūr.

These Bedouin families believe that the non-Bedouin Gabīliyīn do not differ from them since they all trace their descent from renowned Arab tribes. On the other hand, they consider themselves to differ from the Khadīriyīn in two ways: first, there is complete absence of affinal ties; inter-marriage is strictly prohibited by custom on account of inequality in origin and descent. Secondly, the relations are dominated by disdain on the part of the Bedouin, who know that the Khadīriyī occupies a leading position or an important government post. (Falih, a Bedouin from Subai'

tribe, voiced such feeling when he said to me, "The Government, may God direct her, has placed some people in posts they are not qualified for.")

Donald Cole has dealt with the question of the integration, or what he calls "enmeshment" of nomads with villagers and urban dwellers in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. He says:

...that this occurs at three different levels, At the first level the focus is on the way in which villages fit into the ecology of pastoral nomadism; a lineage-type structure in the unit of social organisation most operative at this level. At the second level the focus is on the way in which a tribe, taken as a unit in itself, is tied to a regional urban centre which in the locus of many activities necessary to the life of the nomad, as well as the major field of activity of successful tribal leaders. At the third level the focus is on the way in which tribes, taken together as a single category in Saudi Arabian Society, provide the military foundation of the nation-state. 16

But this generalisation seems not to fit the situation of the village of Irqah.

To begin with, Cole seems not to grasp the difference between nomads and tribal people in general as far as Saudi Arabia is concerned. For nomadism refers to a way of life, pastoralism as a primary occupation, while the category "tribe" refers to descent. Tribal people can be nomads, or sedentary villagers or townsmen. In Saudi Arabia most nomads are tribal people, but not all tribal people are nomads since there are "tribal" villagers and "tribal" townsmen. It is not clear whether Cole is discussing nomads or tribal people in general.

What seems to be important is that he is neither familiar with the wider structure of the Arabian society which is based on a clear-cut distinction between Bedouin and Ḥaḍar. These terms are used to classify the country's population according to way of life. The Bedouin practise nomadism while despising other occupations including cultivation. Ḥaḍar, on the other hand, are villagers and urban dwellers who pursue sedentary

16. Donald Cole, "The enmeshment of nomads in Saudi Arabia", in C. Nelson, (ed.), The Desert and the Sowm (University of California Press 1974), p.114.

life which the Bedouin believe to be inferior. Nor is he familiar with what is locally known as Gabīliyī and Khaḍīriyī which are dealt with in the chapter. The Bedouin groups in Irqah, for example, integrate only with each other, while their interaction with the rest of the population does not go beyond the necessity of their existence there.

In sum: Community relationship among village people, as a whole, are of two kinds: kin-based relations through tribalism, inter-marriage, and fosterage, and other relationships arising from co-residence in the same village, which connect the village people within the limits of ordinary friendship and social occasions.

Every person knows his social status in the village and in the light of this he determines his relation with others within the framework of the prevailing traditions and values. These together exercise some sort of control over community members to the extent that the village has not witnessed serious crimes such as vengeance or theft, or moral crimes such as adultery or prostitution. It is true that there are thefts and quarrels leading to fighting, but those who perpetrate such acts are not usually from the village itself.

2. Gabīliyī and Khaḍīriyī

In the light of the above preliminary account of the background of the three categories of the village population, I now discuss in more detail the concepts of Gabīliyī and Khaḍīriyī, prior to considering them in relation to stratification.

As far as descent (aṣl or nasab) is concerned, Ḥaḍar and Bedouin Gabīliyīn claim their descent from deeply rooted Arabian origins, whereas the Khaḍīriyīn do not claim such descent. But it is not easy to have confidence in genealogies to the extent of being able to affirm that the Gabīliyīn are descended from pure Arabian origins, distinguishing them from other villagers who are not. The Gabīliyīn people rely for determining their descent rather than on oral evidence than on established facts. On

the other hand, any attempt to understand the methods the villagers follow in tracing their genealogy cannot be successful without acknowledging what is meant by Gabīliyi and Khadīriyi, for these two concepts identify the nature of a person's descent.

The term Gabīliyi (pl. Gabīliyin) refers to a person who descends from tribal origin or belongs to a well known Arabian tribe. The term Khadīriyi (pl. Khadīriyin) refers to a person who does not know his tribal origin or a person whose tribal connection has been lost. This could be a consequence of personal circumstances, for example he might have run away from his tribe for one reason or another, or changed his surname identifying him with a particular tribe, or been compelled to take up an occupation despised by the tribal people, such as haircutting, butchery or iron-working. The concept of Khadīriyi does not, however, at all refer to a person descending from slave origins, for the former category although not belonging to a definite tribe, still has a descent. The slave has not.

There are only a few sources dealing with the subject. Perhaps the most interesting is the nineteenth-century passage from Palgrave in which he referred to the Khadīriyin as 'Khodeyreayah' or 'Benoo Khodeyr'. He wrote:

...negroes can without any difficulty give their sons and daughters to middle or lower class of Arab families, and thus arises a new generation of mixed race, here denominated 'Khodeyreayah' or 'Benoo Khodeyr', which being interpreted means 'the Greens' or 'the sons of the Green one'. My readers must not, however, suppose that mulatto flesh in Arabia is so literally grass as to bear its very hue. The colours green, black and brown are habitually compounded in common Arabic parlance, though the difference between them is, of course, well known and maintained in lexicons, or whenever accuracy of speech is aimed at. 'These green ones', again marry, multiply and assume various tints, grass-green, emerald, opal, and the like, or in exacter phrase, brown. Copper-coloured, olive, and what Americans, I believe, call yellow. Like their progenitors, they do not readily take their place among the nobles or upper ten thousand, however they may end by doing even this in the process of time, and I have myself while in Arabia been honoured by the intimacy of more than one handsome 'Green-man', with a silver-hilted sword at his side, and a rich dress on his dusky skin, but denominated Sheykh or Emeer, and humbly sued by Arabs of the purest Ismaelitic or Kahtamitic

pedigree. Riad is full of these Khoḍeyreeyah shopkeepers, merchants, and officers of governments; and I must add that their desire, common to all parveus, of aping the high ton and ruling fashion, makes them at times the most bigoted and disagreeable Wahhabees in the city, a tendency which is the more fostered by hereditary narrowness of intellect. Some of them take an opposite direction, and imitate their African grandfathers and grandmothers in indifference, not infrequently in covert aversion to Mahometanism and Wahhabeism altogether. 17

But it seems to me that Palgrave could not trace the exact origin of the Khaḍīriyīn and, therefore, he was not justified in assuming that they were a new generation of mixed race. Accordingly he confused the Khaḍīriyīn with the negroes in many respects. Firstly he was tracing the origins of each ethnic group in Riyadh, including negroes. But he was struck with the group of the Khaḍīriyīn whose origin he could not trace. The only thing he could say about them was that they are "a new generation of mixed race" resulting from inter-marriage between lower and middle class of Arab families and negroes. Secondly, as it appears from what he said, there was some sort of stratification: "... I have myself while in Arabia been honoured by the intimacy of more than one handsome 'Green-man' with a silver hilted sword at his side, and a rich dress on his dusky skin, but denominated Sheykh or Emeer, and humbly sued by Arabs of purest Ismaelitic or Kaḥṭanic pedigree". But the criterion which he ought to have used is descent or origin. Thirdly it is true, until recently, that some tribal Arabs, as well as some Khaḍīriyīn, took as concubines negro slave women who became emancipated once they bore children to their masters. But their children follow their fathers' genealogy and, accordingly, become either pure Arabs or Khaḍīriyīn. Apart from concubinage with women of negro slaves, an Arab would not marry a negro woman. Thus who were the "middle or lower class of Arab families" referred to by Palgrave? They were the Khaḍīriyīn about whom he could only say that they were a "new generation of mixed race". Fourthly he did not make a clear-cut distinction between the Khaḍīriyīn

17. Palgrave, op.cit., p.457.

and the negroes although the Arabs made distinction between them in the term 'abd to a negro and Khaḍīriyī to an Arab who is neither a negro nor a tribal Arab. His confusion is obvious in the following statement "Some of them take an opposite direction, and intimate their African grandfathers and grandmothers in indifferent, not infrequently in covert aversion to Mohometanism and Wahhabism". A known contemporary Arab genealogist, named Abdullah Ibn Raddas, assured me that the Khaḍīriyīn are not mixed negroes and Arabs. They are Arabs and have descent but have lost their tribal connection.

The Encyclopaedia of Islam, drawing its information from various sources, looks rightly at these two terms from another angle. It says:

Despite all the genealogical vagaries and uncertainties, it is impressive how much importance is attached by most of the Arabs of Arabia to purity of descent. Mankind is divided into those whose race is universally recognised as purely Arab (aṣil) and those of lower category whose blood is mixed or impure (ghayr aṣil). The Bedouin who knows his immediate forebears though no more than six or eight generations is still profoundly convinced of his own nobility; his membership in a tribe of acknowledged purity of descent is sufficient guarantee that the line further back is without taint. Purity of blood is preserved by strict rules governing marriage, which among the Bedouins at least are seldom violated. The distinction between pure and impure, strongest among the Bedouins, is carried over to a considerable extent into the oases and towns, particularly those away from the coasts, where many of the townspeople keep alive their sense of affiliation with one tribe or another. Other townspeople are grouped together in Nadīd under the appellation of Benī Khaḍīr, a generic term for those whose origin cannot be traced back to a specific tribe. 18

This offers a classification which is similar to mine, the only difference being in the way Ḥaḍar Gabīliyīn are described as "the townspeople who keep alive their sense of affiliation with one tribe or another".

Recently some essays have been published in al-Jazīrah, a Riyadh newspaper. Although those articles do not shed light on the background of the two concepts, as they deal with them in a shallow way, they do in fact

18. Gibb, Kramers and Levi-Provencal, The Encyclopaedia of Islam.
op.cit., p.546.

reflect sharp differences of opinion between those who believe that such concepts have no concrete basis for asserting the division of people, and those who believe that such distinction is essential for the preservation of a person's purity of origins.

The writer of the first article contends that the notion of dividing the people in this way is unbecoming to contemporary civilised man. Another writer supported this point of view saying "as far as I know - according to what circulates in the gatherings of our illiterate elders - the familiar terms for differentiation between strata is Shaikh for a Gabīliyī, and 'abd, (slave) for everyone else who is not a Gabīliyī. It is known that a slave has black skin, but since not everyone who is not a Gabīliyī has a black skin, they - the Khaḍīriyīn - have been given the title of bini khaḍīr as an intermediate identification between blackness and whiteness....Among the Khaḍīriyīn there are those who are Arabs as regards flesh and blood, but there have been...circumstances which have compelled them to forget about their descent, i.e., committing some sort of offensive act resulting in changing their descent identity."¹⁹

The main protagonist of this point of view that would favour a descent differentiation between Gabīliyīn and Khaḍīriyīn pointed out that a Gabīliyī is a person who belongs to one of the original Arabian tribes which descends either from 'Adnān or Qaḥṭān. These people only are the Arabs; others are not. But he does not specify what he means by the term Khaḍīriyī for he only refers to the two concepts in an obscure way when he writes: "The question of Gabīliyī and Khaḍīriyī does not mean a Shaikh and an ignorant, or the one who has a career and the one who is unemployed, but it only means the Arabs and non-Arabs".²⁰ In other words he is saying that Gabīliyīn only are the Arabs; the Khaḍīriyīn are not.

19. Muhammad A. al-Aqil, "al-'Unsuriyah al-'Arabiyyah kama yajib an takoun", al-Jazirah Newspaper, First Year, No.30, 15.10.1384/1964.

20. Sulaiman al-Fahhad. Gabīliyī. Khaḍīriyī al-Jazirah Newspaper, op.cit., No.33, 33.17.10.1384/1964.

That is the main theme of the argument published in al-Jazīrah newspaper. It stirred up such vehement correspondence that the Central Authority had to order the editor not to publish any further discussion on the subject. The person who started the argument is a Gabīliyī whose family has affinal relations with some members of the Royal Family. He was educated in the United States of America, and today he is an acting Deputy Minister. A number of leading religious figures asked that he should be put on trial for propagating such an irresponsible idea, which called into question the relevance of purity of descent.

How do the villagers conceive the terms Gabīliyī and Khaḍīriyī, how could they know that someone is a Gabīliyī and another one is a Khaḍīriyī, and what criteria do they follow? Village people agree that the only way of knowing whether X is a Gabīliyī or a Khaḍīriyī is through his family name. The village Amir has said that he did not know exactly the meaning of Khaḍīriyī but he understands it in contrast with Gabīliyī, and that he could know whether a person is a Gabīliyī or a Khaḍīriyī from his family name and by asking about him. A Bedouin living in the village said that every Gabīliyī must know his genealogy and no one who did not know it could be considered a genuine aşili.²¹ He also added that every genuine person knew his pedigree from father to grandfathers as well as the genealogy of his tribe and its segments. At the same time, the tribes know, and often learn by heart, each others' genealogies, which makes it impossible for someone to claim origin in a tribe which is not his. A very pious and fanatical Gabīliyī said that God, the glorious and the most high, has mentioned in the Qur'ān "Oh mankind! We created you from a single (pair) of a male and a female, and made you into nations and tribes, that ye may know each other (not that ye may despise each other). Verily the most honoured of you in the sign of God IS (he who is) the most righteous of you)".

21. Aşili is an adjective from aşl which means origin. It is used to refer to a person who belongs to a well-known Arab tribe.

Therefore, there is no difference between a Gabīliyī and a Khaḍīriyī as far as human or personal quality is concerned, but groups should preserve their distinctiveness. The difference between a Gabīliyī and a Khaḍīriyī is that the former has 'aşl, 'origin', and the latter has not. Thus it is difficult for a Khaḍīriyī to claim that he is a Gabīliyī because the people know who he is and know his family name. Meanwhile names of Gabīliyī families are known and subsequently those descended from them are known. He further related the following story: One of his cousins, who was working for the Riyadh Police, was travelling in the southern part of the Kingdom on an official duty. There he ran into a person claiming to be from his relatives, as he had taken the same surname. He asked him whether he really belonged to the same family or only pretended to, and insisted that he should prove his claim genealogically otherwise he would raise a suit against him. He could not substantiate his descent and was compelled to withdraw his claim.

Some contend that a Gabīliyī has origin because he descends from a known tribe, and that a Khaḍīriyī has not because he does not descend from a known tribe, and so is considered a slave, 'abd. Such contention is held among the Bedouin of the village, who are in fact fanatical about their Arab origins, about whose reality they have no doubt. One of them says that a Khaḍīriyī is a slave or a person who was a Gabīliyī but has lost his Gabīliyīship through marrying a slave woman. In either case he is a low-status (naqış) person. He proudly defends his idea by reference to the following poetry.

Two do not at all rely upon -
the slave and blacksmith;
And two do not accompany an adventure's road -
the bird and those who wear necklaces.

Bedouin do not use the word Khaḍīriyī. They use the term Şanı' (pl. Sunna').²² The groups of Şunna' among the Bedouins still belong to well-

22. Şanı' is an adjective from Şan'a which mainly means handwork.

known Arab tribes. But due to fierce fighting prevailing among the tribes of the Arabian peninsula, they were compelled, as a result of being defeated and weakened, to practise manual occupations to make their living. Consequently they have been given the title of Ṣunna' to distinguish them. Doughty referred to the social position of the Ṣunna' when he wrote,

Ṣunna' or Smiths' Caste in Arabia are not accounted of indigenus blood....They are brasiers, tanners, blacksmiths, farriers, and workers in wood and stone in the tribes and oases. Thus they are villagers and nomads . 23

To sum up the foregoing, the term Gabīliyī denotes anyone who belongs to one of the Arab tribes, and the term Khaḍīriyī denotes a person whose tribal connection has been lost. But it does not by any means denote that he is a slave or descends from slave origins, since there is a distinction between a Khaḍīriyī and a slave. If one presumes that a Khaḍīriyī is a slave or of a slave origin, then this concept would not have been in existence because social mores would have distinguished between people, from a descent point of view, on the basis of Gabīliyīship and slavery instead of Khaḍīriyīship.

What is then the distinction between a Khaḍīriyī and a slave? A Khaḍīriyī is a person who does not belong to a tribe in contrast to another person who belongs to a tribe, whereas a slave is a negro who descends from slave forefathers. That is the common distinction. But it should not lead to the assumption that slavery still exists in the village; the Government emancipated slaves and compensated their owners in late 1962. Even before the abolition, slavery did not prevail in the village due to its high cost. Nevertheless, there are some families belonging to one ḥamūla, who are descendants of slaves of the Hilalāt family who freed them a long time ago because they could not support them. The Hilalāt gave their ex-slaves some land to cultivate and live on called al-Maṭwi. They are now included among

23. Charles M. Doughty, Travels in Arabia Deserta (Jonathan Cape Ltd. and The Medici Society Ltd. London: 1926) p.656.

the Khadīriyīn due to the fact that their emancipation took place long ago. However, there are three women who were slaves until recently. Two of them were slaves of King Saud and now are married to Khadīriyī villagers. The third became free after giving birth to a son by her latest master who divorced her. She then married one of the village people who also divorced her for failing to beget children by him. Later she got married again, to an elderly villager who divorced her as well. She now lives on her own with her son who is about eleven years old.

I was able to talk to this woman, who related her life story. She was not originally a slave, because she was kidnapped from Oman when she was a child. Her kidnappers came to Riyadh where she was brought up by a family, the name of which she does not know, until she reached the age of puberty. Then she was purchased by someone who offered her, together with other women slaves, as a ṣabaḥah gift,²⁴ to his daughter-in-law on the occasion of his son's marriage to her. She stayed with her new master and mistress for less than a year when she asked them to sell her because she was not comfortable with them. Consequently they sold her to a man who took her as concubine and begot from her a daughter, now thirteen, and a son, now eleven.

Important questions arise from these concepts. A person's descent undoubtedly has significance for his marriage because marriage between two groups is not possible. Such a marriage would inevitably create problems. However, it might be possible for a Gabīliyī man to relinquish his Gabīliyīship if married to a Khadīriyī woman, but not for a Khadīriyī to become a Gabīliyī once he gets married to a Gabīliyī woman. This sort of marriage has never taken place throughout the history of the village. The strict prohibition of such a marriage is due to the fact that the concept of Gabīliyī denotes a person's descent aṣl, which is significant in personal evaluation. It is frequently heard that so and so is ibn or bint aṣl or praise in case of criticism. Also a Gabīliyī uses joking remarks against a

24. See marriage in chapter VII for ṣabaḥah.

Khadrīyī, saying that he has no origin or that his origin is not known.

The inequality in marriage between the Gabīliyīn and the Khadrīyīn has no connection with the religious beliefs of the villagers, but has its roots in pre-Islamic Arab values concerning marriage between an Arab of pure origin and a woman slave (the concept of Khadrīyī may not have been known then). The Arabs used to distinguish between an Arab of a well-known descent (hurr) and a slave ('abd) to the extent of prohibiting inter-marriage, although concubinage was allowed. But it was not socially accepted for a woman of pure Arab origin to marry a slave. The story of 'Antara Ibn Shaddad and 'Abla, which is still read and recounted by the Arabs, refers to this, as does the verse by a well-known Arabian poet which says:

Buy not a slave except with a stick for him,
because slaves are mischievous and disastrous.

But Islam has in fact opposed such attitudes and called for equality among human beings regardless of their origins. The Prophet Muhammad got married to a woman slave. Nevertheless, differences based on origins still exist in Iraq and other communities of Najd, where intermarriage between a Gabīliyī and a Khadrīyī is a departure from profound conventions having to do with the preservation of descent.

Hafiz Wahbah noticed that the absence of marriage between the two groups related only to inequality of origin, for as he writes:

And the well-known and respected Arab tribes, Ḥaḍar and Bedouin, maintain as much as possible their descent. They only enter affinal relations with people of equal descent. Other tribes whose descent is uncertain are not allowed to have any kind of affinal ties with any one of the well-known Arab tribes.

Here one sees the true spirit of the Bedouin who owns nothing, refuses to marry a wealthy person because he is a son of a ṣāni' or descends from a slave origin, or because his tribal descent is uncertain. As such the influence of wealth has no value among the Arabs. In spite of the existence of their aristocratic spirit, which only manifests itself in the domain of intermarriage....There hardly exists any difference in other styles of life. For the ordinary individual, the head of a tribe, and the prince eat together rice and meat, milk and dates, and all wear the garment, the robe,

the fancy headband, and the headcover. All members enjoy considerable freedom among themselves . 25

I put the following question to Abdul Rahman Ibn Rawwaf: If someone, claiming that he belongs to the same lineage as yours because he has the same surname, proposes to marry one of your daughters - are you going to accept him? His answer was that he would only marry his daughter to someone known to be from his lineage who shared the same surname in Irqah, Riyadh, Diryah or Qaşim. When I asked him whether it had ever happened that a man of his lineage had married a Khadīriyī woman, or vice versa, he said that that had never happened, and that if it did, the husband must be asked to divorce the woman. If he refused, members of his tribe would repudiate him and no longer consider him a member - in fact the affair could lead to killing as long as the marriage was in effect. He added that discontent with that sort of marriage had nothing to do with religion, but it was due to Arabs' conventions concerning their descent; but it did not imply disparagement of non-Gabīliyīn. He then related the following story.

Prince Saud Ibn Abdul Aziz Ibn Muhammad, a one-time governor of Irqah, saw a beautiful girl while she was bathing on the roof of her family house. Allured by her beauty he decided to get married to her although she was of a Khadīriyī origin. To overcome the barrier of descent, he asked the village Judge whether or not his marriage to that girl would be objected to by Islam. When the Judge said no, he asked the girl's father to accept his proposal. But his relatives, together with other members of his tribe, rejected the idea and told him to give it up. However he insisted and pointed out that the marriage to that girl was not in any way disallowed in Islam. Then he requested some of them to accompany him to the Judge to make sure for themselves. When they went with him, the Judge told him this time that the marriage would be against Islam. The Prince was surprised and asked the Judge why he had said the first time that the marriage would be legal, and now that

25. Wahbah, Jazirat al-'Arab fi al-Qarn al-'Ishrīn, op.cit., p.12

it would not. The Judge's answer was that the marriage in itself did not contradict the Shari'a of Islam, but if it resulted in stirring up trouble, then it would be because any kind of incitement is prohibited by Islamic law.

Another villager said he could not marry his daughter to a Khadiriyyi because such a marriage did not fit the tribal customs. If it was revealed that a person marrying a Gabiliyyi woman was a Khadiriyyi, or that his descent was uncertain, he must divorce her and vice versa. If such a marriage had taken place deliberately the husband would be killed by the wife's relatives if he refused to divorce his wife. He then mentioned that almost ten years ago in Riyadh a wealthy non-tribal man got married to a Gabiliyyi girl from the Qahtan tribe. Her cousins came to know about the marriage and demanded that her father should ask for her divorce from her husband on the ground that he was not equal to her from a descent point of view. When her father told them that he would not and was not interested in their opposition, one of them gave him a fatal blow on the head.

I may summarise the foregoing discussion in the following: (a) the concepts of Gabiliyyi and Khadiriyyi refer to descent; (b) the distinction between the two groups does not imply two separate classes; (c) the social function of these concepts relates primarily to the question of marriage; (d) the concepts have nothing to do with the beliefs of Islam, but the roots go back to ancient Arab customs and social conventions.

The possibility that education might have some effect on these beliefs about descent and the limitations they set on marriage has yet to be tested, because education has only recently been introduced to the village, particularly girls' education. Besides that, girls, whatever the level of their education might be, have not been able to enforce their will either within their families or within the village community. They are still veiled and are not allowed to leave their houses except to visit relatives or close friends, and the question of their marriage is absolutely in the

hands of their guardians who decide on the matter according to their own discretion and regardless of the girls' consent. Perhaps the most important problem is that the concepts of Gabīliyī and Khadīriyī do not concern the family only but all relatives in both paternal and maternal lines. The head of a Gabīliyī family has no right to marry one of his female relatives to a Khadīriyī, for it means neglecting deeply rooted and strongly influential social mores which are unlikely to vanish through education only. It necessitates a long-term social change which could be brought about through participation of cultural and economic factors such as are taking place in Riyadh where educated people have become to realise the pointlessness of these concepts though they cannot deny their existence.

Between the Ḥaḍar Gabīliyīn and the Bedouin Gabīliyīn there is little distinction as far as descent and intermarriage are concerned. In fact there are Ḥaḍar Gabīliyīn and Bedouin Gabīliyīn both belonging to the Qaḥṭān tribe. However, there are slight differences in the depth of descent reckoned, which the Bedouin are extremely proud of. They reckon more generations in their descent. The Bedouin learn by heart their genealogies to beyond the tenth forefather, whereas the Ḥaḍar Gabīliyīn stop at the sixth or the seventh. Also the Bedouin always add their tribal names as a means of identification. For instance, when a Bedouin is asked about his name he says it is so and so al-Qaḥṭāni in order to make it understood that he belongs to the Qaḥṭān tribe, and so forth. The Ḥaḍar Gabīliyīn on the other hand do not add tribal names except when specifically asked.

The Bedouin appear more obliged to preserve their tribal obligations than the Ḥaḍar. According to some Bedouin in the village, their hierarchy of groupings ranges from the 'thigh' (fakhth or khamsah) to the 'abdomen' (baṭn or 'āqilah), which is smaller than a tribe, and then the whole tribe. Their obligations cover various kinds of mutual responsibility on the part of individuals or of sub-segments of the tribe and of the tribe as a whole. Perhaps the question of blood money (diyah) may illustrate this sort of obligation. For instance, if blood money is required its sum is distributed

among members of the khamsah each according to his financial capacity. If members of the khamsah are not able to collect among themselves the amount needed, then the rest of it is to be distributed among the members of 'āqilah each in accordance with his financial capacity. Everyone has to pay. And if members of the 'āqilah cannot afford the amount needed, other members of other 'āqilahs of the same tribe are asked to pay their contribution, though not compulsorily. If the amount is not yet completely collected from the 'āqilahs of the tribe concerned, 'āqilahs of other tribes are asked to contribute, otherwise whatever amount remains is distributed once again among members of the khamsah compulsorily. Such compulsory payment is called fargah or ḥuṣṣ.

The Ḥaḍar Gabīliyīn do not maintain such extensive obligations over blood money. Instead their obligations are confined to the 'āqilah which they consider the smallest segment in the tribal structure beyond the khamsah. Thus 'āqilah, according to their conception, is exactly like ḥamūla, which includes all members having the same surname, e.g. Āl Rawwaf and Āl Zuhair. Therefore, if the ḥamūla of Āl Rawwaf owes blood money to the ḥamūla of Āl Zuhair, every member of the former has to pay his share compulsorily.

Eventually what has been said about the obligations of blood money can be said also about other tribal obligations and these may be regarded as a principal factor contributing to the maintenance of the distinction between the Gabīliyīship and Khadīriyīship.

3. Stratification

The foregoing discussion on the subject of Gabīliyī and Khadīriyī leads to further consideration of the theme of stratification. Such consideration poses questions concerning the type, or model, of stratification that can be applied to the peculiar situation of Irqah.

Stratification has been defined as a system of unequally privileged groups, membership in which is determined by the inter-generational transmission of roles, or opportunities to attain them, through kinship affili-

ation.²⁶ Others do not consider that stratification is always connected with kinship. For instance, Gerth and Mills have stated four dimensions to stratification, namely occupation, class, status and power.²⁷ In the meantime, Dennis H. Wrong says that kinship loyalty may develop classes or strata. He writes:

...there is a tendency, as a result of kinship loyalties, for roles and opportunities to attain them to be passed on from one generation to the next, giving rise to enduring classes or strata monopolising certain roles and exhibiting a greater or lesser degree of solidarity.... 28

I do not intend to go over the literature of the definition of stratification since definition is a matter of personal preference and of special emphasis. For this reason I agree with Bêteille:

'Class', 'stratification', social 'inequality' - these phrases are often used interchangeably in everyday language, and indeed there is a good measure of overlap between them even in their technical meanings .

He further says,

It would be difficult to give a single and precise meaning to each of these terms and to insist that others should adhere to it consistently. For terms such as these correspond to fundamental categories of thought and their meanings cannot be contained solely by the demands of sociological analysis . 29

Stratification as a system of inequality exists in every human community and Irqah is no exception. But the sort of stratification existing in the village is unique because it is a distinct cultural characteristic of the Najd region. The villagers are in two main strata: Gabīliyīn and Khaḍīriyīn defined by descent. But when one goes further to analyse the relationships

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26. Walter Buckley, "Social stratification and the functional theory of social differentiation", American Sociological Review, Vol.23 (1958), No.6, pp.369-75.
 27. Hans Gerth and C.W.Mills, Character and Social Structure. The Psychology of Social Institution. (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul Ltd. 1969) p.306.
 28. Dennis H. Wrong, "The Functional Theory of Stratification: Some neglected considerations", American Sociological Review, Vol.24 (1959), No.6, p.773.
 29. André Bêteille (ed.), Social Inequality. (Penguin Books, 1970) p.12.

among the Gabīliyīn themselves on the one hand, and their relations with Khadīriyīn on the other, one faces critical issues. The special significance of the strata of Gabīliyīn and Khadīriyīn lead to another difficulty concerning the precise usage of sociological terms. I shall speak of a "Caste-like system" here deliberately simply because "class structure", following Weber's criterion, is a feature of industrial society which may not be applied to the village. According to Weber the factor that creates 'class' is unambiguously economic interest which is involved in the existence of the 'market'.³⁰ Furthermore, some social scientists such as Bêteille, consider that "class is not a form of social stratification, but it is rather to be understood in terms of social conflict".³¹

Caste on the other hand is a form of social stratification since it is often defined in terms of kinship and rigid social structure. I do not propose to discuss the definition of the term 'caste' because sociologists are not in agreement. Some of them conceive it as a distinct feature of Hindu culture and society. In other words, they consider caste as a cultural phenomenon. For instance, Leach insists on considering that caste has to be taken in the ethnographic Hindu meaning. He writes:

I believe that those who apply the term to contexts wholly remote from the Indian world invariably go astray. 32

Conversely other sociologists justifiably understand that caste as a structural phenomenon exists in many communities of the globe with variable forms and functions. Barth, for instance, conceives caste as such. He

30. Hans Gerth and C.W.Mills (Trs.), From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology. (London: Kegan Paul, 1946) p.183.

31. André Bêteille, Caste, class and power. Changing patterns of stratification in a Tanore village. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1965), p.185.

32. E.R.Leach (ed.), Aspects of Caste in South India, Ceylon and North-West Pakistan. (Cambridge University Press, 1971), p.5.

writes,

...if the concept of caste is to be useful in sociological analysis, its definition must be based on structural criteria, and not on particular features of the Hindu philosophical theme. In this sociologically more fundamental sense the concept of caste may be useful in the analysis of non-Indian societies. 33

The concept of caste could be useful in the present analysis. Firstly caste is probably the only English sociological term that can help in understanding the situation in Irqah. Secondly, and more important, there is a similarity between caste and tribal organisation. Thirdly, the term of caste has been used by some writers in their description to the structure of the people of Arabia, namely Taqī ed-Dīn al-Hilālī who distinguished between six castes - though his classification is neither consistent nor accurate.³⁴ I prefer, however, to talk about "a caste-like system".

The distinction between Gabīliyī and Khaḍīyī has its roots in pre-Islamic Arab values concerning purity or origin, and has nothing to do with the religious values of Islam. Nevertheless, it might be possible to make explicit analogy between this kind of exclusiveness and what is known as aṣabiyah and shu'ūbiyyah. Aṣabiyah, which has been translated as "group feeling",³⁵ results from blood relationship; according to Ibn Khaldūn's writing:

...respect for (blood ties) is something natural among men, with the rarest exception. It leads to affection for one's relations and blood relatives (the feeling that) no harm ought to befall them nor any destruction come upon them. One feels shame when one's relatives are treated unjustly or attacked, and one wishes to intervene between them and whatever peril of destruction threatens them. 36

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33. Frederik Barth, "The System of Social Stratification in Swat, North Pakistan", ibid., p.145.
34. Taqī ed-Dīn al-Hilālī, "Die Kasten in Arabien" Die Welt des Islams, Band 22, (1940) xxii. pp.105-10. See also Doughty, Travels in Arabia Deserta. loc.cit.
35. Franz Rosenthal, (tr) Ibn Khaldūn. The Muqaddimah: An Introduction to History (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1958) p.ixii.
36. Ibid., p.244.

He also says that Pedigrees are useful only in so far as they imply mutual help and affection, "Anything beyond that is superfluous".³⁷ Therefore aşabiyah, according to Ibn Khaldūn, is the core of tribal organisation.

The concept of shu'ūbiyyah essentially means "belonging to the people".³⁸ But its focal point is the idea of Arabism which reached its peak during the Abbasid period.³⁹ Hanna and Gardner said:

We are proposing that there have been, since the Arabs emerged as a self-conscious community, a succession of movements, involving both Arabs and non-Arabs, which have threatened to merge the Arab community with a wider non-Arab system or to fragment it, and that in each case this was generated by a strong reaction, explicit or implicit, from the Arabs, aimed to preserve their identity. 40

One can only speculate that the caste-like relationship of Gabīliyīship and Khadīriyīship might have developed from aşabiyah and shu'ūbiyyah in the sense that Gabīliyīn claim descent from Arabian origins which they preserve through prohibiting inter-marriage with Khadīriyīn. It is, therefore, purity of blood that matters which is the principal criterion for this sort of rigid stratification. For this particular reason I prefer to use the term caste-like system for Gabīliyīship and Khadīriyīship because of the close similarity between tribal and caste structure. A tribal system of kinship is not in contradiction with a caste system. Bailey explains the similarity between caste and tribe in the following:

If 'caste' is an emotive word, 'tribe and caste' are doubly emotive. There is no single and accepted criterion by which to distinguish a tribe from a caste . 41

He continues:

the methods of establishing whether a particular group is a tribe or a caste are the same. It is not so much the definition of tribe and caste that have interested people as the process by which those who are agreed to be tribal people are incorporated into the caste system.... 42

37. Ibid., p.265.

38. Sami A.Hanna and George H.Gardner, Arab Socialism. A Documentary Survey. (Leiden: E.J.Brill, 1969) p.80.

39. Ibid., p.81.

40. Ibid., p.94.

41. F.G.Bailey, Tribe, Caste and Nation. A study of political activity and political change in Highland Orissa. (Manchester University Press 1960) p.263.

42. Ibid., p.265.

According to Fűr̄er-Haimendorf, the tribal group tends to behave as a caste in the event of its being constantly so treated by others.⁴³

Due to such similarity between tribal organisation and caste structure I have used the term caste-like for analysing the stratification system of Gab̄iliȳship and Khaḍ̄iriȳship. As we have seen, the only criterion for this caste-like system is descent; membership to either group is determined by birth. The concept of descent is maintained by lack of inter-marriage. This point leads me to consider the internal and external relations of each group.

The Gab̄iliȳn consist of two sub-groups, Ḥaḍ̄ar and Bedouin. What they have in common is that they both claim descent from tribal origins. But there are several distinctions between them within the village community. To begin with the Ḥaḍ̄ar Gab̄iliȳn are conscious of the fact that their ancestors were the first to settle in the village. Irqan belonged to Ḥaḍ̄ar Gab̄iliȳn and so do the families of the Āl Hilalāt and the Āl Rawwaf. They also claim status through their religious learning. Consequently they are always conscious that they have established their status in the village based on their tribal descent, their association with the village history and their religious knowledge.

The Bedouin Gab̄iliȳn, on the other hand, do not have such an established status because they neither have long association with the village nor claim religious knowledge. Their arrival there has been fairly recent, and many of them have no intention remaining permanently. Some of them leave the village for good after staying a while, and some others come to live in it for an uncertain period of time. They are more attached to the city of Riyadh than to the village and are less interested in Irqah's affairs. Being equal to the Ḥaḍ̄ar Gab̄iliȳn from a descent point of view, they have no bars of inter-marriage with them. Some of them may belong to a major

43. Christopher Von Fűr̄er-Haimendorf, Caste and Kin in Nepal, India and Ceylon. Anthropological Studies in Hindu-Buddhist Contact Zones. (London: Asia Publishing House, 1966) p.165.

tribe, e.g., Āl Zuhair and Mas'ud both belong to Qaḥṭān tribe. However, only one case of inter-marriage between the two groups has taken place in the village which I have mentioned previously.

The rare inter-marriage between Ḥaḍar and Bedouin Gabīliyīn could be explained in terms of different ways of life, and the question of bride wealth. For instance, a Ḥaḍar Gabīliyī woman may not be able to cope with the Bedouin way of life, and vice versa. Among the Bedouin, bride wealth is less as marriage is always arranged between kin, whereas it is comparatively high among the Ḥaḍar Gabīliyīn. It is paid according to the cost of the Jahaz⁴⁴ and other requirements, which are determined by the traditional Ḥaḍar way of life.

The internal structure of the Khaḍīriyīn is completely different. They do not claim tribal origins and they are composed of unrelated groups of families. Almost all of them are originally from the village though they do not know when or why their ancestors settled there. They do not claim religious knowledge. Only a few of them are prayer leaders or Muezzins. Although they out-number the Gabīliyīn, Ḥaḍar and Bedouin, they do not have established status and have less say in the public affairs of the village.

From the time of Irqan the rulers have always been Ḥaḍar Gabīliyīn. They now dominate the membership of the leading organisations, like the Local Committee and the Board of Directors of the Cooperative Society, and they almost control the religious authority. For instance, all members of Religious Guidance Centre and most Imams of Mosques are Ḥaḍar Gabīliyīn.

As a ruling group, they maintain their status in the village through their descent and their claim to religious knowledge. This kind of consciousness of origin is a typical cultural feature of the Middle Eastern Communities. In a Lebanese village, Peters has observed that the rank of the Learned Families is based on a particular line of descent,⁴⁵ whereas

44. See p. 188.

45. Emrys L. Peters, "Aspects of rank and status among Moslems in a Lebanese Village", in J.A. Pett-Revijs, (ed.), Mediterranean Countrymen (Paris: Mouton, 1963), p.181.

the other categories of the village people, such as the peasants, lack both a long descent line, connecting them with the remote past, and a nodal ancestor.⁴⁶ He concludes that "a linkage through a nodal ancestor provides a ready frame of reference for the regulation of marriage".⁴⁷ The difference between the stratification system of the Lebanese village and that of the village of Irqah is that bars to inter-marriage in the former are explained in terms of alienation of property while such bars are explained in terms of purity or origin in the village or Irqah. Also Bujra found that the people of Hureidah in South Arabia are stratified into three groups based on descent, and that the implication of descent is always supported by an ascribed religious status.⁴⁸ Their stratification is maintained through a discriminating pattern of marriage which is based on the principle of equality of descent only (kaffah).⁴⁹ The concept of descent framework is more rigid in Irqah, since in Hureidah it is possible for a man to marry a woman of lower descent status.⁵⁰

In Irqah upward mobility is impossible, for membership in Gabīliyīn or Khaḍīriyīn is determined by birth. It is inconceivable for a Khaḍīriyī to become a Gabīliyī through marriage. But downward mobility could be possible though it never happened in the history of the village according to the knowledge of my informants. For instance a Gabīliyī may relinquish his Gabīliyīship by marrying a Khaḍīriyī woman.

46. Ibid., p.183.

47. Ibid., p.186.

48. Abdulla S.Bujra, The Politics of Stratification. A study of Political Change in a South Arabian Town. (Oxford; The Clarendon Press, 1971) p.40.

49. Ibid., p.93.

50. Loc.cit.

In most other respects Gabīliyīn and Khadīriyīn are equal. They are equal as far as Islamic law and government regulations are concerned. Some of them occupy similar government posts with similar salaries. Also there is no correlation between wealth and this kind of stratification; differences of wealth are not apparent, because government posts have created some sort of balance of income among the villagers. They have also made some poor Khadīriyīn independent of Gabīliyīn landlords. There used to be so little wealth in the village that it would have been very difficult for one group to exert economic power on another. Wealth differences now evidently exist among individuals and families of both groups. In other words, there are well-to-do individuals and families among Gabīliyīn and Khadīriyīn alike. But the Gabīliyīn did and still do dominate in religious affairs and this makes them the most influential group. It is therefore justifiable to suggest that their present religious authority derives from their comparative wealth in the past which could have helped them devote much of their time to religious learning.

As has been shown in a previous chapter, in the last two decades, education has been a major factor in paving the road of upward economic mobility for Khadīriyīn. For education, using the wording of Bêteille, "not only brought social prestige in its own right, but also opened the way to new economic opportunities".⁵¹ At the present time the educated elite comprises the educated villagers of both Gabīliyīn and Khadīriyīn who occupy government posts in the village or in Riyadh. But education has in fact promoted the status of the Khadīriyīn who are coming to acquire more and more say in village affairs. In short, education has improved their status in the village considerably. Meanwhile the educated Gabīliyīn have not experienced as much change because religious learning has always been their domain, and modern education adds very little to their present status.

51. Bêteille, Caste, Class and Power, op.cit., p.209.

The striking effect of education on the educated Gabīliyīn and Khadīriyīn is that they are aware of their status in the village as an educated elite. But again they differ. To educated Gabīliyīn the status quo is important and they try to avoid creating or widening any conflicts and consequently they are less active in village affairs. On the other hand, the educated Khadīriyīn are more active because they want to assert their status in the village and to have at least equal say in village affairs. For instance, the headmaster of the boys' school, who is a Khadīriyī, was always criticising the Local Committee and the Board of Directors of the Cooperative Society. He resigned from membership of both organisations because he was not satisfied with the way they were controlled and monopolised by the Gabīliyīn. Also we shall see that some educated Khadīriyīn have exploited circumstances to challenge the established authority of the Gabīliyīn.

The foregoing has shown that the village people are stratified into Gabīliyīn and Khadīriyīn. I have used the term "cast-like" for my analysis because of the close similarity between the caste system and the tribal structure which are based on kinship orders. Apart from the implication of descent and bars of inter-marriage between the two groups, there are no barriers of social intercourse. Gabīliyīn and the Khadīriyīn address each other by their names with no title, both share the same cultural features and both conform to the same social patterns and subscribe to the same religious values. They are buried in the same graveyard.

No doubt that the main principle of any system of stratification implies some conflict and strain. Melvin M. Tumin points out this very aspect of stratification saying,

To the extent that inequalities in social rewards cannot be fully acceptable to the less privileged in the society, social stratification systems function to encourage hostility, suspicion and distrust among the various segments of a society and then to limit the possibilities of extensive social integration". 52

52. Melvin M. Tumin, "Some Principles of Stratification: A critical analysis", American Sociological Review, Vol.18 (1953), No.4, p.393.

The Gabīliyyīn always express their attitudes of superiority towards the Khaḍīriyyīn openly. For instance, one of them has said that had it not been for the families of Āl Husain, Āl Rawwaf, and Āl Murshid, the village would not have been wanted. What he meant was that without the presence of these Gabīliyyī families in Irqah, living in it would have become intolerable because it would have been confined to the Khaḍīriyyīn, who have not origin (aşl).

The Gabīliyyīn sustain their distinction from the Khaḍīriyyīn by disdaining menial occupations, i.e. butchery, carpentry, iron-working and barbering and leather-work. They consider such occupations to be inconsistent with their social status because they were not their forefathers' occupations, but were and always are the occupation of the Khaḍīriyyīn and the Sunna'. Salim explains tribal people's scorn for certain occupations in terms of traditional and tribal exclusiveness.⁵³ Some even consider that certain government jobs, like those of messengers, do not fit their social status.

Evidently the Gabīliyyīn try to assert their distinction from the Khaḍīriyyīn not only through their conception of inequality of inter-marriage and their disdain for certain occupations, but also through various means within the framework of the village relationships. They deliberately take the lead on various occasions including religious ones. For example, during the 'Eid of Sacrifice a notable Gabīliyyī arrived late at the mosque. He headed to the front to be among the other prominent figures, who had to squeeze themselves together in order to make space for him though there was plenty of room elsewhere.

The Khaḍīriyyīn are aware of such discriminating behaviour of the Gabīliyyīn. Some of them accept it as a fact created by God that need not be questioned. Others have come to challenge it, realising that distinction

53. S.M.Salim, Marsh Dwellers of the Euphrates Delta. (University of London, The Athlone Press, 1962) p.139.

by descent is inappropriate at a time which has created new criteria of evaluation. The first category represents the elderly people, the poor, and the illiterate who believe that the Gabīliyīn's status is undisputed. One of them expressed their inferior status saying that the poor is a dog's brother (al-d'eif akhu al-kalb). Another said that rubbish bins are placed near the houses of prominent people. He meant to say that the village cleaners pay careful attention to cleaning the places where influential people live while neglecting other places of those who have no significant social status. The second category is presented by the educated people who are beginning to criticise the influence of the Gabīliyīn and their monopoly of leadership and to challenge their dominance.

In sum, I have argued that stratification system of the village of Irqah is a type of caste-like system which obstructs social mobility as we have seen in the traditional distinction between Gabīliyīship and Khadīriyīship. Whether this stratification will change is a question to be answered in terms of a combination of many factors, particularly education and bureaucracy which will relate the village more and more to the wider region. Such factors are likely to loosen the tribal ties gradually thus forcing the Gabīliyīn to accept inter-marriage with the Khadīriyīn.

CHAPTER VII

FAMILY CIRCLE: HOUSEHOLD, MARRIAGE AND DIVORCE

In the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, the family circle centres on the household. It is the main organisation in domain of kinship as well as the main radius of relationships. The family does not only supply the individual with a social identify, but it goes further and provides him with a wide variety of functions religiously, educationally, economically and politically. Family relationships and obligations take precedence over all others. The individual is usually named after one of his ancestors or relatives in his paternal or maternal line. Descent is traced through the paternal line, indicating the importance of the organised kin groups around related males. At the same time for Irqah the maternal line, khawal or Khilan, is also important.

In more modernised communities, household functions have been decreasing with the rise of various specialised institutions, whereas in Irqah the household still retains most of its basic functions. Apart from socialisation, perhaps the basic function of every household, the primary religious disciplines are inculcated through the household - obedience to God, differentiation between permitted and prohibited conduct, how to perform prayers from the age of seven, and how to get used to fasting during Ramadān.

The household is a unit of consumption not a unit of production. All its working males share the responsibility of meeting its needs for the well-being of all its members. It is a close-knit political unit as its members are responsible for each other in respect of all its relations with other households or government bodies. Whatever happens to one affects other members directly; if one member was successful in religion all the others would be proud of him, and this would be reflected in their saying, "So-and-So has whitened our faces, may God whiten his face". By the same token if someone commits an act against religious discipline or public morality it injures the reputation of other members to the extent that makes them disclaim their relationship with him and they demonstrate their resentment

saying, "So-and-So does not belong to us since he has made our faces black, may God make his face black". The political unit of the household is further illustrated in the way its members defend each other against outsiders: in a dispute between members of two households that have no kinship relations, each household units to defend its member whatever the circumstances of the dispute.

Households range in composition from extended to nuclear families. Average household membership is about seven persons as is apparent from the following table.

TABLE 20: SHOWING SIZE OF HOUSEHOLDS IN THE VILLAGE

Number of Individuals	Number of Households	%
1	14	9.27
2 - 4	28	18.55
4 - 6	17	11.25
6 - 8	27	17.88
8 - 10	28	18.55
10 - 12	14	9.27
12 - 14	9	5.96
More than 14	14	9.27
TOTAL	151	100.00

The one-person households are those of Yemeni labourers. Some of the larger households contain between 30 and 40 members.

The survey I conducted shows that the household of a nuclear family is the dominant type contrary to what has been expected in such a community.¹ The number of such households is 95, or 63%; polygamous households number

1. Louise E.Sweet, Tell Toqaan: A Syrian Village. (Ann Arbor, University of Michigan, 1960) p.164.

5, or 3%; extended-family households number 51, or 34%.

TABLE 21: SHOWING TYPES OF HOUSEHOLDS

Husband, wife with sons and daughters		Husband, two wives with sons & daughters		Husband, wife, their sons, daughters and relatives	
Number of households	%	Number of households	%	Number of households	%
95	63	5	3	51	34

The predominance of the nuclear-family household is a recent trend resulting from economic factors that have led to rapid breakdown within the extended family. The wide spread of government posts, and other new economic opportunities, have tended to split the extended family up. There always have been cleavages within the extended family caused by problems arising among wives and children of brothers, but it is only now that the parts have become capable economically of establishing themselves as separate households.

Rosenfeld referred to these factors but he believes that economic rather than what he terms psychological factors and personal conflicts, are the main cause of fission in the Arab village extended family.² While the situation he investigated is similar to Irqah, his interpretation is different. Personal antagonism between wives and children of sons or brothers in an extended family causes its ultimate split. For instance, a villager told me that he had to split from his extended family not because of economic problems, but because of his wife and children who could not get along with other members of his father's family. Consequently his father asked him to have his own independent household. Although economic factors are of considerable significance, they do not seem to be a major cause of fission, for each of its adult male members shares its expenditure according to his

2. Henry Rosenfeld, "Processes of structural change within the Arab village extended family". American Anthropologist, Vol.60, Number 6, Part 1, (December 1958) p.1127.

own capacity. Furthermore, they are strongly bound sentimentally and morally to the extent of sacrificing material questions for the sake of preserving their extended family's unity.

1. Relations within the Household

Many scholars have written about relations within the household of the Arab village community of different countries of the Middle East,³ though little has been published concerning the contemporary Saudi village. A difficulty in much previous writing on the subject is that most of the scholars have confused the household as a social unit with some other forms of kinship grouping such as 'āila and ḥamūla (or clan according to Lutfiyya).⁴

This confusion derives from ambiguous terms used such as bait, 'āilah and ahl, which all mean household as distinct from wider kinship terms as ḥamūlah or clan. In the community of Irqah bait and ahl are used mainly to refer to a household only, but 'āila is rarely used for a household since it is wider and sometimes equal to ḥamūla. Ḥamūla is specifically used in reference to a group of households related to each other agnatically. When Salih al-Gasim says baiti or ahli he means his household. But when he says ḥamūlti he refers to all households of his agnates through Gasim, his ancestor. Āl, on the other hand, is a loose concept. It may be used in reference to a wide range of relatives, i.e. Āl Hilalāt includes all people sharing the surname regardless of where they live. For instance, if X says he is from Āl Hilalāt, he means that he is a member of the Āl Hilalāt as a distinct group by itself, or it may be used in reference to a section of it, for example if a man says he is going to visit Āl Hilalāt, he means only one particular family within it.

As in other households of the Arab world, authority is a prerogative of its male head, i.e. the father or the eldest brother if the father is dead.

3. Abdulla M. Lutfiyya and Charles W. Churchill (eds.), Readings in Arab Middle Eastern Societies and Cultures. (The Hague: Mouten, 1970).

4. Lutfiyya, Baytīn. A Jordanian village. Op.cit., pp.142-43.

It is he who makes decisions and executes whatever he thinks is in the interest of its members, even if they are dissatisfied with his decision, since they are obliged to submit to his authority. Male members of the household might voice their dissatisfaction but females have no such right even if it has to do with personal matters that directly concern them. He has full responsibility for arranging marriages of household members of both sexes and negotiating everything, from the beginning of betrothal to the end of the wedding. He alone decides on the marriage of the females and whether a suitor is to be accepted or rejected.

The relationships within the village household comprise three distinct phases. The first is the relations amongst the male members. Sons greatly respect their fathers and obey their orders, or at least submit to their wishes. This sort of father-son relationship is connected with the economic unity of the household and the sole responsibility which the father has in economic decisions. It derives also from religious teachings necessitating respect and obedience to the father.⁵ Deviation from obedience to parents is considered a deviation from religious morality. Relationships between brothers are based on strong bonds of affection, and of respect particularly from younger to elder brothers.

The second phase is the relations between the two sexes which derive from the consciousness of superiority of the male sex over the female sex. The social position of women of the village, like other similar villages, is locally recognised to be inferior to that of men.⁶ Consequently the men are the masters whom the women should obey and respect in speech and conduct. This type of relation exists between the head of the household

5. K. el-Daghostani, "The Evolution of the Muslem Family in the Middle Eastern Countries", International Social Science Bulletin, Vol.5, No.4, 1953, p.689.

6. Abdulla M.Lutfiyya, Baytīn, op.cit., p.146.

and his wife or wives, his sisters, his daughters, and his sons' wives as well as other females living in the same household. The wife dares not call her husband by his name or mention it in front of others; but she refers to him as 'father of so-and-so' (abū fulān) or simply 'he' (haw). The husband avoids calling his wife by her name or mentioning it except on very rare occasions when he cannot avoid it. Thus when he wants her to render him a certain service he does not use her name, but he only calls her saying hay, anti, or ya. Also when he is forced to speak about her he says "mistress of the house" (rā'iat al-bait).

While Islam gave the woman certain rights of which she had been previously deprived, it still preserves the feeling of male superiority in four ways. Firstly men are preferred over women in many texts of the Qur'ān. Among these texts are "But men have a degree (of advantage) over them", and "Men are the protectors and maintainers of women, Because God has given the one more (strength) than the other, and because they support them from their means".⁷ The superiority here stems from the differences in the nature of men and women, and from the duty of men to support women's needs. The duty does not arise from the mere need to expend money; for the duty would vanish once the woman had enough money.⁸ Secondly, the Qur'ān gives a man the right to take double a woman's share in the division of inheritance; the text of the Qur'ān in this respect reads, "God (thus) directs you as regards your children's (inheritance) to the male, a portion equal to that of two females".⁹ The reason for this difference is attributed to the fact that a brother is responsible for the expenditures of his sister; and the son supports his kinswomen who have no other supporters; and, above all, the head of the household, in general affairs, is the husband, the father or the custodian of the sons and brothers or next relatives.¹⁰ Thirdly, the

7. Abdullah Yusuf Ali, The Holy Qur-An. Text, Translation and Commentary. (Lebanon, Beirut: Dar Al Arabia; Publishing, Printing and Distribution, 1968) p.9.

8. Abbas M. al-Aggad, al-Mar'ah fi al-Qur'ān. (Cairo: Dār al-Kitāb al-'Arabi, 1967) p.10.

9. Yusuf Ali, op.cit., p.181.

10. al-Aggad, op.cit., p.99.

man is given the rights of polygamy and of divorce whenever he wishes. Although Islam has laid down conditions limiting the practice of these rights, such rights are in themselves a recognition of men's superiority. Yet the woman has at the same time the right to ask for divorce from her husband provided she has justification acceptable to Islamic law. Fourthly, the Qur'ān considers that a woman is not equal to a man in testimonial witness. Two men are required to testify in case of a legal procedure. But if two men are not available a man and two women, instead of the other man, are required. The reason given for this is that one of the women might remind the other, if she does not recall the precise events of the case, as the Qur'ān reads:

...And get two witnesses, Out of your own men, And if there are not two men, Then a man and two women, Such as ye choose, For a witness, So that if one of them errs, the other can remind her. 11

These rights which derive from religious ideology, definitely assert male superiority and are accepted in the village with outward satisfaction on the part of men and/^{apparent}content on the part of women. Moreover, community values and social customs confirm that feeling of superiority which manifests itself in the strict separation between the two sexes. The mingling of males and females who are not closely related is not possible either within the household or in social activities outside. It is, therefore, customary for men to eat first, and then women, or in some cases women eat at the same time but apart. In each household there are separate areas where each sex practises daily household activities in order to avoid contact as much as possible. Where two or more married brothers share one household, a wife must cover her face in the presence of her husband's brother, or when she passes near them, even if her own husband is present. She must also avoid contact with them or talking to them if at all possible. A woman must not talk to strange men except on occasions that are unavoidable or very urgent, and while she is behind a closed door.

11. Yusuf Ali, op.cit., p.282.

When a woman goes out she must veil herself with a black robe (bisht or 'abayah), which covers her from head to foot so that the parts, such as hands, do not appear to the eyes of male passers-by. A villager invited me for tea one afternoon; on our way to his house a veiled woman was passing through the streets where he lives. I said to him this woman was going to his house and that we should wait until she went in, as she might be one of his relatives. But he told me proudly "our girls do not go out on the street".

Each sex has its own world which is defined in the Qur'ān, and sustained by community values. But the difference between the two is most important as regards women's rights and obligations. It is true that Islam has given men preference over women in many respects, as we have seen. But at the same time it has given women their own rights and preserved their dignity, and they have to claim such rights if they are neglected by their guardians.

The dominant social values reflect the degradation of women in many ways. Some local expressions describe women as inferior and wanting: "woman is weak-minded" (al-marāh 'aglaha nāgis), and "woman, may God honour you, has no value" (al-marāh Allāh ya'izzak ma lahā geimah). Such expressions are frequently heard when discussing subjects related to women. Furthermore, a man is always described as resembling a woman in case of anger or blame, i.e. "so-and-so is just like a woman" (fulān mithl al-marāh).

The unequal status of the sexes crystallises itself in the division of labour within the household. Men are obliged to work for the purpose of earning and expending on household needs; while women are obliged to carry out their household duties only, and it is difficult for their spouses to accept that they might work outside the house, "a man permitting his wife to work has no value; a man who is supported by a woman is hopeless". That does not mean that there are no working women in the village.¹²

12. See p.108.

Although allowing women to work outside the household is usually inconceivable and intolerable, some women have been, for financial reasons, allowed to work as maids in government posts which avoid direct connection with men, such as the Girls' School and the Nursery attached to the Community Development Centre. Some girls from relatively well-to-do families have taken up teaching posts and their work outside their households is justified on the grounds that teaching is a religious obligation regardless of its financial rewards. In any case, a woman's work and her material earnings which she hands over to her husband or guardian, do not in fact change her status within her household. It is evident that it eases the burden on her spouse's financial obligation, but it gives her neither financial nor personal independence since permission to work is subject to the sanction of her household head, whether he is a father or a husband. A woman cannot have her own independent household once she has a job even if she is unmarried or divorced, but has to remain in the same household.

This division of labour is sustained by religion and by tradition in the village. Religious teaching asserts that God has given each sex certain characteristics that fit its capability, males being suited to the sphere of work. The female sex, on the contrary, is characterised by weakness which puts them in need of comprehensive sponsorship from the male sex, according to the text of the Qur'^{ān} which reads, "Men are the protectors and maintainers of women, because God has given the one more (strength) than the other, and because they support them from their means".¹³ Thus men support women and meet their needs, while women must stay at home to carry out domestic duties, as God has differentiated between them. The village social values sustain these attitudes towards male superiority over women in every respect including woman's mental inferiority; "woman is weak with a weak mind". So, her work is within the limits of her household and

13. Ibid., p.190.

she can leave it only on necessary occasions to visit relatives after asking her spouse's permission. Usually she is not allowed to do her own shopping but her spouse or guardian does it for her. Villagers despise a woman who goes shopping and consider it disgraceful behaviour. "A woman who goes to the market, break her leg, make her crawl".

The third phase of household relations is that between females which I was not able to observe because of the situation of the village. Nevertheless, antagonism is general between a mother and her sons' wives, between brothers' wives, and between co-wives of a particular husband.

To sum up the foregoing discussion: the relations among members of the household are determined by religious principles which necessitate respect and obedience to parents according to the Prophet's saying "obedience to parents is from God's obedience". Such respect and obedience is due to elder brothers and sisters, as well as to a husband and his relations, particularly his parents. Such religious principles couple with very effective social values that stress male superiority. A man is the master who has physical strength and leading authority; whereas a woman has been created to make him happy, to realise his wishes, and to look after his domestic affairs.

The household, therefore, is a social unit whose members are tied to each other through various bonds some of which are based on inferiority and superiority, while some others are based on respect and appreciation, but all have very strong feelings of affection and sacrifice towards each other. The household itself is, in fact, an important factor in strengthening such mutual feelings of affection, especially when we realise that it is where its members spend most of their time. For there are in the village few facilities for social intercourse outside the household with the exception of the domain of related households.

2. Marriage

Since the village is a traditional Muslim Community, marriage is the only legal relationship between a man and a woman (apart from concubinage which does not exist in the village) It is a relationship that is mainly

based on the satisfaction of sexual desire and the birth of children. There is no other permissible relationship between adult males and females. A steady friendship between a man and a woman is not possible; it is forbidden by religion on the pretext that it could lead to adultery which is severely punishable, and which can, at the same time, seriously damage the personal reputation of the two parties and their kin, particularly the woman's.

Marriage in itself is a legal contract between a bride and groom, and also furnishes very strong ties between the cognates of each. For that reason, the arrangement of marital affairs is the concern not of the groom and the bride, but of their families. It is typically of two kinds: the first is arranged marriage within the kinship group either from the agnates of father (aulad or 'iyāl al-'amm) or of mother (khawal). This sort of marriage is most preferred among the Gabīliyīn who take into account equality of origin. The second is arranged marriage between two spouses of unrelated households, which most takes place among the Khaḍīriyīn, who do not give any consideration to equality of origin.

In the village, paternal parallel cousin marriage, which most anthropologists believe to be an essential feature or characteristic of marriage in Middle Eastern Communities,¹⁴ is not the prevailing type. It is true that Gabīliyīn do prefer close marriage as far as possible. At the same time they have a wide range of inter-marriage among people of the same tribal origins. Daughters of mother's brother, or of her agnates in general, are as important as daughters of parallel cousins. For the relations a man has with his mother's brothers (khawal or khilan, sing. khal) are very special. Sometimes indeed the relations of affines (ansāb or arḥām) are stronger than those of the kinsmen as it is apparent in some expressions such as "an affine is preferable to an agnate" (al-nasīb wala al-garīb). Donald Cole has eloquently described this point when he says, "Amongst Al Murrah, however, mother's brothers are at least equally as important as father's brothers. When a man marries a minimal lineage other than his own,

14. R.Patai, "Cousin Right in Middle Eastern Marriage", Southwestern Journal of Anthropology, Vol.11, (1955), p.371.

this minimal lineage is his nasaba but it becomes mother's brothers... during the next generation and remains classificatory mother's brothers for at least several generations even in the absence of further marriage, assuming, of course, that the original marriage resulted in children".¹⁵

Although Cole is referring to the nomadic people of Āl Murrah, the same is true in the village and throughout the country among tribals and non-tribals.

There is no fixed or specific rule determining these two kinds of marriage. The former is most frequent whenever there are available girls of marriage-able age and the relationship between the households of the suitor and the girl are good. And it is least frequent in the opposite case, which, of course, necessitates looking for a suitable mate from outside.

Marriage with a relative of the father's or the mother's lineage depends largely on the nature of the existing relations between the households concerned. Some may prefer such a marriage saying "Our water in our cultivation", or, "our cooking butter in our flour", if they are in good terms. But some may wish to avoid it if relations are not warm, or if they fear some conflict might result, particularly if they have experienced it before. They say "keep meat away from other meat so that it will not putrify", and "do not be close to a relative". These two proverbs indicate the suspicions that may be expected of marriage between close kin.

Marriage takes place without consideration for the bride and bridegroom themselves, except rarely, since it is for the parents to decide who is going to marry whom, and when. If the father feels that one of his sons is at the age for marriage, he notifies him of his desire, or perhaps the son may notify his father that he would like to marry. In any case, if the groom's family has enough money at its disposal, the search for a suitable bride will follow. If not, its head will do his best to obtain money by borrowing it from relatives and friends or through a local credit arrangement

15. Donald P. Cole, "The Social and Economic Structure of the Murrah. A Saudi Arabian Bedouin Tribe". (Ph.D. dissertation, University of California, Berkeley, 1971) pp.110-11. See also Richard T. Antoun, Arab Village. A Social structural study of a Trans-Jordanian Peasant Community. (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1972).

known as we'adah.¹⁶

The question of a bride then occupies the attention of adult members of the household. The priority is, of course, for marriageable girls among the cognates, but if there is none suitable, the search for a bride elsewhere proceeds. When one is found, and her family has no objection, and conditions are met regarding equality of status, and reputation, then agreement is sought on the bridewealth.

The search for a bride is made either through the groom's household or through a male or a female matchmaker (khaṭīb and Khaṭībah). I asked the village matchmaking specialist how he set about his work since, as a man, he cannot make direct contact with women. He told me that he inquires about a girl's looks and age, etc., and then he compares his finding with other sources which he considers a professional secret.

Having found a suitable bride, the groom's father proposes to her father in a letter usually delivered by the same matchmaker. If the girl's father agrees the boy's father pays the bridewealth (mahr, locally known as jahaz). This is very high in relation to the standard of living in the village: it compels the groom or his father to borrow. The average jahaz, which is paid in cash, is usually between 5,000 and 17,000 SR, about £590 - £2,000. In addition, there is clothing for adult members of the bride's household and some of her close relatives such as father's brothers and mother's brothers, jewellery for the bride herself, and the marriage banquets (azīmat al-'irs). The entire cost of marriage varies between 15,000 and 25,000 SR, about £1,764 - £2,947, in accordance with the social and economic status of the households.

It is customary for the bride's household to undertake the purchase of her essential effects, which include dresses, cosmetics, a bedroom unit, washing machine, kitchen requisites, and other items. The process of

16. This is a way of obtaining credit in which the lender avoids usury. See appendix No.1.

purchasing is also called jahaz just exactly like mahr (jahaz). The word jahaz is connected with tajhīz, preparation. Some fathers add to their daughters' mahr from their own pockets to appear more respectable to the bridegroom's relatives, and so gain better repute in the village. Other fathers, on the other hand, keep some of their daughters' jahaz either to use it for other purposes or to keep it for the bride if her marriage should end in divorce.

It usually takes two months to make the necessary purchases. The wedding can then take place. One or two nights before the marriage, the bride's father or guardian and some of her close relatives together with the groom, his father, and his close relatives meet in the bride's house with a mumallik, who is in most cases a judge, to perform the religious rites. Customarily a banquet, called 'azīmat al-milkah, with one or more sheep, is prepared. After the meal the mumallik brings together the groom and the bride's guardian for the marriage rites: he asks the groom and the bride's father or guardian to hold right hands as if they were shaking them while he says "Thanks to God, we thank Him, recourse to His help, ask for His pardon, and repent to Him, we pray to God to protect us from the evils of ourselves and our bad deeds. He who is directed by God to the right path cannot be deviated by others, and he who otherwise cannot be directed. I witness that there is no God but Allah and that Muhammad is His servant and messenger". After finishing this request, the mumallik then asks the bride's father or her guardian to say "I agree to marry my daughter (or sister) named so and so to so and so", then he asks the groom to say, "I agree". He must ask the groom to mention the amount of the mahr; but the exact amount is considered a secret, so the groom only mentions a token amount to confirm that he has paid. Finally the mumallik concludes this rite saying "God bless you and make your partnership prosperous and healthy". Those present are witnesses of the legitimacy of the marriage because it is essential, according to Islam, to have two honest witnesses: a marriage certificate is not needed. The purpose of the witnesses is to testify that

the bride has not been forced to marry against her will, and that the procedures of marriage have followed the religious precepts.

Next night, marriage ceremonies start at the bride's house if it is suitable for accommodating male and female guests. If not, another house is rented or borrowed. Women-folk of the bride attend to prepare her for the night of marriage (lailat ad-dukhlah). Her male relatives take care of all arrangements for the ceremonies and preparations for receiving the groom's party. Meanwhile, these get ready. The women gather at the groom's house, including guests. At about 7 p.m. they all go to the bride's house, where they are met with courtesy and respect. Hospitality includes incense and different perfumes, as well as tea and coffee served throughout the night at their seats in front. At the same time the groom, his male kin, and his guests gather at the house of one of his relatives, to avoid contact with women and to allow them freedom while they are getting ready at his own. There they are served coffee, tea and some fruits as well as perfumes and incense. They all go to the Mosque to say the night prayer. Then they move to the bride's house on foot accompanied by youths and children carrying censers. At the entrance of the house where the marriage ceremonies are held, they are welcomed by the bride's relatives who say loudly, "You are very welcome. There are two feasts in the year, but this occasion is the third". One of the bride's close relatives (father or elder brother) accompany the groom alone to the bride's room where she sits veiled surrounded by her female relatives. When the groom enters all the women leave immediately except for one called the rebe'iyah whose job is to look after the bride for the first week or month of her marriage. The groom asks her to leave saying, "You are excused" (anti markhuşah). But the bride insists on her staying, begging her not to leave. She finally leaves the room and closes the door behind her on the groom and his bride, who have not seen each other before. The rebe'iyah remains at the door of the room to keep people away. Meantime, coffee, tea, perfumes and incense are generously served to those men accompanying the bridegroom. After a while they all

leave. Those who are not very close friends or relatives disperse home, but his close relatives go to the groom's house until it is time to collect their families from the bride's house. Women enjoy themselves that night more than men, as they stay late singing and dancing if these activities are not rejected for religious reasons by one of the fathers. Special women singers are brought for the purpose from Riyadh and are paid money (ṭagaga) immediately after singing in the name of each household. As regards dancing, it is up to those women who desire it when the singers sing in the name of their households. In most cases women let their hair loose while dancing because long hair is regarded as a sign of beauty. Men can also sign and dance in a chorus if they want to, but not in the village as they have to go outside in order to avoid problems with members of the Religious Guidance Centre. If one of the relatives of the bride or groom is pious to the extent of considering singing and dancing alien to religious tradition, then the marriage night is spent in gossiping and drinking tea and coffee instead.

The bride's household is busy from the early morning in preparing the marriage banquet to be served in the afternoon. This usually consists of a large number of big dishes of rice. On the top of each dish is a half portion of a sheep or camel meat. The number of dishes varies according to the social status of the groom and the bride, and whether the bride had been previously married. In both cases the village people boast about the number of dishes and sheep. The female relatives of the groom do not attend that banquet: it is only for men. But the bride's household usually sends some food for them from what has been prepared for the banquet.

In the evening of the same day, the bride moves to her groom's household accompanied by her female relatives where they are welcomed by the female relatives of the groom with generous hospitality of incense, perfumes, coffee and tea. After a while they all leave except the bride and her rebe'iyah. This second night of marriage is called the night of transfer, lailat at-tahwal as the bride moves to her new household with her personal

effects, jahaz. These had been carried there by close male relatives early that morning so that female guests could see and comment on their quality and quantity.

Next day the groom offers a banquet to which he invites male relatives of the bride as well as his relatives. The bride's female relatives are sent some cooked food where they are assembled in her guardian's household. Some people prefer the one banquet, but most insist on the traditional way of having two.

The bridegroom's household gets very keen to hear his news and to what extent he is satisfied with his bride, so they all, male and female, await his return after the marriage night. When he returns everyone congratulates him and says "give the good news, give the good news, may we wish God that you are happy" (bashshir, bashshir, 'asak in sha Allah mabsūṭ); whereas he replies saying "thanks to God, everything is according to what has been wished" (al-ḥamd li Allah kul shai'ala may yoram) even if he is not pleased with his bride, in order not to displease them. No one has seen her - the groom's female relatives even have up until now only seen her veiled.

On the morning after the marriage, the groom presents his bride with some jewels called sabaḥah which usually includes a bracelet and necklaces as well as a wrist-watch. When he leaves the room, one of her close male relatives sees him off saying to him "buy yourself" (ishter ruḥak). The expression is used to exaggerate the welcome the groom who in return presents the person with some money as a token of buying himself. In addition, there are other acts which are important for removing formal barriers between the two households. The groom visits his mother-in-law during the marriage week to greet her, and she removes the veil during his presence since she can now legally meet him unveiled. After greetings he gives her a gift of some money (fitashah), for removing the veil. A week after marriage the bride visits her household for the night visit (ziyarat al-layl) to her female relatives and those of her groom. Coffee, tea and fruits are served. A month from the marriage night, the bride pays a day-

time visit to her household (ziyarat an-nahar) where her male and female relatives are invited for dinner. Neither the groom nor his relatives, male or female, are invited but they are sent cooked food. It is the groom that provides the food for this party including two or more head of sheep. Thereafter the relationships between the two households become normal and the bride is allowed to visit her family whenever her husband permits.

In discussing household and marriage I have said that the household is the centre of kinship, that marriage is the only legal way of any sort of relationship between the two sexes, and that marriage is eventually a strong bridge between the two households and between the kin of each side. I have also indicated that relations within the household and marriage ties are greatly governed and influenced by religious beliefs and social customs.

Some important points about marriage can be briefly brought out. Firstly, the bride-wealth, which is paid in cash to the guardian of the bride, is very high. This is for two main reasons. The families boast about, and exaggerate, the number of sheep and dishes served for the occasion, and other people talk about their generosity. A youth whose father paid high bride-wealth for his parallel cousin's daughter, said "it is because they want to preserve their dignity among the people" (nibgha nostar 'ardana qiddam al-nas). Most bridegrooms are forced to borrow money. The bride-wealth is spent on purchasing clothes and furniture for the bride's use at her new household. Her family prepares it in a way that matches the amount of the bride-wealth - otherwise it may be thought that her guardian has taken a part of it. All female guests scrutinise her personal effects, the jahaz which she brings with her at the night of transfer. If they find it suitable they praise her household saying "God whiten the faces of such and such household, they have honoured their daughter and have done their best". If not, they blame them for their shortcomings in preparing it. In some cases some households are compelled to add to the original mahr in order to maintain their dignity among the villagers. On the other hand,

there are some rare cases in which the bride's guardian tries to save some from her mahr which is very slight if we compare it with the high cost of purchasing the jahaz.

Secondly, the bridegroom bears all marriage expenses which consist the following:

- a) The mahr paid in cash to the bride's guardian, varying according to social status and whether the bride is a virgin or has been previously married.
- b) All the expenses of the ceremonies including the cost of the feast prepared by his bride's household. He pays the cost of the sabahah jewellery, consisting of necklace, bracelets and a wrist-watch. It may exceed that: the sabahah presented by one notable to his bride was a complete set of gold, including a wrist-watch and wedding ring, whose total value was 5000 SR or £592. He pays a sum of money to the person who serves him coffee and tea when his bride goes to change her clothes at midnight on the marriage eve. This person is usually one of the bride's close male relatives.
- c) He pays money to the bride's male relatives who meet him when he leaves the wedding eve saying "buy yourself". He pays a cash gift (fitasha) for the removing of the veil to his mother-in-law. He pays the charge of rebe'iyah, the women who accompany the bride for a week or month after marriage. Finally he donates the food for the feast the bride's household prepare on her first daytime visit after her marriage.

All these costs and expenditures are paid by the bridegroom as an unavoidable obligation which is, traditionally, the essence of marriage valuation among the villagers. I am using the word valuation because the villagers estimate whether a marriage is good or otherwise according to the extent this obligation is met.

Thirdly it is a custom that the relatives and friends of the groom and his bride offer some material aid towards marriage expenditure called hafalah which differs in kind and quality according to the nature of relationship and friendship. It might be a sum of money or some articles. But in most cases it is in the form of one or two head of sheep as a gesture of participation in marriage costs from male relatives or friends. Female relatives and friends usually offer articles relating to the bride's personal use, like clothes and perfume. This marriage aid, hafalah raises the obligation of a return gift if a member of the donating household gets married. The household of the bride and the bridegroom thus write down the

names of those offering them ḥafalah. Naturally this adds to the financial burden of marriage. In other words, the ḥafalah is not a free gift, but a sort of delayed loan.

Fourthly, perhaps the most striking aspect of marriage, which may be the cause of misery of the two parties to it, is the fact that they have never seen each other before marriage eve except in rare cases where they are close kin who have known each other since they were young. Their betrothal takes place through a matchmaker who gives an exaggerated description of the bride. The groom and the bride both fear the tension of the marriage eve for the groom is very anxious to find his bride living up to her description, while the bride faces a critical moment because she does not know who her groom is, or even his name. They may get along when they meet, but otherwise have to accept their fate, hoping to get acquainted in due time. Disappointment can lead to a divorce sooner or later.

Here are two examples illustrating such an unhappy marriage. In one, a villager had to leave his bride who was his father's brother's daughter at midnight on the wedding eve. He intended to divorce her that night because he did not want to take her to his household. But he was advised by his friends to wait a bit, otherwise some might think she was not a virgin and this would damage her as well as her household. He kept her for a month, then divorced her. In another case a village girl did not get along with her husband. She asked to be divorced; her husband said he wanted her either because he really did, or because if he pretended to she would divorce him and he could then claim back what he had spent on marrying her. Eventually she insisted on being divorced and her father had to borrow money to repay the cost of the marriage.

3. Divorce

Divorce (ṭalāq) in the village, as in all Muslim communities, is a prerogative of the husband. At the same time, a wife may be granted a divorce from her husband if she cannot stand living with him for one reason or another. In this case, which is called khal'a, the husband has a full

legal right to claim back his bride-wealth. But if a man divorces his wife, using his prerogative, he cannot claim any of the marriage costs.

As between khal'a (divestiture) and talaq (divorce), W.R.Smith explained:

In Mohammedan law, the difference between the two is that in ordinary divorce or dismissal the wife claims her dowry, while khal'a is a divorce granted by the husband, at his wife's request, she undertaking either to give up her dowry, or to make some other payment, to induce him to set her free. 17

In the village the divorce rate is very low while khal'a is known only in that one case. Thus one can say that marriage is rather stable, and the following considerations apply. The high cost of marriage makes a husband think a long time before deciding to divorce his wife because it means a considerable financial loss, and an additional financial burden that will result from another marriage. Therefore, keeping his wife is much better, pursuant the proverb "the face you already know is better than the one you do not know". The fast begetting of children makes both the husband and the wife hesitant to take serious steps towards divorce because it creates persisting problems concerning the upbringing of children, particularly the financial ones which the husband is legally obliged to meet. Wives will always sacrifice as much as they can to avoid divorce. That is because a divorced woman gets the blame for not having been a good wife, and she may have only a small chance of getting married again.

Taking these considerations into account, as well as the low per capita income in comparison to the relatively high cost of living, we find that divorce is infrequent not necessarily because of mutual satisfaction but because of the pressure of these factors. I may add here that the villagers' religious faith has a strong impact on marriage stability since everything happening in the world is according to the will of Allah to which one must submit and be satisfied with, and that what had happened was written beforehand, including one's marriage.

17. W.Robertson Smith, Kinship and Marriage in Early Arabia. (London: Adam and Charles Black, 1907), pp.112-3.

These chapters on descent and stratification, and differing marriage practice, give the setting against which the administrative organisation of the village can now be investigated. From this point of view they have indicated particularly the extent to which the Ḥaḍar Gabīliyīn form an exclusive group with social arrangements which help it to command and retain positions of authority in the village. I now turn to the administrative organisation itself.

CHAPTER VIII

THE ADMINISTRATIVE ORGANISATION

The Supreme Power in the Saudi Arabian Kingdom is the King who is the final authority in all political, military, financial and administrative affairs. The King is assisted in the making and execution of state policy by the Council of Ministers, which comprises all ministers of official ministries, and also ministers without portfolio who preside over government agencies like the General Bureau of Civil Servants and the General Auditing Bureau.

The Council of Ministers is formed of two categories of ministers: the first category comprises the royal ministers - that is to say Ministers of Defence and Aviation, Interior and Finance. The second category comprises ministers other than those from the Royal Family. The appointment of ministers is the King's sole responsibility.

There was no ministerial change for the twelve years up to 1975 except for one occasion when a minister was relieved of his duties and replaced by another for reasons which were found essential by the King in the interests of the State.

The duties of the Council of Ministers' are concerned with consultative matters in which the King has the right of acceptance or rejection. Nevertheless, the Council has been entrusted with wider jurisdictions comprising internal and external policy of State thus becoming the organisational executive and administrative machinery.¹

Each minister is responsible for his ministry's affairs within the framework of instructions regulating such responsibilities. But there is no legal administrative body to control ministers' authority except the General Auditing Bureau which is responsible for the procedure relating to financial payments and for determining whether they conform with the State regulations or not. Otherwise, the only control is the King. Each minister

1. Muhammad T. Sadiq, Taṭawwur Nizām al-Ḥukm wa al-Idārāh fi al-Mamlākah al-Arabiyan al-Saudiyah. (Riyadh: Maṭbu'at Ma'had al-Idarāh al-'Amnah 1965), p.63.

is apt to nominate his deputies and senior staff according to his own discretion and satisfaction. The King has the right then to accept or reject the nominees.

A form of administrative organisation has been introduced in the Kingdom and has passed through three main stages: the first lasted during King Abdul Aziz's era from the establishment of the Kingdom until his death in 1953; the second lasted during King Saud's era until he was dethroned in 1964; and the third lasted from the beginning of King Faisal's reign until 1975.

During the first stage there was no administrative organisation in the Kingdom. King Abdul Aziz ruled his Kingdom by simple methods, free from bureaucratic controls. He used to decide on matters according to his own discretion and give his orders for immediate execution. Thus there were no ministers or ministries as they are now understood, except for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. He used to appoint amirs of towns and villages directly and they had to contact him on all matters relating to their Emirates. According to Muhammad T. Şadik, King Abdul Aziz ruled his Kingdom from Riyadh with no organised central body for the State, but he appointed Governors to administer the regions, and to them he sent directly his directions in accordance with the needs and conditions in each region. Thus the regional Governors acted in the capacity of personal representatives of the King in their regions. Their power of attorney included all matters relating to their areas except for military and foreign affairs which were the absolute responsibility of the King.²

Meanwhile the King had his consultants from among members of the Royal Family, tribal leaders, and religious men (Ulama), but this was for consultations only; decisions were absolutely his own concern.

During the second stage the administrative organisation started to develop with two main occurrences, the establishment of new ministries of

2. Ibid., p.23.

Interior, Health and Education, and the increase in oil production which helped to improve the state's financial position and paved the way for expansion of services in health, social and educational projects.

Although the regulations for the Council of Ministers were issued during the last months of King Abdul Aziz's life, they were not enforced until King Saud was entrusted with the rule after his death. King Saud immediately gave orders for the formation of a Council of Ministers. The Council took on a formal effectiveness that was manifest when it reformed and expanded its terms of reference. But the means of administration remained as before. Thus in spite of the existence of ministers dealing with the people's affairs the King remained the authority in all respects, and paid no regard to the formal hierarchy of Government machinery. In view of this the Amirs of regions, cities, and villages used to contact the King directly without consideration to their formal administrative ties, which lay with the Ministry of the Interior.

In the last stage, the stage of administrative organisation, the situation changed to give effect to the hierarchical arrangement. As a result some organisational amendments have been applied in different spheres of government including the Council of Ministers' Regulations.

This development has included local government; so while Amirs of towns and villages were appointed directly by the King, and while they used to refer to him in all matters concerning the administrative affairs of their Emirates, now the Ministry of Interior, established in 1951³ has become directly responsible for all that.

It is not my intention to go into detail regarding the development of Local Government organisation, but it is desirable to point out that in spite of the promulgation of laws regulating the establishment of provinces, which divide the Kingdom into a number of main and subsidiary administrative

3. Abdul Mu'ain A. Bushnaq, ad-Dalil al-'Amm li al-Mumalakah al-'Arabiyyah as-Saudiyyah, (Damascus: Muṭba't Muhammad Hashim wa Shurakah, 1957) p.605.

divisions, such an organisation has not been enforced yet.⁴ The administration of interior affairs is still carried out on the basis that the Kingdom is divided into four main regions; the Emirates of Western Province, Eastern Province, Northern Province and of Central Province (Riyadh Emirate) in which Irqah is included.

Each of these four Emirates is ruled by a Prince of the Royal Family who is responsible for the Amirs of towns and villages connected with his Emirate. At the same time there are some Amirs of towns and villages who are connected with the Minister of the Interior which indicates that the definition of the ties of each is a matter needing some sort of clarification. There is no clear definition of an Amir's terms of reference and authority, and this gives him the opportunity to play an important role himself in determining his rights and duties.

It is thus clear that Irqah is a link in the bureaucratic structure which comprises all towns and villages of the Kingdom. Leaving this wide bureaucratic organisation aside we find that there are three main government bodies taking part in the administration of village affairs. These bodies are: the village Emirate, the Court, and the Religious Guidance Centre. I will now discuss these in order. Some other relevant administrative machineries will be examined subsequently in the chapter.

1. The Emirate

When stability was attained by King Abdul Aziz in the Najd area in 1927,⁵ Irqah was independent of other villages and administered its own affairs, as I pointed out in Chapter V. Then the Emirate was transferred to Āl Rawwaf, the present Amir's family. According to the statement of the present Amir, Shaikh Muhammad Ibn Rawwaf, the Emirate was transferred to him

4. Institute of Public Administration, Provincial Regulations. Riyadh, March 1964, p.4.

5. Ameen Rihani, Najd wa Mulhaqatiha (Beirut: Dār al-Rihani li al-Tiba'ah wa al-Nashr, 1964), p.7.

in response to a request submitted to King Abdul Aziz by villagers.

Like the Āl Hilalāt, the family of Āl Rawwaf had, and still has, its established social and religious status in the village. Actually it is their religious repute which has always maintained their social status, e.g., the Imamship of Friday mosque was performed by members of Āl Rawwaf. The present Amir's father was the last Imam of the Friday mosque and was the teacher of the village Kuttāb. He also performed some religious functions such as marriage and divorce, and he advised on religious questions relating to business and other transactions. As they were conversant with religion the earlier Hilalāt used to consult them in running village public affairs. It is therefore possible to suggest that the Rawwaf used their influence in the village in order to have the present Amir nominated.

Muhammad continued to rule the village until 1951, when he asked to be relieved of his duties because his income from the Emirate did not cover his expenditure. While he was waiting for his resignation to be accepted, he opened a shop in Riyadh. However, the villagers insisted that he should stay in his post, and wrote to the King, who ordered him to remain village Amir. He therefore responded to the King's command, resumed his duty and closed his shop.

The Amir used to refer to the King in all matters relating to the village throughout the rule of King Abdul Aziz and the beginning of the rule of King Saud despite the new regulations which tied the Emirate of Iṛqah to the Central Region (Riyadh Emirate).

In the past, duties of the Amir comprised the resolution of internal problems, the preservation of security, and the execution of legal orders pronounced by the village Judge upon those in breach of the rules of Islam. These various duties were very simply carried out without the aid of clerks or officers. The Amir performed them through personal contact with both the authorities and the village people and without any official correspondence or records. He was assisted by a man with the title of "man of the group" (rajjal al-jama'ah).

There was no budget or financial provisions for village projects. The needs of the village in the services field were met by means of contributions from the village people. If the Amir and the elders wished to carry out a project or deal with an emergency, such as fire or flood, the Judge would announce it during the Friday Prayers, explaining the circumstances and the need to deal with the situation, and ask the village people to make contributions according to their capability.

As with other village Amirs, the Amir of Irqah had no regular monthly salary or fixed remuneration but in return for his duties he received a remuneration in kind called barwah, which was wheat and dates given to the Amir out of the village religious tax zākāt collected annually. Its quantity varied with the state of the harvest. He had also an annual financial remuneration called sharhah or manakh in addition to some clothes, a robe, a garment, and a turban. These were paid by the Central Authority in Riyadh. And he collected from the villagers wheat and dates for his guest house, and also for his assistants who used to get sharhah and clothing as well.

His duties and functions of the Emirate continued in this way until the Kingdom's first budget of 1955. Since then, the Amir has been paid a monthly salary like any other State official, and an administrative body has been set up in the Emirate. The Central Government also now finances village projects through its various ministries.

The Emirate's terms of reference have expanded and now comprise:

1. Looking after village affairs and transmitting its needs in the field of services to Riyadh Emirate, which subsequently contacts the ministries concerned.
2. Preservation of security and stability in the village.
3. Reconciliation of villagers in dispute. If this is impossible, the disputing parties have to be arrested and brought before the Court, where the Judge decides on the question according to Islamic law. Appeal can be made to Riyadh Emirate.
4. Inflicting penalties imposed by the Court.
5. Short-term imprisonment. Those to be imprisoned for a long time have to be sent to Riyadh.

6. Levying of zakaat from the farmers and distributing it among the village poor. Some elders and a member of the Religious Guidance Centre and a member of the Court help the Amir in this.

As a result of such expansion in the terms of reference it has been essential to increase the administrative personnel of the Emirate, which at present consists of the Amir, who at the same time functions as Mayor (Omdah); a head of the office, a post occupied at present by the Amir's nephew; a clerk, who is the Amir's son; five men (khowiyya, sing. khawi) of whom two of them act as village police - they summon litigants and people wanted by the Court; one acts as a prison warder and is also a servant in the Amir's house; one is a driver who drives the government car allotted to the Amir; and one is a servant who prepares coffee and tea for the Amir's guests during the hours of official work.

In fact there are no important administrative functions in the Emirate. He has limited executive authority, and disputes among the villagers are rare. In view of this fact most of the Emirate work is routine, such as issuing testimonials. A survey of the official correspondence of the Emirate over two months (Ramadan when the work is usually slack, and Shawwal when the machinery is rather active) revealed that the letters were as follows:

TABLE 22: SHOWING THE NUMBER AND TYPE OF LETTERS OUTGOING FROM THE EMIRATE DURING THE MONTH OF RAMADAN 1973

<u>No.</u>	<u>Type of Letters</u>
10	Memoranda regarding registration of sons on their fathers' identity cards
4	Letters of introduction for work purposes
2	Testimonials
1	An advice regarding beggars in the village
2	Advice to Riyadh Emirate about the Amir's son taking up duties as a clerk in the village Emirate
1	A memorandum regarding the village poor addressed to the Charitable Society of Riyadh
1	A memorandum demanding <u>zakaat</u> of grapes from one of the village farmers
1	A memorandum explaining why one of the villagers was late for work in the Vocational Training Centre
<u>22</u>	<u>TOTAL</u>

TABLE 23: SHOWING THE NUMBER AND TYPE OF LETTERS OUTGOING FROM THE EMIRATE DURING THE MONTH OF SHAWWAL 1973

<u>No.</u>	<u>Type of Letters</u>
20	Memoranda requesting registration of sons on fathers' identity cards
6	Letters of introduction
2	Memoranda confirming that the applicants were building their own houses, to enable them to collect cement from the Cement Company
1	A memorandum regarding a car accident on the village bridge
1	A memorandum applying to the Ministry of Agriculture and Water for the watering of village farms
3	Memoranda regarding approval of invoices pertaining to purchases from the village clinic
1	A memorandum addressed to the village Court dealing with a subject relating to two parties of the village
1	A memorandum relating to the release of a prisoner in Riyadh prison
2	Memoranda demanding <u>zākāt</u> of grapes from two village farmers
1	A memorandum confirming that a married woman had not been registered on her father's identity card
<hr/> 38	TOTAL

From the above two tables it is apparent that most of the correspondence dealt with personal rather than village affairs.

The Amir has no official working hours. The Emirate occupied a part of a house he owned and rented to the government as an office of the Emirate while he and his family occupy the other part. Usually the Amir sits in his office in the morning between 8 and 10 o'clock. He may be late in coming in or going out, or he might not come to the office at all. During his presence he receives his visitors and if there is any official work he carries it out while conversing with others present. If there is no work he talks about general matters, whether village or personal affairs. Sometimes there is banter about the private affairs of the Amir's men and their sexual ability while coffee and tea are served. He then goes to Riyadh on his own or Emirate business.

The Irqah people do not have the right to elect their Amir or to check his work. It is true that they have the right to ask the Central Authorities to expel him if they unanimously find justification for such an act. It is also true that some oppose him, and others believe that they are better qualified to be Amir. The Amir does not bother about such opposition, and he considers himself to be the best qualified, having rendered so many services to the village as everyone knows. Moreover, he has intimate relations with the Amir of Riyadh to whom Irqah Emirate is administratively subordinate, and whom he often invites to the village, with parties given in his honour. Also the Amir has close relations with the Vice-Minister of the Interior who occasionally pays visits to the village in response to the Amir's invitations, when again parties are given in honour. The Deputy Minister of the Interior is married to a girl from the family of Āl Rawwaf and thus is the Amir's affine. Lastly, the Amir has friendly relations with many of the State officials in government ministries which he manages to exploit in the interests of the village.

This does not mean that in the village there are no other people in positions of leadership; it is simply that the Amir gives no opportunity for the emergence of any social position which might affect his influence in the village. Those who are not interested in his leadership can do nothing to eject him from his post due to his powerful connections on the one hand, and because of the services he has effectively rendered to the village on the other. Among these services have been the introduction of electricity, water, and primary schools for boys and girls.

Some of the other Gabīliyīn families believe they are more qualified to take charge of the Emirate than Āl Rawwaf, but they are in no real position to compete. The Murshid family for instance belongs to this category. Though they are considered people of repute in the village they are few in number, as most of them have migrated to Riyadh. However, they are trying to confirm their influence in village affairs. In fact Abdul Rahman and Salih al-Murshid are among the notables of the village and both of them

can read and write. Both are clerks in the Community Development Centre. Also they are members of both the Board of Directors of the Cooperative Society and the Local Committee. When the Judge is away, Salih also delivers the Friday and 'Eid prayers and sermons. It is natural that Salih's performance of such religious duties adds to his leading position and puts him in good standing.

On the other hand, much of the talk and behaviour of Āl Murshid indicates the sensitivity of their relations with the Amir. I met Salih two days after the Sacrifice 'Eid and after greeting him for the occasion he asked me, "We have not seen you, have not you been here with us during the 'Eid?" I told him that I have said the 'Eid prayer and did not leave the village afterwards. He said, "But we did not see you". I told him that I had the 'Eid meal in the Amir's quarter. He then said, "We were expecting you to come and greet us in our place". I replied that I had actually gone to their quarter but it was after the 'Eid meal was over and the people had dispersed, and I could find neither him nor his brother Abdul Rahman and I thought that they must have gone to Riyadh. Nevertheless, he said proudly, "We were present in our house receiving the 'Eid well-wishers". Naturally his blame indicated that he was expecting the same treatment as I gave the Amir.

It is one of the most important customs during 'Eids that people greet each other and express their good wishes in their houses. I had not seen any member of the notable families in the Amir's house expressing good wishes. I was last to leave his house and noticed that most of the people who came to greet him were the inhabitants of the section where he lived, and who are his neighbours. Most of them were poor people, without weight in the village.

Another occasion when it was apparent that the relation between the Amir and Āl Murshid was not good, took the form of a joke. I was talking to Abdul Rahman al-Murshid amongst a group of the village people near his house. The gossip was mainly about the high cost of living. Abdul Rahman

said that the price of salt had gone up and therefore the Amir and Salim, one of the Amir's men, had gone to al-Mogaibrah to sell salt there (al-Mogaibrah is the main open market in Riyadh). Abdul Rahman undoubtedly intended this as backbiting.

Some people are reluctant to disclose that they feel hatred for the Amir. Such hatred might have been caused by the way the Amir exploits his authority and influence for his personal interests and those of his relatives as he controls all the leading posts in the village. For he is the Amir of the village and he is the village Mayor (Omdah), the Chairman of the Cooperative Society Board, and the Chairman of the Local Committee. The Amir's relatives have other main posts in the village. His son, who obtained a High School Certificate, was appointed to fill a vacant administrative post in the Emirate. The Amir's parallel cousin Shaikh Abdul Rahman Ibn Rawwaf is the head of the Religious Guidance Centre. He was in the past Vice-Chairman of the Board of the Cooperative Society and he is still a dominant member of its Board as well as that of the Local Committee. Each of his two sons fill two posts at the same time and each post has its separate pay. His son Abdullah is an administrative clerk in the Emirate, a permanent government post, and the accountant of the Cooperative Society, for which he receives a similar salary. His other son Muhammad fills a messenger post in the Community Development Centre and a salesman of the Cooperative Society, from which he receives a higher salary. He does no work in his first post on the ground that it is inappropriate to his social status, but still he gets its monthly salary.

Most of the buildings rented to the Government offices are owned by the Amir directly or indirectly. Besides the Emirate Office Building, which is the property of his son Abdullah, the buildings of the Court, the Dispensary, the Boys' School, the Religious Guidance Centre, and the Kindergarten are all properties of the Amir himself, who leases them to the Government at a high rent. He also used to own the Girls' School building before he sold it at the time of his eldest son's marriage: he probably needed its price to cover the wedding expenses.

Lastly there is a category of poor villagers who feel unhappy towards the Amir, as they are poor and he does not need their insignificant support. On the contrary, they need his favours because he takes part in distributing charity to the poor and decides, in his capacity as Mayor, whether or not a person is eligible to receive a social security pension. Among this category, for instance, is Shabib who was once frustrated because the Amir had not invited him for dinner on the occasion of his son's marriage. He keeps repeating that everything is in the hands of the Shaikhs, "We are poor and therefore, we have no value, for the poor man is brother to a dog".

Some examples will illustrate the sort of behaviour the Amir can adopt without challenge.

Abdul Rahman al-Murshid rebuilt a house, the property of his family; he spent a good sum of money in the hope of renting it as an office to one of the government agencies. But the Amir gave priority to his own properties, rejecting Abdul Rahman's house on the pretext that although it was newly constructed and equipped with modern facilities it was far from the village centre. I heard Abdul Rahman on many occasions express his disappointment.

One of the villagers, a newcomer, built a new house which the Ministry of Health wanted to rent for the village dispensary because it was built with blocks and cement and had the necessary sanitary requirements which are rarely available. But the Amir rejected it under the pretext that it was far away; he wanted to continue renting a house he owns, which is not more than 150 yards away from this new one.

The previous director of the Community Development Centre is an active man who used to carry out his work honestly and strictly. But he is not on good terms with the Amir because he does not want the Amir to interfere in the administrative affairs of the Centre. He asked the Amir's cousin to carry out his duties as a messenger in the Centre. But the Amir refused, for such work was unsuitable to his family's social status. The director, however, insisted on the grounds that they had agreed in principle to have

him appointed to the job, but the Amir and his cousin rejected this, and said they did not realise that the job was that of messenger. Differences developed to the extent that the Amir asked the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs to transfer the director for incompetence, though he was the best person to work in the Centre and came from a large kin group in the village. He was transferred and replaced by another director who is in the hands of the Amir.

The male nurse who is working at present in the village dispensary applied for transfer to a place where he had worked before. But the Amir delayed his transfer on the basis that his replacement used to work in the village but could not get acquainted with its people. But the main reason behind the Amir's move was that the replacement had personal differences with the Amir while the other had rendered services to him in respect of the renting of the house occupied by the dispensary which the Amir owns.

The Ministry of Health requires that the doctor working in the village dispensary should live there. But the doctor's wife (both are Egyptian) could not stand it and so the doctor moved to a flat in Riyadh with the Amir's approval. The Amir approved because the doctor responds to his requests and those of his family in the medical field. In return the Amir signs the allowances' bills which the Ministry of Health pays to the doctor for his residence in the village though he resides in Riyadh.

I have mentioned that the village Amir functions as an Omdah, or mayor, whose post was introduced to the village during the time of King Abdul Aziz. The Amir has acted as an Omdah ever since, thus preventing anyone else from filling the post. Whether the Amir's insistence on retaining this post for himself is because of its monthly salary or because its function competes with those of the Emirate is a matter known only to him. The functions of the Omdah as distinct from those of the Emirate are as follows. They are primarily concerned with local affairs, for example, knowing the residence of every villager, approval of good conduct certificates, and so forth. But such duties lie within the framework of the Emirate authority.

In other words, the Omdah is responsible to the Amir in all matters concerning his work. The distinction is not clearly seen in the village, since the Amir holds the two posts at the same time. Most of the correspondence mentioned in the tables above appear to relate to Omdah's rather than Amir's work.

2. The Shariā' Court

The court plays a significant role in the administration of village affairs, especially in matters relating to religious subjects. The Judge (gadi or shaikh) is the equal of the Amir. He is well respected by the people for his religious status. His social status even precedes that of the Amir as regards appreciation and consideration, because the village people, in general, respect religious men and give them their confidence. Respect for the Amir derives from the power he represents, while respect for the Judge stems from the fact that he personifies the people's religious beliefs. The Amir also pays respect to the Judge; usually if he has private or official business with him he goes to see him in the court, and the Judge can request his presence when court duties require it.

Ten years ago the village had no Shariā' Court and no resident Judge. Cases used to be sent to the Riyadh Shariā' courts (there being no other kinds of court in the Kingdom). Matters relating to marriage, divorce and other enquiries about religious questions, but not necessitating judgments, were dealt with by Imams of Mosques who had some limited religious knowledge, although they were not judges by any means.

In 1964, the court was inaugurated in the village and a Judge appointed. He is responsible for dealing with and deciding on all personal religious matters, and transactions including marriage and divorce, as well as legal matters concerning property sale and purchase. He also pronounces penalties on those who neglect moral codes and those who do not attend daily prayers with others in the Mosque. The Judge in his personal capacity has also other religious duties such as acting as Imam (prayer leader) on Fridays, all 'Eids, and at prayers for rain.

The present judge, who is blind and the bearer of a Shariā College degree, is assisted by an administrative body comprising a recording clerk, a research clerk, a registrar, a summoning clerk, and a messenger.

From an administrative point of view the Court has direct relations with both the Emirate and the Religious Guidance Centre. The Emirate executes whatever judgment is passed by the Court and, if necessary, enforces the appearance of defendants before it. Whereas the Court is responsible for applying Islamic teachings to worship and to various kinds of transactions, the Religious Guidance Centre is concerned with supervision of moral and religious behaviour, such as deviation from moral codes and lack of assiduity in attending the five daily prayers etc., at both the individual and group level. If a person is found in breach, the Religious Guidance Centre reports the fact to the Amir who arrests him or sends him to the Court for punishment. Also if a person is careless about regular prayer during his stay in the village, the Imam of the Mosque nearest his living quarter informs the head of the Religious Guidance Centre who consequently advises and reprimands him. If he still does not attend prayers in the Mosque regularly, especially the night and dawn prayers, the head of the Centre advises the judge, who writes to the Amir to make the arrest; he decides whether the punishment should be imprisonment or reprimand in a form of a number of lashes in a public place; and he orders him to execute the punishment. Reprimand concerns only the Saudi inhabitants of the village; non-Saudi Muslims - there are no Christians in the village - such as the doctor, the male nurse, and the teachers, are supposed to attend prayers in Mosques regularly or else leave the village. It has happened many times that transfers have been demanded for professionals working in the village, on account of their lack of perseverance in prayers.

I once took the liberty of asking the Judge about the legality of flogging those who do not say their prayers in Mosques. His reply was that there is no defined penalty, whether in the Holy Qur'ān or the Hadith or the Sunna. But Almighty God had commanded in the Holy Qur'ān the patient

performance of prayers and the command meant the duty of performance. Also the Prophet Muhammad was about to set fire to houses of those who did not say their prayers in Mosques regularly. The Judge further said that if people were not checked at the Mosques they would stop praying, or if people were given the liberty to say prayers at home it would be impossible to know who were saying prayers and who were not and Mosques would become empty. He added that saying prayers in Mosques provided an opportunity for those praying to see each other, and thereby strengthen their relationships; any one noticed to be absent might be sick or requiring assistance, and his circumstances could be investigated. Nevertheless, Islamic law had not pronounced on the punishment for those who do not attend regularly. But I could not discuss with the judge such a sensitive religious question, for prayers, according to Hadīth, are the pillar of religion.

Leaving aside the work relationship that links the court with the Religious Guidance Centre and the Emirate, we find that the Court, like other government agencies in the village, has very little activity despite the Judge's regular attendance during official working hours. Probably the most active work of the Court is the writing of affidavits relating to the purchase and sale of residential or agricultural property. This could be attributed to two factors already mentioned: the frequency of such transactions following the demolition of many houses for widening the village streets; and the enormous increase in real estate prices in the Kingdom, which lured many investors to invest in village land in the expectation of considerable profits with the expansion of Riyadh City towards the village.

I expressed my wish to the Judge to attend a Court hearing. He told me that suits necessitating hearings were few and there were no complications. The plaintiff has to provide evidence against the defendant, and if the latter denied the allegation the former had to bring witnesses or to accept his oath on the Holy Qur'ān.

During the time of my field work there were only two court hearings. One, which was protracted, I missed because one of the parties was a woman and men could only attend if they were directly concerned. I gathered that

it dealt with maintenance for the children of a divorced couple. The other case, which I did attend, had as subject of the suit the demarcation of an old house, traces of which had disappeared. The two disputing parties were the heirs to the house. The second party alleged that the first party sold a part of the land on which the house was situated before it was demolished in the widening of the village streets.

The court has another duty, issuing certificates, on the Omdah's recommendation, to poor people of the village, declaring them eligible to receive Social Security pensions, or requesting assistance for them from Riyadh Charitable Society.

In addition to the foregoing functions, the Judge in his personal capacity carries out some tasks which are not related to Court work, such as leading the five prayers in the largest Mosque, besides being the Imam for the village on Fridays, 'Eids and other special occasions. Naturally he gets paid for his Imamship. He also carries out religious guidance in the mosque after afternoon prayers each day except Fridays. After his research clerk has read from a religious book on general subjects regarding backbiting, and telling lies, or exhorting the saying of prayers, the Judge gives a talk for some fifteen minutes explaining what has been read. These tasks do not constitute a part of the Court's functions, but the Judge performs them as secondary duties which he gets paid for.

If we leave aside the additional work of the Judge, we find that the official work of the Court is very slight. The Judge has plenty of time to spend in general talk with religious men and village elders who pay regular visits to the Court in order to greet him in appreciation of his religious and social status.

3. Religious Guidance Centre*

Whereas the Emirate represents the Central Authority, and the

* Markaz Haiat al-Amr bi al-Ma'ruf wa an-Nahyi 'an al-Munkar

Court represents the Religious Authority, the Religious Guidance Centre represents religious authority of another kind. At the same time, it has close links with the Emirate and the Court. The Emirate carries out duties of an executive nature and the Court carries out those of a legal nature; what is then the nature of the duties of the Religious Guidance Centre? In order to answer this question we have to review the history of the Religious Guidance movement at national level, and then to review the official position of the Religious Guidance Centre of Iraq.

The term Religious Guidance derives from the Qur'ānic text in which Almighty God addresses Muhammad saying,

Hold to forgiveness; Command what is right; But turn away from the ignorant, 6

and the other where God says,

Let there arise out of you a Band of people inviting to all that is good, enjoying what is right. 7

Religious guidance means commanding people to follow the teaching of Islam in all that concerns individual and community behaviour in respect of regular prayer, fasting during Ramadan and avoidance of prohibited acts; and, forbidding all acts alien to Islamic teaching, such as drinking alcohol and worshipping at tombs and shrines, etc.

It is not easy to discover whether a Committee for such purposes had existed in previous Islamic generations, but the idea of initiating religious guidance machineries can be traced as far back as the Wahhabi reform movement whose rise and connection with the house of Saud we have already mentioned. As a revival of Hanbalism - the fourth and most conservative orthodox school of Islam, and being based on a strict religious puritanism which aims at preaching Islam as it was practised by the Prophet, it claims that the Qur'ānic Commands must be accepted and adhered to without re-interpretation. Therefore, it rejects any sort of innovation that might

6. Yusuf Ali, The Holy Qur-An. Op.cit., p.400.

7. Ibid., p.149.

be a line to the true Islam, such as worshipping of tombs and shrines. For that kind of worship explicitly contradicts the purity of Islam. The Qur'ān plainly declares the uniqueness of God who is the only one to be worshipped in accordance with the principle of the testimony;

"There is no God but Allah".

Subsequently the true believers, who believe in the oneness of God, are called unitarians (muwahhidiyīn). Those who believe in the worshipping of tombs and shrines are called infidels (mushrekyīn). Henceforth, the Wahhabi movement declared that polytheism and infidelity are against the true Islam and obliges the unitarians to fight infidels wherever they are, until they become unitarians in faith and practice.

If a Muslim testifies that there is no God but Allah and that Muhammad is the Apostle of Allah, but continues in his prayers to ask the dead - meaning the saints - for favours and invokes them instead of, or with, God, then he is a polytheist and infidel and his blood is forfeit. 8

Wahhabism gradually became the official creed of the Saudi dynasty. It reached its climax when King Abdul Aziz reformed the organization of the Ikhwan (the brethren) during the process of his unification to the Kingdom. The notion of the Ikhwan organisation owes its initiation to Imam Faisal (1834-65) who aimed at conquering the Bedouin and organizing them by organising them into religiously based fraternities. It reached its peak in 1912 when King Abdul Aziz considered it essential to keep the Bedouin under his control. Although his explicit object was to teach them the practice of Islam according to Wahhabi puritanism, he wanted first of all to keep them under his absolute authority by chaining them to some sort of sedentary life. In order to achieve these goals he allotted to every tribe, or segments of a tribe, a piece of land where sufficient water was available. There tribal Shaiks were to move with members of their tribes. These newly formed Ikhwan organisations were called hijar (sing. hijrah - meaning emigration).⁹ Thus hijrah indicated that those who joined in had emigrated from

8. Ameen Rihani, IBN Sa'oud of Arabia: His people And His Land, (London: Constable & Co.Ltd., 1928), p.249.

9. It seems that this naming derives from the Prophet's emigration from Mecca to Medina in 622 A.D.

the way of life of nomadism and settled to pursue a new style of life and a different pattern of behaviour; settlers had migrated to the world of Islamic salvation where they were taught how to practise the Creed of Islam according to Wahhabism. Some religious preachers (maṭawa', sing. moṭawwa') were sent there to teach the Bedouin the main principles of Islam which most of them knew very little about. But in 1926 some prominent Bedouin leaders started a revolt against the King on the grounds that he was permitting some innovations in the country, like the introduction of automobiles, telegraph, and telephones, which they thought to be alien to Islamic purity. In 1930 the King broke the back of the Ikhwan rebels. Since then it has vanished as a tribally organised religious movement.

Although the Ikhwan revolts claimed religious grounds for legitimising their demands, they were politically motivated. Philby eloquently described the reasons behind the rise and fall of the Ikhwan organisation when he wrote:

Ibn Sa'ud's creation of the Ikhwan movement in 1912, on original lines of his own devising, was a master-stroke of genius: only equalled by his courageous liquidation of the organisation eighteen years later, when it could be nothing but an obstacle to the consolidation of a position which he had built up so patiently and laboriously. The Frankenstein of his own creation would surely have destroyed him, if he had not taken the initiative of destroying it himself.' 10

The Ikhwan organisation was meant to pursue Wahhabi religious reform among the Bedouin tribes of the country. No similar organisation was set up for townsmen and villagers. Therefore, no one can precisely specify how the present Religious Guidance Committees came about. Nevertheless it might be justifiable to relate them to the system of the religious hierarchy of the Kingdom. The Wahhabi movement has been the creed of the successive Emirates of the house of Āl Saud ever since its rise in 1745. It became the official creed on the ultimate establishment of the Kingdom in 1932. Since

10. Philby, Saudi Arabia, op.cit., p.313.

then the King has been regarded as the head of the state politically and religiously. Politically he is the sole person who decides on all matters concerning the state's public affairs, and religiously he is the leader, the Imam,¹¹ who leads his people in all religious ceremonies, for example the pilgrimage and the Eids. In other words, the King fills two traditional roles: that of religious leader (Imam), and head of state and government (King).

Below the King is the group of 'Ulama whose principal figures are among descendants of the Wahhabi family. Their primary concern is to see that the five pillars of Islam are maintained. They seldom meddle in politics. But the King asks their advice whenever he wants to give one of his policies a religious legitimisation. Generally speaking the 'Ulama are responsible for making decisions on religious matters in accordance with the Qur'an and the Sunna since they are usually among the leading judges.

Next to the category of the 'Ulama is another group of religious people known as maṭawa' or nuwwab whose members are prayer leaders and muezzins. Their main duty, as members of this category, is to teach townsmen and villagers how to practise the five Pillars of Islam and to check on those who do not adhere to them. They use mosques for such purposes where the Qur'an and books of Ḥadīth are read and explained. Members of this category were sent to the Hijaz of the Ikhwan to teach the Bedouin the same principles of Islam.

It seems, therefore, that the present form of Religious Guidance Committees have gradually developed as a result of two factors: (1) the complete vanishing of the Ikhwan organisation; (2) the gradual administrative and economic development which followed upon the unification of the country in 1932.

This state religious hierarchy exists side by side with the recent civic administrative organisation which has been dealt with at the beginning

11. The term Imam had been applied to the successive Amirs of Āl Saud who have come to power.

of this chapter. The leading figures of the group of 'Ulama used to be among the descendants of Muhammad Ibn Abdulwahhab. For instance, the successive Grand Muftis were from this family until nearly 1970 when King Faisal abolished that post and appointed the present Minister of Justice who is not related to the Wahhabi family. That courageous move followed the death of the last Grand Mufti. It caused open agitation since ^{members of} the Wahhabi family believe that that post must be preserved for them. Consequently many of them did not go to offer the King their good wishes at the following 'Eid.

But that does not mean that the family has lost its hereditary religious position. Some of its members still hold leading religious posts, such as the two presidencies of the Religious Guidance Committees.

The group of 'Ulama still officially retains its basic characteristics though its structure has changed. Its leading figures are no longer from among the descendants of Muhammad Ibn Abdul Wahhāb. It is a customary routine that the King meets leading personalities among the 'Ulama on Thursday mornings when religious matters concerning the state are discussed. Meanwhile, the 'Ulama are to declare their consent, muba'ya, whenever a new King is to be enthroned, to show their satisfaction that he will govern the country in accordance with the Qur'ān and the Sunna. It is a religious legitimisation to the authority of the newly enthroned King. It is very true that

The religious role of the King within his country, nevertheless, remains unshaken.

But

The increasing dependency of the religious institution on government financial support led to an enduring consequence: the control of the King over the religious institution. 12

This account of the religious hierarchy of the Kingdom might help in understanding the position of the Religious Guidance Committees which were

12. Tareq, Y. Ismael and others, Governments and Politics of the Contemporary Middle East. (Homewood, Illinois: The Dorsey Press, 1970) p.367.

formed during the reign of King Abdul Aziz. These Committees have become organised into two "Presidencies": The Presidency-General for Religious Guidance Committees for the Central and Eastern Regions; and the Presidency-General for Religious Guidance Committees of the Hijaz. Each presidency is presided over by one of the Āl Shaikh, the descendants of Shaikh Muhammad Ibn Abdulwahhab. Each Committee supervises a group of Religious Guidance Centres, which have spread to most cities and villages of Saudi Arabia.

In cities these centres are found in populous localities and commercial districts. The main task of each centre is telling people to say their prayers some fifteen minutes before call for prayers, and supervising those who do not attend prayers after the call. In commercial districts members of each Religious Guidance Centre roam the streets calling for prayers saying loudly:

Pray, pray, may God direct you to the right way, hurry up
for prayers (Ṣallo, ṣallo, hadakum Allah, alḥaqo 'ala aṣ-ṣalah)

Thus owners of shops must close their businesses until prayers are finished. Those who do not close their shops are liable to imprisonment and flogging. In the streets of big cities members of the Religious Guidance Centre move from one place to another walking or riding their pick-up trucks, ordering passers-by and shopkeepers to attend prayers. Frequently members of Religious Guidance Centres arrest shop workers or passers-by on the spot. They also supervise main shopping centres where there is a crowd of men and women in order to stop men, who purposely wander in such places, from chasing women.

In the villages the range of activities of Religious Guidance Centres is less, but they are stricter. In each village the members of its Religious Guidance Centre, being acquainted with the people, find it easy to supervise their conduct. The Religious Guidance Centre in Irqah was established in 1967 by the Presidency-General for Religious Guidance Committees of the Central and Eastern Regions. Before it was established, religious guidance tasks were done on a voluntary basis by villagers of good religious standing. In about 1950 Shaikh 'Umar Ibn Hasan, President-General of the Religious

Guidance Committees of the Central and Eastern Regions, asked Shaikh Abdul Rahman Ibn Rawwaf to preside over the Centre in the village at the head of six members. These had no fixed or regular salary, but for about four years each member received remuneration during Ramadan. Afterwards, each was given a monthly salary of 150 SR, about £13 at that time. Gradually their salary has been increased to 700 SR, or about £85 at present. Shaikh Abdul Rahman Ibn Rawwaf is still the head of the Centre and its members are still the same men who were appointed 27 years ago.

The Religious Guidance Centre consists of a head, six members, and a messenger whose task is to open the Centre during its working times, in addition to making tea and coffee for the members. The Centre has no fixed working hours but its members meet most evenings after prayers and their meetings are longer or shorter according to the number of those accused of neglecting prayers, or acting against religious and moral norms. And if there is no work some members may stay gossiping or drinking tea and coffee. I never saw the Centre open during the daytime.

There is nothing written about the functions of Religious Guidance Centres. In other words, there are no fixed rules specifying their functions. But Shaikh Abdul Rahman, head of the village Centre, told me that its functions can be summarised as follows:

1. Ordering people to attend the five daily prayers and other occasional prayers in the Mosque;
2. Supervision of private parties to ensure that there is no singing or unlawful drinking;
3. Supervision of marriage ceremonies to ascertain as far as possible that men and women do not mingle;
4. Supervision of meetings which might be suspected of leading to unlawful, immoral, or irreligious conduct;
5. Preventing the selling or smoking of cigarettes on the streets.

Now let us look at some of these in more detail, starting with the last. I asked the head of the Centre why non-Saudi Arabs are not strictly prohibited from smoking cigarettes on the street while it is unquestionably prohibited for the villagers. His answer was that the village people accept it and if

some disobeyed he could turn them in the right direction; but as regards foreigners he had no influence over them. Meanwhile, he added that no one has been punished for smoking cigarettes so far.

Cigarettes are not allowed to be sold openly in the village, though the shop connected with the Yemenis working in the Cooperative bakery sells cigarettes secretly. Some strangers in the village smoke on the streets either because they do not care for the people's attitude, or are not aware of it.

The government collects dues on the import of cigarettes, and there is nothing to prohibit its sale or use in the Kingdom. The prohibition in Irqah, and some other villages of Najd, is a relic of the fanaticism of Ikhwan who believed that smoking was equal to drinking and an act of the devil.

The Imam of each mosque is supposed to check the absentees of the locality where his mosque is, especially during night and dawn prayers when more people are likely to be in the village. The Imam or the muezzin of the mosque calls each person's name immediately after the prayer has finished. In case of absence or irregular attendance, the Imam reports the offender to the head of the Centre who subsequently summons him and, if he has no acceptable excuse, gives him advice. If he absents himself again he will be rebuked; and if he repeats his absence, the head of the Centre reports the case to the Judge who then decides on the punishment and asks the Amir to carry it out. Normally punishment would be imprisonment and flogging in a public place, usually at the door of the Friday Mosque. The village people thus attend mosques for prayer either because they are actually pious, or because they want to avoid this punishment, which is a matter for shame, and harmful to personal reputation.

The Bedouin groups living at al-Rimailat and al-Thaharah are not checked for the five daily prayers since there are neither built mosques nor regular Muezzins or Imams. When a prayer time is due one of the elderly Bedouin volunteers to perform the duties of both Muezzin and Imam in places

marked for that purpose. They perform Friday Prayers and other occasional prayers whenever they are.

Non-Saudis living in the village are not exempt from this religious undertaking. If one of them is repeatedly absent from the mosque at prayer time he will be asked to leave the village. Some examples are now given to illustrate other basic duties of the Centre of Religious Guidance.

The head of the Centre summoned one of the villagers, Abdul Rahman, after night prayer and told him that he had not attended the mosque for dawn prayer three times, and asked him to explain. Abdul Rahman professed that he had attended the mosque for the prayers mentioned, but they insisted he had been absent. Finally they rebuked him and warned him not to be absent again. One of the villagers told me that he was imprisoned and flogged but Abdul Rahman denied that.¹³

Muhammad, a Bedouin born in the village, told me that he had the following experiences with the members of the Religious Guidance Centre. Some members were listening to voices at his house, trying to discover what was going on. Muhammad went outside to ask why they were eavesdropping.

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13. Later on the man in question delivered the following poem in which he cursed the members of the Centre:

Last night immediately after dark
I was dragged as if I were an orphan,
I was innocent and faultless
what torture you get oh poor.
I was entered through the door,
and I found five deputies (members of the Centre)
snapping like wolves.
What was the story, what were the reasons,
they said to me you were lazy,
and this behaviour of yours was wrong,
Though you are old and have offspring,
your prayer you did not attend,
This was invention and defamation,
each of them was like a devil,
always causing nastiness to himself.
They said we have an idea and advice for you,
do not be obstinate and stupid,
each day you are dragged
and cause writing and stamping.
Each one of them was like a black insect,
whose heart is polluted and cursed
may he be deranged
as he is hurting people.

They replied that they wanted to find out if there was some sort of prohibited entertainment going on inside. He told them that there was nobody with him but his cousins who happened to be visiting. But they were not convinced and asked him to let them enter. He then allowed them in; they found nothing except his relatives and some cigarettes.

On another occasion the Amir and his men raided Muhammad's house on the complaint of neighbours that he was having a drinking and hookah-smoking party. Having entered the house and searched it, they found nothing except cigarettes. Being innocent he demanded from the Amir the name of the person or persons who had slandered him, or otherwise he would fight him and his men for not respecting the esteem of his house. The Amir told him that he had done so in response to information from his neighbour.

Again, Abdul Rahman, who was working as a member of the Centre on behalf of his ailing father, was listening at the door of Muhammad's house to discover whether he was having a drinks party. Muhammad looked, by chance, from one of his windows and saw Abdul Rahman listening near the door. He poured some hot water on him and made him run away.

A Jordanian working in Riyadh lived in the village with his wife who was a teacher at the girls' school. He was absent from Dawn prayer. The Muezzin informed him of the need to attend the gathering. Having failed to do so regularly, the head and other members of the Centre came to his house at about 9 p.m. He said he had been sick and going out for dawn prayer might affect his health. The head of the Centre said that he knew that he had been sick but did not want him to get a bad reputation for not attending the dawn prayer. He replied that if it could be proved he was sick they should forgive him. One of the members told him not to try to deceive them, for he was going to work in Riyadh every morning, and went on to say if he did not go to prayers regularly, particularly at dawn, they would ask for his transfer from the village. The Jordanian replied that he would transfer himself first. Finally the head of the Centre said he accepted the excuse and hoped that God would make him recover. But the member who had been suspicious

about his sickness added that the matter was not so easy. So the Jordanian applied for his wife to be transferred to one of the Riyadh schools, hoping to move there with the beginning of the new school year.

The head and members of the Centre got to know that the Yemeni who operated the bakery shop of the Cooperative Society sold cigarettes secretly. They summoned him to the Centre three times. On the first two occasions they advised him not to sell cigarettes, but the third time they ordered him not to. He brought to their attention the fact that cigarettes are sold throughout the Kingdom with no restriction whatsoever. But they told him that they considered cigarettes to be prohibited and made him sign an undertaking not to sell them in the village, especially to children.

These situations reflect the main functions of the Religious Guidance Centre. The Centre's activities are few because most of the villagers attend to their religious obligations. The members of the Religious Guidance Centre consider that they exercise direct religious control over the conduct of the villagers to ensure that religious rites are performed satisfactorily. They try to have the appearance of devout religious men by wearing long beards, by punctuating their talk with texts from the Holy Qur'ān, sayings of the Prophet, or thanks to God. They consider radio and television as harmful innovations which must be left aside. Each carries a heavy stick during working times as a threat to those who do not adhere to their orders, especially orders to pray at the fixed times at the mosques. Although the villagers are religious and respect their religion, most of them dislike the members of the Religious Guidance Centre because they are not doing their work for the sake of heaven, but as an official duty. Perhaps the youth of the village, particularly, dislike them, because they believe that the concepts of religion are acquainted only with shallow aspects of Islam, and that their ideas are alien to those of true religion. Nevertheless, everyone in the village fears the influence of the members of the Centre.

These three administrative organisations, the Emirate, the Court, and the Religious Guidance Centre, collaborate horizontally in administering the public affairs of the village. They are not hierarchically arranged. For instance, the Emirate executes orders of the Court and the Religious Guidance Centre. On the other hand, the Court and the Religious Guidance Centre undertake, each in its terms of reference, whatever questions are referred to them by the Emirate. These administrative bodies are not connected with each other technically, for the Emirate is administratively connected with Riyadh Emirate and the Court is linked to the Ministry of Justice, whereas the Religious Guidance Centre is tied with the Presidency-General for Religious Guidance Committees of the Central and Eastern Regions. Thus their collaboration is within the framework of their functions in the village.

It is true that the Emirate has wider responsibilities than the other two administrative bodies due to the fact that its duties include those of the police and the Omodiah. Further, the Amir is the chairman of the Local Committee and the Board of Directors of the Cooperative Society. Accordingly he is more influential than the Judge and the head of the Religious Guidance Centre. But that should not lead to the assumption that he takes precedence over the Judge. On the contrary, the Judge is more respected and appreciated than the Amir due to his religious status. Therefore, it is always the Judge who summons the Amir to come to the Court whenever his presence is needed, and not the other way around. Also the villagers always pay cordial visits to the Judge in the Court while their visits to the Amir are necessitated by official duties apart from occasional visits, e.g. on the occasion of 'Eids.

On the other hand, the head of the Religious Guidance Centre has neither an influential status like the Amir nor a respected status like the Judge. Evidently he is a prominent figure, but he does not have an equal prestige to that of the Amir and the Judge since his authority is confined to religious supervision, the sanction of which has to be approved by the Judge and carried out by the Amir.

4. The Community Development Centre

In the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia Community development is carried out through local Community Development Centres. Each Centre serves a village or a group of neighbouring villages. Programmes of community development were introduced to the country in 1960. The Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs established a Community Development Centre in Irqah in 1961; it is in fact an extension of the services of Diryah Centre though it is administratively independent. My concern with the Centre is twofold. The first is to demonstrate the sort of services it has accomplished since its establishment, and the second is to discuss the villagers' relations to it and its services.

The Centre's services are rendered through cooperation of three specialised units constituting its staff. These units are:

1. Social Unit consisting of a director and male and female social workers.
2. Cultural Unit consisting of an expert in adult education.
3. Health Unit comprising a general practitioner, sanitary expert, female nurse, (the general practitioner belongs to the village dispensary).
4. Agricultural Unit consisting of an agricultural expert.

In the field of social services, the Centre, with the help of its social unit's staff as well as that of other social experts of the Ministry concerned, has brought about the formation of local organisations for the purpose of studying and carrying out projects of development. Perhaps the most important of all is the "Local Committee" (which used to be called the "Village Council")¹⁴ The Local Committee, whose function will be examined later on,¹⁵ has in fact brought about useful projects. Among the other organisations, which the Centre helped to establish in the village, is the Cooperative Society which has been a successful project socially and economically

14. Such local organisation has been introduced to villages that have a Community Development Centre. The name Village Council was changed to Local Committee after a village Council's chairman sent a cable to his Majesty King Faisal without reference to the village Amir, because terms of references for these Councils were not defined. R.M.King Faisal, having been informed about them, ordered that their names were to be changed to Local Committees in 1971.

15. See section on Leadership, p.236.

As for cultural services, only a Rural Club was formed for the village youth. Apart from that there are no other organised programmes of entertainment for the village youth except for very simple games; e.g., running, or the ceremonies of 'Eids and Marriages. Although adult education is a main objective of community development, the Centre provides no programmes for male adult education. The only educational facilities available is a small library which is poor in the number and quality of its books. However, it is always closed.

In the field of health services, the Centre has participated in spreading health awareness among the villagers, especially as regards insect control, filling up leaky drainage pits, and replacing old latrines with sanitary ones.

Finally the Centre has done nothing in the field of agricultural services in spite of the fact that such services are among its main ends. There is neither an agricultural advisor nor any other means for providing them.

Perhaps the most active work of the Centre at present concerns the Women's House (dār al-fatāt) and the Nursery (dār al-ḥaḍanāh) which were opened in 1968. The Women's House aims at training village women in proper housekeeping from social and hygienic aspects; enlightening the village mothers on proper methods of bringing up children; reassuring the women about the importance of their role in the household; improving the standard of living of the family through encouraging women's activities and organising family budgets; strengthening the relationships between the Centre and the village homes; and educating the village women in religious teachings, housekeeping, and dressmaking.

These educational activities of the Women's House are organised in a two-year course under the supervision of a female social worker residing in Riyadh. The table below shows the amount of participation in this programme.

TABLE 24: SHOWING THE NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS

<u>Course</u>	<u>68-70</u>	<u>70-72</u>	<u>72-74</u>	<u>Total</u>
Participants	15	13	37	65
Withdrawals	3	6	11	20

The Nursery is an extension to the social services of the Cooperative Society, which pays its entire cost, including food and the special clothing for children, against a token subscription of 3 SR, about 40p, per month for each child. In 1974, 47 children were using it. The purposes of the Nursery are to prepare children for the school atmosphere and develop their interest in school through providing them with preliminary principles of reading, writing and arithmetic; to develop their personalities properly through satisfying their childhood needs; to look after their health by instilling healthy habits and the principles of general cleanliness; to prepare them in the principles of religion and the social conditions of the community.

Most of these activities of the Centre were introduced during its first year; thereafter new development projects slowed down until 1968 when the Women's House and the Nursery were opened with the financial help of the Cooperative Society.

In order to understand the relationships between the villagers and the Centre, and their attitude towards it, one cannot escape evaluating its activities in general. The Centre has not been able to achieve the objectives of community development. There are various reasons for this. The villagers misunderstand the meaning and aims of community development, and are not fully aware why the Centre is there. They conceive it as a government agency which does not differ from other government agencies - especially if one takes into account the Amir's influence over its staff and its activities. Undoubtedly the Centre has brought about new local organisations, like the Local Committee. But even the members of the Committee do not understand what is meant by community development, and have a limited conception of its purpose.

More important is that villagers are extremely conservative to the extent that they do not trust concepts unfamiliar to them or they do not understand. For instance the word "social" (ijtima'i) is a strange concept and consequently the term "social development" does not mean anything to them.

As far as the improvement of their lot is concerned, the villagers believe in quick, tangible results: they are interested in the affairs of today without giving concern to tomorrow's world. Accordingly they repeat that they have got nothing real from the Centre, ma shfna minba al-markaz shai min ja'endana. Dependence of the villagers on the government makes them reluctant to pay any sort of token participation for the Centre's projects. Although its projects are directed towards the improvement of the village conditions, they think that the government should sponsor all its financial needs like other government agencies, such as the schools.

These are but some of the factors which explain the villagers' response to the services of the Centre. From another angle, the Centre has disappointed them in two ways. The first is that its technical and administrative staff is not adequate to carry out its activities in an integrated fashion. At present the Centre is in desperate need of a male social worker, of agricultural and adult education experts and administrative clerks. Thus most of its activities are retarded. The second is that its present staff are neither enthusiastic nor responsible about their duties, as some and often all of them absent themselves from work during office hours. The only people attending their work regularly are the messenger and the watchman who always take over from each other. The messenger keeps saying

I am the director, the clerks, and the messenger. I open the door during hours of official work and close it when it is over.

Furthermore the door is mostly closed during afternoon periods despite the fact that some of the villagers, particularly the youth, want to use its library and its club during their spare time. What makes the situation even worse is that the present director of the Centre lives in Riyadh, and does not attend his work regularly, being on good terms with the village Amir.

Women have only a limited interest in the Centre's activities. The female social worker (when she is available) and the visiting nurse are Egyptian and differ from the village women in many respects, particularly the way they dress, their dialect, and many habits. These differences constitute an obstacle that makes the village women reluctant to accept their advice because they are strangers and because they do not strictly observe religious teachings on proper veiling and on contact with men. Most of the village men do not appreciate having these female employees of the Centre getting in touch with their women-folk, as they consider them more harmful than useful, because they alert their minds to things they should not know. One of the leading villagers told me he did not want any of the female workers to visit his family because:

"they do not veil and cover themselves properly, and therefore, their harm is immeasurable".

The female social worker considers that the village women are reluctant to join the Women's House for two reasons. Firstly, the men do not want their wives to have any knowledge or education, but much prefer them to stay at home. Secondly, some of them refuse to pay the token subscription for the materials needed to teach dressmaking and cookery. An educated man passed comment on the Centre's activities by saying "close the centre". It has not so far fulfilled the objectives for which it was established.

5. The Cooperative Society

The village multi-purpose Cooperative Society was established in 1962 with a capital of 16,720 SR, about £1,370, consisting of the participation of 55 shareholders at the rate of 10 SR, about £1.20 per share. Its capital increased gradually as a result of the villagers' demand on its shares after a period of doubt concerning its objectives, which reached the stage of consulting the village judge about its legality from a religious point of view.

The Cooperative Society is the only flourishing project which the Community Development Centre has introduced. It has been successful economically and socially. It has made many everyday commodities readily

TABLE 25: SHOWING BUDGETS OF THE COOPERATIVE SOCIETY TO 1971

Fiscal Year	1962/63	1963/64	1964/65	1965/66	1966/67	1967/68	1968/69	1969/70	1970/71
Membership	55	77	92	134	145	182	188	190	200
Stock Capital	16,720	20,000	22,950	31,400	33,660	41,000	42,360	42,750	44,640
Reserve	5,000	6,009	7,034	8,847	24,754	33,575	47,010	55,517	58,375
Building Properties	-	-	12,865	25,702	21,520	21,568	43,479	49,776	52,986
Social Services	504	5,408	9,705	12,121	15,251	17,877	18,777	17,950	21,963
Purchases	84,841	86,183	96,599	125,451	138,169	151,426	188,580	183,075	176,516
Sales	78,955	730,005	103,479	136,422	153,505	168,743	192,537	181,823	182,821
Surplus	5,707	5,075	5,964	9,000	12,000	13,790	14,814	14,300	15,978
Reserved Capital	26,767	36,493	45,693	64,476	88,283	108,803	126,786	132,433	142,485
Expenditures from the Fund of Services	-	2,000	2,000	4,000	6,500	7,200	9,477	19,598	19,898

available, such as food, clothing, paraffin and cement. It has engaged in social services: for example, it has met the financial needs for maintenance of mosques; it has sponsored the maintenance of public ablutions; contributed to health projects such as the installation of new latrines in some houses; distributed zākāt among the poor and the needy of the villagers; aided financially some of the villagers, shareholders and others, in cases of accident, disability or marriage; and sponsored the Community Development Centre's requirements for the Nursery and the Women's House.

From the nature of these services it seems that the main factor behind the success of the Cooperative Society is its economic benefits which are visible to the villagers. These economic benefits have encouraged them to join, and also to purchase their household needs. The society also offers the following facilities: it sells at Riyadh retail prices, which saves the villagers time and ares. It offers credit for a year or more. And, of course, the customers participate in the profits.

Although the villagers are aware of its usefulness, they are conscious of its problems and they criticise it openly. To begin with its management is monopolised by the village Amir and his relatives. He has been Chairman of its Board of Directors since it was established, and his cousin was its vice-chairman until recently. He alone chose the members of its Board of Directors, whose composition has hardly changed.

Members of the Board of Directors in 1974 were:

- | | |
|---|---------------|
| 1. Muhammed Ibn Rawwaf, the Village Amir, | Chairman |
| 2. Abdul Rahman al-Murshid | Vice-Chairman |
| 3. Salih al-Murshid | Secretary |
| 4. Abdul Rahman bin Shabib | Treasurer |
| 5. Muhammed al-Husain | Member |
| 6. Abdul Rahman Ibn Rawwaf | Member |
| 7. Abdul Rahman al-Zuhair | Member |

This is the original board, except that Abdul Rahman al-Zuhair has replaced Muhammed al-Rusaimi who resigned as he was dissatisfied with the way its business was run; and that Abdul Rahman Ibn Shabib has replaced the previous treasurer whose post was transferred to Riyadh. The only other change that has taken place is that Abdul Rahman al-Murshid has become vice-

chairman instead of Abdul Rahman al-Rawwaf, who has continued as a member. Apart from the treasurer these are all at the same time the members of the Local Committee.

The Amir used his influence in appointing his cousin's sons to the posts of accountant and salesman of the Cooperative Society, though each of them also fills a government post. The accountant, who is also a clerk in the village Emirate, alone handles purchases. There used to be a Purchasing Committee consisting of two members of the Board of Directors. But this Committee's functions have been suspended since the resignation of one of its members who could not get along with the other members of the Board. The salesman, who also occupies a messenger's post, belongs to the Community Development Centre, but does not observe regular opening hours. Though the villagers get annoyed, they cannot do anything about it. A few of them did complain to the Amir, but he paid no attention. One villager expressed his agitation by saying :

The group (the villagers) are dissatisfied, but they all say they do not want to open their mouths, since the salesman is the Amir's cousin and the Amir is the Chairman.

Another problem is that some people, originally from the village but now living permanently in Riyadh, are shareholders of its capital merely for the profits.

Prices are fixed according to prices in Riyadh, but they ought to be lower for two reasons. The first is that goods are purchased wholesale, and the second is that the Cooperative Society does not pay rent for the premises it occupies, as they were obtained free of charge with the permission of the Central Government. In Riyadh, on the contrary, retailers pay high rent for their shops. Thus the prices of the Cooperative Society are relatively high, especially when we consider that its main objective is to supply the needs of the villagers at low cost without consideration of profit.

On the other hand, the Cooperative Society has affected the business of other small shops, not because their prices are higher, but because of

its credit system and the financial return of its share profits.

The Social Services Fund of the Cooperative Society has sponsored minor projects, and pays out charity and annual zākāt. But the revenues of such services are in fact accumulated from the following sources: yearly foundational aid from the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs differing from one year to another; yearly services aid from the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs which also differ from one year to another; yearly aid for the cost of its bookkeeping amounting to 7,047 SR, about £830, paid by the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs; and yearly aid from ARAMCO amounted to 24,000 SR, about £2,824 for the year 1974. This aid was neither added to the Cooperative Society's budget nor included in its accounts. Prior to that year its sum was 15,000 SR, about £1,767. Although I was not able to acquaint myself with the exact date of this aid, it was initiated by ARAMCO upon a request from the Cooperative's Board of Directors for the purpose of its social services fund.

Thus, if one estimates the total amount of these aids and what the Society spent, one finds that the actual amount spent on the social services was far less. For example, the above table shows that the sum the Society spent on the social services during its fiscal year 1970/71 was only 19,898 SR, about £2,340, which was in fact less than the aid of ARAMCO alone. More important, there was no precise supervision of its bookkeeping except that its accounts were audited by unqualified clerks of the Directorate of Cooperations of the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs. For instance, its accounts for the fiscal year 1971/72 were not settled for unknown reasons. Consequently this fiscal year's budget was included in the fiscal year 1972/73 without clarification. For that particular reason, I have not included its budget for these two years in the above reckoning.

In spite of all these defects villagers are very interested in dealing with it. They are however ignorant about the way it is administered and its financial procedures. They do not know why it has not distributed interests or dividends among shareholders for three years.

6. Leadership

I now look at the position of the Amir and of leadership in the village as it appears through the operation of one of the most important committees.

One form of leadership represents itself in Communities whose members exercise the right of choosing their leaders. It is different in Irqah since its leaders (Amirs) successively inherited its Emirate; and since the present Amir is appointed by the Central Government. His appointment to the Emirate was due to the fact that there was no real competition from the Hilalāt family in 1944 after the death of the last Amir in that line.

Nevertheless I will use the concept of leadership as defined by Gerth and Mills, as:

...a relation between leader and led in which the leader influences more than he is influenced: because of the leader, those who are led act or feel differently than they otherwise would. As a power relation, leadership may be known to both leader and led, or unknown to either or both; it may be close-up or long-distance; it may occur at a single crossroad in the lives of both, or only in the life of the follower, after the leader is long dead; it may affect only a momentary decision, or it may dominate the life of the led. 16

From the previous sections the dominant position of the Amir and the Judge is evident. Indeed the authority and influence of the Amir and the respected religious authority of the Judge have, until recently, prevented any new kind of leadership from emerging or affecting the public life of the village. Their role derives from their position as instituted leaders.¹⁷ But this should not imply that the village lacks any other manifestation of local leadership. Its social structure has been changing, and giving rise to leadership from a new quarter, connected with the existence of new government posts. These posts, particularly the administrative ones, lend their incumbents a prominent social status since they represent the central authority and have connection with it.¹⁸ Moreover the income from government

16. Gerth and Mills, Character and Social Structure, *op.cit.*, p.405.

17. The instituted leader is the one who applies sanctions against those who fail to meet instituted expectations. *Ibid.*, p.416.

18. See Chapter IV, pp. 109-13.

posts is continuous and, particularly during the last five years or so, sufficient. As such it provides an opportunity for devotion to other activities not related to earning a living.

In this section I take a close look at the "Local Committee", which is the main vehicle for the proposal and implementation of plans and ideas for innovation in the village and it best reveals the nature of the direct and organised leadership in the village.

The first meeting of the Committee which was a product of the Community Development Centre, was held in 1966. But I could not discover how its members had been selected. The present director of the Community Development Centre told me that he thought selection had taken place at a meeting at the Centre, but he was not sure, since there is nothing in the Committee's minutes to prove it. He also said that the Amir alone decided on the membership. Many villagers testified that they never knew about any meeting being held to select Committee members. They say too that they have never been conversant with its work or the resolutions it makes. All they know is that the Amir chooses the members he likes without reference to anyone. Meanwhile, some described it as a "private committee", while others have said "it is a secret committee".

Nor could I find out with any accuracy how the Committee is organised or the nature of its work. All it was possible to discover was that it discusses some village matters during meetings which are held at no specified times of the month or year. After members reach agreements on the items of the agenda they form sub-committees to carry out what can be done locally, while the Amir submits to the authorities concerned decisions that have to be followed up elsewhere.

Although Committee members should be selected every two years no significant change has occurred since its first meeting, as is clear from the following lists.

First Membership of the Local Committee, (1966 to 1969)

<u>Name</u>	<u>Nature of Membership</u>	<u>Occupation</u>
1. M. Ibn Rawwaf	Chairman	Amir and Mayor
2. A. Ibn Rawwaf	Vice-Chairman	Head of R.G.C.
3. M. Ibn Husain	Member	Deputy Head of R.G.C.
4. A. al-Zuhair	Member	Farmer
5. A. al-Murshid	Member	Clerk in C.D. Centre
6. M. al-Rsaimi	Member	Headmaster of Boys' School
7. A. Ibn Du'ayyan	Member	Farmer
8. S. Ibn Mubarak	Member	Clerk in C.D. Centre
9. F. al-Harabi	Secretary	Director of C.D. Centre

This membership continued until 1969. In that year Salih al-Murshid became secretary, and Abdulla al-Zuhair and 'Esa Ibn Du'ayyan, a teacher at the village Boys' School, became new members. But 'Esa states that he does not remember being nominated, or attending any meeting. Anyhow, this change was operative for one meeting only. Although another change took place in the same year, it was not registered in the minutes until 1972.

Third Membership of the Local Committee (1972 to 1974)

<u>Name</u>	<u>Nature of Membership</u>	<u>Occupation</u>
1. M. Ibn Rawwaf	Chairman	Amir and Mayor
2. A. al-Murshid	Vice-Chairman	Clerk in C.D. Centre
3. M. Ibn Husain	Member	Deputy Head of R.G.C.
4. A. Ibn Rawwaf	Member	Head of R.G.C.
5. A. al-Zuhair	Member	Farmer
6. A. Ibn Shabib	Member	Clerk in C.D. Centre
7. S. al-Murshid	Member	Clerk in C.D. Centre
8. M. al-'Ishaiwi	Secretary	Social Worker C.D. Centre

The only difference in membership is that Abdul Rahman Ibn Rawwaf became a member, and Abdul Rahman al-Murshid replaced him in the Vice-Chairmanship. As regards Sa'ad Ibn Mubarak, he used to work for the Community Development Centre before he was transferred to other work out-

side the village. Besides that Abdulla Ibn Du'ayyan and Muhammad al-Rsaimi were replaced by Salih al-Murshid and Abdul Rahman Ibn Shabib. Ibn Du'ayyan was always opposing the Committee resolutions and so he was not advised of its meetings; and al-Rsaimi, the headmaster, did not attend any meeting at all after 1972; he resigned his membership of the Local Committee and the Board of Directors of the Cooperative Society, because he disapproved of the way the meetings of both organisations were conducted.

Committee membership, as is seen from these lists, is taken from among the prominent people of the village with government posts. Thus none of the ordinary villagers has been a member. All its permanent members are from among the Gabīliyīn sector namely Āl Rawwaf, Āl-Murshid, Āl Husain, and Āl Zuhair. Only two members from among the Khadīriyīn were nominated to its first membership. They were M.al-Rsaimi and Ibn Du'ayyan, the former resigned and the latter was replaced by one of his relations, 'Esa Ibn Du'ayyan, for one meeting only. The others are advisory members who, therefore, attend Committee meetings for consultation.

The Committee is mainly concerned with the village affairs such as the repair of mosques and roads, and filling up old wells, etc. The minutes of its first meeting will acquaint the reader with the nature of its work and the way it is conducted.

First Meeting (2.1.1387) 1967.

Agenda

1. A request to the Cooperative Society to carry out some projects from its social services fund.
2. Repairs to the street of the Cooperative Society.
3. Finding out what action has been taken regarding some previous projects.
4. Presentation of some activities of the Centre.

Minutes of the Meeting

At eleven o'clock /sunset timing which is still used in the country, equivalent to approximately 5.30 p.m./ on Thursday 2.1.1387 /1967/ in the Community Development Centre, a meeting of the Village Council /the Local Committee/ was held, presided over by its Chairman Shaikh Muhammad Ibn Rawwaf, in the presence of Fahmi 'Eid, the Director of the Centre, Abdul Rahman al-Murshid, Muhammad al-Husain, Abdul Rahman al-Zuhair, and Abdul Rahman Ibn Rawwaf.

Muhammad al-Rsaimi, Abdul Rahman al-Du'ayyan, and Sa'ad al-Murbarak apologised for absence /the first two members were the ones who did not acknowledge the Committee's meeting/.

As the meeting was legitimate, the following resolutions were adopted.

Resolutions

Firstly, it had become apparent to the Council that some places needed some sort of maintenance such as:

1. Sidrah place
2. Tala'at al-Sibayyil

Since most of the members of the Council are members of the Board of the Cooperative Society they stated that they would have no objection to carrying out the required maintenance provided that if the benefits of the project were limited, then the Cooperative Society would participate with not more than 25% of the cost, and the beneficiaries and the neighbours should pay the remainder. But if the benefits were of public nature, then the Cooperative Society would pay the largest possible percentage. Accordingly A. al-Murshid had been asked to contact the beneficiary from the first project and assess their contribution and the cost of the project. As regards the second project the Cooperative Society would pay the cost of the earth required for filling the road and the neighbours should pave and spray same. A. al-Zuhair undertook to carry out paving and spraying.

3. Shaikh A. Ibn Rawwaf suggested purchasing a tent and tarpaulin to be used during pilgrimage seasons and to be kept at other times in the Centre's warehouse. Those attending the meeting discussed the suggestion and realised that that would facilitate the villagers gathering in one place during the pilgrimage. As the suggestion was accepted, it was agreed to obtain the consent of the Cooperative Society concerning the purchase of these items from its social services' fund.

4. The director of the Centre drew the attention of the Council to the existence of a number of wells near the water taps together with some swamp around the place. Those who attended the meeting were unanimously enthusiastic for dealing with the matter. It was decided that the sanitary expert, the Director of the Centre and the Chairman of the Council should make the necessary study to it and submit its cost to the Board of the Cooperative Society.

5. The Council discussed a project for maintaining the street of the Cooperative Society so that it could become a passage and an important entrance for passers-by. The Chairman of the Council pointed out that it would be easy to pave this street if the owners of the houses adjacent to it were told to stop their drainage from passing over it. The village council requested the village Amir (who is the Chairman of the Council) to take the necessary official action not to allow owners of the houses adjacent to let their drainage pass over the street thus causing damage to it so that its maintenance could be carried out at the expense of the Cooperative Society.

6. It was decided to form a sub-committee of the Council to examine the condition of house maintenance, and submit a list of those houses to be repaired at the expense of the Cooperative Society. The sub-committee was to be made up of Shaikh Muhammad Ibn Husain and the Director of the Centre.

7. The Council requested its chairman to contact the Municipality of Riyadh, asking it to open a Municipality office in the village.

8. The Council recommended that the Municipality of Riyadh was to be entrusted with lighting the village streets as well as carrying out installation of the necessary wiring.

As other articles of the Agenda had been discussed in the first item, and as the members had enough to discuss, Minutes of the Council was closed. The meeting was adjourned at 12 sunset (6.30 p.m.)

Chairman	Secretary	Members
M.al-Rawwaf	Director of the Centre	M.Husain A.al-Rawwaf A.al-Zuhair

"Copied from the Minutes of the Local Committee".

Some of the members' names were not written

It may be questioned whether the Local Committee thus constituted is representative of the villagers whom it serves, whether the decisions it makes are satisfactory to the villagers, and whether the villagers are in a position to voice disapproval of its members' resolutions.

In fact, the Local Committee is not representative of the actual local interests for some very apparent reasons, which may be summarised as follows:

1. The members of the Committee are not members elected to represent the wishes of all, or the majority, of the villagers;
2. The membership represents only a very small minority of the villagers and rests on the basis of family consideration;
3. The majority of the members of the Committee are all affinally related Gabiliyin and consider themselves the leading elite;
4. The educated men who were selected to the Committee membership resigned their membership out of disapproval;
5. Committee members are not in a position to express their points of view because the Amir alone runs its discussions, and makes its decisions according to his own discretion;
6. The villagers neither know what is being discussed in the Committee meetings nor the nature of the resolutions it adopts.

Taking these considerations into account we find that the Committee does not by any means represent the actual village interests either in the way it is organised or in the decisions it makes.

The meetings of the Local Committee are held at the Amir's behest whenever he wants to discuss matters for which he needs the approval of the Committee members. He asks the director of the Centre to convene a meeting and he chooses agenda items, of which the members are given inadequate notice. During the meetings the Amir gives no opportunity for others to

speak unless he wants someone to support his proposal; he makes decisions in accordance with his own wishes, knowing that the rest of the Committee members will not oppose and he asks for sub-committees to be convened to follow up some matters in ways he finds appropriate.

Among the members is an illiterate, who attends without speaking or expressing opinions; his presence is for the sake of the quorum and all he does is to put his seal on the minutes. There are others who can hardly read and write, and need to be shown where to sign; their attendance is only a matter of attesting to their presence, for they understand little of the discussions. The remaining members are officials of the Community Development Centre due to their knowledge of reading and writing, though their participation in Committee discussions is only to support the Amir. Others who are not official members of the Committee, viz. the director of the Centre, the sanitary expert, and the dispensary doctor, attend the meetings only for consultation; they have no right of voting or decision-making. It is for considerations such as these that educated people of the village find it difficult to carry on their membership.

The villagers know nothing about the meetings because they are not kept informed by the Emirate or the Community Development Centre. On the other hand, since the Amir is its Chairman, most of the villagers conceive that the Committee's function is simply an extension of the Emirate's, which is not their concern. Such a conception of the Committee is held among the illiterates and the poor, who consider themselves not in a position to be interested in such matters. By the same token some villagers consider their residence in the village as temporary for they are not tied to it any more than they are to Riyadh where they work or do business. As such they are not concerned with the Committee or its decisions. There is only a very small minority of the educated people among villagers who fill government posts either within the village or in Riyadh. They see themselves in disagreement with the members of the Committee who are dominated by the Amir, who uses the village interests for the purpose of forwarding his own.

A new challenge to the Amir's leadership has been seen in the recent dissension over a piece of land in the village called al-Musta'jilah. The Amir is no longer left alone to decide and execute whatever he likes; the villagers, mainly those who are originally from the village, seem to be waiting for an opportunity to challenge his influence. Indeed al-Musta'jilah gave the educated people the chance to organise most of the villagers to demonstrate their challenge to the Amir and the Committee members.

Al-Musta'jilah is the name of a piece of land purchased as speculation by Abdul Rahman and Salih al-Murshid a long time ago. It is situated at the west end of the village, where they were unable to realise their hopes of selling it for a profitable sum. They let the Amir and his cousin, Abdul Rahman al-Rawwaf, head of the Religious Guidance Centre, share in the ownership, hoping that the Amir would try to make it the site for a government project.

The village needed a graveyard and the Amir, as a partner in al-Musta'jilah, offered to sell it to the Government; but the Grand Mufti of the Kingdom rejected it on the pretext that the site was unsuitable for a graveyard. This did not prevent the Amir from once again trying to sell the land to the Government - this time to house a public utility. He found a favourable opportunity when the Ministry of Pilgrimage and Wakfs, which is responsible for the construction and maintenance of mosques, approved the purchase of a piece of land to be utilised as an 'Eid Mosque. He called a Committee meeting to sanction the choice of al-Musta'jilah for the purpose. He was sure that the Committee members would approve because the powerful majority of them were partners in it: the Amir himself, his cousin Abdul Rahman Ibn Rawwaf, Abdul Rahman and Salih al-Murshid, and the other members were affinally related to al-Rawwaf and al-Murshid. The minutes of this meeting read as follows:

In the Name of God the Merciful the Compassionate
Minutes of the Meeting of the Local Committee

AGENDA

1. Discussions of the previous agenda and approval thereof.
2. Discussions of the subject of selecting a site for the 'Eid Mosque.

3. Other new duties.

Place: Community Development Centre

Time: Four o'clock p.m. Saturday 24/1/94 (1974)

Members of the Local Committee held a meeting presided over by its Chairman, Vice-Chairman, A. al-Murshid, secretary of the Director of the Centre, M. al-'Ishaiwi, the Sanitary expert, F. Sofar, and membership of Shaikh A. al-Rawwaf, Shaikh M. al-Husain, Shaikh A. al-Zuhair, and S. al-Murshid. A. Ibn Shabib had apologised for absence due to his study commitment. Since the quorum of six members of the original seven members is complete, the present members started discussing the above mentioned agenda as follows.

1. The secretary of the meeting read the minutes of the previous meeting to which the members gave their approval.
2. The Chairman of the meeting submitted for discussion the subject of seeking a suitable site for the 'Eid Mosque to be immune from passers-by and animals etc. so that those offering prayers could perform their rites comfortably whether on the occasion of the two 'Eids or at prayers for rain. As a number of members had looked for a suitable site and decided to choose the land called al-Musta'jilah due to its spacious area and its proximity to the village, the Committee recommended that the project of opening a street, previously planned by the City Planning Office, which will begin from the Wadi in the east passing through Tala'at al-Sibayyil up to the afore-mentioned land, should be accelerated for the land has the required advantages including the proximity, large area, high level, and the number of streets. Therefore, the members recommended submission to the authority concerned for surveying and purchasing the land as well as the following up of the implementation of the project of the street leading to the land in order to become suitable for the 'Eid Mosque.
God is generous.

(Signatures)

Chairman of the Committee

Muhammad al-Rawwaf

Vice-Chairman

Abdul Rahman

al-Murshid

Secretary

Muhammad al-'Ishaiwi

Members

Salih al-Murshid

Muhammad al-Husain

Abdul Rahman al-Rawwaf

Abdul Rahman al-Zuhair

(Copied from the records of the Local Committee Meeting)

From these minutes it is clear that the meeting was purposely held to approve the choice of al-Musta'jilah as the site of the proposed Eid Mosque. The Amir, chairman of the Committee, asked for approval so that he could inform the authorities that the choice had been made by the Committee members as the leading personalities of the village, not by the Amir alone. In fact a letter had already been written to this effect to the Ministry of Pilgrimage and Wakfs in which the Amir informed the Ministry about the procedure taken by the Committee members.

Actually most of the villagers vehemently opposed the Committee's decision

once they learned about it. The affair of al-Musta'jilah divided the village people into three groups: those who favoured the decision, namely the Amir, his cousin A. al-Rawwaf, and Salih and Abdul Rahman al-Murshid; those against it, led by Salih al-Milali, Muhammad al-Husain, and a number of the educated people like Abdullah Ibn Du'ayyan, the headmaster, and Abdul Muhsin al-Joraisi; and a third group whose members preferred to be neutral in the dispute such as Ibn Mubaddal and others who are not very interested in village affairs.

The opposition was very strongly led by S. al-Milali, the last living of the Hilalat family, and M. al-Husain, a member of the Local Committee, of the Board of the Cooperative Society, and of the Religious Guidance Centre. They took the initiative of discussing the matter with A. al-Rawwaf, the head of the Religious Guidance Centre and a member of both the Committee and the Board of the Cooperative Society. They informed him that they would oppose the purchase even if it meant that they were compelled to contact H.M. the King personally and raise the matter with him. But he simply told them "you are envious people".

After long consultations, which continued for nearly a week, the opposers met until late on two consecutive nights at the house of Āl Mada'aj. They decided to send three representatives to the Amir in order to negotiate with him the possibility of his changing his mind about the land. The three representatives who went to negotiate with the Amir were Hasan Ibn Mubarak, unemployed villager, Ibrahim Ibn Mada'aj, stone cutter, and Abdullah Ibn Du'ayyan, an educated youth having a government post in Riyadh but living in the village with his farmer father. All three are Khadīriyīn. They explained their views to the Amir, who replied that the Committee had already approved the plan. But they stated they were not satisfied, and that they would continue with their opposition and keep the authorities informed of their point of view. Finally they signed a protest which was approved by the Court and then sent to the Ministry of Pilgrimage and Wakfs. The Ministry sent one of its engineers, and after surveying the village he

recommended another site called al-Mishairfah. The village people agreed, except for those favouring al-Musta'jilah. The opposing party, after two more nights of discussion and negotiations, signed a petition approving of al-Mishairfah site. Among those who signed the petition was a merchant originally from the village but now living in Riyadh, who was tied sentimentally to the village and still owned two farms there. Naturally the members of the Local Committee did not sign. The Amir stated that he was neutral on the subject of the petition. I understood that the same merchant told the Amir and his cousin that if the Ministry of Pilgrimage and Wakfs did not approve of the site agreed upon by the villagers he would purchase it himself and offer it as a site for the proposed Mosque.

These are the details of the story of al-Musta'jilah, which had not come to an end when I left the village. The Ministry wrote to the Amir asking his opinion about the site chosen by its engineer and confirmed by most of the villagers. His reply was that al-Mishairfah was owned by about 30 persons, and that it includes Wakf properties, which need special permission from their holders before they can be expropriated. He tried to delay any decision, so that he could first have the proposed street leading to al-Musta'jilah constructed and opened, and because he was well aware that the owners of the al-Mishairfah properties would welcome the government's compensation in return for expropriation.

The events of al-Musta'jilah shed a light on the nature of leadership in the village. The Local Committee is a new organisation to the minds of the villagers whose role or aim they do not understand, a position exploited by the Amir for legitimising his personal desires. Al-Musta'jilah made obvious the gap between the Committee and the villagers. It also caused a division among the Committee members. Thus while the Amir showed his power and indifference, his cousin Abdul Rahman was in a more ambiguous position, for he had a personal interest as a partner in al-Musta'jilah, but at the same time he had his position as a religious leader, as head of the Religious Guidance Centre. In answer to the protest of Ibn Jabr, the merchant referred

to, he said that the Amir had asked the Committee members to sign their approval of al-Musta'jilah, without asking their opinion about it. This statement indicates his confession that al-Musta'jilah is not a suitable site for the 'Eid Mosque and that his approval to it was not rational, but was merely a flattering of the Amir. Meanwhile, he told Salih al-Hilali and Muhammad al-Husain that they were envious when they told him frankly that the place was by no means suitable. Naturally his conflicting conscience certainly indicates that he was convinced that al-Musta'jilah was unsuitable. But his self-interest, as a partner, defeated his conscience; thus he signed the approval regarding the suitability of the place.

Muhammad al-Husain, another member of the Committee, is religious to the extent of fanaticism. At the same time he is proud of his deeply rooted tribal origin. His consent to al-Musta'jilah, as a member of the Committee, seems to have been a result of pressure from A. and S. al-Murshid because the latter is his son-in-law and the two brothers are partners in ownership of the land. But when he realised that there was genuine opposition from the majority of the villagers, he joined their ranks alleging that he signed the Committee approval against his will. He could not sign in favour of the second site, although he was convinced of its justification, because he had been forced to approve the first one. But it seems that he withheld from signing under the pressure of his in-laws.

In estimating the position of A. al-Murshid, the vice-chairman of the Committee, and his brother Salih, a member of the Committee, we find that they have no weight. It is true that both of them are officials filling administrative posts in the Community Development Centre. The former works as in-coming and out-going mail clerk, and the latter used to be a messenger but he learned how to type and thus has elevated himself to the post of typist in the Centre. It is also true that they are members of the Board of the Directors of the Cooperative Society. But their membership in these organisations, the Committee and the Board of the Cooperative Society, does not mean that they are among the prominent leading figures, but it does

lend them an influential position. The differences about al-Musta'jilah do not concern them in any way since the Amir is the Chairman of the Committee who demanded its members' sanction for choosing its site. But the opposition of the majority of the villagers and their argument about it concerns them in two respects. Firstly, al-Musta'jilah is their property. But, due to the fact that they could not make profits out of it, they had appealed to the partnership of the Amir in the hope that he could use his influence for selling it to the government for a favourable price. Secondly, they do not favour the Amir and therefore the villagers' opposition to his decision as a Chairman of the Committee interests them as long as it causes damage to his personal fame. According to their image he is always serving his own interests rather than those of the village.

The sixth member of the Committee, Abdul Rahman al-Zuhair, is a very naive person. Being illiterate he always carries his seal in his pocket for sealing minutes of the Committee meetings. His selection to the Committee membership was based on various considerations. The most important of which is that he represents the interests of the farmers since he is a farmer himself. He is also a member of the Religious Guidance Centre in place of his very aging father. He has an affinal relationship with the rest of the Committee members. In any case he is not the type to refer to in the question of leadership.

The opposition was organised and planned by the educated persons among whom I may mention for example, Abdullah Ibn Du'ayyan who works for the Department of Education for the Region of Riyadh, the headmaster of the Boys' School, Muhammad al-Rsaini, and Abdul Mohsin al-Jeraisai a clerk at the Department of Girls' Education in Riyadh. These are but a few of the educated villagers with government posts, who incited the villagers behind Salih al-Hilali and Muhammad al-Husain. They arranged for the opposers to meet in order to discuss the question of al-Musta'jilah; they had written the protest sent to the Ministry of Pilgrimage and Wakfs; and they had also written the petition about al-Mishairfah.

Whatever the outcome of al-Musta'jilah might eventually be, it definitely disclosed some important facts about leadership in the village. These are (1) that the Amir has always been using his instituted leadership for personal interests; (2) that the Local Committee is a mere formal organisation monopolised by him; (3) that the features of the new emerging leadership represented by the educated elite, working for various government agencies, have been crystallised by the conjuncture of al-Musta'jilah; (4) that the events of al-Musta'jilah, above all, were some sort of vent for strain and frustration on the part of the villagers resulting from the Amir's exploitation without considering their say in the village affairs.

This discussion has dealt with the type and nature of leadership in the village of Irqah. I have ventured the story of al-Musta'jilah because, as I believe, it reflects this, and reveals how the majority of the villagers united against the Amir and the Committee members.

CHAPTER IX

SOCIAL CHANGE

The discussion has dealt with various present day village institutions with reference to their past conditions as far as this has been possible. We have seen how important religion is in these institutions, and the extent to which directly or indirectly it influences them. My reason for analysing the village social structure in the past and present is to accentuate the sort of social change that has been taking place. In other words:

...changes take place in time, and they can only be understood as a causal sequence of events leading up to new states of affairs. 1

How is it possible to measure the rate of change or to identify its dimensions in a community in which religion takes a whole place - a religion which has not yet itself been affected by change, whether regarding beliefs, rites, concepts, or morality.

In order to answer this question I believe it is useful first of all to define social change and then to use a suitable model which would help in understanding the process in the village.

By social change, Gerth and Mills write, we refer to whatever may happen in the course of time to the roles, the institutions, or the orders comprising a social structure: their emergence, growth and decline. 2

Gerth and Mills have put forward a list of six major questions which can be asked about social change: what is it that changes? How does it change? What is the direction of change? What is the rate of change? Why did change occur or why was it possible? What are the principal factors in social change?³

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1. John Beattie, Other Cultures. Aims, Methods and Achievement in Social Anthropology (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul Ltd., 1966). p.241.
 2. Gerth and Mills, Character and Social Structure, op.cit., p.393.
 3. Ibid., pp.377-9.

The social structure of Irqah is undergoing considerable changes. Although one cannot give a precise starting point, one can safely say that during the last two decades a combination of factors has accelerated the process of change directly or indirectly. But that does not by any means imply that the village social structure was static prior to that period. On the contrary, changes of a very slow rate have been occurring ever since the village was fully incorporated within the central authority in Riyadh. But the rate of change has been gradually speeding up during the last two decades or so.

Assuming that the process of change has been accelerating recently, it might be possible to identify clearly the factors that have brought it about, as well as others that have had an opposite tendency.

To begin with the village has been administratively linked to the Central Government through intermediate administrative machineries: so it is no longer administratively autonomous. In other words, the final process of decision-making concerning village public affairs is not carried out in the village itself. It is evident that local leadership still exercises an effective role, but it is nevertheless subjected to the sanction of the central authority. The story of al-Musta'jilah demonstrates the limitations to the scope of the local authority. Nevertheless, kinship still plays a significant role in the village administrative organisation, particularly within the framework of the Emirate due to the influential personality of the present Amir who always uses his good relations with powerful people in government circles whenever he wants something done his own way. But the administrative authority in the village is decreasing with the strengthening of the national administrative structure. Villagers have begun to realize that the village administrative body is a mere link in a hierarchical structure of bureaucracy; and that it is no longer left alone to execute whatever it sanctions. For instance, shortly before I went to the village, there was a vacant clerical post in the Emirate which the Amir was keeping for a particular person to fill, while refusing

it to a qualified villager. The latter, through a kinsman, approached senior people in the Department of Government Civil Service in Riyadh, who appointed him to the vacancy. The village Amir knew nothing about it until he received the official notice of appointment, which he had to accept since it was too late for him to do anything about it. This indicates one way in which the traditional village authority is losing some of its grip.

Perhaps economic change is the most significant. Some of the consequences of the advent of the new economic opportunities have affected the traditional occupational structure of the village. The economy has changed from being dependent on agriculture and traditional occupations to be more dependent on government posts and other new occupations like car hiring. Even some of the village women have been able to take advantage of the new opportunities.

Undoubtedly the new economic opportunities have increased the villagers ability to purchase material goods, like radio, television and refrigeration. Most of them have either rebuilt their houses or built new ones. The family structure itself has been affected. The extended family is giving way to the nuclear family as sons and brothers have become economically more independent and are so able to establish their own households.

The rate of change in the village has been enhanced by its proximity to Riyadh. The villagers' contact with Riyadh is not only for the purpose of occasional shopping. But it is a continuous contact since some of them have their permanent work there, others have close relatives, and all students, boys and girls, who pursue post-primary education attend school and specialised educational and training institutions there. According to Laura Nader, there are two ways of contact between village and city:

On the one hand, there is that kind of communication which stems from national...interest, moving predominantly

in one direction, and when initiated in national urban centres, follows out to villages. In contrast with communication arising from personal or individual interests, which is usually a two-way process from urbanite to villages and vice versa. 4.

Evidently this sort of contact is an important element in the process of social change taking place in the village.

Apart from the contact between the village and Riyadh there are other channels of communication. Perhaps the village primary schools and the Community Development Centre are the most obvious for their effective roles in creating knowledge and in forming and changing attitudes.

It is not only education as an end in itself that has stimulated villagers to educate their children, but it is the possibility for them, once educated, to fill government posts. For instance, a villager told me that his financial difficulties would be overcome when his son graduated from a religious college and got a rewarding post. Education to obtain government posts is in fact the only way to social and economic mobility. It is so that villagers have become convinced of the viability of boys' education as some of them have graduated and taken government posts, or gone on to higher educational or training institutions which pay monthly allowances. In both cases education has led to financial gain which improves the living conditions of the families concerned. On the other hand, girls' primary school is in its way a more effective creator of change than the boys' school though it was opened recently. It is true that both the boys' school and the Community Development Centre have created a favourable atmosphere for it to play its role effectively. But since girls are more attached to the house than boys, the effects of their education lead more immediately to changes within the family circle. That is because their education emphasises things like housekeeping which undoubtedly leaves marks on their status and role. Furthermore, it is

4. Laura Nader, "Communication between village and city in Modern Middle East". Human Organisation, Vol.24 (1965) p.19.

now possible for girls to go on to higher educational institutions for women which pay monthly allowances and which will help them to get rewarding jobs after graduating. Some of them could in fact get jobs after finishing their primary education if their guardians would let them. Those who attend higher institutions or fill jobs, contribute to their families' income - especially as a girl's guardian looks after her money while boys always try to manage their financial affairs independently.

The Community Development Centre is of equal importance for planned change. We have seen how it introduced new, unfamiliar organisations, the Local Committee and the Cooperative Society, as well as the Nursery and the Women's House. These have produced changes although the villagers have been slow to appreciate the objectives of the Centre.

Now what is the rate of change, its trends, and its dimensions? In other words, in Irqah is the process of transition as a result of changes produced by these factors, or is it still basically a conservative community?

As a matter of fact it is somehow difficult to envisage social change in a conservative community. Nevertheless, it is fair to say that social change in the village of Irqah is proceeding very slowly. It is proceeding very slowly because it has not been introduced through religious institutions, which occupy such a dominant position. As we have seen throughout, religion intervenes in every aspect of the social structure. Apart from the five Pillars of Islam and their obligatory nature, religion influences the field of administration whose procedures accord with religious principles including questions relating to all sorts of transactions. Activities concerning business and loans must be dealt with pursuant to Islamic law, particularly as regards usury and zakat. By the same token the modern system of education, which replaced the traditional one, is basically an extension to religious education. Although modern medicine has been introduced, treatment of diseases is largely based on

religious beliefs such as speels, expecoration and al-Azimah. Not least, all sorts of relationships in kinship and marriage, as well as other social activities, are taken from religious blueprint.

What is more, inculcation of religious beliefs has been emphasized through radio and television as religious programmes constitute a large part of the broadcast output. Radio and television interrupt their activities to broadcast calls for prayer on each occasion, and broadcasts are always preceded by recitation of verses of the Qur'an and some Ḥadīth. Radio broadcasts Friday prayers, pilgrimage rites and 'Eid prayers. Television cuts off its programmes until each prayer is finished. Besides religious programmes through these media, the Religious Guidance Centre supervises individuals' behaviour in various ways.

According to a study of the United Nations, religion is the most important factor resisting any sort of change.⁵ Despite radical changes in the village economy, little change has occurred in other aspects of the village social structure and values. Because religion, using the wording of Hamed Ammar:

Continues to be validating force of life, explaining it, and providing people with their major intellectual and emotional satisfactions and dissatisfactions in coping with the problems of life. 6

In the meantime, family relationships have not considerably changed. For example, sex roles and father-son and brother-brother relationships still remain as they were centuries ago without much change. Women still live in their own isolated world under the strict authority of men. What is more, a person has specific obligations towards his or her parents, brothers and kinsmen. The only explanation to these conservative relations is that they are religiously sustained. Accordingly any sort of neglect

5. United Nations, Department of Economics and Social Affairs, 1965. Report on the World Social Situation with special reference to popular participation and motivation for development. (New York: 1966) p.23.

6. Hamed Ammar. Growing Up in an Egyptian Village. Silwa, Province of Aswan. (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul Ltd. 1966). p.64.

in observing them means disobedience to God. Even educated youths, boys and girls have to maintain such relations as they are taught in school their significance from a religious point of view.

Assuming that there is a slow change, has it produced any kind of conflict within the framework of the village relationships?

It could be said that trends taking place in the village are leading to a transformation in the standard of living. The new economic opportunities have enabled the villagers to improve their material comforts. Education produced very little change in the villagers' concepts regarding family relationships, especially father-son and father-daughter relationships either because sons and daughters are better educated or because they contribute to their families' income from salaries of their jobs or allowances they receive from educational or training institutions which they attend. Consequently they feel they are economically independent, sons in particular, and this in return has weakened their fathers' authority and influence.

On the other hand, change has brought with it conflict, or structural strains, which have become crystalised in the village relationships. For instance, there is a growing strain between the type of old leadership representing the elderly and fanatical villagers, and the new emerging leadership of more educated men. Perhaps the most obvious strain is that between the elderly villagers in general and the youth. The first group believes that the youth have deviated from the right directions in respect of neglect of religious duties and commission of prohibited acts, such as smoking cigarettes, the mother of great sins umm al-kaba'er. Whereas the youth consider the former group as fanatics who understand nothing about life, and who do not realise the difference between what was, yesterday, and what is, today. When some of the village youth poured out motor oil on the corner of the main entrance to the village, where old people gather every day, their behaviour indicated the sort of tense relations between the two groups. Further, some of the educated youth have begun among

themselves to argue certain religious questions in a less conservative spirit. Certainly they all agree on the importance of religion for both this world and the hereafter, and the need for maintaining the present religious beliefs and rites as they are without change or amendment. They consider however that change ought to be in the manner of understanding and conceiving religion, which the elderly people do not think about.

Even family relationships have started witnessing some acute tension as a result of education and the effect of radio and television. Men's attitudes towards women have changed slightly as women become more conscious of their status as wives and mothers. Radio and television programmes invite women's attention to their legal rights in Islam as regards good treatment on the part of men. One of the villagers expressed his dissatisfaction concerning this particular kind of change, saying that at present the son and the women have become venerable (al-walad wa al-marrah fi hazziman shakhu).

Eventually there is another kind of strain which has been keenly felt by the village youth working in Riyadh. This results from their inability to make a balanced adjustment between their work conditions in Riyadh and their residence in the village. In Riyadh they feel free to enjoy personal behaviour which they are deprived of in the village, such as smoking and innocent entertainment. There they are free from supervision of members of the Religious Guidance Centre.

Social change in the village community of Irqah may not be easy to measure because it is superficial. It is so because it does not indicate explicit change in the mind and behaviour of the village people, including the educated youth, since they are tied to the past through a very deeply rooted legacy. The village is nevertheless undergoing changes, which have been resisted, or at least slowed down by religion. This phenomenon of changes and various reaction to change are themselves aspects of Middle Eastern culture which cannot be evaded.⁷ Whatever the scope of

7. John Gulick, "Introduction" Human Organisation, op.cit., p.1.

social change in Iraq might be, it is a kind of change referred to by Loomis and Beagle, when they wrote:

...the tremendous changes for the two-thirds of the world classified as underdeveloped, represent what we refer to as changes from Gemeinschaft-to Geselleschaft-like forms of society. Whether our model of change is that of revolution staged and implemented by those following the communist line...or without revolution as in the case of Japan - basic changes in value orientations and social structure are involved. 8

8. P.C.Loomis and J.A.Beagle, Rural Sociology. The Strategy of Change. (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall Inc., 1963) pp.455-6.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX I

Al-Wi'adah

Al-Wi'adah, or what is known in the literature of Islamic law as tawarrog, is a sort of moneylending which differs in its concept and its method from the regular transactions followed in banks and other similar organisations. For taking an interest on depositing or lending money is forbidden, as it is considered usury, riba, which the Qur'an prohibits:

"...God hath permitted trade and forbidden Usury."¹

Usury is of two kinds:²

The first is usury of faḍl, which means similarity between things that are measured or weighed. It is prohibited to sell a kilo of barley for a kilo of barley because such transaction is a usury of faḍl on the ground that the two kilos of barley are of one quality. It also includes prohibition on selling all forms of money having the same or similar quality, i.e. selling bank notes for similar bank notes, gold for gold, or silver for silver, etc.

The second is the usury of credit, al-nasi'ah, which means prohibition on selling on credit all that is prohibited of the first kind. In other words, it is forbidden to credit things having the same quality, i.e. crediting money for similar money or a kilo of barley for another kilo of barley. But it is allowed to credit a kilo of barley for a sum of money on the basis of the original price of barley at the time of transaction without any increase in its credited price.

Al-Wi'adah is a way of avoiding prohibited usury. Only the Hanbali orthodox school allows it. It helps people to get loans to meet unforeseen circumstances, provided that two conditions are fully observed. The two conditions are: the loaned things should not be similar, i.e., money for money, or barley for barley; and the value of the loaned things should not be increased when the debt is settled.

1. Yusuf Ali, The Holy Qur'an, op.cit., p.111.

2. Shaikh al-Bahuni, al-Raud al-Murbi' Vol.II. op.cit., p.106.

According to the Hanbali School, the lender offers to the borrower a certain kind of commodity valued for example at 1,000 SR, for a delayed price of 1,100 SR provided that the commodity is moved to another place so that the borrower sells it on his own. If the commodity is not moved, and if the borrower gets the money from the same lender, it means that the lender has credited money for money, which is prohibited. To avoid this the borrower removes the commodity to another place, where he sells it to someone else, and so he gets the money he needs.

The system of what is locally known as al-wi'adah, which is commonly practised in the village and other parts of Najd, differs from what the Hanbali school permits; because it is carried out in a complex way and results not only in avoiding the forbidden usury, but also in making very high interest.

Supposing that 'A' needs a sum of 2,000 SR for an urgent occasion which he cannot raise from his own resources or by borrowing from a friend or a relative. He gets in touch with an al-wi'adah creditor (all creditors of al-wi'adah practise it as a secondary business) whom I will refer to as 'B'. When 'B' is satisfied that his conditions are fully met, and that the guarantees are genuine, he makes the final arrangement for providing 'A' with the loan he needs.

In fact 'B' never mentions that he is going to lend 'A' a sum of money, nor does he write a statement to this effect in the agreement between them, what happens is that 'B' mentions that he has sold to 'A' a commodity, for a price higher by either three or four riyals in each ten than the present price according to the local practice. The commodity becomes the property of 'A' who has the right of disposing of it. But since 'A' wants the loan in cash he has to sell the commodity in one of the following ways:

The first way is that 'A' sells the loaned commodity to 'B', provided that 'A' has first touched the commodity to indicate formally that he has taken from 'B' a loan in a commodity and not in a financial form, for

loaning money for money is considered prohibited usury. At the same time, 'B' buys from 'A' the commodity he has sold to him either for the same price or less. Here we notice two transactions of selling and buying which have taken place at one time as 'A' has purchased from 'B' a commodity in a form of loan then sold the same commodity to him for a cash price.

The second way is that 'A' sells the commodity which has been purchased from 'B' either in auction or to a third party for cash. In both cases the second price is usually less than the first price. In other words, the price which 'A' gets from selling the commodity is less than the price he paid to 'B' for the commodity as a loan during the first transaction. But the first way is commonly used because the process of moving the commodities to be sold in auction may not be completed as quickly as 'A' expects.

Lending through the system of al-wi'adah is very costly whether in respect of the rate of interest, normally within the range of 30-40%, or of the loss to the borrower when he sells the loaned commodity for cash.

To explain further let us assume that 'A' borrows from 'B' a sum of 2,000 SR in commodity form with a supposed interest of 35%. Thus the total interest of the proposed price of the commodity which is 2000 SR is 700 SR. On the other hand, the loan which is the price of the commodity, becomes less when 'A' sells the commodity for cash either to the lender himself, 'B', or to a third party, at the rate of 1% at least which is 20 SR. Accordingly the actual loan which 'A' gets in cash is 1,980, whereas the credit he owes to 'B' is 2,700 SR which includes the price of the loaned commodity plus 700 SR.

If the borrower cannot settle the credit in due course, the interest is doubled. The procedure of doubling the interest is locally known as galb, which means that the borrower has to take another loan in the form of commodity from the same lender on the basis of the total amount of the first received loan including its interest. In other words, supposing that

'A' cannot settle the price of the commodity he borrows from 'B', what he is supposed to do is to take another loan in a commodity form from 'B' for a sum of money equal to his debt which is 2,700 SR following exactly the same procedure.

In spite of the high rate of interest of al-wi'adah and its complicated procedures, many of the villagers make use of it for special occasions although it overburdens them. Borrowers whom I asked did not know about its legitimacy from a religious point of view. They differed in respect of their understanding of its procedures. Some said that they did not understand them, but accepted it as a standard procedure by which they could obtain sums of money they urgently need. Others said they did understand the procedures and realized that lenders through it used various methods of cheating.

Case No.1

Ali was compelled to borrow 3,000 SR to repair his old car. He contacted one of the al-wi'adah dealers. The dealer agreed to sell him a quantity of cardamon whose present price was equal to the amount of money he wanted, for that price plus an increase of 4 Riyal in every ten. Ali agreed to the deal, and moved the commodity from one place to another in the lender's shop in order to make sure that it had become his. At the same time he sold the commodity which he purchased formally from the lender for the market price which is 3,000 SR. At the end Ali received in cash from the lender 3,000 SR only, which his debt amounted to 4,200 SR, which is 3,000 SR loan plus 1,200 SR interest.

Case No.2

A newly married villager was in desperate need of 6,000 SR to cover some of his marriage expenses. The dealer agreed to lend him a number of boxes of tea equal to the amount of money he wanted, plus an increase of 30%. They went to a food merchant where the lender purchased for the borrower some boxes of tea for 6,000 SR. The borrower, having become formally the owner of the tea boxes, sold them to the merchant himself for

the original price less 30 SR. Then the lender paid to the borrower only 5,970 SR of the 6,000 SR whereas the total loan due was 7,300 SR to be paid monthly on the basis of 400 SR. The loan was 6,000 SR minus 30 SR plus 1,300 SR interest.

These two cases clearly demonstrate the methods of stratagem for the avoidance of usury. In the first case the lender was the owner of the commodity which he sold formally to the borrower and at the same time purchased it from him. What he had done to evade the prohibited usury was removing the commodity from one place to another in his shop. In the second case the lender had evaded usury through purchasing the loaned commodity from a third party who bought the same commodity from the borrower for a cash price of 30 SR less than the price he sold it for.

It is apparent from the foregoing that the system of al-Wi'adah is based on a manner of cheating which is only understood by its dealers. As such they exploit those who make use of their services on the grounds of avoiding usury which is religiously prohibited.

APPENDIX II

Brief History of lives of some of my Informants

Shaikh Muhammad Ibn Abdul Aziz Ibn Rawwaf (the village Amir and Mayor)

Shaikh Muhammad was born in Irqah in 1333^{AH}, about 1916. He started his schooling in the village kuttab where his father was the only teacher and was at the same time the Imam of the village Friday Mosque. Later on he studied monotheism, jurisprudence and grammar in Riyadh for a year under the supervision of Shaikh Muhammad Ibn Ibrahim, the then Grand Mufti of Riyadh. But he did not continue on because he took up some commercial business in the village dealing with dates, seeds and local timber. During that period he got married to his first and only wife. He worked as a slave trader on the Arabian Gulf for more than two years. Then he returned to the village where he joined the organisation of the government army, at that time Mujahidyin in addition to his old commercial business. He was appointed Amir to the village in 1364 (1944). He submitted his resignation from the Emirate in 1370 (1950). While waiting for the acceptance of his resignation, he opened a food shop in Riyadh for a year. But King Abdul Aziz refused his resignation and ordered him to stay in his post. He has five sons (one of them married) and one daughter.

Shaikh Abdul Rahman Ibn Rawwaf (head of Religious Guidance Centre)

Shaikh Abdul Rahman was born in the village in 1325 (1904). He was the only child of his father, who died when he was three. After his father's death he was brought up by his father's father because his mother remarried. His father's father died when he was ten, and he was looked after by his father's mother until he got married and begot children.

He learned how to read the Qur'an under the supervision of Shaikh Ali al-Bahly who was the only teacher (muṭawwa') of the village school. Then he learned the Ḥadīth under the supervision of Shaikh Abdul Aziz Ibn Rawwaf, father of the present village Amir, who was conversant with religion and had some religious duties.

Farming was the first career he engaged himself. After some time he switched to the business of agricultural credit: he loaned money to farmers for their agricultural products before the crops were ripe - a hazardous enterprise. Were farmers not able to produce enough, Shaikh Abdul Rahman used to postpone the debt for another year, provided that his profits would be doubled. Later on he went to Bahrain and Qatar and worked as a pearl diver for five months, where he made good money. (This work was quite acceptable to Gabīliyīn). On his return, he joined the service of Prince Saud, the late King Saud, as collector of zakat from villagers and Bedouin settlements. At the same time he was assigned to work as a religious guide for four years with neither remuneration nor salary. He resigned from the Prince's services after two years to devote his time to his farm, part of which he inherited and part of which is a Wakf holding which he was entrusted to administer.

Shaikh Abdun Rayman works now as head of Religious Guidance Centre, which he was appointed to nearly twenty-five years ago, for a monthly salary. He is also a mosque Imam for which he receives another independent salary. Besides that he still cultivates his farm, where he lives with his extended family.

Shaikh Abdul Rahman is one of the prominent figures of the village not only because he is the head of Religious Guidance Centre, but also because he is the village Amir's parallel cousin. Therefore, he is vice-Chairman of the Local Committee and a member of the Board of Directors of the Cooperative Society of which he once used to be vice-chairman. He is among the top wealthy villagers.

Shaikh Abdul Rahman Ibn Ahmad al-Anqari

Shaikh Abdul Rahman was born in Jljajel, a village of Sudair province in Najd area. He learned how to read the Qur'an in the village kuttab until he was nine. Then he attended the village (Jljajil) Primary school when it was opened there where he continued his schooling until he reached the third year. He was absent from school for a year due to being affected

by the disease of smallpox which resulted in loosing his sight. Once again he resumed his schooling in his village for another year. Afterwards he moved to Riyadh where he attended a religious institute. He continued his schooling at that institute until he got his primary and secondary certificate. He went on to pursue higher education as he enrolled in the College of Sharia' of which he graduated after four years. Later on he obtained a diploma in methods of teaching the blind from the same college.

His first work was a sort of training on procedure of juricature for about three years at the Supreme Court of Riyadh. Then he was appointed Judge to the village of al-Hilwa, one of the Najd villages, for more than a year. Since then he has been appointed Judge to Irqah Sharia' Court. He is married with a son and a daughter. At the same time he is very desirous of marrying one or two more wives.

Salih Muhammad Ibn Gasim

Salih was born in Irqah in about 1934. He started his schooling at the village kuttab, and then the primary school when it was opened in the village. He continued in the school for five years after which he left to help his father in his farm. When his father abandoned farming, due to scarcity of water, he worked as local building labourer until appointed messenger in the Community Development Centre six years ago. He married twice, his first wife died leaving to him and infant and therefore he was compelled to marry his present wife. Though he has nine children he always prays to God for more.

Besides his government post, Salih is a part-time slaughterer during Sacrificial 'Eids as well as slaughterer and cook during private occasions, i.e. marriages.

APPENDIX III

Some Official Letters

I have selected the following seven letters, sent by the central authority to the village Emirate, in order to illustrate some aspects of the previous administrative procedures discussed in Chapter VIII. They also shed light on the nature of the work of the Emirate.

Letter 1. From King Abdul Aziz to the village Amir.

①

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

من عبد العزيز عبد الله افضل اجاب الله محمد بن رواف سلم
 السلام عليكم ورحمة الله وبركاته بعد ذلك بارك الله فيكم المسكين انتا و
 عارضين عبد الاستقا ونا راسبتا الموضع ثاني من جمار اول قاتم
 انتا وده توكولون على الله وتنبهون على من حولكم من طوافكم بداركم والذي
 نعوذكم به وانفسنا تقوى الله تقا وادنا بة اليه وراقبته في سر
 والعلانية والتوبة النصوح والتطوع ا بين يديه نهجوان الله سبحانه
 وبقا يتقبل منا ومنكم ومنه جميع المسكين ويصم عباد الله بكفيت البارك
 عند ملكه صلوات
 ٤٠٩

In the Name of God the Merciful and the Compassionate
From Abdul Aziz Ibn Abdul Rahman al-Fiasal to the
respected Muhammad Ibn Rawwaf, God saves him. Peace

and mercy and blessing of God be upon you. Then, God bless you, the Muslims (the people of Saudi Arabia) if God wills it, are intending to perform the Prayer for Rain on the morning of Saturday 2nd of Jumada al-Auwal. So, if God wills it, rely on God and notify the neighbouring people about that. What we advise you and ourselves, is devoutness to God, the most High, and turning repentantly to Him and fearing Him openly and secretly. We hope that God, Almighty and the most High, accept from us, you, and all Muslims; and that He may have mercy upon His People by blessing and abundant rain. That was all what intended to be informed, and peace be upon you.

Sealed
Abdul Aziz 29/a/1364 (1944)

Letter 2. From Saud Ibn Abdul Aziz to the village Amir.

②

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

من محمد بن عبد العزيز بن عبد الله بن فيصل الامله كرت و ابنه
 السلام عليكم ورحمة الله وبركاته سيدنا ان الله من قبل هلاله
 عندنا رؤيته ليلة الاحد ثوب شري فانت انت الله شهره
 ذكركم في الامم

In the Name of God the Merciful and the Compassionate. From Saud Ibn Abdul Aziz Ibn Abdul Rahman al-Fiasal to the respected Muhammad Ibn Rawwaf, God the Most High saves him. Peace and mercy and blessing of God be upon you. Then, God bless you, the visibility of the moon of the month of Shawwal has been confirmed. So, if God wills it, inform your neighbouring people about that.

That was what intended to be told and peace be upon you. (It was meant by this letter to inform the Amir that 'Eid al-Fitr was due the following morning).

Sealed 29/9/1366 (1946)
Saud
(He was then Crown Prince)

Letter 3. From Saud Ibn Abdul Aziz to the village Amir.

ديوان سمو ولي العهد

③

تاريخ
المشروعات

في عهد من عهد العزيز بن عبد الرحمن الفيصل آل سعود
محمد بن رواف السلام ونحو ذلك لما حدثت عليه ان زوجها
بنت محمد بن ابراهيم بن عبد راحمة تزور ولا يعود له عليه
فانت ان شاء الله تعالى ابوها شيخا معز وزوجها
الا ان كان يكون الشروع ارفعهم للشرع وما حكمه والعمل
عليه يكون معهم والسلام
٧/٢٧

In the Name of God the Merciful and the Compassionate. From Saud Ibn Abdul Aziz Ibn Abdul Rahman al-Fiasal to the respected Muhammad Ibn Rawwaf. Peace be upon you. Then Hamad Ibn Aqeil has informed us that his wife, the daughter of Hamad Ibn Ibrahim, went to visit her family, but has not returned back to him. So you, if God wills it, order her father to send her to her husband unless they (the wife and her father) have legal question. If so refer them to the Sharia Court and its judgement is final. That has to be known and peace be upon you.

Sealed 26/7/1367 (1947)
Saud
(He was then Crown Prince)

Letter 4. From Saud Ibn Abdul Aziz to the village Amir.

رقم
 التاريخ
 الشرفان

(4)

في حق الذئب بن عطاء الفيل الحمد بن رواف (الم)
 الذي ذكر ان اى رجب فاع بن ربيع القحطاني اياه له طلب عنده
 دفعه ذكر ان اى رجب فاع بن ربيع القحطاني اياه له طلب عنده
 في حق الذئب بن عطاء الفيل الحمد بن رواف (الم)
 الذي ذكر ان اى رجب فاع بن ربيع القحطاني اياه له طلب عنده
 دفعه ذكر ان اى رجب فاع بن ربيع القحطاني اياه له طلب عنده

In the Name of God the Merciful and the Compassionate.
 From Saud Ibn Abdul Aziz Ibn Abdul Rahman al-Fiasal to
 Muhammad Ibn Rawwaf. Peace be upon you. Then 'Ayid
 Ibn Falih Ibn Bsair al-Qaḥṭāni has mentioned to us that
 Muhammad Ibn Shlwan owes him something. So you order him
 to settle it unless he has legal claim. If so refer both
 to the Sharia Court and its judgement is final. That is to be known.

Sealed 12/10/1367 (1946)
 Saud
 (He was then Crown Prince)

Letter 5. From Prince Sultan (Governor of Riyadh) to the village Amir.

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

5

المملكة العربية السعودية

إمارة الرياض

ميدان

المدام امير القرية

السلام عليكم وبعد من طرف صالح بن فحيمان
الذي يطلبه فهد بن محمد البشر مبلغ الفاروقية ريال
تقولون انه غير موجود بقره والنايات انه
بقره فابنوه عنه جيداً ولا تستجاروا من اخذ
الحقد منه ارض غيره فان لم يمثل او كانت
له حكرى فابنوه اليها كما امرتكم

In the name of God the Merciful and the Compassionate.
The respected Amir of Irqah
Peace be upon you. Then you have informed us that Salih
Ibn Fhaiman, who owes the sum of 400 Riyals to Fahd Ibn
Muhammad Ibn Bishr, is not in Irqah. But we have been
assured that he is in Irqah. So look for him carefully and
do not neglect to take others' right from him or anyone else.
If he did not obey or has legal claim send him to us.

Amir of Riyadh 2/8/67
Sultan

Letter 6. From Saud Ibn Abdul Aziz to the village people.

6

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ
 بِإِذْنِ اللَّهِ الْمَلِكِ الْقَدِيمِ
 الْحَيُّ الْقَيُّومُ
 الَّذِي لَا يَأْخُذُ بِهِ
 حَوْلٌ وَلَا مَتْرَبٌ
 وَلَهُ مَا فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ
 وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ
 عَزَّ وَجَلَّ
 يَا قَوْمَ الْوَدَّانِ
 إِنِّي أُرِيدُ أَنْ
 أُنَاقِلَ إِلَيْكُمْ
 سُلْطَانَكُمْ
 مُحَمَّدَ بْنَ
 رَوَّافٍ وَأَنَا
 بِإِذْنِ اللَّهِ
 أَعْلَمُ بِمَا
 فِي قُلُوبِكُمْ
 وَأَنَا أَعْلَمُ
 بِمَا فِي
 قُلُوبِكُمْ
 وَأَنَا أَعْلَمُ
 بِمَا فِي
 قُلُوبِكُمْ

In the Name of God the Merciful and the Compassionate.
 From Saud Ibn Abdul Aziz Ibn Abdul Rahman al-Fiasal to all
 respected group of Irqah, God the Most High saves them. Peace
 and mercy and blessing of God be upon you. We have received
 your respected letter and understood what has been mentioned
 therein, especially your concern about your Amir Muhammad Ibn
 Rawwaf. Therefore, we finally obliged him to shoulder your
 Emirate and he has no excuse of not doing so. We enclose
 therein a letter in which we gave him our orders in that res-
 pect. That was what intended to be told and peace be upon you.

Signed 27th, Rajab 1371 (1951)
 Saud
 (He was then Crown Prince)

Letter 7. From Saud Ibn Abdul Aziz to Muhammad Ibn Rawwaf.

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

معذورين على ما يظن اننا قد فعلنا من غير قصد ولا إرادة
 بعد ان كنا نريد ان نخلصكم من بين ايديهم ونجعلكم
 اميراً لهم فانا نرى انهم تلتزموا بلواهم عند ابائهم وجمعنا
 انفسنا معكم ان لم يكن معكم معكم
 رجب ٢٧ ١٣٧١

In the Name of God the Merciful and the Compassionate.
 From Saud Ibn Abdul Aziz Ibn Abdul Rahman al-Fiasal to
 Muhammad Ibn Abdul Aziz Ibn Rawwaf, God the most High saves
 him. Peace and mercy and blessing of God be upon you. Then
 your group (the people of Irqah) informed us that they want
 you remain in your post as their Amir. Therefore, you, if
 God wills it, are obliged to accept that and you have no
 excuse of whatsoever if God wills it. We will do our best for you.
 That is to be known.

Signed. 27th, Rajab, 1371 (1951)
 Saud
 (He was then Crown Prince)



Plate 1. Entrance of the Village



Plate 2. General view of the Village and the Bridge

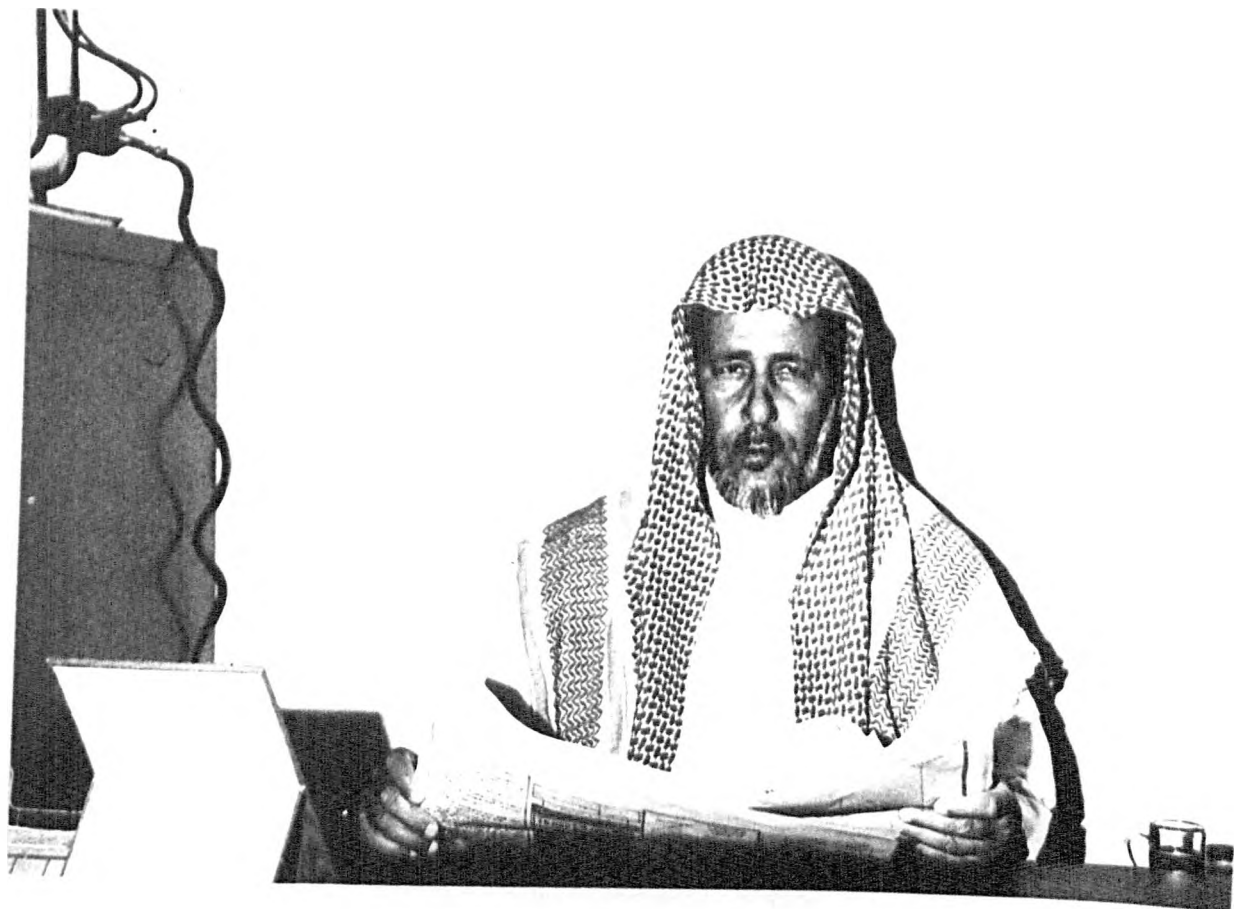


Plate 3. The Village Amir



Plate 4. The Headmaster of the Boys' Primary School and the teacher of Physical Education



Plate 5. The Boys' Primary School



Plate 6. Religious Guidance Centre



Plate 7. Girls' Primary School



Plate 8. The Nursery



Plate 9. The Women House



Plate 10. Irgan Mosque (x) indicates where the shrine used to be



Plate 11. al-Nubaddal's shop (Sha'ab Grocery)

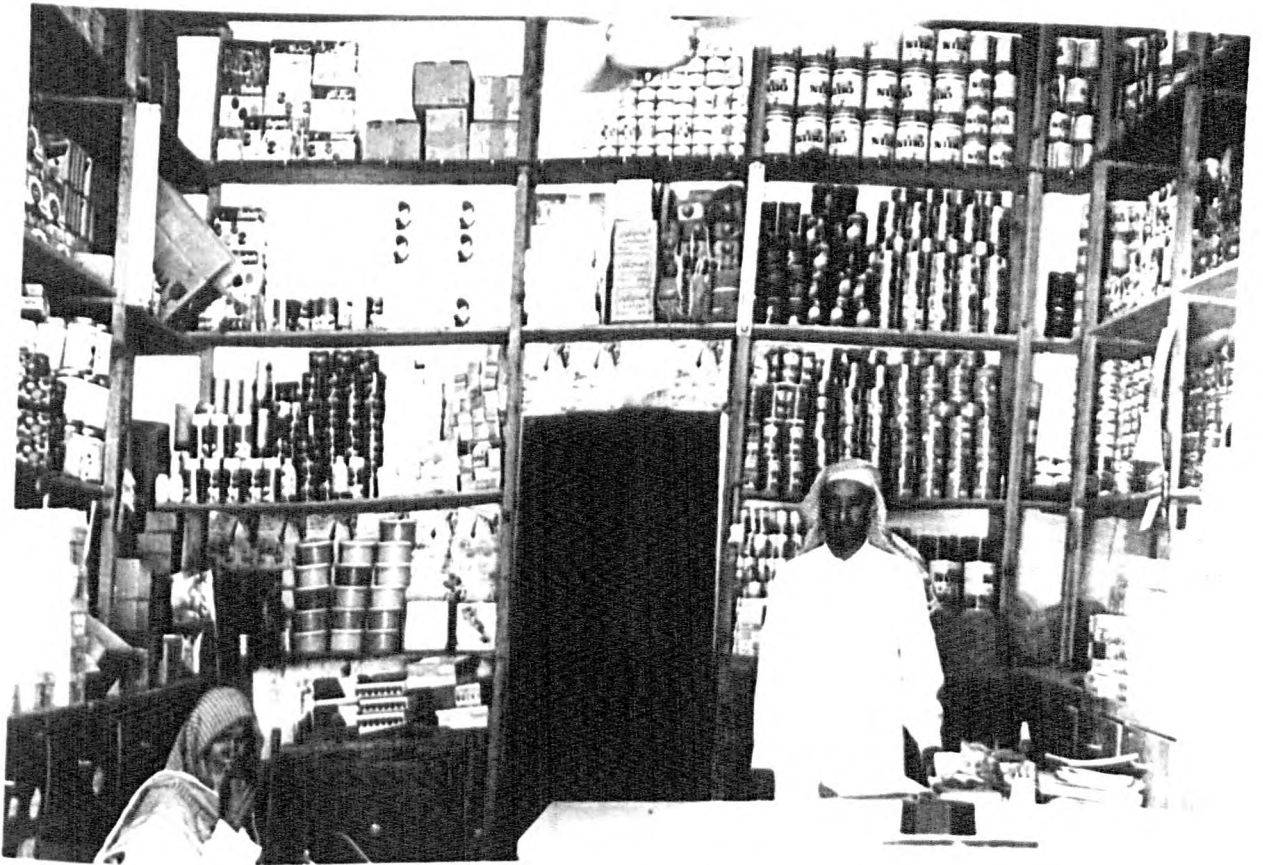


Plate 12. View of the Cooperative Society from inside



Plate 13. Some villagers having the 'Eid meal on one of the village's streets



Plate 14. Villagers greeting each other for the occasion of the 'Eid



Plate 15. An old street of the village



Plate 16. Some old and new houses

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