

ARABIC: THE MOTHER OF ALL LANGUAGES

Sanskrit: Its Incognito Offspring

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“In the history of the human race, the Qur’án is the only book that has proved to be a ‘mercy to all nations’ in all spheres of activity. Every country, nation and religion except Islam claims that its language is the only heavenly language, spoken by God and the angels, and despises other languages by considering them of Satan, Hell or of the untouchables.”

It is stated in the Qur’án¹ that God created man and gave him the power of speech. The power of speech includes all the various forms in which one expresses oneself, viz., speaking, writing, gestures and the like. God has declared this to be the greatest Gift He has bestowed on mankind.² Man could not name anything without first discovering some general quality that seemed at the time the most characteristic of the object to be named. Without speech there could be no reason and without reason there could be no speech. So first God created man or a being endowed with conception and the ability to reason. Man was favoured with wonderful vocal organs which form an extraordinary instrument on which words and thoughts are played. Man is made to think. The first manifestation of thought is speech. As man is the best of God’s creation, in the same way the power of speech is the highest faculty bestowed on man by God which distinguishes him from the rest of the creation. It was the ability to speak that gave man a preference over the angels and he was given the title of God’s vicegerent on earth.³ Among the Hindus, Christians, Egyptians and Greeks the power of expression is believed to be the source of wisdom and strength. In ancient civilizations it was also believed to be the cause of all the creations on this earth. Tehuti or Thoth, the well-known deity of Egypt, was the medium through whom the will of God was revealed. Clement of Alexandria enumerates forty-two “Books of Thoth”, of which the first ten are those of the prophet, deal with the law and of gods. The following ten contain regulations regarding sacrifices and feasts (*Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics* by Hastings, Vol. 2, p. 793). Thoth or Tehuti means inventor of speech or hieroglyphics or letters . . . and the God of Wisdom (*New Century Cyclopaedia of Names*). No animate or inanimate object came into existence until its name was uttered. God called out the names of all things, and as their names were called they came into existence. God is the author of words

and scriptures. Whatever came out of God’s mouth became the words “Indeed God was word and word was God”.⁴

The Brahmins and the Greeks were against the development of the language. The Greeks considered speech to be the gift of the Holy Ghost (*Logos*). The word *Logos* itself is derived from the Arabic word *Lughah* and the English word “language” is derived from the same root. The Greeks divided mankind into two groups, viz., those who had been blessed by the Holy Ghost with the ability to speak; the Greeks were the only people who came in this group; and they termed the rest of mankind *Aglossoi*, meaning those who were deprived of the power of speech. In the same way the Germans called the rest of mankind as *veela* or *valla*, that is to say, unclean. They considered it derogatory to follow other people in speech, dress or manners. The Poles believed their neighbours to be *naemi*, i.e., dumb. The Turks, Russians, Slovaks, Bulgarians — nearly all nations considered themselves to be dumb. In the Middle Ages it was a prevailing opinion that Hebrew was the primitive speech of mankind (*Jewish Encyclopaedia*, Hastings, p. 307). St. Jerome in one of his epistles to Damascus writes: “The whole of antiquity affirms that Hebrew, in which the Old Testament is written, was the beginning of all human speech” (*The Science of Language* by Max Müller, p. 145). Origen in his eleventh homily on the Book of Numbers, expresses his belief that the Hebrew language, originally given through Adam, remained in that part of the world which was the chosen portion of God (*Ibid.*, p. 146).

No ancient Greek ever thought of learning a foreign language. Why should he? He divided the whole world into Greeks and Barbarians, and he would have felt himself degraded by adopting either the dress or the manners or the language of his Barbarian neighbours. Greeks called the Barbarians *Aglossoi*, or speechless (*The Science of Language* by Max Müller, 1891).

A Dutch author tried to prove that the language in heaven would be Dutch (Hermathena Joannia Goropii Becani, Antwerpiae, 1580). And there is a saying amongst the Swedish: “God spoke to Adam in Swedish, answered in Danish and the serpent spoke to Eve in French” (Andre Kemp in his work on *The Language of Paradise*).

1 “He (God) created man and gave him the power of expression” (The Qur’án, 55: 34).

2 “Which then of the bounties of your Lord will you deny” (The Qur’án, 55: 13).

3 “And when thy Lord said to the angels, I am going to place a vicegerent in the earth” (The Qur’án, 2: 30).

4 “In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God” (John 1: 1).

A saying in Persian states that only three languages are known in Heaven: the serpent spoke in Arabic, Adam and Eve spoke in Persian, and Gabriel conversed in Turkish. Chardin relates that the Persians believe three languages have been spoken in Paradise, Arabic by the Serpent, etc. (*Ibid.*, p. 149). The equivalent of speech in Hindi is *Vak*, and Hindus believe it to be a deity. They further believe that Sanskrit is a language of God and except for the Brahmins no one should converse in it. So the language of their sacred writings is by many people taken either for the most ancient language or for the natural language of mankind. Buddhists claim Magadhi is the mother of all languages (*Chips From a German Workshop*, Vol. 4, p. 23). According to Jewish doctrines the inhabitants of Heaven only spoke one language. The Babylonians⁵ thought of trying to reach Heaven by climbing through the skies, and so they started building a tower! It is recorded:

“And the whole earth was of one language and of one speech. And it came to pass, as they journeyed from the east that they found a plain in the land of Shinar, and they dwelt there. And they said one to another, Go to, let us make brick, and burn them thoroughly. And they had brick for stone, and lime had they for mortar. And they said, Go to, let us build a city and a tower, whose top may reach unto heaven, and let us make us a name, lest we be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth. And the Lord came down to see the city and the tower, which the children of men builded. And the Lord said, Behold, the people is one, and they have all one language. And this they begin to do; and now nothing will be restrained from them, which they have imagined to do. Go to, let us go down, and there confound their language, that they may not understand one another's speech. Therefore the name of it called Babel, because the Lord did there confound the language of all the earth, and from thence did the Lord scatter them abroad upon the face of all the earth.”⁶ (Genesis XI : 1-9.)

Thus for this very reason, whether rightly or wrongly, according to the Bible, God Almighty disliked the unity of the human race and He descended from Heaven and created differences in the languages of the people. However, it is evident from this that at some time the whole human race lived at one place, and spoke one language. It is reported that God lived with Enoch in the sixth generation of Adam for three hundred years and taught him this language. (Genesis V : 23, 24.)

The Opinions of Orientalists about Speech

Professor F. Max Müller and most of the Orientalists who have done considerable research on languages and have written considerable volumes on the subject are of opinion that languages of the world can be divided into three groups, viz., the languages of the Aryan race, of the Semitic race and thirdly the Teutonic or Mongolian race. They have not given much importance to the last group of languages and have given considerable attention to the languages of the Aryan and Semitic race. They are of opinion that Sanskrit is the source of the languages of the Aryan race, such as English and other European languages and also of Latin, the ancient languages of Greece and Persia. They hold that the true source or mother of all these languages somehow became extinct and Sanskrit is the deceased daughter of this deceased mother, because the roots of Sanskrit, Greek, German, Latin and Scandinavian languages are the same. In English and German dictionaries the derivations of these words have been traced in Sanskrit, but scientific terms have been borrowed from Latin. But, in no part of the world has

it been the practice, nor will it ever be, to use derivations in speech. Whenever man invented a speech or God taught him a speech, the first words that were constructed or used were nouns. Even today, wherever a child is born in any part of the world, the first thing he learns is names. Linguists claim that language was created to unite mankind. Some think that man first invented gestures, because names could be conveyed by signs even. For instance when people saw a wolf, they only pointed towards it and said that it was coming. Contrary to this, some are of the view that names are the foremost part of speech, therefore people must have spoken “wolf, wolf” first and made a sign of its coming. So far as the view of Islam is concerned, God Himself gave man the power of speech and the first thing He taught man was names. God Almighty taught the names to man or He gave them the power to invent names (The Qur'an, 2 : 30). A child also makes its first attempt to speak with the words “mummy” and “daddy”, which are nouns.

Sanskrit is not the mother of all languages

Professor Max Müller in his wonderful book, *The Science of Language*, 1891, Vol. 1, p. 234, states: “The religion of the Veda is not the source of all other religions of the Aryan world. Nor is Sanskrit the mother of all the Aryan languages. Sanskrit as compared with Greek and Latin is an elder sister, not a parent”.

On page 77 of the same book he states: “Hindustani is not the daughter of Sanskrit, as we find it in the Veda or in the later literature of the Brahmanas; it is a branch of the living speech of India . . . springing from the same stem from which Sanskrit sprang”.

And what applies to those Aryan speakers applies with even greater force to the Arabic speakers, because the earliest monuments of Semitic speech, differentiated as Babylonian, Phoenician, Hebrew and Arabic, go back, we are told, far beyond the earliest documents of Sanskrit or Greek. Arabic is more primitive than Hebrew (*Ibid.*, p. 49).

However, it is an admitted fact that at some time there was only one language in this earthly heaven and all the people spoke only one language, and that language was the mother of all languages, and from that origin sprang the daughters — Latin, Greek, Sanskrit, etc. Hebrew is not the primitive language. Hebrew is the usual name of the language spoken by the Israelites up to a few centuries before the birth of Jesus. The term Hebrew is not in the Old Testament. In later times the Jews called it Hebrew, “the holy language”. The phrase “Hebrew language” therefore does not go back to the Old Testament. The Hebrew word “Ibri” (Genesis 10 : 11) comprises of a number of Arabic and Aramaic stocks (*The New Schaff Herzog Encyclopaedia of Religious Knowledge*, under the caption Hebrew Language).

The Bible relates that difference in language started from Babylon (Genesis 11 : 1-9), and it was the difference in language that created enmity and dissension in the human race or that quarrels and disputes among people started a

5 Babylonia is the Greek name of the country derived from the name of the capital city, the original name was Bab-ilu, Hebrew Babel (Gate of God). The earliest name of the whole land was Eden. In contrast to Assyria, which stood for Semitic materialism, for fighting ability, and conquest by force of arms, Babylonia represented culture, civilization, literature, and the all-controlling power of religion (*The New Cyclopaedia of Religious Knowledge*).

6 The Biblical story mentioned here of the Tower of Babel is probably a later addition (or copied from the Babylonian stories). *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics* by Hastings and *Encyclopaedia Biblica* by the Rev. T. K. Cheyne.

difference of languages. At first the Aryans and Persians were brothers. Then they fell out: the Aryans called God by the name *Dev* (God), and the Persians, therefore, called Satan by that name.

Enmity between different communities causes changes in the meanings of words

The word "Hindu" was used for a gentleman in India, but in Persia this word was used for a thief or a slave. This is nothing surprising. Hundreds of instances like that can be given, which are a proof of long-hidden enmity between the two nations. The same thing is happening with Urdu in India. If the Muslims in the Punjab use the word *matlab* (purpose) in their everyday speech, the Sikhs and Hindus distort the word and say *matbal*. They also distort *chaqoo* (knife) and say *kachoo*; and call a *degcha* (cooking utensil) as *dechka*. There are numerous instances where Hindus and Sikhs have changed the shape of a word just because the Muslims use it in their speech. A Hindu can pronounce the English letter *F* very well, but when he comes across the Urdu alphabet *fe*, which is the equivalent of *F* in English, he somehow feels unable to say *F* or *Fe* and makes it *Phe*. The Hindu *Pandits* have spoilt the pronunciation of the word *lafz* and say *laphaj* instead. In the Madras province (India) there is division between Ayar and Nayars, that is to say Brahmins and non-Brahmins. An Ayar not only considers a Nayar to be an untouchable, but he also considers it unclean to speak the language of a Nayar. An Ayar never utters a word of a Nayar's language and does not give the Nayar a right to speak his language. Difference in language does not give rise to different words only, but it also strains harmonious relations. People who have lived together for generations become each other's enemies.

Human dignity in Islam

The word dignity of a human being is untraceable in the Vedas. In the Old Testament, in the Gospels and other scriptures there are castes, tribes, colours chosen by God Himself. The idea of mankind, of the brotherhood of man, as found in the Qur'an, would never have sprung into life without Islam. Arya Dayand Sarasvati, founder of Arya Samaj, says that outside the Aryavarata all are the *malekkhas*.^{6a} Savami Dayananda, founder of the Arya Samaj, on the authority of Rigveda, writes: "Excluding Aryavarata all the countries of the world are *Asur* and *malekkha* countries". In the north of Arya desha (Arya country) is the Himalaya, in the south Vindhichal, and on the east and west is the ocean (*Satyarthprakash* Smullan 8, 1887). To the Greeks all their neighbours are Barbarians. Jews say only the Israelites are the chosen people of God. Aryas declare *Aryasya aptayaniti Ayra* (God is the son of God). It is in Dharma Shastra: "Let him (Brahama) not learn a language spoken by Barbarians". To Jesus Christ the non-Israelite humble woman was equal to a dog; Christians believe that God never spoke in any language save Hebrew. The Jews, Hindus, Persians, Greeks, etc., considered the study of languages other than their own equivalent to forsaking the path of their religion.

In the history of the human race, the Qur'an is the only book that has proved to be a "mercy to all the nations" in all spheres of activity. Every country, nation and religion except Islam claims that its language is the only heavenly language, spoken by God and the angels, and despises other languages by considering them of Satan, Hell or of the

^{6a} *Malekkha* means impure.

⁷ Professor Max Müller counts 900 languages (*The Science of Language*, Vol. 1, p. 25).

untouchables. Contrary to this the Qur'an claims:

"And among His signs is the creation of the heavens and the earth, and the diversity of your tongues and colours. In that surely are signs for those who possess knowledge" (30: 21).

In this verse the fact is explained that the diversity in languages that is found in the vast sections of humanity is caused by the diversity that is found in the structure of the earth, the weather, and this whole universe. It has also been recommended by the Qur'an that scholars should study the different languages, as there are verses of God in different languages and in all colours of nations.

The great characteristic of Islam is that it requires its followers to believe that all the great religions of the world that prevailed before it were revealed by God. It thus lays down the basis of peace among the religions of the world. More than this, it emphasizes that God spoke to prophets in their respective languages: "We have not sent any messenger but in the language of his nation" (The Qur'an, 14: 4). Hence according to the Holy Qur'an, God spoke in different languages of the world. Accordingly Muslims translated Greek philosophy, Sanskrit and Persian books into Arabic and wrote in Sanskrit language books on astronomy, and never said that that language was of the untouchables. The Prophet Muhammad has done a great service to humanity by encouraging the study of all languages. God sent this "mercy to all nations" to gather together the whole human family, which is badly split up. Consequently, the Prophet Muhammad ended the barriers between different languages by saying that different names for a thing do not change the reality and properties of that thing. A rose may be called by any name — it will continue to give its sweet fragrance. Although there is a vast difference in the make-up of the things in this universe, still there are uniform laws governing them. In the same way, although there are thousands of languages,⁷ still there is a universal thread in them all.

Attempts are being made to prove unity amongst various groups of languages

Numerous attempts have been made to prove the unity in the Aryan languages. In a like manner, there is considerable literature showing the similarity of Arabic, Hebrew, Chaldean and Aramaic languages. But very little effort has been made to prove the affinity between Aryan and Semitic languages. An effort in this direction will be a great blessing, for it will prove the unity of the human race and unify the scattered and divided sections of humanity.

Arabic has an extensive vocabulary. No language can compare with it in the wealth of its words

In the huge mass of languages, Arabic is the most extensive. The Da'irat al-Ma'arif of Hyderabad, Deccan, India, has re-printed an old lexicon of Arabic named *Jumhura al-Lughah*, which consists of three comprehensive volumes. The introduction has been written by a German scholar, in which he states that Arabic is the most extensive language in the world. It is beyond human power to comprehend its vastness. A book has been published in Egypt called *al-Mukhassas* which consists of sixteen volumes. There is a detailed discussion in this book on the "Philosophy of the Arabic Words". There are different names for the various characteristics of the horse, camel, sword, honey, human age and of the numerous animals. Arabic is capable of supplying names for all these things to all the languages of the world. Arabic has a different name for every stage of human emotions, e.g., love and passion, jealousy and enmity, distress and pain. The age,

colour, height, beauty and ugliness, cultivated or wild growth, all find different names in Arabic. There is a different name in Arabic for all varieties of things like the date, grapes, cow, ox, etc. Farrar writes in his *Origin of Language*, p. 85 : " In Arabic a work is mentioned on the 500 names of the lion, another on the 200 names of the serpent ". An Eastern author has written a whole book on the words used for honey. He counted 800 without exhausting the subject. The same author maintains that in Arabic there are at least 1,000 words for sword. Others maintain that there are 400 to signify misfortune. Van Hammer counts 5,744 words all relating to the camel (*The Science of Language* by F. Max Müller, Vol. 1, p. 526, published in 1891). This point is further explained by the following example. To cut is an infinitive. The Arabic word for this verb is *Qat'*. A list of all those words follows which describes all the various ways in which this action takes place. This illustrates the fact that Arabic is extensively rich in vocabulary.

| | |
|-----------------|---|
| <i>Qatta</i> | he cut it out or shaped it any manner. |
| <i>Qadda</i> | cut cloth in lengthwise. |
| <i>Qata</i> | cut cloth in breadth. |
| <i>Jadda</i> | cut into pieces. |
| <i>Jatha</i> | cut at the roots. |
| <i>Jadhdha</i> | cut swiftly. |
| <i>Jazza</i> | cut in pieces. |
| <i>Adhdha</i> | cut to cause pain. |
| <i>Hadhdha</i> | cut quickly. |
| <i>Qadhdha</i> | cut out sides. |
| <i>Qassa</i> | cut a knot of a stick. |
| <i>Jizzatun</i> | cut it in a good manner. |
| <i>Jassa</i> | cut with his mouth. |
| <i>Jabba</i> | cut off penis or testicles. |
| <i>Daqqa</i> | cut finely that a thing became small in size or diameter as compared with length. |
| <i>Dakka</i> | cut and smoothen. |
| <i>Bakka</i> | cut off head. |
| <i>Fakka</i> | to separate by cutting, deducting, cutting to make a gap. |
| <i>Shaqqa</i> | to divide in half by cutting. |
| <i>Hadda</i> | get cut by fall. |
| <i>Fasl</i> | severence of claim. |
| <i>Qadha</i> | to be executed. |
| <i>Batta</i> | to cut limb or hair. |
| <i>Qataba</i> | to collect after cutting. |
| <i>Sha'b</i> | to collect before cutting. |
| <i>Dharib</i> | to cut into bits. |
| <i>Qardh</i> | cut — scissors the tool to cut. |
| <i>Jurm</i> | cut fruit off tree. Cut off the wool of the sheep. |
| <i>Hasada</i> | cut crops. |
| <i>Sarm</i> | to interrupt or cut a speech. Cut through. Cut off friendship. |
| <i>Sarim</i> | determination to cut. |
| <i>Ajram</i> | cut for evil purpose. |
| <i>Taqriz</i> | cut for noble purpose. |
| <i>Sharh</i> | to open after cutting. Cutting a piece of flesh. |
| <i>Abza'o</i> | cut pieces. |
| <i>Sabat</i> | cut a work. |
| <i>Batak</i> | cut limb or hair. |
| <i>Abatir</i> | cut off completely in any place. |
| <i>Abtar</i> | tail cut off entirely. Cut off progeny. |
| <i>Batal</i> | cut off severely. Cut off from everything for the sake of God or worship. |
| <i>'Azuda</i> | cut or lop trees. |
| <i>'Adhdha</i> | cut or bite hand in wrath. Cut by teeth. |

| | |
|----------------|--|
| <i>Fadhdha</i> | cut property amongst a people. Cut out a useful thing. |
| <i>Bassa</i> | cut into enormous pieces. Cut off. Cut to pieces. |
| <i>Shakka</i> | cutting in or making hole in it. |

In the same way, to cut slowly, to cut swiftly, to cut in front, to cut from behind, to cut in length, in breadth, etc. — all these modes of action have a word to describe every condition and situation in the process of cutting. There are numerous words for this single action of cutting. Arabic with its vast vocabulary must have given words to other languages.

There are thousands of words in Arabic where a change in the short-vowel gives a different meaning to the word. For example :

| | | |
|------------------|---|------------------------|
| <i>Ghamaraho</i> | - | abundant water. |
| <i>Ghimrah</i> | - | concealed enmity. |
| <i>Ghumrah</i> | - | ignorant. |
| <i>Salaam</i> | - | greetings. |
| <i>Silaam</i> | - | stone. |
| <i>Sulaam</i> | - | bone. |
| <i>Kalaam</i> | - | speech. |
| <i>Kilaam</i> | - | wound. |
| <i>Kulaam</i> | - | hardness of the earth. |
| <i>Harra</i> | - | black-stoney. |
| <i>Hirra</i> | - | acute thirst. |
| <i>Hurra</i> | - | chaste woman. |
| <i>Halam</i> | - | to colour the hide. |
| <i>Hilm</i> | - | kindness. |
| <i>Hulm</i> | - | sexual excitement. |
| <i>Sabt</i> | - | Saturday. |
| <i>Sibt</i> | - | imprint of horse-shoe. |
| <i>Subt</i> | - | sleeping or relaxing. |

There are some words which contain two opposite meanings. There is a genuine reason for such words to carry such meanings. For example :

Sareem. It is used both for day and night. The reason is that its real meaning is to cut. It is used in this sense because the day cuts the night and the night cuts the day.

Al-Saarikh. Means both plaintiff and defendants. The real meaning is to complain. This word is used as both complain against each other.

Rijaa'. Is used for both hope and fear. Because in certain cases both are intermixed.

Zann. Is used for both doubt and belief. Because in doubtful matters both factors are present.

There is a whole book in Arabic on this subject. The aforementioned examples have been cited that these aspects of the language might not be ignored.

Many years ago Mr. Karamat Husain, a Judge of the Allahabad High Court, India, at the request of the late Khwaja Kamal-ud-Din (founder of the Working Muslim Mission), made a research and on the basis of this claimed that 15,000 words in English have been borrowed from Arabic. Most of these words are used in English in their original form. Thousands of years ago, the inhabitants of India spoke and understood Arabic. Arabic was disfigured into various forms and gave rise to the hundreds of languages we now find in India. The founder of the Arya Samaj movement, Swami Dayanand, has stated in his book, *Satyarth Parkash*, that the Kurus and Pandwas discussed confidential matters in Arabic. The words for mountains, rivers, towns, heaven, earth, names of relations, names of posts, exclamations of happiness, bedding and coverings, house, etc., are all in Arabic. The only difference in most cases is that if the words are read from right to left they sound Arabic, and if they are read from left to right they sound Sanskrit. There

is no doubt that old lexicons of Sanskrit which are known by the name of *Nirukt* do give an explanation of Sanskrit words. But the scholars of Sanskrit strongly differ about the explanations given in these lexicons. They give strong and contradictory explanations for most of the words. In Arabic every word has a definite philosophy and a chain of words related to it. Before a list of such words is given, I will give an example to show the relation between Arabic and the rest of the languages of the world. The words for mother and father are common to all languages and they are pronounced in more or less the same way. Let us make a study of the words used for mother in different languages.

| | | | |
|-------------|---|---|-----------------------------|
| Arabic | - | - | <i>Umm.</i> |
| Persian | - | - | <i>Mader.</i> |
| Sanskrit | - | - | <i>Mata</i> or <i>Matr.</i> |
| Greek | - | - | <i>Matter.</i> |
| Bulgarian | - | - | <i>Mati.</i> |
| Russian | - | - | <i>Mate.</i> |
| Polish | - | - | <i>Mater.</i> |
| German | - | - | <i>Mutter.</i> |
| Lethonian | - | - | <i>Mote.</i> |
| Italian | - | - | <i>Madre.</i> |
| Spanish | - | - | <i>Madre.</i> |
| Portuguese | - | - | <i>Madre.</i> |
| French | - | - | <i>Mere.</i> |
| Danish | - | - | <i>Moder.</i> |
| Swedish | - | - | <i>Moder.</i> |
| English | - | - | <i>Mother.</i> |
| Welsh | - | - | <i>Mam.</i> |
| Irish | - | - | <i>Mathir.</i> |
| Icelandich | - | - | <i>Modhir.</i> |
| Gaelic | - | - | <i>Mathair.</i> |
| Zend | - | - | <i>Matar.</i> |
| Anglo-Saxon | - | - | <i>Moder.</i> |
| Latin | - | - | <i>Mater.</i> |
| German | - | - | <i>Muotar.</i> |
| Slavonic | - | - | <i>Mate.</i> |
| Dutch | - | - | <i>Moeder.</i> |

Only this example proves that it is worth while considering that in all the above-mentioned words only "M" is common. A study of languages reveals that the root of all these words is Ma and the same is the root of Mata in Sanskrit. About the words Matar (Mother) and Patar (Father) (see Otto Bohtlingk and Rudolph Roth, *Sanskrit Wörterbuch*, St. Petersburg, 1865-1868. Bohtlingk and Roth state: "Pa and Ma were probably the much older original onomatopoeic names (the formation of words by imitation of sounds or expressing by sound the thing signified) and mother, which in a later reflection age influence the formation of Pitri and Matri (which themselves go back to the Indo-European period)."

In Sanskrit mother is called Matr. Orientalists think that its root is Ma, which is the root for the same word in all Indo-European languages. Contrary to this, my opinion is that no language is based upon roots.

The real words of a language are its nouns, and by changes in the nouns a language is formed.

To search out roots is the work of scholars, and it is evident that there is a difference of opinion amongst the scholars of all languages regarding the roots or derivations for any noun. Every commentator has his own views. The old lexicons of Sanskrit are known as Nighantu, and the commentators on these are called Nirukt Acharya. Mostly they disagree in the explanation or root of a word.

Language begets language. Changes in a language occur when nations mix with each other or when enmity takes place

between two nations; then they adopt words of each other's language after deforming them in shape or meaning. Some words when adopted cannot be pronounced properly because of climatic conditions. The Japanese cannot pronounce the letter "r" properly and in all places replace it with "l". For example, they pronounce Europe as Eulope, France as Flance, and Turkey as Tulkey, etc. The Turks cannot pronounce *kh* and substitute it by *h*.

It has already been observed that of all the words used to denote mother, the smallest of them is "Umm". In fact this letter is "m", which is difficult to utter and therefore needs a vowel in order to be pronounced. In Arabic every letter has a significance. For example:

| | | |
|---------------|---|-------------------------------------|
| <i>Tau'am</i> | - | conjunction of two. |
| <i>Hamma</i> | - | collection of goods. |
| <i>Dhamma</i> | - | get together with some one. |
| <i>Tamma</i> | - | call and collect every one. |
| <i>Imam</i> | - | one around whom every one collects. |

Not only does every word have a special meaning, but the change of vowel signs affects the meaning of the word.

For example:

Hamal (with *Fathah* on h) means a burden which can be carried and which may have to be carried in the womb.

Himal (with *Kasrah* on h) means a burden which is difficult to carry and which may have to be carried on the back.

Humal (with *dhammah* on h) means a burden which is very essential to be carried.

It is obvious that it is easy for a child to utter the word *Umm*, and *m* which conveys the same sense is easy to utter for a child. A similar word is *maa'*, which means water, and which is considerably easier for a child to say than water.

The Sanskrit word *matri* or *mata*, which is an altered version of *Um* and *matru*, which is the same word as pronounced by the Maharashtra Pandits and which are distorted versions of *Umahaat*, which is the collective noun of *Um*.

In Arabic singular *Um* is another version of *ma*. This is not the only word. In Arabic there are hundreds of words that have been absorbed by Sanskrit in an altered form.

It is understandable that it is easier for a child to utter *Umm*. In fact any word which can be spoken by a slight movement of the lips is easily spoken by a child. Words like father, mother, *mata* and *madar*, are words which are comparatively difficult to be spoken.

One of the wonders of the Arabic language is that collective nouns are not formed from singular nouns. Instead, in Arabic singular nouns are derived from collective nouns. Whenever man must have given names to objects, his mind must have conceived collective things and gender. A child as soon as it opens its eyes in this world forms a conception about the world collectively. But slowly and gradually he comes towards the principle of "thinking things in twos", and after determining the gender for every object he fixes a place for every word. One of the interpretations can be given to this verse of the Holy Qur'an, and which fits it very well, that "Adam was taught collective nouns" (2: 31). It means that man has the ability to determine nouns of genders and form and give a name to every object. Man gives names by conceiving an idea about a certain object. No other creature has been gifted with this ability, whether animals or angels.

Why is mother called *Umm* in Arabic? For this we have to refer to the Arabic lexicons. Any being which nourishes a thing improves it from beginning to end, and is referred to by the word *Umm*. Those people who have claimed that the root of all the words in different languages

for mother is *ma*, can never prove that the Sanskrit word for mother has the conception or meaning of *ma*.

An Arab calls the mother of an animal in its collective form as *Ummaat*, and the mothers of human beings as *Ummahaat*. But this subtle and delicate difference is not observed in Sanskrit. In India a cow is called *Go-mata*, and the country itself is called *Bharat mata*. In their mind the word *mata* has a limited meaning and not the comprehensive meanings contained in the conception of mother.

Like the word for mother, there is another word which is a source of language, and that is father, which is pronounced in more or less the same manner in all languages, i.e., English, German, and various European languages, Sanskrit, Persian, etc., e.g., father, and the root of all these words is *Pa*, and according to the principles of investigation into languages, the roots for all these words should be one. Undoubtedly, there is a root for this word in Sanskrit, i.e., *Pa*. But this root is unable to give the philosophic interpretation of the conception of father. My objection to this root is the same as the one I have for *ma* being the root of *matri*.² Language is never formed by roots but by nouns. It is the job of scholars who follow to dig out the common factors in the family of words and thus determine the roots. But they can never make a new language from roots.

However, the philosophical explanation of father is as follows: "He who begets a child, one who exercises paternal

care over another, a fatherly protector or provider, the nearest male protector".

The Sanskrit word for "one who provides" is not *Pita* but *Ganitr*. Still, the conception of spiritual nourishment is not contained in the word at all. It is just as if someone has said that father is derived from feeder, meaning one who provides us with bread. But such statements are frivolous. The word *Pa* does not contain the meaning of giving spiritual sustenance nor does it mean "the nearest male ancestor". The Arabic word for father is *ab*, which is a very short one. In fact it is the smallest word in all the languages of the world to express the idea of father. The root of this word is *b*, and it needs a vowel to precede it so that it becomes easy to speak. In Arabic *ab* is not the root but the noun. The Sanskrit root for father is *Pa*, and this is a distorted form of *ab*, because *p* of Sanskrit changes into *b* when written in Arabic and the Arya people convert *b* into *p*.

The Arabic lexicon explains the word *ab* as one who begets, who is the source of creation, improvement or manifestation. The Prophet Muhammad has been called the father of *Mu'minun* because he is the source of spiritual instruction and development for all the believers.

² In Sanskrit the root *Pa* means (1) to drink, *patrika*, to measure with a vessel or with *patra*; (2) to watch, keep, preserve, protect, care; (3) *pitri*, to watch, keep, preserve, protect or care.