



T a n g e r, May 15. 1900.

Dear Professor Goldziher,

Kindly excuse me for not having answered you before. I have been away among the Gebala, and only lately returned. I enclose some oaths, which are used by the people here, and have made some remarks where I thought explanation needed. I think I could easily get more. As for the numbers, I have made some inquiries already on my first journeys, but found that the Arab belief in the unluckiness of even numbers—Burckhardt speaks of it in the preface to his Arab Proverbs— is at all events not common in Morocco. I made some notes on numbers when I was in Fez, but I ~~was~~ lost them a night when I was robbed and lost all my luggage. I do not think that they were of any value; it occurred to me then that my informers invented what they said. Equally valueless is, in my opinion, the following list, which I got from a magician whilst I was in Marrakesh:-- 1 good-- there is only one God--, 2 good, 3 and four bad, 5 good, 6 good, 7 not good, 8 good, 9 bad, 10 good. But from a paper which I enclose you will find what the Moors say when they count grain. The number 5 is universally used as a spell, and I have enclosed the expressions they use in case of the evil eye.

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In his book "An Account of the Empire of Marocco," Third edition, London 1814, <sup>pg. 165,</sup> James Grey Jackson says,--"There is a ridiculous pre-judice throughout this country, which extends as far as the Nile El Abeede, or Nile of Soudan, in considering the word five as indecorous; it is therefore never mentioned in the Emperor's presence, nor even to any prince, bashaw, or powerful man: the speaker expressing himself thus: /Arbat u Wahud/ i.e. Four and one."

This is at all events not a universal custom, so far as my experience goes it is not even a common mode of expression; but I heard a statement to the same effect from a Christian who had been some years in the country. If Jackson's statement is correct, the indecorous character of khamsa is evidently due to its being used as a spell, or a curse. The connection between five and the evil eye is due to the five fingers, and in my own opinion the five fingers, or the hand, is regarded as a means of averting the evil eye, not because the hand is a "symbol of power", as has been suggested, but simply because the hand is the natural means of protection against the looks of other people. Children, as is well known, are often satisfied with putting their hand before their own eyes, when they want to avoid the looks of others. --- As for the common belief in the luck of odd numbers, Elworthy has collected various facts in his book "The Evil Eye," pp.404 sqq.



I saw a very interesting thing during my travels among the  
 Gebala, viz. a kind of a drama, or rather ballet. It is known under  
 the name of Buglud, this being the name of its chief person, a man  
 dressed in a goat's skin. This ballet is performed seven days, or  
 rather nights, during the "great feast", but among the tent-Arabs  
 in the neighbourhood only for three. I find that Mouléiras refers  
 to this custom, p. 606 sqq., but his description of it is so incor-  
 rect that it is hardly possible to recognize it to be the same.  
 He calls it Ba-Chikh, a name which nobody here knows, and he does  
 not mention the main person, the goat man, which evidently gives  
 the play its *raison d'être*. It is the story of the scape-goat, for  
 a prominent feature in the performance is that Buglud is beaten  
 by everybody. --- So far as I have been able to control Mouléiras's  
 statements generally, they require to be used with great caution.  
 I do not think he is very particular, and it is absolutely impossi-  
 ble that his informant could give correct information on all those  
 subjects with which he deals, especially as he never made notes.

But I am afraid that I am <sup>troubling you</sup> ~~troubling you~~ out, and must apologize  
 for this lengthy letter. As for my stipendium, I can say nothing  
 as yet with certainty. I have heard that the issue is very uncert-  
 ain, and it is quite possible that I never shall be able to bring  
 my investigations to an end. ::: If I can supply you with any in-  
 formation you want, I shall of course be most happy to do so. My  
 Shereef wishes to be remembered to you. Yours very faithfully

Edward Westermarck.

It is the most common word for "goat", and is also  
 used for "goat" in Persian. I shall make further inquiries.