

**CULTURAL PRACTICES IN ORAL LITERATURE: A
CASE STUDY OF YEMENI ARABIC AND AMERICAN
PROVERBS**

**DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY
IN
COMPARATIVE LITERATURE**

**BY
ALI KASEM AHMED MOSA**



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SCHOOL OF HUMANITIES
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HYDERABAD – 500046
2010**

CULTURAL PRACTICES IN ORAL LITERATURE: A CASE STUDY OF YEMENI ARABIC AND AMERICAN PROVERBS

**A Dissertation submitted to the Centre for Comparative Literature, University of
Hyderabad, in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of**

**DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY
In
COMPARATIVE LITERATURE**

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CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that **Mr. Ali Kasem Ahmed Mosa** has worked under my supervision for his Ph.D. degree at the Centre for Comparative Literature, University of Hyderabad. His dissertation entitled **“Cultural Practices in Oral Literature: A Case study of Yemeni Arabic and American Proverbs”** represents his original work and does not constitute part of any material submitted for a degree elsewhere.

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that all information in this dissertation entitled “Cultural Practices in Oral Literature: A Case study of Yemeni Arabic and American Proverbs” is my original work carried out under the supervision of Professor P.R. Dadegaonkar. I also declare that I have obtained and presented all information in this dissertation in accordance with academic rules and ethical conduct and that I have fully cited and referenced all material and results that are not original to this work.

Hyderabad

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Signature:

DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to ‘aumi,’ my mom, my mother, and my father and to all whom I owe many things that are worthy in my life.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This dissertation has been completed with such intellectual, moral and personal support of many individuals. I would like to thank Professor P. R. Dadegaonkar, my supervisor who has been a source of support and inspiration. I consider myself very fortunate to have had him as my supervisor. His trust in my abilities inspired the confidence that was crucial for the long haul. I would like also to thank the members of my dissertation committee: Prof. Tutun Mukherjee and Prof. Panchanan Muhanty for the time and effort they put into reading and commenting on it, during all the work on progress of the dissertation. Special thanks to the student, friend and Encyclopedia of proverbs, Professor Wolfgang Mieder. It is difficult to find words to convey the depth of my gratitude for the help, generosity, friendship and support he gave me during my fieldwork in the United States.

My deepest thanks should go to my parents, my sisters, my brothers and my brother-in-law whose unfailing support and concern was a source of strength that kept me moving ahead despite the difficulties encountered during the course of this dissertation.

Finally I wish to express my deep appreciation to my Yemeni and American friends, too numerous to be named individually, for their helpful contributions and comments.

NOTES ON TRANSLATION AND TRANSLITERATION

Since some of Yemeni Arab informants have their own dialects, the proverbs, names and places which have been reflected in their responses to the questionnaire and speech during the interviews, I have used the forms as they provided in the text (for example “bn Zayid”, “Ali wild Zayid”, “Ali Ibn Zayid” which all stand for the same man- the wisest Yemeni from the past). I have preserved their varieties as they represent the current pronunciations. I did the same regarding the current wording of many proverbs transcribed both in the notes and in the bibliography whenever applicable. For the convenience of the general reader, the transliteration for *على هامان يا فرعون* is given as *‘ala hamaan yaa fer’aun* where ع is represented by *a’*.

Regarding translation, word-for-word, literal, conceptual types have been made use of wherever possible. For the proverbs that could not be rendered into English using word-for-word or literal translation, conceptual translation is used. For example, *يحكمه أصله*

Yahkumuh asluh we cannot say (‘he is governed by his origin’ as a word-for-word translation) because it sounds meaningless to non-Arabic native speakers. Here word-for-word or literal translation is of no use, so we have to apply the conceptual translation. Thus, this proverb can better mean: **behavior is one’s mirror** which is understandable to an English speaker and which represents more than one variety of the same proverb, such as: *إذا غرك الأصل ذلك الفعل*, *كل ناء بماء فيه ينضح*, *ذي بقاع الدست تطلعه المعلقة*, etc...

The presented proverbs in the text are not limited to any categories such as the classical or modern varieties but rather they are common to everyday use.

Transcription and Phonetic Values of Arabic Alphabets:

| Stand-alone | Name | Transcription | Phonetic Value (IPA) |
|-------------|---|---------------|-------------------------|
| ء | hamza | -- | [ʔ] |
| ا | alif | aa | various, including [æ:] |
| ب | ba: | b | [b] |
| ت | ta: | t | [t] |
| ث | <u>th</u> a: | th | [θ] |
| ج | gi:m, Other Accents:(ji:m, gi:m) | j | [dʒ] / [g] |
| ح | ḥa: | hž | [ħ] |
| خ | ḫa: | kħ | [x] |
| د | da:l | d | [d] |

| | | | |
|---|------|-----|---------------------------------------|
| ذ | ðɑ:l | dħ | [ð] |
| ر | ra: | r | [r] |
| ز | zāī | z | [z] |
| س | si:n | s | [s] |
| ش | Ši:n | sh | [ʃ] |
| ص | ṣa:d | sž | [s ^ʕ] |
| ض | ḍa:d | dž | [d ^ʕ] |
| ط | ṭa: | tž | [t ^ʕ] |
| ظ | ẓa: | dħž | [ð ^ʕ] / [z ^ʕ] |
| ع | ayn | rh | [ʕ] / [ʔ ^ʕ] |
| غ | ğayn | gh | [ɣ] / [ʁ] |
| ف | fa: | f | [f] |

| | | | |
|---|---|--------|---|
| ق | qa:f, Other Accents:(qa:f, ga:f) | q | [q] |
| ك | ka:f | k | [k] |
| ل | la:m | l | [l], [l ^ʕ] (as in <i>Allah, ḍala:m</i> (= <i>darkness</i>)) |
| م | mi:m | m | [m] |
| ن | nu:n | n | [n] |
| ه | ha: | h | [h] |
| و | wa:w | w, uu | [w] , [uɪ] |
| ي | ya: | y , ii | [j] , [iɪ] |

Al-Shormani (2007:vi)

ABSTRACT

In the light of the bleak reality of the enmity between the East and the West, Muslims and Non-Muslims, one might wonder as to what are the factors that have contributed to fuel such a situation and kept on perceiving each other as threat. To answer this question and many other similar questions, one has to check and reinterpret history honestly through all people who were part of it or were witnesses, rather than depend on the written history dictated by the biased victorious, and differentiate between the identities of a nation represented by its 'government' and the people themselves, i.e. oral representation and understanding of the "Other" through manifestations of their daily life and listening to them and knowing more about the way they live and think. In such a situation, it seems the speech made by Barak Obama in Cairo confirms this fear, but does it solve the issue? In the words of my informants: Michael Ohoda, Gettysburg College in Pennsylvania, comments on Obama's statement, "I have come here to seek a new beginning between the United States and Muslims around the world"-- it's the same like, "let bygones be bygones" which is definitely a common expression. I guess when you have an interaction with a friend, when you have a bad fight, you end up saying, "We'll put it behind us." I think Obama's saying the same thing. There's been some general history between the East and West, the Muslim nation and the United States, but it's time for that to change. I think that's what the message is. We want to move past the problems and make progress; it's the only way we're going to get anywhere."

Emily (from Bloomington, Indiana, Indiana University, and a Folklore Major) comments: "I think it's a smart little political move. I mean, you could phrase something differently, but by bringing in an idiom that most people in the nation know, it might be helpful. Also, Benjamin Franklin ... in his "Poor Richard's Almanac," recorded a lot of

proverbs, and possibly made a few up himself ... it's a smart way to look back at American history and bring that up, like, localize things.

Amelia Jayanti from the University of Vermont, a psychology major, states: "That's called the Golden Rule. It's pretty prevalent within Christianity, Islam, and Judaism. I think what Barak Obama is trying to address in his speech is how Muslims have been treated since 9/11...there was a lot of prejudice, discrimination, acts of violence throughout the United States, a lot of tension with xenophobia which happens a lot after a war, once a war begins you need to find someone to blame. The discourse in the States was a criminalization of Muslims, making them bad, fundamentalist extremists. They didn't take the time to teach the American public about Islam or Arabic culture, they wanted to keep them ignorant so they could remain the enemy face... Before 9/11, people probably didn't even know what Islam was. A majority of Americans probably had no idea. And they still don't really even know. I mean, Christians that complain so much about Islam, about 'these crazy extreme fundamentalists', don't even realize how many connections, how many similarities these cultures actually share. I think they would be shocked if they found Jesus was considered a prophet! And that's what our media and policy makers want us to believe- they don't want to give Muslims a human face.... So he's forming such common goals, trying to construct a new path for all nations to come together to a mutual understanding, and he deeply relies on such quotations, such sayings which will be familiar. "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you.", or "let bygones be bygones", and quoting verses from the Holy Qur'an, Bible and Torah. This may provide a better and more honest understanding of those people and their cultures. One should differentiate also between religion and culture, culture and politics, and politics and history...

On the other hand, Yemeni informants' reaction to Obama's speech was mostly proverbial, describing Obama as the bee and the fox at the same time, they said that, "we do

respect the people of America and their culture, we do appreciate the Islamic greeting made by Obama in Cairo and gladly responded to that, but our fear is that what he promised is more political than humanitarian.” With two Yemeni proverbs they summarized the whole issue referring to his policy, “The other face of the same coin”, and “Honey of speech you receive, deceived notion you perceive”.

One tries to enjoy the literary production of all people, but ought to be more cautious of the translations of the same. There is no logical explanation for hatred and depiction as a threat phenomenon between nations. There are far many good things among everyone all over the globe which form the common ground for all, since the contents are coming from within, i.e., people’s feeling towards each other to live peacefully. Many Yemeni and American informants agreed to some extent to the policy carried through the Yemeni proverb, “*aus kabdak wa kabd gheirak mithlak*”, (do feel your soul, so the others’), and do not show much interest towards the American proverb “speak soft and carry a big stick”, since it gives practically the hegemony of one side against the other. The Yemeni proverb gives tolerance by considering feeling and rights to live the way you like and to accept the way others like to live. Some other proverbs like “We’re all Adam’s children”, as also given by many American informants and as it was understood from Obama’s speech, was of great interest to both. Unfortunately, such welcomed and shared similarities between different cultures, and liked by people are not given right platform by intellectuals, experts and the media.

For a prolonged time media has continued to exert a deforming effect on American’s imagination of the “Other,” such as Yemeni Arab people. This has created a bitter sense of indignation among Muslims which has often led to a form of extreme violence in some cases. This dissertation addresses the issue of how continuous misrepresentation of the “Other” can be seen as one of the main reasons for the escalating hatred, and how a fair representation of

the “Other” with emphasis on the similarities between nations and respect for differences can help diffuse the congested atmosphere. To do this, the dissertation draws on literary production-- from the people by the people to the people: I present Yemeni Arabic proverbs in their natural contexts in daily conversations with explanations of their meaning and circumstances from the informants to the people with whom they are used.

Hymes (1962) holds that the ethnography of speaking was the approach that the researcher followed and the comments of the informants were intensively used in the analysis. The researcher is a member of the Yemeni society, well-informed of its culture, and used to teach some proverbs to students for educational purposes to motivate them and to draw their attention to comparisons between the similarities and differences between various cultures as enshrined in proverbs, and show them how the experiences of forefathers are passed on to the posterity through maxims and proverbs. Interviews with experts of folklore and study of proverbs have proved to echo several important and common cultural issues.

As Finnegan notes (1972:425), ‘proverbs are used on particular occasions, by individuals in particular contexts and their wit; their attractiveness, their insights, even their meaning must be seen as arising from the context.’ The researcher incorporates this principle as the basis of investigation, with a broader view that proverbs are also conversational ready-made (and can often be created) building blocks, culturally and intellectually. Ethnographic techniques suggested by Hymes (1962) have been employed, and literary criticism is utilized to draw out the significance of proverbs from their natural contexts.

Mieder (2004:xiii) argues that “paremiologists usually look at proverbs from a more inclusive point of view as they draw on such fields as anthropology, art, communication, culture, folklore, history, literature, philology, psychology, religion, and sociology.” Even ordinary people are known for their tendency to use proverbs in daily conversations. It is impossible to minimize the number of situations in which speakers/writers quote proverbs.

Therefore, this study does not in any way attempt to deal with each and every proverb ever quoted by speakers of both cultures concerned. The situations mentioned in this study are only examples to help readers understand how people in both Yemeni and American societies use their proverbs. Some researchers (e.g. Bird 1976, Mieder 2004) ascertain that the absence of the local well-oriented media meant the lack of a good source to peoples' positive attitude towards their heritage with proper interpretations, and to enhance the give and take with other people from different cultures. In addition, Mieder (2004:152) states that statements made by film directors and actors become proverbs and he provides an example from the film *Forrest Gump* whose "life is like a box of chocolate: you never know what you're gonna get" has become a proverb owing to the incredible popularity of this Hollywood film with its thousands of screenings.

The researcher hopes that the data collected for this study could be made use of through the media for broadcasting under any program of folklore or culture to spread the values and virtues expressed through proverbs and be filmed and shown to other cultures. Such data may help to bring about a better understanding of some of the controversial social issues among which are social attitudes towards women, solidarity, love of homeland, etc. as expressed in folklore and in proverbs in particular, and ease the confusion of mixing social values and traditions with what is considered as beliefs or religious issues. In such situations, rational reinterpretations of culture, folklore and proverb lore are required to make people fully or at least better understand the self and the "Other," leading to a harmony within and beyond, sharing the similarities and celebrating the differences.

This dissertation is also a call to trigger off interest among American intellectuals and scholars in particular to explore the non-Western world as an area for cultural investigation, before they stereotype them in 'ugly' terms under the merciless impact of their media, e.g. T.V. channels, movies, newspapers, etc. As far as the American audience is concerned, the

only image they receive of Yemen is a country inflicted with poverty, war, extremism and ‘pre-history’ man: little has been written on the way in which Yemenis feel, think, behave and believe. Consequently, there has not been a moderate comprehension of the people of Yemen and their attitudes towards and ways of life.

This dissertation proposes to construct a picture of the main Yemeni ways of life and of the major attitudes of the Yemeni people towards their natural and social environments. By adopting a compare and contrast technique, the analysis of the proverbial paradigms in both the Yemeni and American milieus can hopefully create a starting point from which a better and more optimistic understanding of each other can be obtained. The best way to study how one culture relates to another is by finding and celebrating similarities as well as differences between these cultures through a detailed examination of examples drawn from the way a culture represents its people in real life. It is hoped that through the explanation of the proverbial paradigms of Yemen and America and the situational use of proverbs (as construed by the informants themselves) this dissertation could provide a fresh approach to the study of Yemeni and American cultures and throw new light on the subjective world of the common people of both countries.

Though the study of proverbs of a culture can be seen as a means to give an honest snapshot of a people’s culture, using proverbial materials in exploring people’s attitudes and feelings cannot be claimed to yield absolutely reliable results: after all, culture itself is too flexible to be reduced to a bunch of maxims and proverbs. Besides, any analysis of the proverbs of a specific culture is inevitably constrained by preconceived notions governing the selection of proverbs for analysis. An analyst often selects only materials which fit his theory. Therefore, the interpretation of proverb content remains usually tainted with bias. The researcher’s awareness of this weakness inherent in the study of proverbs has been the

driving force to meet face to face as many people as possible from both the respective cultures, with an aim to achieve a better level of objectivity.

The technique of content analysis of proverbs has been applied: they were assembled, exerted, and examined on a systematic basis. They were not selected to illustrate any preconceived idea; rather, they were studied with a perfectly open mind to see what information they could yield. *A Dictionary of American Proverbs* (by Mieder et al. 1992) and *Alamthal Alyamania* (The Yemeni proverbs); two volumes compiled (by Alaqwa'a. 2004) have been used as reference materials. Several other small collections have been taken into consideration. Hundreds of proverbs have been collected from the informants from both societies, and have been taken as a part of the corpus for the analysis in this dissertation. As a partial check on the currency of material used for analysis, proverb samplings taken at random from the collections as one way, have been given to some native speakers of different regions of both countries to give the equivalent or the opposite. Most informants were able to recognize the sampling proverbs. They actually used or heard others use them in daily conversation. No matter how old a proverb may be, it still reflects actual social and psychological realities of a nation as long as it is used by its members in every geographical section.

Difficulties in translating Yemeni proverbs into English arise from the fact that most of them are adorned with imagery, rendering them rather more poetical than the American counterparts. This is one of the issues that distinguish how Yemenis work with and express their cultural reality and mental background through proverbs as opposed to their American counterparts. It is almost impossible to preserve in the English translation the terseness of the original proverbs due to the depth of Arabic language, which is perhaps another barrier for non-Arabic speakers to understand Arabic Yemeni culture through Arabic language.

Finally, another central concern in this study is the attitude; i.e. the collective attitude

distinguishes members of a cultural group from members from other cultural groups. This will not necessarily apply to any particular member of the Yemeni society and cultural patterns which seem permanent for many people in the cultural scene of Yemen. This does not mean that Yemeni culture is static. People's attitudes and ways of life are always in the process of change. A change that is happening from within as a result of the long trial-and-error history of human frustration and satisfaction: people are willing to change and catch up with modernization by way of adopting the modern technology without adopting the "Other" values and social practices. Americans are willing to share their technology but they have the phobia of rejection by what they call the extremists in such traditional society. The question is: Do the Americans try to impose their social practices and values through their technology? Or, do both societies lack the real understanding of each other's culture? This question has its share and space in this dissertation where such comparison is made to bring the similarities and differences through the situational proverb lore compared.

The chapterization of this dissertation follows the order of analysis of the Yemeni and American cultures, as both are seen through their proverbs and their currency in daily cultural practices. While Chapter I introduces the thesis and the methodology of research, Chapter II offers a review of the most contemporary literature devoted to the study of proverbs within the Yemeni and American academia. The approach to the ethnography of speaking has been employed, and literary criticism is utilized to draw out the significance of proverbs from their natural contexts. The comments of the informants (direct interviews, appendices, D and F, F, H and G, are full Yemeni and American interviews with different informants from both cultures respectively) are used intensively in the analysis along with the findings of the fieldwork carried out in Yemen and in the United States (visits to both the countries and meeting distinguished scholars). Besides, Dictionaries and collections of proverbs have been used.

Chapter III demonstrates how proverbs echo the way of life of Yemenis and Americans as viewed in terms of their cultural practices: the frequency of using a great deal of proverbs during their daily conversations is used as an index of the structure of the society (tables in chapter IV show that percentages). Proverbs reflect people's various attitudes towards (specific situations in) life. Based on this premise, this chapter serves as the backbone of this research as it connects theory to practice. The discussion in this chapter is supported by the analysis in the next chapter.

Chapter IV presents a comparative analysis of certain proverbs as interpreted by adult informants (both Yemeni and Americans), pointing out similarities and differences as to how the Yemeni and American societies deliver similar messages through proverbs. It is hoped that the findings can help shed light on the problem of cultural misunderstanding between Yemenis and Americans and try to bridge the gap between these two nations.

Chapter V is the conclusion of the study. It accentuates the validity of the controversial perspective that people are more similar than different, at least from the cultural point of view. In addition, this chapter recommends that future studies be made to gain a better understanding of how proverbs echo the life-style of a nation and how proverbs can be used to reduce cultural misunderstanding.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Proverbs: an Overview

“Let me assure you that Ms. Holmes and I thoroughly enjoyed teaching you the wisdom of some very common proverbs. All of your assignments, your drawings, and your projects are real treasures, and I hope that you will continue to be interested in proverbs. I am certain that you will get to know many more as you walk through life. They will serve you well as you communicate with people of all ages”. (Mieder, 2000:235).

That was Mieder’s letter to his students of the fourth graders, finishing one-year work of studying proverbs. I tried my best to quote a similar one from Yemeni society but unfortunately, though educated people and teachers know the importance of proverbs, but they do not teach them in schools and universities.

Proverbs are treated as phenomena of language, thought and folklore. They occur in large texts such as everyday conversations, newspaper editorials and sermons. They also occur as texts complete in themselves, e.g. as group slogans, house inscriptions and along with other sayings in anthologies. Paremiology, the study of proverbs, is an important branch of oral literature under folklore. So much and extensive research has been done on proverbs in English literature and linguistics. In fact, numerous articles and papers, books and encyclopedias investigating proverbs have been published and many collections have also been published among which *The Oxford*

Dictionary of English Proverbs (1935) and *A Dictionary of American Proverbs* (1992) are classic examples. In addition, there is the *Proverbium* that continues with new studies to thrive as valuable *Yearbook of International Proverbs Scholarship*.

However, in the case of Yemeni Arabic no such extensive studies are available at the level of both paremiology and paremiography. Thus, in such a situation, it would be worthwhile to conduct the present full length study on Yemeni proverbs which has not yet been attempted so far in the history of Yemeni culture which otherwise is immensely rich with proverbs of different kinds reflecting the cultural praxis in its various aspects, viz. the customs and traditions of the Yemeni society at the level of family, occupation, tribes, food habits, administration, business, education, religion, arts, entertainment, social relationships, beliefs, and even dress habits being commented upon in proverbs among many others.

The Middle East is best known for the tales of *The Thousand and One Nights* though a very rich variety of Arabian folk literature also exists. The stories, proverbs, rhymes, and jokes that people use in everybody conversation are largely un-documented since most scholars only concentrate on the written literary tradition. Unfortunately, the folktales of South Arabia, comprising the former modern states of North and South Yemen, are virtually unknown to Western audiences. While attention has been given to the folklore of Yemeni Jews living in Israel, very few of the stories still told in Islamic South Arabia have been collected.

Further, justifications for the study of proverbs consist in their traditional status, their rustic imagery, their prosodic form, their didactic value, etc. In Yemen, such didactic values applied through proverbs are considered the peak of wisdom. Alakua'a (1967:7) states that the Yemeni proverbs played a crucial role in the history of the Yemeni people's life, particularly in the tribal areas where patriotism to the tribe had a complete control over the conduct of the tribe,

individuals and groups, and where individuals are closely associated with their families and tribes. They can only live in accordance with the tribal law, and within the established custom, tradition of the tribe often having the proverbs to judge the individual's behavior in the community and identifying the group's ties to its community and environment, making proverbs have the force of law.

Alakua'a (1967:10-11) adds that the total impact of proverbs on the individual and the group resolved a lot of problems, and addressed issues and disputes between individuals and groups from the common public which were not resolved in the Qur'an and Sunnah. Individuals' and groups' commitment to proverbs is sometimes even more than their commitment to the Islamic law and jurisdiction. Alakua'a cited an example in which there is more commitment to proverbs than Qur'an and Sunnah:

“... then he, the judge, recited a line of the Quranic verse 4:12 ‘after payment of legacies and debts; so that no loss is caused (to anyone).’ They did not obey, the judge stated that he would quit his mission and return to Dhamar. Suddenly, he remembered a famous proverb and said to them: ‘Ali Bin Zayed said, “Debt before inheritance”’. As soon as the heirs heard this proverb, they listened to the judge and asked him (the judge) to divide the inheritance.”

The same story and some other similar stories which show the important role of the proverbs in the Yemeni society have been told by many of the informants of this study.

However, comparing the Yemeni folklore to other folklores like English and Russian is not satisfactory. In that, Alhamadani (2004:54) holds that the Yemeni folklore, if compared to the Russian folk literature or the English one, will show the extremely poor situations in the Yemeni folklore library as well as the need to revive folk literature in the Yemeni society.

Yemeni Americans are one of many Arab-Americans in the United States. Today, the term Yemeni is a cultural, linguistic, and to some extent, political designation. It embraces several national and regional groups as well as few non-Muslim religious minorities. (Indo-Yemeni, in the South, particularly in the city of Aden and Yemeni Jews in the North, most Yemeni-Americans are U.S. citizens. They are geographically concentrated in a handful of cities and states, such as Detroit, New York, and Los Angeles-Long Beach, still they have their place back home, and relations with the host society have been mixed. Early immigrants went largely unnoticed by the general population. They tended to settle in economically vibrant areas, which drew other immigrants. Early Yemeni immigrants assimilated easily into American society facilitated by the fact that the majority were Christian. However, the establishment of cultural clubs, political committees, and Yemeni language schools helped maintain a cultural identity and a political awareness among many new arrivals and their children. As regards women in certain neighborhoods, e.g. of Detroit and Dearborn, more common are the plain-colored head scarves worn by many Lebanese and other Arab Muslim females. Some Arab and other Muslim women occasionally don long, shapeless dresses, commonly called Islamic dresses, in addition to the head scarf. Men rarely wear traditional garb in public. At some traditional wedding parties individuals might wear *Mi'awaz*. Many foreign-born men of all ages are fond of carrying rosary beads, which they unconsciously run through their fingers while engaging in conversation or while walking. Yemenis have their particular dialect, and within each group, regional and local subdialects are found. For the most part, speakers of different dialects can make themselves understood to speakers of other dialects. Some basic Yemeni greetings include: *marhaba* ("mar-ha-ba")—hello, and its response *ahlen* ("ahlen"). A more formal greeting, readily understood throughout the Arabic-speaking world is: *asalaam 'a laykum* ("a-sa-lam ah-laykum") - greetings,

peace be upon you. The proper response is *wa‘a laykum asalaam* (“wa-ah-laykum a-sa-lam”)—and peace be upon you, too. Side by side, they also remit money back home to support similar activities.

In Yemen, if you get thirsty when you are far from the folklore, it comes to you to quench your thirst. It is the horse which approaches you at the times of war and peace. In fact, Yemeni folklore is something that calls you now and then and you find it with you everywhere. However, the way it happens in America is quite the opposite – folklore will not force you to take it in similar situations. It leads Americans to water but it doesn’t make them drink its nectar. That was the opinion of one of my Yemeni-American informants who lived in New-York, US, for forty three year and now is living in Aden-Yemen having a good background of both cultures, Approaches to American folklore obviously have been changing over time. They used to do more ethnography of people who seemed different from themselves. And now, people are looking more at the entirety of the population and finding specific folk groups within it. The meanings and the usage of a proverb, and of other forms of folklore for that matter, must be obtained from the folk, with folk, as used here, referring to any group of people who share at least one common characteristic. This is what Dundes has recently called “oral literary criticism”. (qtd. In EO Arewa, 1970: 430)

A common American stereotype about Yemenis and Arabs as well, emphasizes that they are by definition Muslims and therefore are bloodthirsty, fanatical, and anti-Western. Other misconceptions and stereotypes include: they are desert nomads; and they oppress women. Stereotypes of Arab culture and society abound in Western literary works, scholarly research, and in the news and entertainment media.

To clarify this point a little more, here are a few short comments on the proverbial speech

of Barak Obama in Cairo, June 4, 2009 as it has been considered a readymade speech by some Yemeni people. However, an interpretation by some American informants shows the functionality and currency of the proverbs used. About that speech, people like: Michael Ohoda, Gettysburg College in Pennsylvania, comments on Obama's statement ("I have come here to seek a new beginning between the United States and Muslims around the world."), by saying that

It's the same like, "let bygones be bygones", which is definitely a common expression. I guess when you have an interaction with a friend, you have a bad fight, you end up saying, "We'll put it behind us." I think Obama's saying the same thing. There's been some general history between the East and West, the Muslim nation and the United States, but it's time for that to change. I think that's what the message is. We want to move past the problems and make progress; it's the only way we're going to get anywhere.

A response by another American informant, Emily (from Bloomington, Indiana, Indiana University, a Folklore major), is as follows:

"I think it's a smart little political move. I mean, you could phrase something differently, but by bringing in an idiom that most people in the nation know, it might be helpful. Also, Benjamin Franklin was one of our national heroes, and he's one of the few political people that people just tend to think really good things about. And he, in his "Poor Richard's Almanac," recorded a lot of proverbs, and possibly made a few up himself. So it's a smart way to look back at American history and bring that up, like, localize things.

Amelia Jayanti from the University of Vermont a psychology major, states that,

"That's called the Golden Rule. It's pretty prevalent within Christianity, Islam,

and Judaism. I think what Barak Obama is trying to address in his speech is how Muslims have been treated since 9/11...there was a lot of prejudice, discrimination, acts of violence throughout the United States, a lot of tension with xenophobia. Which happens a lot after a war, once a war begins you need to find someone to blame.

The discourse in the States was a criminalization of Muslims, making them bad, fundamentalist extremists. They didn't take the time to teach the American public about Islam or Arabic culture, they wanted to keep them ignorant so they could remain the enemy face...before 9/11, people probably didn't even know what Islam was. A majority of Americans probably had no idea. And they still don't really even know. I mean, Christians that complain so much about Islam, about these crazy extreme fundamentalists, don't even realize how many connections, how many similarities these cultures actually share. I think they would be shocked if they found Jesus was considered a prophet. And that's what our media and policy makers want us to believe; they don't want to give Muslims a human face.... So he's forming such common goals, trying to construct a new path for all nations to come together to a mutual understanding, and he deeply relies on such quotations, such sayings which will be familiar. "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you.", or "let bygones be bygones", and quoting verses from the Holy Qur'an, Bible and Torah.

Yemenis' view of the present is deeply-rooted in their respect for the past, that is, all actions in the present are governed by past actions: most personal and group behavior is measured according to traditional norms. On the other hand, Yemeni informants' reaction to

Obama's speech was mostly proverbial, by describing Obama as the bee and the fox at the same time, that is, "Honey of speech you receive, deceived thoughts you perceive".

Elders are also symbolic of other virtues, such as courage and generosity which are attributed to heroes of the past. Elders are highly respected as they are considered to be the link between the past and the present, the link to wisdom and to the blessing of God. Proverbs, when used by elders in any conventional situation, bear great weight because the speaker is linking his saying to the past. The emphasis Yemenis place on memorization of oral literature, especially poetry and proverbs, is not less than of memorizing of the Holy *Qur'an* and the *Hadith*. A twenty-six-year old Yemeni informant, who has never been to school, told me that his school is his farm, his teacher is time, the laws of authority are the norms of his tribe and his books are the elders and the nature. This is exactly the reflection of the emphasis many Yemenis place on learning, especially wisdom being not necessarily derived from institutionalized sources. The following story is one of what he heard from the elders which confirms the magical power inherent in speech. It is the story of Tawabah and Layla Rosenthal (1989: 349-378) which confirms the idea that what the poet says is going to happen as he has the power to predict. When they passed by the grave of Tawabah, the poet (her first beloved), Layla's husband, who was with her, challenged her to go up and greet the dead poet. His purpose was to find out whether there was a prediction to come true in his verses:

When Layla addresses greetings

To me when I am in grave,

Greetings, gladly shall I return or there will come up,

A frightening cry to her from beside the grave,

Layla, understandably, refused, but her husband insisted. Her camel approached the grave,

and she uttered a greeting. A bird that was resting in the heat of the summer on the stones covering the grave flew off, scaring her camel. The camel threw her off, and she died. From the story many proverbs are derived, such as: “Like the end of Layla”, “words are arrows, their wounds never go”, or “trouble may come from talk”.

Many scholars prefer the terms “oral literature” (Finnegan, 1970), “oral tradition” (Baldick, 1990:156), or “orature” (Thiong’o, 1986) over the formerly used term “folklore” due to the negative connotations often given by Europeans to the term “folklore”. Proverbs are a part of, and intimately connected to, the larger body of oral literature. They are often told in the context of stories or songs, either as the summation of the point or as an introduction to the performance. Like other oral literature, proverbs provide an aesthetic expression as an oral art form; therefore, the performance of the proverb carries the meaning, not just the words or logic of the utterance.

1.2 Definition of Proverb:

There are several definitions of the term proverb. From a typological point of view, the term proverb comes from the Latin word *proverbium* which is composed of the adverbial prefix *pro* meaning forth, publicly, and the noun substantive *verbum* signifying word. Thus the term may be boldly rendered by *publicly (prevalent) word*, i.e. a saying which has wide currency among the public or people at large. The word derives from the Latin phrase *probatum verbum* meaning a proved word or a word i.e. saying of proven worth or value. But the consensus of opinion is in favor of the first etymology.

According to Mieder (1985: 119; 1993: 24; 2004:3), “A proverb is a short, generally known sentence of the folk which contains wisdom, truth, morals, and traditional views in a metaphorical, fixed and memorizable form and which is handed down from generation to

generation.” Mieder states that through proverbs one can discover the human nature by their contradictory nature: “Proverbs fulfill the human need to summarize experiences and observations into nuggets of wisdom that provide ready-made comments on personal relationships and social affairs. There are proverbs for every imaginable context, and they are thus as contradictory as life itself.” (Mieder, 2004:1).

Al-Mathal (pl. *amthal*), in Arabic, proverb, is a popular saying, derived – similar to Aram. *mathala*, Hebr. *mashal* and Ethiop. *mesl*, *mesale* – from the common Semitic root for “sameness, equality, likeness, equivalent”. In Arabic, to create a proverb is *faarsala(t)ha*, or *dja’ala(t)hu mathal^{an}*, to become proverbial is *duriba bihi ‘l-mathal^u*, *fa-dhahaba(t)*, *mathal^{an}*, or, simply, *fa-sara mathal^{an}*. Arabic philologists, since Abu ‘Ubayd (d.224/838), have repeatedly defined the concept of *mathal*. They have discerned and set forth its three essential characteristics: comparison, the metaphorical way of expression (*tashbih*); brevity (*e’ajaz al-lafdh*); and familiarity (*sair*). The totality of these characteristics and qualities do not apply to each and every *mathal*. Many *amthal* can only lay claim to two of them (Bosworth et al., 1989: 111-112).

A proverb is easily identified when spoken but hard to define. Arora (1984) notes that certain characteristics of proverbs often include traditionality, currency, repetition, certain grammatical or syntactical features, metaphor, semantic markers (parallelism, paradox, irony, etc.), lexical markers (archaic words, etc.), and phonic markers (rhyme, meter, alliteration). The more these are included in the phrase or saying, the more likely it is to be regarded as a proverb. Alakua’a (1967:13-15) argues that the language, tone, and style, and sometimes the subject of the Yemeni proverbs differ from region to region. The proverbs of tribes, especially those living in the north-east, are characterized by richness of expressions and vocabulary, sublimity of

expression, clarity of objectives, and dominated by the glorification of freedom and courage, adventure, fighting, underestimation of death in defense of homeland, and praise of loyalty and generosity. Sometimes proverbs may show a tendency of evil, i.e. treachery and deceit can be felt, whereas other areas' proverbs may exhibit the advantage of encouraging hard work, the pursuit of livelihood for its hard toil, strive, and patience. These proverbs have predominantly agricultural reference and related issues because agriculture is the main source of livelihood. The proverbs of urban cities are characterized by the use of metaphors and puns, especially the proverbs in Sana'a, well-known for blistering jokes, and cynical style. Generally, proverbs used in cities have different purposes related to the multiplicity of professions and trades of these cities. These proverbs are also characterized by having foreign words, especially in coastal cities.

Al-Maydani (1992: 8-9) holds that the equivalent proverb is equal to the condition of the compared one. He quotes Ka'b Bin Zuhair's poetry line which reads:

Aurqoob appointments were exemplary to her so, her appointments are all lies.

Aurqoobs's appointments are examples of false appointments.

He concludes that a proverb has four unique features: brevity of articulation, reaching the meaning, good analogy, and the quality of metaphor; it is the apex of rhetoric. Ibn al-Muqaffa says that if a speech is made as a proverb, it will be more logical, and better for hearing, and wider for the speech variation. (qtd. in Almaydani, 1992: 18)

A famous American paremiologist Archer Taylor was the first to introduce the term 'proverb-type'. In the book *The Proverb*, published in 1931 and recognized world-wide, he dealt with proverbs as an international phenomenon from different aspects, using examples from English, German, Latin, French works. Referring to the proverb as a property of many national cultures, he called the equivalents of the same saying expressed in one separate language or by

means of several tongues, ‘the variants of the proverb’, while a set of variants was called ‘the type’ reminding that, “Oral transmission creates minor variations in proverbs”, (Taylor, 1931: 20-22). Mieder, (2004: XV) confirms the universality of proverbs, “Since the human condition distilled in the world’s proverbs proves to be more alike than different”, supporting that by adding that “The American proverb ‘Human *nature* is the same all over the world’ quite literally hits the proverbial nail on the head”.

The origin of the Semitic word “proverb” means “similarity” as well as the representation in metaphorical image. Bloch, cited in Al-Maydani (1992: 17), believes that it may have been arabicized from the Aramaic language. In addition, it is mentioned in the Holy Quran (22: 73) “O people, a parable is set forth, so listen to it.” A proverb can stand for an exemplary, as mentioned in the Holy Quran (43: 56) “And We made them a thing past and an example for later generations.” A proverb can also mean evidence: Qur’an (43: 59), “We bestowed favor and We made him an example for the Children of Israel,” an evidence of the prophet hood. If we go back to the books of heritage, we find that the word “proverb” exceeds the linguistic meaning to the conceptual one. Ibn Muqaffa says “If speech has been presented as proverbial, it will be more logical, rationale and can be a rich source of knowledge”. (qtd. in Almaydani, 1992: 18)

Some researchers combined analogy and metaphor in their definition, indicating that parables are a type of literature characterized by brevity of pronunciation, good sense, courtesy of metaphor, and the quality of metaphor. It is found in almost all nations. Others ignored the rhetoric in the parable, and see it as a way to study the language. (qtd. in Mahboub, 2002: 25). They are right to do so; proverbs are a source among language sources cited by scholars in their books, and also stated by linguists in their interpretation of the language’s common and odd words.

Qatamesh (1964: 31-3) has divided the Qur'anic proverbs into two types: short and standard. He added a third category developed by later scholars called "inherent proverb", which is not mentioned in the Quran as proverb: As mentioned in Quran (17: 29), "Make not thy hand tied (like a niggard's) to thy neck, nor stretch it forth to its utmost reach, so that thou become blameworthy and destitute." which is close to the meaning of the Arabic proverb "plainness is the best of things". The Quran mentions many verses setting proverbs as a reminder and exemplary to people, as in (14: 25), "It brings forth its fruit at all times, by the leave of its Lord so Allah sets forth parables for men, in order that they may receive admonition." The profound effect the Holy Quran has on the development of such Arabic proverbs can be manifest in the proverbs inspired by the meanings of the Quran and the stories of the Prophets: the verses "And the heart of the mother of Moses became void: she was going almost to disclose his (case), had We not strengthened her heart (with faith), so that she might remain a (firm) believer." (28: 10) can be traced to be the origin of the proverb "more free than the heart of Moses' mother".

In addition, Qatamesh adds that there are several levels that contribute to the creation of proverbs.. The Yemeni dialect is a branch of the classical Arabic, on the social level, the nomadic pattern of life is still so prevalent today in some areas of Yemen controlled by the tribal system and its influence. Again, some economic and religious issues differed in dealing with political issues as a result of the different circumstances of life. Meaning also includes articulation, one language, one Arabic mind, and one environment. Ancient Arabic proverbs have common heritage, borders of Arab countries extend to all regions where the sense of life unites people of diverse races and cultures.

An informants(see App. E, G, and H) in this study reflected on the idea that children and proverbs speak the truth: proverbs speak the truth because they are very deeply seated in the

cultural ideas about what is right, and proverbs reflect what each culture's common sense is, i.e. wisdom. As for children speaking the truth, children have a view of the world which is much less complicated by views imposed by socio-cultural structures. Proverbs and children have a simple view of the world. It is not much complicated by politics, economics, or the many socio-cultural constructions that characterize grown-up life. She added about how we can understand proverbs as common sense according to their context: "Everything's related, if you're going to go by Levi-Strauss's structuralism or something, or Clifford Geertz's. Someone paraphrased him by saying man is suspended by webs of his own making. In the idea that people create everything, everything is related to these cultural constructions that we make, that are artificial, that we artificially put upon the world. We are acculturated into certain cultural structures and that is how we view the world. If it is outside of our cultural structure, frameworks, then we don't really understand it. I guess how proverbs would fit into that is that proverbs reveal the basic tenets of cultural frameworks through which people view their world."

It is worthwhile to highlight at this point what makes a proverb particularly "American". The title *A Dictionary of American Proverbs* itself entails an implication. There are many proverbs in the dictionary which show the commonality of human culture everywhere, such as "Time flies", "The love of money is the root of all evil", "As you sow, so shall you reap", etc. These proverbs may be originally considered as international, Biblical, British, German, Arab, Chinese, and so on. But all the proverbs included in the dictionary are being used in America. This is exactly what has been mentioned in the introduction to the dictionary by its compilers: "They are thus 'American' proverbs in that the population uses them frequently as concisely expressed traditional bits of wisdom. As such, they surely belong in a dictionary of American proverbs". Mieder, et al. (1992: xi) the compilers support the idea that some so-called American

proverbs are only recorded in American literary sources like those attributed to Benjamin Franklin and Ralph Waldo Emerson. From the preface and the introduction of the dictionary, the reader appreciates this an invaluable reference which consider as the first major collection project of proverbs in which around fifty years of work have gone into this elaborate project in the English language based on oral sources rather than written sources, it includes thousands of uniquely American proverbs that have never before been recorded as well as many thousands of traditional sayings that have found their way into American speech from classical, biblical, British, continental European, and American literature.

Field work on the Dictionary was conducted over thirty years under the direction of the Committee on Proverbial Sayings of the American Dialect Society and resulted in 15,000 records of proverbial texts which have been edited for this collection. General readers and students, as well as cultural historians, folklorists, linguists, anthropologists, sociologists, and scholars of literature will find it as helpful reference contains a nuggets of popular wisdom on all aspects of American life: weather, agriculture, geography, travel, money, business, food, neighbors, friends, manners, government, politics, law, health, education, religion, music, song, and dance.

Again, for instance, there are six proverbs listed under the headword *car* which are genuinely American proverbs and have never been recorded elsewhere.

1.3 Objectives of the Study:

1. Examine the cultural practices reflected in Yemeni proverbs in different places of Yemen and offer insights about the nature of Yemeni culture and society.
2. Shed light on how the cultural practices are incorporated in proverbs to comment, guide, and facilitate the conduct of social life in the Yemeni society;

3. Compare and contrast these cultural practices with their American counterpart as reflected in American proverbs.
4. Trigger off interest among intellectuals and American scholars in particular to explore the non-Western world as an area for cultural investigation; instead of stereotyping other people in 'ugly' terms under the merciless impact of their media, e.g. T.V. channels, movies, newspapers, etc. As far as the American audience is concerned, the only image they perceive of Yemen is a country inflicted with poverty, war, extremism and 'pre-history' man. Little has been written on the way in which Yemenis feel, think, behave and believe. Consequently, there has not been a moderate comprehension of the people of Yemen and their attitudes towards ways of life.
5. Construct a picture of the main Yemeni ways of life and of the major attitudes of the Yemeni people towards their natural and social environments. By adopting a comparative and contrastive technique, the analysis of the proverbial paradigms in both the Yemeni and American milieus can hopefully create a starting point from which a better and more optimistic understanding of each other can be achieved. The researcher believes that the best way to study how one culture relates to another is by finding and celebrating similarities as well as differences between these cultures through a detailed examination of examples drawn from the way a culture represents its people in real life. It is hoped that through the explanation of the proverbial paradigms of Yemen and America and the situational use of proverbs (as construed by the informants themselves), this dissertation can provide a fresh approach to the study of Yemeni and American cultures and throw new light on the subjective world of the common people of both countries.
6. Give an honest snapshot of a people's culture, using proverbial materials in exploring

people's attitudes and feelings.

7. Apply the technique of content analysis of proverbs: proverbs are assembled, exerted, and examined on a systematic basis. They are not selected to illustrate any preconceived idea; rather, they are studied with a completely open mind to see what information they could yield. The general aim is to see what ideas can come out of such analysis.
8. It is widely believed that any language is as expressive as another in the sense that any idea that is expressed in any language can equally be expressed in another language though different words are used. Therefore, one of the main concerns of this study is to identify similarities and differences between Yemeni and American proverbs as expressions that may differ in wording but can be used in equivalent situations to express similar (or opposite) ideas.

1.4 The Academic Motives placing the Study

The dissertation echoes 'the voice of the folk', trying to facilitate and make the voice of the people be clearly heard, by pushing the walls made by 'governments', which makes the Media its voice' Yemeni voice through its proverbs which have been collected at an early stage of life as I have participated in most of the school activities where proverbs were presented weekly as *Amthal wa Hikam* (proverbs and wisdoms). parents and their friends in the countryside provided many of them, Some proverbs used here were collected in Al-Shaib district in the Southern Yemen and in Aden, the Free Zone of Yemen; I have spent most of my life in these two places; as a student and a proverb user. Being a member of this society, born in a culture of high proverb frequency, enables me to see the true picture of the reality of experience as it is lived by people who use proverbs in this culture. Reflecting much of its attitudes, values and cultural

traditions, Yemeni proverbs are used as lessons in good manners and devices to control people's behavior, so they deserve to be studied and brought about to light. Later on, in India I got the golden chance to bring this valuable part of my culture to the world by joining the Centre of Comparative Literature, University of Hyderabad, Hyderabad with a proposal "Cultural Practices in Oral Literature: A Case Study of Yemeni and American Proverbs". Americans' voice has been also heard through their proverbs (six months fieldwork, in U.S, in 2006 has been carried out by the researcher, and met Yemeni-American, there, Yemeni customs center on hospitality around food, socializing with family and friends, and a preference to reside close to relatives. Yemeni Americans generally harbor negative attitudes toward dating and premarital sex, especially for females. Educational achievement and economic advancement are viewed positively, as are the maintenance of strong family ties and the preservation of female chastity and fidelity. Yemeni-American beliefs about the United States are extremely positive, particularly regarding the availability of economic opportunities and political freedoms. Socially, however, Yemeni Americans feel that American society is highly violent, rather promiscuous, too lenient toward offenders, and somewhat lax on family values. The three religious holidays celebrated by Yemeni American Muslims are also celebrated by Muslims everywhere. They are *Ramadan*, *Eid al-Fitr*, and *Eid al-Adha*. Yemeni Muslims are nominally divided between Sunni and Shiite (*Shia*), the two major branches of Islam. Yemeni American Muslims also forego some of the five daily prayers devout Muslims are obligated to perform because of a lack of facilities and support from mainstream institutions In Yemeni society members of two or three generations dwell in a single household or, in wealthier families, in a family compound. This extended household centers around a married man and some of his adult sons and their families. A grandparent may

also reside in the household. A variation on this structure is for several brothers and their respective families to reside in a compound with a grandparent and other elderly relatives.

Yemeni culture prefers endogamous marriages — especially between cousins. This preference is, however, not uniform throughout Yemeni society. Arranged marriages are common among recent immigrants. Arranged marriages run the gamut from the individual having no voice in the matter and no prior acquaintance with a prospective marriage partner to the family arranging a meeting between their son or daughter and a prospective mate they have selected. In the latter situation, the son or daughter will usually make the final decision.

Education is highly valued among wide segments of the community. Affluent households prefer private schools. Working class and middle class members tend to send their children to public schools. A recent trend in some Yemeni American Muslim communities is the growth of Islamic parochial schools. These schools, favored by recent immigrants of all classes, are still in their infancy), despite of the historical difference between the two cultures, many people from different ages are using proverbs and able to explain most of them according to the context in both cultures, and able to relate them to the way people think and behave.

At this point, it is hoped that the dissertation and through its above mentioned objectives of the study will add if not open the door, to the expanding open-minded studies on the role of folklore in the better understanding between cultures, bridging the gap and judging the events wisely, events that put the people in threat of the ‘Other’ such as the war on Iraq or the 9/11.

1.5 Chapterization

The dissertation is divided into five chapters. Chapter I serves as an introduction to the topic in general and how it is discussed. It also provides a background of how the two cultures

Yemeni and American, have been viewed through the continuity and currency of their proverbs in terms of daily cultural practices.

Chapter II is a review of the contemporary proverbial research within the Yemeni and American academia, keeping up to date what scholars have recently used of different approaches and paradigms. “*The Ethnography of Speaking*” by Hymes (1962) has been employed and literary criticism is utilized to draw out the significance of proverbs from their natural contexts. Comments of informants are intensively used in the analysis. In addition, a considerable number of proverbs during the fieldwork in Yemen and in the United States on many and different occasions, others during direct interviews, have been examined. Dictionaries and collections on proverbs have been used.

Chapter III demonstrates the way of life of Yemenis as viewed in their cultural practices by including a great number of proverbs used during daily conversations, mapping the country by giving a brief description of the social structure of the society preceded by a thorough background about its people, land, language and religion. Chapter IV examines the results of the given and explained proverbs by the adult native Yemeni and American informants regarding similar situations having to some extent the same messages towards different issues of life. It is hoped that this procedure can shed light on the problem of misunderstanding between each other in many aspects of life, and reduce, if not solve, the existing phenomenon of accusing the other as a threat.

Chapter V is a conclusion. It brings and debates the possible ways of being similar rather than different, putting life of folklore, proverbs in particular, one way or another, as a cross-cultural meeting point of two different cultures representing the West and the East. Finally, recommendation for future studies is also made.

1.6 The Limitations of the Study

The study is limited to:

1. Yemeni oral proverbs of everyday conversations.
2. American oral proverbs of everyday conversations.
3. Yemeni Arabic currently spoken in different areas of the country.
4. Similarities and differences between the two cultures compared.
5. The points where the two cultures meet and where not.
6. Finally, the study cannot be claimed to yield absolute results. After all, culture itself is too flexible to be reduced to a bunch of maxims and proverbs. Besides, any analysis of the proverbs of a specific culture is inevitably constrained by preconceived notions governing the selection of proverbs for analysis. An analyst often selects only materials which fit his theory. Therefore, the interpretation of proverb content remains usually tainted with bias. The researcher's awareness of this weakness inherent in the study of proverbs has been the driving force to meet face to face with as many people as possible from both cultures concerned, with an aim to achieve a better level of objectivity.

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CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW AND METHODOLOGY

2.1 Literature Review:

Since the investigation of proverbs in relation to man and the environment overlaps with universal principles, culture, history, social science, religion and even politics, the nature of analysis requires an interdisciplinary framework. The critical cultural studies approach allows one to benefit from contributions made by scholars from different disciplines and makes it possible to proceed with the investigation and seek answers for the primary questions concerning the currency of proverbs and their cultural significance as comparable phenomena between different languages and cultures.

2.1.1 Defining a Proverb is an Old Problem:

Some American proverbs in themselves are peoples' definitions of a proverb, like: "Proverbs are the wisdom of the streets," "Proverbs are the children of experience," "All the good sense of the world runs into proverbs." These statements define proverbs as production, and not proverbs *per se*. Gallacher (1959) define the it thus: "A proverb is a concise statement of an apparent truth which has [had, or will have] currency among the people" (qtd. In Mieder 2004:4)

. Among Arab scholars, Freyha (1974: 1) states, *Mathal* (Proverb) is from a common Semitic root signifying simile or comparison. However, the truth of the matter is that proverbs remain elusive to be included in one clear-cut definition. Many definitions of proverb have been given, none of which holds true of every proverb.

People realize the appeal of well-known proverbs, they make use of them for different purposes to gear with the daily life. For example, people in Yemen say, “Nobody trades his son with a genie,” meaning “Do not exchange your belongings which you have experienced enough with something that you did not”, and in business, people say: “The quality of goods is determined by the messenger,” and “Don’t send a child” meaning “Don’t send unpracticed one to do professional job”. The same idea is available in the American proverb which says: “Don’t send a boy,” meaning “Don’t send a boy to do a man’s job.” Some slogans such as: “One good term deserves another,” politicians can campaign with for re-election, in the States. “Written in very large letters across the top of a full page advertisement in the New York Times was the saying “Don’t send a boy”, meaning “Don’t send a boy to do a man’s job.” The first write-up in a theater program was entitled “Catch Them While They are Young” Bryant (1951: 134-142).

But in Yemen, slogan such as: “Till here, the cows should be sent back” is used to warn politicians that people would not re-elect them because they had not fulfilled their promises, if the situation is about elections. The use of this one shows the multifunctional nature of the proverbs. The warning remains within the range of the knowledge and experience of the audience.

Alan Dundes, (1980), *Seeing is Believing*, says: “A brief look at visual terms used in American speech illustrates just how much culture affects perception”. As Dundes states, Americans are conditioned from childhood to believe that “what you see is what you get.” One of the informants, Chris McCurty, Elizabethtown College, Pennsylvania relates the proverb to the cultural practices among Americans saying: *Seeing is believing* (Appendix G). It is the result of the scientific revolution, and that development of having concrete evidence for something that they can believe in and reproduce. McCurty elaborates,

“We use it for things that aren’t so concrete as well. Some may say something about somebody’s success, whereas the evidence for that might be a bit shaky, but they’ll point to specific instances where they have succeeded in reaching their goals, and claim that as the idea of ‘Seeing is believing.’ It’s the idea that you can trust what it is that is before you.”

Yemenis are also reaching their goals and requirements by trusting their relatives and friends asking them to ‘see things and get it done’. In fact they see things through others more than by themselves. They rely on vision but it doesn’t matter if that could happen by friend or trusted person. The Americans and Yemenis relying more on vision than on other senses doesn’t mean that they are aware of it. Nor does it mean that it is peculiar to them. People everywhere rely on their senses to perceive their world and order their experiences, but since my data are derived from American folk speech, I cannot speak about others. Both cultures are clearly visual. “Seeing is believing” and “I’m from Missouri”, same like “I’m from Yafi’a” (which implies “you’ve got to show me”) are indications of the emphasis on seeing something for oneself of a given event. “I saw it with my own (two) eyes” is a common authenticating formula, as is the invitation to “see for yourself.”

There are many theories of culture among which language plays an important role in the formulation of six theories (Duranti 1997: 23-46). They are: 1. culture as distinct from nature; 2. Culture as knowledge; 3. Culture as communication; 4. Culture as a system of mediation; 5. Culture as a system of practices; and 6. Culture as a system of participation. The focus here is placed on culture as communication and culture as a system of practices. The third is semiotic and views culture as a system of signs, “a representation of the world, a way of making sense of reality by objectifying it in stories, myths, descriptions, theories, proverbs, artistic products and

performances ... To believe that culture is communication also means that a people's theory of the world must be communicated in order to be lived" (Duranti 1997:33). Geertz stresses that culture is "not an experimental science in search for law but an interpretive one in search of meaning" (qtd. in Bhuvaneshwar, 2003: 1), (Geertz 1973:5). According to the semiotic approach of Levi-Strauss (1963 a,b), different cultures emerge from different groups of people since their thinking properties – even though the human mind is anatomically the same everywhere – are adapted to specific living conditions.

A multitude of studies of proverbs, both paremiographical and paremiological, I have seen and read, and during my visit to Vermont, met with people and with specialists in proverbs, Professor Wolfgang Mieder being the foremost. He provided me with a lot of materials relating to my research, his own library (answering my question about the future of his rich library, he said that it will be given to University of Vermont, that was during a conversation with him inside his library) with thousands of international publications on proverbs, many slides and pictures. I asked him about the many different statues of monkeys shelved in the library, in just a few seconds he picked up a book which answered my question, and he himself summarized the issue. The harmony between the library and the "librarian" made the researcher easily access to the source getting the data required. Everything was 'wisely' fitted and organized. His international proverb archives may become Mecca of international studies.

I can honestly state that my fieldwork in the United States remind me of what Yemen used to be famous for! For many people, at least for Yemenis, 'wisdom' will be the answer. A research center for paremiography and paremiology has to be established on the land of wisdom, preferably called the Center for Regained Wisdom. I hope this will take the torch of wisdom to serve not only Yemen but the rest of the world.

In George Lakoff and Mark Turner's theory proverb is treated as a species of metaphor. A group of experimental psycholinguists, Richard P. Honeck and collaborators, developed the other, an analogy-based problem-solving model.

Bradbury in "Transforming Experience into Tradition: Two Theories of Proverb Use and Chaucer's Practice" *Oral Tradition*, (2002:261-289) states:

"On the basis of some aspects of Chaucer's practice, I have attempted to identify some ways in which the available theories illuminate proverb practice and some places where practice shows up the limitations of theory. I began with the metaphor of building a bridge between the work of ethnographers and that of cognitive scientists. It may be easier to outline work for others to do than to do it, but a bridge begins with the recognition that a gap needs to be spanned."

Bradbury's hope is shared with by many scholars in this field and other fields to bridge the gap by having a comprehensive theory of proverb.

Chilukuri Bhuvaneswar whom I met in Hyderabad, India, has encouraged and provided me with useful materials, relating to my topic. His study entitled "A Bibliographical Review of English Proverb Literature (1400-2000): Evidence for Karmik Linguistic Theory" which reviews some of the most important scholarship on English proverbs, also offers significant suggestions for research scholars. A fruitful discussion with him for many days about proverbs and related issues made me aware of the important role played by proverbs, for Karmik Linguistic Theory, Bhuvaneswar as a linguist patiently explained that emphasizing the need of having a theory of proverbs since there is no guiding theory on how best to put together proverb collections that are to serve various proverbial genres and purposes.

As indicated by many scholars, there are extensive collections of proverbs in many societies. Many studies have relied on textual resources or proverbs drawn from the memory of elderly members of a given culture – and so does this study especially as far as Yemeni proverbs are concerned. Many individual authors, poets, politicians or wise people have contributed a great deal to all nations' literatures by creating new proverbs, which add to the national heritage of a given nation. That is to say, a proverb is first uttered by an individual and in time it becomes part of the traditions. Undoubtedly, Christians quote from the Bible and Muslims quote from the Quran when they express their religious beliefs. However, investigating the origins of Yemeni or American proverbs is so extensive a research that the scope of this study cannot cover.

Since time immemorial, Arabs are known to be fond of using similes, metaphors and rhyming in their arguments to strengthen the rhetoricity of their speech. The Quran uses figurative language and the word *mathal* as well, on many different occasions to illustrate situations to Arabs, to advise or warn them. For example, *Surah* 18, *Al-kahf*, verse 32 reads:

“Set forth to them the parable of two men: For one of them We provided two gardens of grape-vines and surrounded them with date-palms; in between the two We placed tillage.”

Another example is found in *Surah* 39 *az-Zumar* verse 29 which reads:

“Allah puts forth a Parable— a man belonging to many partners at variance with each other, and a man belonging entirely to one master: are those two equal in comparison? Praise be to Allah! But most of them have no knowledge.”

And *Surah* 43, *az-Zukhruf* verse 57 reads:

“When (Jesus) the son of Mary is held up as an example, behold, thy people raise a clamour thereat (in ridicule)!”

In Arab culture, the word *mathal* is connected with wisdom: *hikmah*. However, there is a clear difference between *hikma* and *mathal*, as *hikma* is always connected with facts, wisdom, and lessons, and this is not always the case with *mathal*. At the same time, *mathal* is often related to a local society or a small community while *hikma* might concern a universal issue that reveals lessons to all humans regardless of their customs, location or traditions. The Quran and the Prophet’s sayings are referred to by Muslims as *hikma*. Significant individuals like King Solomon and Luqman the Wise (peace be upon them both) are referred to as wise men. In Yemeni traditional tales, some characters like Ali ibn Zayed and Al-Humaid ibn Mansoor are referred to as wise men as well. Al-Maydani’s *Majma’a Al Amthal*, collection of Proverbs (1992) contains a number of anonymous sayings from the New Testament, mainly taken from the Sermon on the Mount.

Goitein (1952:169-179) paid special attention towards “*Proverbia Arabica*” by I. B. Yahuda (1932, 1934). For Arabic itself, there are a few collections of proverbs: *Study of Meccan Proverbs* by the great Dutch scholar Snouck Hurgronje (1886), and Abdulla Yacoob Khan’s *The Gem Dictionary of Anglo-Arabian Proverbs, Maxims, etc.* (1945). Much material may, in addition, be found in travel books or in linguistic studies on Arabia. The collection of proverbs of Central Yemen, published by (Goitein) in 1934 under the title of *Femenica*, comprises 1,432 items, but is only a selection from a much greater stock, complemented and enriched by subsequent research. Researchers also paid attention and made use of the available studies towards Yemeni proverbs such as: *Almwaqit Alzira’aya fi Aqwaal Ali Ibn Zaid wa Alhumaid Ibn Mansour wa Akhareen* (The Agricultural Timings in the Sayings of Ali Ibn Zayed, Al-Humaid

Ibn Mansoor and others), by Ala'ansi (2004), *Aqal Ali Ibn Zayed: Drasa wa Nusous* (Ali Ibn Zaid's Sayings: Study and Texts) by Albaradoni (2006), *Alfolklour Alyemani: ba'd Alhaqaiq wa Almolahadaat* (The Yemeni Folklore: Some truths and Observations) by Alhamadani (2004), *Qamous Alamthal Alyemania* (The Dictionary of Yemeni Proverbs) by Alhamadani (2007), *Hikam wa Amthal Sha'bia min Almanaatiq Alsharqiya* (Public Maxims and Proverbs of the Eastern Districts) by Altuhaifi (2004), *Allahjah Alyemaniah fi Alnukat wa Alamthal Alsana'nia* (The Yemeni dialect in the Sananese Jokes and Proverbs) by Zaid (2004), *Alamthal AlYemania wa alaaqatuha bilamthal Alarabia Alqadimah* (The Yemeni Proverbs and their relation to the Old Arabic Proverbs) by Mahboub (2002), *Amthal Sana'ania* (Sananese Proverbs) by Mohammed and Asma'a (2003), *Alshaaye'a min Amthal Yafi'a*, (The Common Proverbs of Yafi'a) by Alkhulaqi (2006), *Aadaat wa Taqaleed Alzawaj fi Yafi'a* (Customs and Traditions of marriage in Yafi'a) by Alkhulaqi (2006), *Althaqafah Alsha'abiah: Tajarib wa Aqaweel Yemenia*, (The Public Culture: Yemeni Experiences and Sayings) by Albaraduni (1988), *Majma'a Alamthal* (Book of Collected Proverbs) by Al-Maydani (1992), *She'ir Al'amiah fi Alyaman* (Folk Poetry in Yemen) by Almaqaleh (1986), *Min Alamthilah Alsha'abiah Alymaniah bi Mantiqat Yafi'a* (From the Public Yemeni Proverbs of Yafi'a District) by Omar (1992), *Alamthal Alsha'abia fi 'Adan* (The Public Proverbs of Aden) by Alsaqaf (2004).

The best known and most comprehensive of the early Arabic proverb studies is the *Kitab Majma' al-Amthal* (Book of Collected Proverbs) of Ahmad B. Muhammad al-Maydani, a philologist. Al-Maydani, who died October 27, 1124, gathered material collected by his forerunners and "expanded each section by an appendix on modern proverbs" (Brockelman, 1913c:419). Al-Maydani's *Kitab*, still extant in several manuscripts and regarded as a standard book on Arabic proverbs, appeared in two volumes, and offers material on "ancient Arabic

household words and proverbs, with very important explanatory notes on poetry” (Brockelman, 1913c:409; Brockelman, 1913b:144-145).

Arabic vernaculars differ from each other, so that proverbs sounding very different in wording may in reality be exactly identical. Most of the Arab countries invite an investigation of their origins, particularly if one bears in mind that this common stock is characteristically different from the proverbs of other civilizations, including the European, with which Arab civilization shares the Jewish, Christian and the Graeco-Roman, and with which it has been connected through political and cultural relations for many centuries. One has only to compare any collection with the *Oxford Dictionary of English Proverbs*, (1935) *Oxford Dictionary of American Proverbs* and (Qamoos Al amthal Alyamania) (2004) (Dictionary of Yemeni Proverbs) Then only one will be aware of those cultural influences between different nations. Based on the rich materials available in Arab countries, particularly in Yemen regarding the currency of proverb as an indicator of the past as well as of the present, further studies will throw more light on the history of Yemeni Arabic proverb.

Wolfgang Mieder and Deborah Holmes (2004:83) speak of the American proverbs, indicating that it is generally accepted that proverbs represent the smallest verbal folklore genre, and this fact might lead some people to the false conclusion that they must also be the simplest form of folklore but nothing could be further from the truth. Anybody trying to put together a list of American proverbs will quickly realize that this is a very problematic task indeed. Proverbs such as “Time flies”, “All is not gold that glitters”, “Big fish eat little fish”, and many others are very popular in the United States, but they are certainly not American in origin. Each of these proverbs has a long history and their origins can be traced back to classical antiquity. In fact,

they were already so well known over two thousand years ago that they were translated into many national languages from Latin during the Middle Ages.

A similar picture appears with the many Biblical proverbs, which are an integral part of the proverb tradition in countries where Christianity took hold. Such common proverbs as “there is a time to weep, and a time to laugh” (Ecclesiastes 3:4), “The love of money is the root of all evil” (St. Paul [1 Timothy] 6:10), “Pride comes before the fall” (Proverbs of Solomon, 16:18), “A prophet has no honor in his own country” (St. Matthew 13:57) or “Man does not live by bread alone” (St. Mathew 4:4) exist in basically identical form in the hundreds of languages into which the Bible was translated. Not everybody thinks of the Bible when using this proverb and only a small number of people will be able to give its precise Biblical source. Margaret Hardie published a list of “Proverbs and Proverbial Expressions Current in the United States East of the Missouri and North of the Ohio Rivers” in 1929 which she had checked for actual currency with at least three persons of that area. Such proverbs as “Don’t kick a fellow when he’s down”, “It pays to advertise” and, “Paddle your own canoe” seem to be expressions of typical aspects of American culture.

America’s two greatest paremiographers, Archer Taylor (1890-1973) and Bartlett Jere Whiting (born 1904), have gone far beyond Richard Jente’s pioneering essay, “The Untilled Field of Proverbs” (1945), in investigating the stock of proverbs in use in America. Together they published *A Dictionary of American Proverbs and Proverbial Phrases, 1820-1880* in (1958), and Whiting subsequently issued his monumental collection *Early American Proverbs and Proverbial Phrases* in (1977). With these two lexicons a solid scholarly foundation of which proverbs have been used in American since its earliest colonial times until 1880 has been obtained. Besides, the work on a massive *Dictionary of American Proverbs* based on a large

collection project by the American Dialect Society during the forties and fifties is also nearing completion, can help to give even more insight into proverbs indigenous to the modern United States.

The interest in regional proverbs has an impressive history in the United States. Three valuable early collections are, for example, Miss Margaret Hardie(1929) *Proverbs and Proverbial Expressions Current in the United States East of the Missouri and North of the Ohio Rivers*, Emma Louise Snapp's (1933) *Proverbial Lore in Nebraska* and Francis W. Bradley's (1937) *South Carolina Proverbs*. They were clearly inspired by the superb paramiological research which particularly Taylor (1890-1973) was doing at this time. His seminal book *The Proverb* written in (1931) has to this day remained the world's most important study on proverbs and generations of students and scholars have been guided by its wisdom.

Margaret Bryant with the help of many field workers and state chairpersons amassed the incredible number of more than 250,000 proverbial phrases during about thirty years of collecting. A number of collections were published in the meantime, of which the following are of particular value: John Adams (1947/48), Atkinson Mary J. (1954), Frances M. Barbour (1963), Mac E. Barick (1963), Bill Cole (1960), Robert Edward Gard and L. G. Sorden (1962), L.Hughest (1960), Margaret M. Kimmerle (1947), K. Koch (1961), Helen.Pearce (1946), Vance.Randolph and George. P. Wilson (1953), Harold W. Thompson (1949), and Bartlett Jere Whiting (1952). Margaret Bryant (1945) had given her co-workers excellent guidance for their field work by providing them with her invaluable (still today!) monograph *Proverbs and How to Collect Them*.

The Oxford Dictionary of American Proverbs (1996) includes approximately 30,000 proverbs with their many variants based on the field research of the American Dialect Society

described above. Katarine Luomala (1985) published “A Bibliographic Survey of Collections of Hawaiian Sayings” which brings to light the rich heritage of native Hawaiian proverbial wisdom. In the California collection “A dollar saved is a dollar made” which is clearly a variation of the British original “A penny saved is a penny earned.” Yet it is a variant which is most likely current throughout the United States. The next worthy collection of Indian proverbs appeared only in 1932, and it contained the grand total of six proverbial expressions! Nevertheless, Robert Lowie’s paper “Proverbial Expressions among the Crow Indians” published in *American Anthropologist* is a clear indication that proverbial materials can be found when an honest attempt is made.

The white settlers did not just try to superimpose their proverbial and biblical wisdom on the native Indians; they also created their own stereotypical expressions about the Indians which are anything but flattering. An unfortunate proverb which is still heard today is the ugly “The only good Indian is a dead Indian” which stems from the western frontier of America. It should be no surprise to realize that the Afro-American population of America has a very rich tradition of proverbs going back at least in part of the African roots of this important minority group.

A number of very useful early collections of Afro-Americans proverbs exist which could form the basis for thematic and ethnographic studies. Joel Chandler Harris (1848-1908) included a section of “Plantation Proverbs” in his classic book *Uncle Remus: His Songs and Sayings* (1881). Many of these proverbs reflect the early slave existence of the Afro-Americans. A few examples from *Uncle Remus* would be “Mole don’t see w’at his naber doin’”, “Jay-bird don’t rob his own nes’”, etc. In *Uncle Gabe Tucker* we find such wisdom as “Sharp ax better’n big muscle”, “De fox wants to know how de rabbit’s gittin’ on”, etc.

In the year 1926 Thomas H. Russell brought together *The Sayings of Poor Richard: Wit, Wisdom and Humor of Benjamin Franklin in the Prefaces, Proverbs and Maxims of Poor Richard's Almanack for 1733 to 1758*. Franklin published an instructive and entertaining almanac for twenty-five years from 1733 to 1758. Next to the Bible, the almanacs might well have been the most frequent reading material in the colonies. To this day people use such introductory formulas as "Benjamin Franklin said" or even more frequently "as Poor Richard says," a formula which Franklin himself had used so often in the almanacs. There can be no doubt that Franklin played a major role in keeping traditional proverbs alive among his compatriots. They read them daily in his almanacs, they heard them at church, and above all they used them at home in the family and in all encounters of public life. Franklin's "The Way to Wealth," a short piece of Puritan ethics based on proverbs, has been reprinted enumerable times and it has been translated into the major languages of the world.

"Life is just a bowl of cherries" and the extremely well-known Bailey (born 1918) song "Takes two to tango" from 1952 originated two of American proverbs which have become very popular indeed. The former received a marvelous boost when Erma Bombeck (1927-1996) came out with her best-selling book *If Life is a Bowl of Cherries, What Am I Doing in the Pits?* published in (1978). The latter gained international prominence when Reagan on November 11, 1982, commented about future Soviet American relations after the death of Leonid Brezhnev by citing the proverb "It takes two to tango" (Mieder and Bryan, 1997). Societal and personal problems also result in the use of proverbs in such songs like "Easy Come, Easy Go" (1967) sung by Elvis Presley (1935-1977), "Money" (1973) by the group Pink Floyd and "Homeward Through the Haze" (1975) by David Crosby (born 1941) and Graham Nash (born 1942).

2.2 Methods and Materials

This study highlights a variety of issues: the present status of Yemeni and American proverbs, and the possibility of translating such cultural expressions, bringing the similarities and differences to understand more about the cultural messages carried out through proverbs from both cultures. Data coming from the Yemeni informants seem raw and untouched and has not been previously studied or analyzed from a cultural perspective. This makes the task challenging, since a semantic translation of the Yemeni proverbs into English would forfeit the cultural connotations of the proverbs by changing the images presented these proverbs – hence, the window into Yemeni culture would thus allow only half of the view. Therefore, the proverbs are more likely to be literally translated: matching equivalents from the other culture in a similar situation thus remains on the side of readers from both cultures. As an assisting procedure, Yemeni and American proverbs have been classified under different categories to reflect the ways people think and interact towards many aspects of life. An accurate and complete transfer of knowledge from the source language into the target one still remains uncertain due to the cultural-specific features that govern the languages by the ways and thoughts reflecting the human beings towards their environment.

Presenting some of the Yemeni folklore to the world does not mean that we have to show that what we believe is the best and leave what we think is ‘bad’: that is not the purpose of this research. The aim here is to bring in translation as nearly as possible the word that the researcher heard *from the mouth of the horse*, oral tradition by its informants. And to make it accessible to the experts from other cultures for mutual benefit and evaluation – for, it is high time we worked in that direction to find *the treasure* for the peoples’ benefit.

This study consists of three major sections, each of which has a specific aim and methodology. The first presents Arabic Yemeni proverbs in their natural contexts in daily conversations with explanations of their meaning and circumstances in which they are used. The ethnography of speaking is the approach that has been followed and comments of the informants were intensively used in the analysis. This section is based on extensive fieldwork in some parts of Yemen – i.e. Aden, Sana'a and Al-Dhala. The researcher attempted to record large numbers of proverbs used by people in their conversations. They understand the meaning of each proverb they use, and know to whom they quote it and why. The researcher as a member of the society started recording some of the data collected at an earlier stage of life – i.e. during school years. The researcher often used proverbs for educational purposes while teaching in secondary school classes in Yemen to motivate the students and to draw their attention to comparisons between the two cultures, Yemeni and American, and to the past and present states of both cultures.

Other stages of fieldwork in Yemen took place during the writing of the research, where the researcher a considerable number of proverbs on many different occasions including weddings and memorial gatherings. Some more Yemeni proverbs were gleaned during direct interviews with people who are known for their knowledge of proverbs and national heritages. The corpus of the proverbs collected was also discussed with proverb experts regarding the meaning and use of a large number of proverbs. Most of these interviews were tape-recorded. The researcher was unable to understand some of the proverbs that they are in use, so expert informants have been asked about the roles of these proverbs, their usage and their meaning. The data was either tape-recorded during interviews or recorded in a written form by the researcher while interacting with informants. As it was very difficult if not impossible for the researcher to hear all proverbs used in daily conversations in American culture, direct questionnaires were

administered to find out people's opinions about proverbs and their attitudes towards them. Some proverbs were also elicited from the informants in an attempt to find equivalent or related Yemeni proverbs, either by means of face-to-face interviews or by using questionnaires filled in their own time. Because the informants varied in age and knowledge, they had different views of proverbs as reflections of people's values. Some young informants, among them university students, consider proverbs as old-fashioned 'ready-made' expressions that old people sometimes use to justify or encourage a given behavior. In addition, one of the informants, a doctor of philosophy, thought that people who use proverbs are playing the role of authority – similar to the nature of using proverbs in Yemenis – so as to become effective in driving home a point. Proverbs appear to play a much more vital role in Yemeni society in all aspects of daily life than in the American society. They are one way of expressing people's opinion in an indirect way. People use proverbs when they want to express their views on a certain situation, for example, when a person wants to give his/her opinion regarding a certain occurrence.

As the spontaneous nature of proverbs' circulation makes it difficult to tape-record them like other traditions, for example poetry or traditional stories, the interviews in the tape-recorded data were based on discussing the use and the meaning of proverbs collected by the researcher from other informants and experts.

As Ruth Finnegan, (1972: 425) notes, "Proverbs are used on particular occasions, by individuals in particular contexts and their wit, their attractiveness, their insights, even their meaning must be seen as arising from the context". This principle has been incorporated in the fieldwork method. Ethnographic techniques suggested by Dell Hymes (1962) have been employed and literary criticism is utilized to draw out the significance of proverbs from their natural contexts. As people of Yemen, specifically in countryside, are known for their tendency

to use proverbs in daily conversations, it is impossible to minimize the number of situations in which they quote proverbs. Therefore, this study does not in any way attempt to deal with every proverb ever quoted by the Arabic speakers in Yemen. The situations that are mentioned in this study are just examples to help readers to understand how people in this society use their proverbs (for a more detailed list of proverbs, see Appendix I).

Local media encourages peoples' positive attitude towards their heritage, broadcasting some of the most successful radio programs in which the statement "Qulw li Mis'adah" (Tell Mis'adah), in a form of song getting its way to the Yemeni cultural repertoire of proverbs. From the Yemeni legends and proverbs about Yemeni folklore, the research derives from part IX of the *Iklil* (The Crown), a historical and cultural encyclopedia and reference book written by the renowned Yemeni scholar and speaker Abu Muhammad al-Hasan bin Ahmed Al-Hamdani (893?- 945), who prepared a reference to Himyarite civilization and its proverbs and sayings which can be relied upon in judging on the origins of proverbs, their history and development. Yemeni libraries are not rich enough to make use of, especially regarding Yemeni folklore, proverbs in particular. The real libraries for this dissertation were made of the real people as informants, who provided the researcher with a huge bulk of data related to the study, although in many different situations, the researcher's intentions were viewed with suspicion as a criticism of social values, specifically while discussing the social attitudes towards women as expressed in Yemeni proverbs.

The scarcity of the systematic theoretical work of Yemeni proverbs is one of the obstacles that faced the researcher and the non-availability of any work in English made the researcher again collect study, analyze, translate into English many Arabic texts and then compare them with their American counterpart. Al-Hamadani (2004) maintained that the first

product of these Yemeni proverbs in English came to Yemeni researchers in the form of a booklet by Abdullah Ya'aqub Khan under the title *A Dictionary of Adeni Proverbs* in 1948. After that, this color of the literature stopped until the late sixties where readers and scholars depended on two books: the first is written by Ismail al-Akw'a under the title *Yemeni Proverbs*, in 1967, and the second by Anatoly Ogarchev under the title *The norms of Ali Bin Zayed*, in 1968. However, the seventies, eighties, and nineties witnessed the emergence of a reliable source of literature with regard to the criticism and collection of Yemeni proverbs, *Qamos Alamthal Alyamania* (The Dictionary of Yemeni Proverbs) by Alhamadani (2007).

To fully understand Yemeni proverbs it is necessary to find out directly from the people how they use their proverbs. To achieve this objective, the researcher obtained the views of some Yemenis who are known in the area for their understanding of this aspect of Yemeni culture – carried out by way of holding interviews with some of them. The interviews in this section were tape-recorded in Arabic, later transcribed and analyzed. The following list shows the questions used in direct interviews with some Yemeni informants.

List 1:

1. What do you think a proverb is?
2. In your opinion how did proverbs originate?
3. Do proverbs reflect social values?
4. Are educated people still using proverbs?
5. Do proverbs have any utility in the present-day society?
6. When and why do people use proverbs instead of direct sentences?
7. How do you respond if a person quotes a proverb to you, especially if he criticizes you?

To make the interviews more effective and allow for the informants to express their views informally, these questions were not necessarily presented in the same order or same words. For example, excerpts from the interview with Ali Abdulkareem (more interviews are included in the appendices), who is a popular figure for his interest in Yemeni culture, are as follows:

Researcher: Do you think that proverbs have an important role in Yemeni culture? Please, elaborate this issue according to your experience and academic life.

Abdulkareem: Proverbs in Yemen are part of the cultural heritage of the Yemeni people in particular and the Arab people in general. The Yemenis have accustomed to proverbs to express, criticize, and advise as a result of what they experience in their reality through proverbs as short wisdoms of deep meaning. They consider proverbs as effective, brief messages.

-- Yemeni proverbs are much related to the local environment in rural and urban areas and they are a summary of the wisdom of Yemeni generations in different historical stages passed over to them, and are used widely.

-- Yemeni proverbs are still in use and are cited in all aspects of life. They are still quoted by the intellectuals; they reflect the Yemeni social and cultural reality.

-- Proverbs are characterized by having the ability to criticize various negative aspects and guide people to the best. They are an effective mechanism in the reality of the society dealing with educated and non-educated people alike.

-- Proverbs are used by the general public when they face a situation, or to criticize a negative phenomenon and also to express their attitude toward a phenomenon which they do not accept, or to glorify a positive attitude.

-- Many of proverbs are accepted by people, but those that have the nature of criticism are not accepted by people although they use them in their daily life, even though a part of the proverb may not be accepted only because of the person who cites it.

-- Proverbs are used most often, as I hear people citing them frequently, by different people from different classes of the Yemeni society.

-- Proverbs should be directed positively towards addressing many of the imbalances and negative attitudes in the society, notably towards young people. Proverbs are interesting, enjoyable, and should be of good use in society.

-- Proverbs have an effect on the listener and can change behavior.

Commenting on whether proverbs reflect the culture and the behavior of the Yemeni people and how proverbs give suggestions and solve problems, Ali Abdulkareem said: “yes, they do reflect the Yemeni culture and behavior; they are positively used for in most cases. Proverbs are a kind of critical, educational and behavioral dialogue. Using metaphors and similes in Arabic proverbs, for example, shows different characteristics of Arab culture even preceding Islam, such as an Arab’s pride in his loyalty to his tribe and descriptions of his people in terms of bravery, generosity and honor.

He added:

-- To know the culture of any nation, we have to study its proverbs since proverbs contain inherent characteristics that reflect people’s lives and environmental surroundings. Let us examine these proverbs: *Al rafeeq qable altareeq* ‘(If you set on a journey) think of the companion before the path’. A piece of advice normally given by the elders to the young people, this proverb indicates that having a company while traveling is highly recommended to avoid unexpected risks of the journey and to enjoy the travel. This proverb is a part of the daily

experience. Again, *Yadd wah'da ma tisafiq* 'One hand will not clap' (you cannot clap using only one hand): a proverb stressing the importance of cooperation.

The second section of this study is based on extensive fieldwork done by the researcher in the United States and in India. Data were collected from different kinds of textual sources and elicited from various groups of American citizens both in the U.S. and in India. The researcher designed a questionnaire to draw comments from native informants about the currency, meaning and use of proverbs. Informants were American citizens in Rockford and Memphis basically and also included people from many different towns in the United States. Most of the informants were visitors to the malls, Rockford Library readers or people in public places like markets and universities. The researcher also visited churches in Boston where informants talked about Biblical proverbs as well as traditional proverbs. While most of the collected data were scribbled by hand, only one interview was tape-record, but there was a larger response to the questionnaires. Comments from some students from Harvard University, Tennessee University and Rock Valley College were taken into account as well. Particularly in the discussions that took place in the Parking of South Main, a great deal of data was collected especially about the currency of proverbs in the United States, their meaning and use. List 2 shows the questions used in direct interviews with informants in the United States.

List 2:

1. What do you think a proverb is?
2. In your opinion how did proverbs originate?
3. Do proverbs reflect social values?
4. Are educated people still using proverbs?
5. Do proverbs have any utility in the present-day society?

6. When and why do people use proverbs instead of direct sentences?
7. How do you respond if a person quotes a proverb to you, especially if he criticizes you?

Further data was collected through questionnaires. Questions were constructed to find out about the extent of use of proverbs in America and to draw out similarities and differences between American and Yemeni proverbs. The proverbs were then classified and many different examples and situations were analyzed. As the proverbs represent almost all aspects of human life, it would be difficult if not impossible to limit them to specific subject matters. However, for the purpose of this work, it was obviously necessary to deal with proverbs that represent people's culture and values as much as possible. The analysis of this corpus met the aims of the research. Respondents in the United States fieldwork were adult members and belonged to the culture of the areas. The informants have been divided into two age groups: 18-40, and above 40 years old. All informants were American English speakers.

2.3 Conclusion

This chapter encompasses two parts: Literature Review and Methodology employed. The first part has discussed the most important relevant studies in the literature devoted to the study of proverbs. Two contributions have been made here. The first is the researcher's attempt to indicate the stages through which Arabic Yemeni proverbs have been scholarly collected and how Yemenis view their proverbs. Secondly, by studying how proverbs are viewed by both cultures central to this study, viz. American English and Yemeni Arabic, it has been noticed that different and diverse views are held about and of proverbs even within the same class of people within the same society: those of young age held different views than those held by older people.

The second part presented the methodology employed. It consists of questionnaires and interviews. Some of the interviews are presented in the appendices. Besides, the researcher has made use of the critical comparative method throughout the whole study. Tape-recording is also made use of wherever possible. In fact, tape-recording was emphasized when the researcher aimed to know more from the interviewers and probe deeply in cultural relationships and the ideologies expressed or can be expressed through proverbs. Tape-recording has been meant for eliciting information that could not be collected by means of the questionnaires.

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CHAPTER III

YEMEN AND ITS PROVERBS

Yemen is a Middle Eastern country which is not only considered a promising country in agricultural and mineral resources offering substantial market opportunities for exporters, but it is also rich in literature and local folkloric cultural tradition. The richness and the historic nature of the Yemeni literature and folklore make Yemen one of the important countries in the Middle East, where researchers from all over the world can find all literary furniture, folkloric tastes, wisdom and all necessary tools for different cultures to meet. In this way, perhaps, many new political, religious, economical and social aspects can be understood.

Translating at least part of that literary treasure into English will be of great help in that regard. Only then can many researchers and other people appreciate the local culture in this era of globalization. Translating Yemeni culture into English will immensely benefit the concerned people from the globe, as a way of exchanging cultural values, especially among the cultures of the East and the West, the traditional with the modern. One of the informants of this study indicated an interesting idea: “Arabs do not export their culture with their oil. Not only that, they do not make use of either of them” (App. D)

Arabic language is rich and has the ability to carry such great civilization and culture to the rest of the world, but as a matter of fact it is not in the position at present to do so for many reasons, among of them political and economic. English as a *lingua franca* can be used at present to access and bridge the gaps between many cultures – this can be done with Yemeni and American cultures too.

The traditionalist view is a dominant one in the Yemeni society, indeed. A highly religious society, Yemenis take pride in their rich tradition and in their quick response to the invitation to Islam made fourteen hundred years ago. Even among the Islamic world, wisdom is what Yemen is famous for in history. Prophet Mohammed (peace be upon him) says: “*Al-eiman yamani wa al-hikma yamaniyyah*”, meaning: Faith is Yemeni and wisdom is of Yemen (Al-Nisaburi, 1988). Among Muslims, this is considered as a universal message from the Prophet to the rest of the world to benefit from Yemeni wisdom. However, at the same time, part of the Yemeni wisdom is manifest in the propensity of Yemenis to remain open to different cultures.

Arabic in Yemen has a variety of dialects each of which has its remarkable phonetic, morphological, lexical and semantic properties. In fact, proverbs collected from different regions in Yemen can be seen as evidence to such linguistic differences: e.g. Sana’anese, Ta’zi, Hadhrami, Yafi’ai, etc. Even some areas have their own “wise man” as a source of wisdom: that is, some areas tend to refer wisdom to the sayings of a historical figure although there is no written evidence in many cases that such ancestral wise figure was the true source of a certain proverb. For example, while some areas use the wise figure of Ali bin Zayed (sometimes, Ali wild Zayed, where *wild/bin/ibn* all mean ‘son of’), others use Alhumeid ibn Mansoor. Both the figures were deeply connected to the agricultural setting of the Yemeni society and culture.

While in the Anglo-Saxon culture, language speakers use certain expressions to initiate the listener to a proverb, such as “The proverb goes that ...”, Yemeni speakers also have a repertoire of such expressions: e.g. “The proverb says ...”, “The ancestors say ...”, “Ali wild Zayed/Alhumeid says...”. Despite the debate over the last two figures, these expressions generally give the authority to the speaker while at the same time enable the speaker to draw the addressees’ attention by creating an atmosphere of authenticity and pithiness through invoking

ancestors or ancestral figures. The data collected reflect Yemenis' love for using proverbs and their reliance on them whenever needed. Among Yemenis, these kinds of expressions constitute an essential component of verbal art, as they add flavor to their oral literature in different situations of their daily life.

While proverbs starting with "Ali wild Zayed/Alhumeid says..." can be surely of Yemeni origin, owing to linguistic and rhythmic reasons, a lot of other proverbs have been derived from different sources. Some have been derived from the Yemeni culture itself and have to do with different issues, social, political, economic, etc. Some others came from the Islamic setting and tradition. Other proverbs can be traced to foreign influences. This point reflects how Yemeni folklore represented by proverbs has always remained in a state of cultural interaction and folkloric give and take. Besides, proverbs belonging to different eras, i.e. pre-Islamic, Islamic and modern times show various linguistic differences in diction, structure, and wording.

Yemenis store and memorize a huge number of proverbs from different aspects of life such as home, field, mountains, seas, and almost everything observed on earth or sky, day or night. Using a proper proverb at the right time and situation gives the speaker the appropriate linguistic weapon with which to drive home the point s/he is trying to make without opposition from the listener. Proverbs normally go unchallenged by listeners because people tend to take them for granted as the source of wisdom and as the words of the ancestors and, out of respect for the ancestors; their words must be respected as well. This case becomes all the more intensified when the source of the proverb is traced to the Quran and the Prophet's tradition.

Since proverbs are derived from the culture of the society in which they are used, it is important to present an outline of Yemeni society, social structure and culture. Although there are many dialects in Yemen, sometimes with different versions of similar proverbs, this study

attempts to subsume such proverbs under the umbrella category Arabic Yemeni proverbs, and will henceforth be referred to as such. They are used by all Yemeni people, whose language is Arabic, and hence referred to as Yemenis or the people of Yemen.

3.1 Land, People, Language and Religion

The Republic of Yemen, located in South-West Asia, at the southern edge of the Arabian Peninsula was formed in 1990, when the Yemen Arab Republic (the former Northern Yemen) and the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen (the former Southern Yemen) were unified. Yemen is bordered on the north by Saudi Arabia, on the east by Oman, on the south by the Gulf of Aden, and on the west by the Red Sea. The islands of Socotra, in the Arabian Sea, Perim, and Kamaran are also part of Yemen. Sana'a is the capital; Aden is the country's commercial capital. Yemen has a narrow coastal plain, stretching more than 1,130 km, along the southern edge of the Arabian Peninsula. It has also interior highlands and an eastern desert. The remainder of Yemen is normally hot and virtually rainless. Numerous wadies (i.e. dales) spread from the highlands but Yemen does not have permanent rivers, streams and oases. It has, however, seasonal rivers, streams and oases which usually appear in summer.

Yemen is the most populous country in the Arabian Peninsula. The great majority of the population is Arab (90%), some are Afro-Arab. Minorities include Indians, Somalis, and Europeans. Arabic is the nation's principal language. English is a foreign/second language. Islam is the main religion. The north is nearly 100% Muslim, both Sunni and Zaidi Shiite; the south is predominantly Muslim, but also has Christians and Hindus. Between 1948 and 1950 about 50,000 Yemeni Jews immigrated to Jerusalem, a few Orthodox Jewish families still live in the North. The tribal social structure is still prevalent in the country, although its importance

diminishes along the coast due to more foreign contact.

In addition, it is important to throw light on Yemeni cultural and social structure to explain how circumstances including geography and culture have formed this nation, viz. the people of Yemen. Yemeni social structure is Arab-Islamic culture. Over many centuries, members of groups or tribes have crossed into the territory of Yemen, under different circumstances and different times, culturally mixed with the native population and shared their history. Islam has played a vital role in uniting some of those groups and creating the Yemeni nation with its unique social structure.

The earliest recorded civilizations of South Arabia were the Minaen and Sabaen. Sabeen Kingdom flourished from c.750 BC to c.155 BC. The Himyarites, who followed the Sabeans, were defeated by the Romans (1st cent. BC) and were occupied by the Ethiopians during Axum Civilization (c. AD 340U - 2013 AD 378). During the second Himyarites Kingdom, Christianity and Judaism took root in Yemen. Ethiopians again conquered the country in 525. After a Persian period (575 U+2012 628), Islam came to Yemen, which was soon reduced to a province of the Muslim Caliphate. After the breakup of the Caliphate, Yemen came under the control of the rising Rassite dynasty Imam of the Zaidi sect who built the theocratic political structure of Yemen that lasted until 1962.

The Fatimid caliph of Egypt occupied most of Yemen from c. 1000 until c. 1175, when it fell to the Ayyubids, who ruled until c. 1250. By 1520, Yemen formed part of the Ottoman Empire, which exercised at least nominal sovereignty until the end of World War I. In 1937, after a brief Saudi Arabian invasion and skirmishes with Great Britain (which has the protectorate of Aden South Yemen), Yemen's boundaries were fixed by treaty with Saudi Arabia and Great Britain. Yemen became more active in foresight efforts after World War II. It joined

the Arab League in 1945 and the United Nations in 1947. Between 1967 and 1972, frequent border clashes occurred between northern Yemen and Southern Yemen, until a treaty was signed in 1972 to merge the two countries, but fighting continued between the two states. In early 1979 border fighting erupted into full-scale war; however, peace was soon established.

The British presence in Southern Yemen began in 1839. Between 1886 and 1914, Britain signed a number of Protectorate treaties with local rulers. In 1937 the area, which by then consisted of 24 sultanates, emirates and sheikhdoms, was designated the Aden protectorate and was divided for administrative purposes into the East Aden and the West Aden protectorates. In 1959 six small states of the West Aden protectorate formed the federation of Emirates of the South; it was later enlarged to 10. Despite considerable opposition from its population, the Aden colony proper was made part of the Federation (1963), which was then renamed the Federation of South Arabia, 1965. 16 tribal states joined the federation. However, nationalist groups in Aden opposed the federation. In November 1967, Southern Yemen became completely independent. In 1970 the country created a new constitution and was renamed the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen. In December 1989, final unification agreements were made ready between the two Yemens and the borders were opened in February 1990 and on May 22 of that year, the two were officially united.

Here is a summary of a group discussion of the informants (most of them were educated). The discussion took place in Al-Shaib, in 2006. Many of the people agreed that, Yemen is rich in humanities and art due to the richness of the Yemeni culture. Yemenis for centuries and through their heritage have come to the conclusion that they are close to getting the treasure, the Yemeni treasure of happiness, prosperity, peace, luxury, faith, honor and identity. These are manifested through different kinds of cultural heritages deeply rooted into Yemeni culture through its

folklore in different forms, such as stories, novels, plays, poetry, proverbs among others. Yemenis live their dream having the quest of Yemeni treasure, which they believe does exist in their homeland. They work hard and continue teaching their children to have patience and overcome all kinds of obstacles encountering them in life. Proverbs are used as persuasive means to achieve such goals among Yemeni people. They live near mountains in quest of a treasure believed to have been left by their grandfathers somewhere. In folkloric terms, the treasure might be the land and the agricultural plants remain the gold that Yemenis are proud to have. Yemenis describe their land wisely in the form of legendary stories or wise sayings depicting every set of life in very artistic ways. But sometimes, failing to get the treasure may have led some people to think of leaving their houses to find it somewhere else in the world.

Reading Yemenis through their wise observations in the form of proverbs gives the reader the real feeling and belief. Yemenis value their life and allow it the pleasure it can have. For instance, the proverb *enfiq maafī aljeab, yatiek maa fī alghyb*, (literally: spend what you have in your pocket, unexpected money will come) can give a vivid clue of how Yemenis tend to enjoy the moment no matter what might be in store for the future, although the proverbs unmistakably reflects an optimistic view of the future. Culturally speaking, the proverb also implies sharing what one has with others in order to maintain an atmosphere of friendliness.

In fact, little has been written about social issues in Yemen in general and Yemeni proverbs in particular. The beliefs that have been inherited through generations are still alive among Yemeni people. Proverbs not only echo such beliefs, but also show that Yemen has great historical and natural sites comparable to Arab and world sites encompassing the landscape, architecture. The Yemeni people, who are traditionalists, take much pride in showing tremendous hospitality and openness towards foreigners and guests. One can see this in the

following line of poetry:

Wa enni la'abdu adhayfi madam nazilan

Wa ma sheematun li ghayraha tushbihi al'abda

Surely, I am a slave to my guest as long as he is in my house/And there is no other aspect of my character that can make me similar to a slave.

Again, such characteristic is manifested by proverbs like *ikrem dhaefak* (literally: be so hospitable to your guest) or *lialdhaef Saba' khataaya* (literally: the guest is allowed seven mistakes, i.e. that can be forgiven).

However, Yemen lacks the intellectuals and scholars who can exert efforts to bridge the gap between the Yemeni culture and other cultures. This lack is in the sense that no more Yemenis to date have made a commendable attempt to bring the Yemeni civilization to other nations in any foreign language.

The production of the oral culture in the form of verses, poetry, songs, slogans and oratory speech calling back some of the oral tradition is closely related to the situation expressing many aspects of social life. In fact, the oral tradition of the peasants in Yemen is rich in its variety and content. It consists of lyrical folk songs of numerous types, ballads, heroic poems, folklore, prose narratives such as legend and myth riddles, proverbs among others. The elements of the oral tradition of folk literature are closely related to specific sections of the social structure and to particular aspects of social life. For example, there are different types of songs sung with various kinds of situations is in wedding parties (e.g. *zaamel* 'dithyrambic poetry', and *baalah* 'poetic debates'), seasons of agriculture and harvest (called *mahjil*; the name derived from the Arabic root *hajala*, which was derived from the name of a noble horse owned by Arrabee' ibn Ka'b Al-Mazini, thus the eponym is taken in terms of functioning, i.e. recite poetic

lines to enhance the speed and performance of work, usually sung while working by workers in group) and grinding of corn with the hand-mill. Others relate to specific ceremonies.

Folksongs in Yemen provide a lot of materials about family life. They constitute sets of inventory material for certain situations. Hearing a specific song is limited to a certain season or ceremony, of course apart from *zaamil* and *baalah* where innovation is a must. But, in general, the social attitudes and experience of generations are best reflected in the use of proverbs. A *zaamil* or *baalah* line can become a catch phrase and wisdom for generations if it contains a proverb or attain a proverbial status.

Proverbs serve as a mirror for the complex situations in real life with a homely language: To exemplify the role played by proverbs in the social life of people, one can critically see – later in this chapter – how the status of women is reflected in proverbs. In the Yemeni society a man's presence is enough to terminate a mixing event among women. Some situations and settings are recognized both ethically and amicably as appropriate for women to perform in, just as there are those situations and setting for men. Most activities divide along sexual lines; men and women sit separately in mosques or *majales* 'sitting rooms'; male social life is centered in male clubs. Few women go to such places and even the most daring "modern" husband would rarely consider taking his wife to them on special occasions, such as the days of Eids in villages. Women may go into these male realms briefly but they tend, even then to be seated on chairs placed in specific areas in the buildings themselves. Musical performances are limited to men; women have their own musical parties. In that, any woman who sings and dances in public is badly thought of from the moral point of view because women are not allowed to do so. In fact, this is one of the drawbacks that may be taken into account. Some proverbs as a conclusion of tales, songs deal with such situation like "O female dancer, in darkness you will be appreciated

not”. The other proverbs related to games like *Khusais* and *Barburah* (two similar female games in which small stones are used to be played on the ground divided into six squares) and “Rise your voice, maybe your dowry will increase, O bride” and “like the dove and the tiger in their marriage night”.

3.2 The Yemeni Society through its Proverbs

Looking at the social structure of both Yemeni and American societies, it is, in fact, the hierarchical system based on the nuclear family as well as the extended family which distinguish the former from the latter. Unlike Americans, (many informants confirm it) all members of the Yemeni society occupy a number of social roles and statuses regardless of age. These social roles regulate and organize the behavior of children, husband, wife, parents and grandparents among others. Children are socialized to accept the nature of the extended family along with other unquestioned social and cultural values. In some families, relatives from different generations live in the same house and are looked after by one person; however, one of the American informants in this study indicated that the social interaction among extended family is looked upon differently from the American perspective as such a phenomenon is not welcomed by the majority: American prefer independence as in line with the American dream (App. G)

As far as Yemeni proverbs are concerned, this study attempts to reflect a true image of the values of the Yemeni people as they represent them through their proverbs and to provide facts about their outlook on life. Proverbs cover almost all aspects of Yemeni daily conversation, which makes it difficult to categorize them under specific subject matters. However, a corpus has been made and classified under the following categories:

- 3.2.1 Homeland
- 3.2.2 Social Status
- 3.2.3 Law and Justice
- 3.2.4 Casteism and Class
- 3.2.5 Education
- 3.2.6 Goals, Morality and Values
- 3.2.7 Respect and Behavior
- 3.2.8 Poverty and Wealth
- 3.2.9 General Attitudes towards Life
- 3.2.10 Time in Man's Condition
- 3.2.11 Belief and Religion
- 3.2.12 Man as an Individual.
- 3.2.13 Friends and Neighbors
- 3.2.14 Attitudes towards Women and Men
- 3.2.15 Attitudes towards Marriage
- 3.2.16 Attitudes towards Relatives
- 3.2.17 Solidarity
- 3.2.18 Beyond within
- 3.2.19 Yemenis as Wise Men

In examining the meaning and use of each proverb, Newmark's (1988) semantic approach to translation is adopted to give the exact contextual meaning of the original texts. Newmark suggests that proverbs cannot be translated word for word; rather they should be translated into equivalent concepts in TL (Target Language) to convey the same meaning and

produce the same effect on the readers. But, the need of the research is to relate the meaning of the Yemeni proverb to its Yemeni-specific setting, thus providing a window into what the proverb is in the Yemeni milieu. It is not the general aim of the translation here to evoke a similar response in the TL reader as the one created in the SL reader, i.e. dynamic equivalence. Rather, Newmark's method of literal translation is adopted in an attempt to preserve the syntactic as well as the semantic properties of the proverb: for such provide clues as to how Yemeni proverbs and their structures enshrine meaning. One of the main problems of translating the Yemeni proverbs is the inability to convey the meaning and the poetic rhyming at the same time. Therefore, a semantic translation approach will not be able to respond to all the proverbs, although maybe in the case of some proverbs. Besides, sometimes using semantic translation for some proverbs would have brought in different images and associations unavailable in the original.

Generally, the translation, carried out by the researcher and revised by two professional translators (English-Arabic and vice versa) has attempted to convey the conceptual meaning of a proverb. Thus, whichever method is used, the aim of the researcher is to make the proverb as understandable to non-Arabic speaker as possible. Further, the uses of the proverbs are also described in passing, employing the following categories: instruction or education; social control through judgment or advice; expression of values; commentary on life's events, sometimes by ridicule or justification; and to counsel or comfort. There is inevitably some overlap between these. Most of the proverbs were either recorded when people used them in conversation or collected from informants by asking them to repeat any proverb that they remembered together with its meaning and occasions when it is used. Few of them were drawn from textual sources; their meaning and use were discussed with informants.

3.2.1 Homeland

من ترك داره قل مقداره

Min tarak daruh qal miqdaruh

He who leaves his home (country) loses his dignity.

The point of this proverb is that everyone is honored in his country.

Context: Yemeni people use the proverb to encourage a person to stay in his own country and to warn him against emigration.

إلى ماله أول ماله تالي

Eli maluh awal maluh taley

Whoever has no first (i.e. beginning) has no second.

Yemenis encourage the youth to preserve their customs and traditions as they believe that a stable society should keep its values in spite of rapid changes in life because they believe that the one who has no past will not be able to cope with the present or the future.

Context: the proverb is used to point out that it is a mistake to forget one's past. In fact, Yemenis believe that the past is the wealth from which one can start to develop his character for the present and the future.

الغربة كربة

Alghorbah kurbah.

Expatriation is but suffering.

This proverb urges people not to emigrate and leave their homeland. It conveys that one has to rush back home to join one's relatives even if one is living in luxury abroad.

Context: People use the proverb to encourage those who leave their country for a long time to come back to join their own people.

3.2.2. Social Status

من تعالى ردى

min taala;’ radas

One who is up does not show mercy to the one who is under.

The proverb criticizes those people who do not show mercy toward those who are not in their position or are defeated.

Context: It can be used to encourage the rich to help the poor, or the victorious to show mercy on the defeated.

ما علا طير إلا وقع

ma ‘alaa tyrun ila waqa’a

Whatever high the bird gets, it must come down.

The proverb makes it clear that the one who achieves high positions in life will finally fall down.

This proverb urges people to behave well and not be proud because of transient worldly acquisitions. The emphasis here is on humility towards one’s fellowmen.

Context: People use this metaphor to describe a tyrant person or leader who ends up in misery.

3.2.3. Law and Justice

لكل قاعدة شواذ

likul qa’edah shwath

Every rule has exceptions.

This is a classical proverb used without any changes in its form. Since laws are man-made by consensus exceptions can also be made.

Context: People use the proverb to justify their attitude towards the law or to treat a given situation as an exceptional case.

أنا رب ابلي و الكعبة لها رب يحميها

an rab ebili wa al Ka'ba laha rab yahmiha

I am the protector of my camels, for the Kabaa has its own Protector.

The proverb reflects a pastoral environment and it seems to have been first quoted by cattle herders. Usually, a shepherd looks after his herd animals to drive away wolves and thieves. In fact, this proverb was first said by Abdulmutalib, the Prophet Mohammed's grandfather when Ebraha al-Ashram, the Ethiopian leader attempted an attack on Al-Kabaa, and on the way tried to seize Abdulmutalib's camels.

Context: People use this proverb to indicate that their concern is limited to what belongs to them only, irrespective of other considerations.

3.2.4. Casteism and Class

Although Yemeni social life calls for solidarity in economic terms (the rich are required to help the poor), there are indications of casteism which have always remained deeply rooted in Yemen's history, but a discussion of this point is outside the scope of this research. Islam came to abolish casteism, and this is also reinforced by the constitution of the Republic where people are all equal, as any type of class polarization and social injustice are essential causes of violence, war, and hatred. The Quran states clearly that there is no difference between Arabs and non-Arabs except in *taqwa* (piety) (*Sura* 49, No.13). Prophet Mohammed said that people are the

same like ‘the teeth of a comb’. Although Islam calls for social equality and humanitarian treatment between social groups, Yemenis divide themselves according to social classes and tribal status. For example, they have very strict rules forbidding intermarriage between certain classes. The word *khadem* (servant) has very high frequency of usage in Yemen. Here are some proverbs that reflect this social predicament.

اشتري لك عبد أفضل من تربيته

ishtari lak a’bad aftal min tarbiatuh

Buy a slave, rather than bring one up.

The proverb is said to advise someone that it is better for you to buy a slave than buying him/her. It is just a waste of time and money feeding and fostering a slave. As such, slavery existed in some parts of Africa until early in the twentieth century and Yemen has been involved one way or another in the slave trade. However, it is worth mentioning that nowadays slavery does not exist in Yemen.

خاو لك خادم

khaw lak khadim

Do not consider a slave as a brother (as the slave is ungrateful).

This proverb asserts that a slave has no manners and he always forgets your kindness and good treatment to him/her.

Context: the proverb can be said in present days about people who are of low mentality or ungrateful.

رو الحليم النجد

raw alhaleem alnajed

For an intelligent man, use a gesture.

People who use the proverb mean that it is difficult to communicate with some unintelligent people as they do not understand the hints given to them by the speaker who is not willing to give more details about what he meant, but often they use it as an insult claiming black people and some families are not as intelligent as the rest of the people.

ينتقل مثل عيال العسن

yatanaqal mithl a'yaal ala'wsan

He who changes his host is like the kitten.

Yemenis often prefer to stay with relatives or friends when they travel from one place to another inside the country; they must stay in one particular place as it is unacceptable that one moves from one host to another.

Context: is used to mean that one who does not maintain the tradition of staying with one host is not a noble person.

سمحنا له يتفرج راح يرقص

samhna lah yatafraj rah yarqus

We told him just watch, but he went to play.

People who use the proverb here mean that firmness is required in all situations and suggest that carelessness might give some people a chance to become ambitious, such people are described by the community as having bad nature, so when they are given a permission to do something they cross the limit, which means crossing the norms and the rule of the given job, sometimes they called as people with no 'origin'.

Context: here is used when someone is trusted to something but he/she ignores that and starts to do bad things.

ما جودة من خادم

ma juawdah min khadem.

Goodness is not the nature of slaves.

Context: this proverb says that goodness should not be expected from slaves as good values do not exist in their race.

This proverb reflects the bad behavior a slave has and he/she is not to be trusted. Perhaps, it also reflects the mutual distrust between *khadems* and slave owners.

رجعه ذي بها بي

raja'ah thi biha bi

The wound of the princess is cauterized on the maid.

Context: People use the proverb here when a person of high status deserves to be punished, but cannot be punished due to their social status; others in a lower status take the blame instead.

فوق المسكينة يا عون الله

fawq almiskeenah ya a'wn alah.

The anger with the wife from a noble origin is let out on the maid

Like the above similarly comments that if a man has two wives, the one of lower status will be blamed for the mistakes of the one of higher status. and the people or the relatives may criticize the husband using another proverb as if they questioning him, thus: *jaded jaded qubeh qwl bali* (getting new doesn't mean to throw the old)

يا لابس ثياب الناس كنك عاري

yaa labis thiab alnass kinak a'ri

A borrowed cloth will not last for the servant with a big mouth.

Yemenis use here to mean that it is not good to show off. It is so good to appear as you are. If one pretends to be something, he/she sooner to lose his/her trust by others. Thus, because a maid

is poor she does not have good clothes, so she might borrow some, but soon she will have to return them and keep her ragged clothes, and so if she started boasting in them, she will get loss of face. This proverb in some situations like when poor people receive *hasana* (welfare) from rich one, other people may use this proverb to muck or make fun of them, so poor people stop wearing clothes that they don't buy them by themselves.

ما يساوى شعرة في رأسي

maysawi sha'rah fi rasi

He is not worth a hair in my head.

This is used by Yemenis to mean that some people are so worthless in terms of their origins and that they are inferior.

كله اخضر و كل اخضر بصل

kuleh akhadhr, wakul a khaddar basal

Everything is green and everything is green onion.

This proverb is used when people do not value valuable things. It comments on a person's ignorance of the value of something simply because it looks like something else invaluable, it goes beyond things to human being, that is people must take their own social place in everything as the say: *lukli maqam maqal* (measuring people is not with the same tool).

فوق كل ذي علم عليم

fawq kul thi a'lmun a'leem

I have a master, but my master has one too.

This might reflect a class system in showing that everyone has someone who oversees his actions. In fact, this proverb is derived from the Holy Qur'an. It is used to reflect the fact that whatever one knows is not the end of knowledge.

يحكمه أصله

yahkumuh asluh

A person's behavior is determined by his origin.

This proverb shows that caste cannot be hidden. In fact, and as far as Yemeni culture is concerned, blood and upbringing are believed to influence character. This proverb suggests that a person's behavior reflects how well or bad his origin is, even if this person tries to hide his origin. This can be taken as an indication of the importance Yemenis give to a person's origin. It also bears witness to various kinds of social inequality in Yemen: no matter how good a person's behavior may be, this person is looked upon if his origin proves to be inferior. On the other side, it is believed that a person with good origin is not expected to commit menial whims.

3.2.5 Education

Educational and Moral Principles

This section examines the meaning and use of selected proverbs to explain their role as seen by Yemenis as a means to educate and discipline children and youth. Other examples can be found in the (App. I) According to the paremiologist Wolfgang Mieder (2004), proverbs have been used and should be used in teaching as didactic tools because of their content of educational wisdom. Mieder says that "since they belong to the common knowledge of basically all native speakers, they are indeed very effective devices to communicate wisdom and knowledge about human nature and the world at large" (p. 146). When it comes to foreign language learning, proverbs play a role in the teaching as a part of cultural and metaphorical learning. Mieder also claims that the use of proverbs in the teaching of English as a second or foreign language is important for the learners' ability to communicate effectively. He suggests that the proverbs

which ought to be taught are the proverbs that are used today and are a part of the Anglo-American paremiological minimum (see 4.2). Mieder also states that “textbooks on both the teaching of native and foreign languages usually include at least some lists of proverbs and accompanying exercises” (p.147). If proverbs are important, as the paremiologists claim, in cultural learning and metaphorical understanding, and for the development of effective communicative skills, then we may assume that they should be a part of the material teaching in Yemen and have a place in the textbooks in Arabic first then in English. Education is most often seen as a technical exercise. Objectives are set, a plan drawn up, and then applied, the outcomes (products) measured. It is the work of two American writers Franklin Bobbitt (1918; 1928) and Ralph W. Tyler (1949) that dominates theory and practice within this tradition. In *The Curriculum* Bobbitt writes:

The central theory [of curriculum] is simple. Human life, however varied, consists in the performance of specific activities. Education that prepares for life is one that prepares definitely and adequately for these specific activities. However numerous and diverse they may be for any social class they can be discovered. This requires only that one go out into the world of affairs and discover the particulars of which their affairs consist. These will show the abilities, attitudes, habits, appreciations and forms of knowledge that men need. These will be the objectives of the curriculum. They will be numerous, definite and particularized. The curriculum will then be that series of experiences which children and youth must have by way of obtaining those objectives. (1918: 42)

Education was not important in its own right for Bobbitt. Its value lay in the preparation it offered children for their lives as adults. Second, his so-called scientific approach to curriculum-making served as a precedent for the work of numerous educators. It was a method that became and has remained the conventional wisdom among American educators concerning the process of curriculum development. Some of the American informants elaborated the issue willingly to have more education based on culture and individuals of all society. Curriculum which is not being from all, about all and for all, will remain incomplete to serve the society better. Emily Stafford agreed completely with the Yemeni proverb in translation '*Each country should be built by its own stones*' which conveys the policy of education in this context saying: "culture is very important to education within a country. Each place or country has its own identity and it would be best to be taught from someone that understands all aspects of the students. This would include their culture through curriculum and teaching by one from the same culture. Having a teacher from outside your culture, from personal experience, only causes confusion because they have different ways of looking at things, same thing it goes to the curriculum" This insinuation to education theories, as well as the quotation at the beginning of the introduction, implies the researcher's desire, based on objective reasons, that proverbs be taught in schools and universities and incorporated in their curricula. This is because without integration of proverbs in teaching, a very important part of culture and its representation is missed: it will be as if '*Dha'a aljamal bima hamal*' (the camel has been lost along with its load).

Some Yemeni proverbs which can be heard regularly, and from old people during the fieldwork (in Aden for a month) concerning education and the current situation of the curriculum in the country, points to the fact that the people are not satisfied with the output of the learning process through its educational institutions. They express their feelings and attitudes during and

at the end of the conversation by employing proverbs such as: '*Hatha Almaydan ya humydan*', (implying that anyone who doubts should go to the schools and find out what is going on!), '*Qasduh ba albawleh, yaqra walla la qira*', (a teacher cares about his salary, not about the students), '*Yadkhuleen min ethen wa yakhrwjyn min al thaniah*' (what is entering one ear is easily going out through the other) – similar to the American proverb, 'Easy come easy go'.

In Yemen, most people's impression about the school curriculum and its output is only stark disappointment. According to them, school curricula in Yemen are "imported" and so not reflect the culture and true needs of the society. For them, this is the main reason why most pupils '*Dakhal Zari'a wa kharaj Zari'a*' (Zari'a is one of the terms for bull), i.e. come out of schools without real intellectual improvement. They use the term '*Zari'a*' for those who do not show any development or change of behavior even after educating them.

The American disappointment is there, but it does with 'institutionalized the truth', as it has been expressed by one of my informants, Shahani Salcedo says: "The American curriculums (in California) hold a very strong nationalistic, *not* cultural tendency. American culture doesn't exist; it is an ambivalent, rootless society with no historical roots with only superficial unity based on politics and forcibly on-going issues that are *not* even of American nature. America is the epitome of conformism, most would say the nation promotes individuality, but this is rather far from the institutionalized truth. The level of nationalism that exists in the social-cultural existence of America is engraved in the media, work system and the systematic social cooperation in schools and civil societies to/in the nation." (see App. G for details)

People encounter and learn about proverbs mainly through their contacts with the family and members of the society. Apart from that, little else is obtained. For this reason, schools should try to activate their roles properly as institutions of cultivating a society's culture in such

a way as to respond to its true characteristics and needs. Moreover, the role of the family should be extended as to guarantee proper collaboration with the society and school for this objective to be realized. All should come together to encourage the child's creativity and comprehension skills.

This idea is supported by the well-known curriculum theorist John Dewey, who lived from the mid-1800s to 1952. He believed in learning through discovery and life experiences. He thought the most valuable lessons were interdisciplinary, and children should have a values-based, active education. The teacher's role was to encourage problem-solving and critical thinking. In *My Pedagogic Creed* (1897: 77-80), he wrote:

I believe that the question of method is ultimately reducible to the question of the order of development of the child's powers and interests. The law for presenting and treating material is the law implicit within the child's own nature.

Some of us are concerned about diminishing moral values and the growing intolerance among communities, tribes and groups that make up the nation. What is discouraging is the sad reality that spread of education in the country has made no serious change in this regard. In fact, there are at least some of us who suspect that the automatic education provided through our schools may have, to some extent, contributed to this painful situation. One of the informants describes the pupils as memorizing things without realizing their meanings like the parrot '*Mithl albabgha*'.

School education relies almost exclusively on predetermined sets of 'competencies' to be acquired through rote learning, thereby denying our children opportunities to exercise their innate thinking capabilities and their individual creativity. The classroom pedagogy deprives them opportunities to learn in a collaborative, reflective manner that would have at least helped

them acquire basic social skills. An imported educational system has contributed to a mad rush for ‘ranks’, ‘seats’ and ‘jobs’, etc. making one wonder whether people have, at some point in time, lost sight of the real objectives of education as well as the need of the society, i.e., when there was a good relation, at different times, with U.K, Soviet Union, East Germany, or even with Egypt and Sudan, their *Manahij (curricula)* were just taken and provided to people under the name of *Manahij Wazarat Altarbyah wa Alta’aleem* (curricula of the Yemeni Ministry of Education). The situation can be described as ‘*Ya labis thyaab al naas sawa wa anta ‘ari*’ (He who is wearing others’ clothes is as if naked). People are bothered about the declining awareness among children about their own cultural background.

Another cause for concern is the fact that education is looked upon by marginalized sections of the society if not the totality of it, as given by the previous proverb, as the means to get ‘cultured’ in order to ‘get out of the rut’. Literacy, while opening up the entire world to these sections may also alienate them from their basic cultural strengths. Children must recognize the strengths of their own cultures and needs so as to build up on those.

Educating and disciplining children are considered by Yemeni parents to be among the most difficult duties that face any family. They express their worries about the difficulties of bringing up children in their proverbs, for example:

من أعول تكعول

man a’awal taq’awal

It is easy to give birth to a baby, but it is difficult discipline him/her up.

This is a vivid example that Yemeni social structure makes the educational process a general responsibility for all members of the society. A neighbor, a friend, or a relative can discipline the child or even punish him/her without consulting the parents. Sometimes, however, parents are

blamed of failing to bring up their children correctly if their children misbehave.

Context: People may use the above proverb to comment that parents failed to discipline their children, or a parent may use it for social control, to blame his child if he does not appreciate his parents' effort to train him.

العصي لمن عصى

ala'sa leman a'sa

Use a stick for the child who doesn't obey (teacher, or parent).

Teachers hold great responsibilities for disciplining children. A.M, a Yemeni school's manager, commented that although physical punishment is considered a criminal offence in the eye of the law nowadays, some parents still advise their children's teacher to punish them when they take them to school using this old proverb.

Context: used to give teachers permission to punish their students if they fail their duties.

العلم في الصغر كالنقش في الحجر

al'ilm fi als'ighar kalnaqashi fi alh'ajar

Learning at young age is like sculpturing a stone.

What a child acquires when he is young will not be easy to forget. It will remain in memory like inscriptions on a stone.

Context: used to let the parents understand that they should start their duty to train their children at an early age. A parent may use the proverb to encourage his child to learn.

من له طبيعة بالبدن ما تروح إلا بالكفن

men lah tabi'ah bi albadan ma truh ela bilkafan.

Some habits remain life-long.

This proverb is used to indicate that a habit cannot be easily got rid of. It will last up to death.

Context: used for social control to encourage parents to teach their children good manners, and also sarcastically to accuse a person who has grown up with bad habits.

اشبع ولدك و أحسن ادبه

eshbe'a waladak wahsen adhaboh

Feed your son properly and discipline him.

This proverb is used as advice. Yemenis use it to indicate that it is the parents' duty to feed their children properly and at the same time they have to discipline them. One has to look after one's child by supporting him with good food and accommodation, but the most important thing is to teach him good morals and to discipline him.

Context: If a parent lets his child behave badly especially when visitors are around, a relative may use this proverb to encourage the parents to educate their children and to teach them good behavior at an early stage in their life.

كثر الصنع تنجى من الفقر

kuther alsinaa tinji min alfiqer

Many skills keep poverty away.

The proverb states that it is the parents' duty to teach their children and to educate them in order to prepare them to lead a right life. Knowledge is the most important factor to build good character, and to attain wealth and money by various honest ways.

Context: This proverb may be used to encourage people to pay attention to teach their children as many skills as possible so that the children can avoid poverty when they grow up.

الصدق نجى محمد

alsedhq naja Mohammed.

Telling truth saved Mohammed

This proverb warns against lying and encourages children and the youth to tell the truth no matter what. It originated from the story of the Prophet and how honesty saved him despite the many hazards and attempts at his life. Thus, such a proverb is said when people want to pinpoint the value of telling the truth which once saved our Prophet.

من تصبح بالكذب ما تعشى به

min tasabaha bil kathb ma ta'asha bih

He who gains breakfast by lying cannot gain supper.

The context in which it is used is to warn children not to lie. In fact, it is better to tell the truth even if you will be punished, for telling lies will not save you anyway. It warns that lying will not save a person from the consequences of trouble. It also encourages that one should be honest in all cases. Thus, this proverb is used when people intend to warn people against telling lies. In that, if one tells a lie to save him/her from punishment, this safety will not last long.

الصراحة راحة

assaraha rahaa

Frankness is comfort.

Like the above proverbs, this proverb indicates that one of the main values in disciplining children is to train the child at a very early age to be frank. Frankness brings comfort. Parents and grandparents may draw a fearful image about the consequences of lying: a liar is a person hated by God and people. Telling truth is described as light, and being a faithful person is a virtue that helps the person to live a right life.

Context: used to educate by encouraging people to avoid lying.

الضحك بلا سبب قله أدب

athehq bela sabab qillat adab

Laughing without reason is indecent.

As there are many reasons for laughing, such as happiness, jokes, pranks or surprise, this proverb advises that a person should not laugh without a reason. However, if laughter happens without reason, it is an indication of misbehavior.

ابعد عن الشر و غنى له

aba'id a'an alsharr wa ghanilo

Keep away from evil and sing for it.

This proverb means that one should avoid troubles in order to live safely. At the same time, the metaphor of singing here implies that sometimes troubles are so pending that one cannot avoid them, in the case of which one should try to make the minimum contact with them. This situation is like the snake charmer, and how he avoids evil by diverting its attention.

Context: People use it to warn against bad company and troublemakers.

ما حك جلدك مثل ظفرك

ma h'aka jildak mithil dhifrak

Nothing scratches your itchy skin better than your own fingernail.

This proverb draws attention to a very important fact that if one wants a job well-done, one should do it by oneself, and not depend on others. Here, there is an implication that especially personal affairs should be attended to by the person concerned as he or she is the best one to do it.

Context: It is used to encourage self-reliance.

3.2.6 Goals, Morality and Values

عذر أقبح من ذنب

'uther aqbah min thanb

An excuse that is worse than a sin.

This proverb is used to indicate a justification for a wrongdoing and the justification itself is so silly that it would have been better not to give it. For instance, if one steals money from a pocket and claims that he found the jacket lying on the ground instead of feeling guilty or asking whose jacket it is.

Context: This proverb might be quoted to a person who gives an unacceptable excuse to justify his misdeed.

من جالس جالس

maan jaalas jaanas

He who stays with others will behave like them.

The moral lesson of this proverb is that a person should always keep a good company and avoid corrupt people. If one chooses bad company, he/she will be infected with bad traits.

Context: used to encourage people to choose good company and avoid bad ones.

الفتنه اشد من القتل

alfitnah ashadd min alqatl.

Dissension among people is worse than killing.

This proverb is derived from the Quran (Surah 2, Al-Baqarah, verse 191; “...for persecution is worse than slaughter...”. Verse 217 in the same chapter reads: “...tumult and oppression are worse than slaughter...”). The Arabic word *fitnah* can be translated as persecution, tumult, oppression, disbelief, discord, dissension, civil strife, injustice, seduction, trial and torment.

إذا صاحبك عسل خلى منه وسل

itha sahebak a'sal khali minah wasal.

If your friend is honey, do not have it all but keep some of it.

The proverb condemns those who take full advantage of their friends. It warns against greed and exploiting of friends. The moral of this proverb is that if one has a good friend, one must not exploit that friend.

ما حد يدخل من الطاقة

ma had yadkhul min alaaqah.

No one enters through the window.

The exact meaning of this metaphor is to deal with things directly and openly instead of seeking tricky or unclear ways.

Context: This proverb is used to encourage people to use direct means and proper channels to deal with different matters.

3.2.7 Respect and Behavior

In Yemen the elderly are respected whether they are relatives or not. They are considered as stores of wisdom and it is the social duty of everyone to show respect to them. It is unacceptable to argue with the elderly or talk to them in a loud voice.

من اكبر منك بيوم اعلم منك بسنه

min akbar mink ba yaum a'lam mink ba sanah.

He who is older than you by one day knows the year more than you do.

This proverb implies that seniority in age entails more experience. Thus, it is the duty of young people to listen to the suggestions made by elders.

Context: This proverb is used to encourage young people to listen to and make use of the experience of elders.

من علمني حرفا صرت له عبدا

man a'lamani harfan sirtu lahu a'bdan

He who taught me one letter, I'll become his slave (I am indebted to him).

Context: This proverb is used to urge people to respect teachers or anyone who might teach them. It stresses the gratitude one has to show to one's teachers.

الجنة تحت أقدام الأمهات

aljanah tih't aqdam alumahat

Paradise is under the feet of mothers.

Context: Derived from a tradition of the Prophet, this proverb is used to encourage sons and daughters to respect their mothers and to appreciate what they do for them.

3.2.8 Poverty and Wealth

Although money is a dividing line that shapes society, wealth and poverty are represented by Yemeni proverbs as changeable, transient states. A rich man should not rely on his wealth and forget to establish good relationships with others: A poor man should not be ashamed of poverty although he is represented by some proverbs as an isolated person. However, some proverbs ironically stress the schism between the rich and the poor: e.g. it is not advisable for a woman to marry a poor man or for a man to marry a poor man's daughter. In addition, a rich person gains many friends and people's respect, while a poor man may live in a contrary condition. Money is thus seen as a means to acquire friends and power. This section views poverty and wealth as reflected by Yemeni proverbs.

الحال من قلبه بقلبه

alhal min qalbah biqalbah

Man's condition changes over time.

This proverb is a philosophical statement of how one views life and its vicissitudes. The word *qalb* here is a pun: it may be taken to mean 'turn over' or 'change', and also can mean 'heart'. The preposition itself (→) allows of this circumlocutory function. If it is taken to mean the first case, then this is a statement warning of the transitory nature of wealth. Happiness will not last forever, nor will sadness. But if it is taken to mean the second case, the gist of the proverbs becomes more philosophical as it is taken to mean that happiness/sadness is what one feels inside. That is to say, riches and poverty are not the real causes of happiness, but what one feels inside.

Context: People use this proverb to comfort people in distress and to warn the rich not to count on their wealth, as conditions might change at any time.

كلنا فقراء إلى الله

kulina fuqara ela Allah

We are all poor (if compared to Allah's wealth).

This proverb aims at showing equality between all men, rich or poor. Whatever a rich man has, he is not richer than God (Who is seen as the Giver of all wealth). For this reason a poor man should not feel ashamed of poverty.

Context: This proverb is used to comfort poor people, and to reprimand rich people if they brag about their wealth.

قنع بالقليل يأتيك الكثير

qena'a ba alqaleel yateek alkatheer.

Be satisfied with the little you have, much more will come to you thereafter.

This proverb warns against greed. Satisfaction is not only seen here as a path to content and

happiness, but also as a means for more gains.

Context: used to tell people to maintain balance in character and nature.

حيث ترزقون لا حيث تخلقون

hyth tarzaqwn la hyth takhlaqwn

Live where your livelihood is not necessarily where you were born.

The proverb advises people to run after their livelihood no matter where it is. Contrary to the general trend of asking expatriates to come home, this proverb encourages people to lead their lives where they find abundance of wealth.

مفرح عياله و عاصبها بصلئه

mufrah a'yaluh wa a'sibha bi salah

Time passed with his kids, stomach empty.

It describes the situation of a poor person who does not have enough food for himself and his children. Therefore, he tells stories to his children to get them sleep.

Context: used to describe extreme poverty.

الفقر في الوطن غربه

alfiqar fi al watan ghurbah

Poverty at home is estrangement.

This proverb makes poverty equal to estrangement. A poor person suffers isolation even at home. There is similarity between being poor at home and being abroad looking for livelihood. A poor person might feel like a stranger in his own homeland, as most of the time poor people do not have so many friends.

طريق الأمان و لو مسيرة ثمان

tareeq alaman walu maseerat thaman.

Keep to the safe road even if the journey takes eight days.

This proverb is a warning against adventurous and unsecure methods of doing things, especially attaining wealth. Dubious ways and shortcuts may result in unthankful ends. Context: used to encourage people to be moderate and to follow the right path of doing things.

ما يدخل المبرع إلا سائر

ma yadkhul almbra' ela sater.

He who does not have strength and knowledge should not dance.

This proverb stipulates for knowledge of and ability to do things before one starts doing them. Otherwise, one should keep away, especially where a lot of people are involved in the activity or are watching (just like dancing). This is because it is considered a shameful act to start doing something and then fail in it. Therefore, one should calculate one's chances of success before starting any project.

Context: This proverb is sometimes used to mock a poor person for acting rich, or powerless people who pretend to have power.

الغبين الأول لمن زادت عليه الديون وغبين ثاني لمن قلت رجاله يهون وغبين ثالث لمن فارق كحيل العيون

Alghubn alawal liman zadat 'alaih addyoon

wa ghubn thani liman qallat rejaalah yehoon

wa ghubn thaalet liman faraq kaheel al'eyoon.

The first distress is the share of the man whose debts have increased;

The second distress is the share of the man whose tribesmen decreased, as he will be humiliated;

The third distress is the share of the man who has lost his beautiful woman.

This proverb is an extract from Ali wild Zayed's wise poetry. The first line shows how debts can

make a man's life miserable.

Context: Mostly, this proverb is used by people who are suffering from any of these causes of distress in the form of self-pity.

شمه ولا تطعمه

shumah wala tata'muh.

Smell it, but you will not taste it.

Apparently, this proverb hints at the how poor people can smell good food but are unable to have it. But it can be generally used of anything that one may come close to but cannot have. Sometimes, one can console oneself by looking at a thing even if one cannot obtain it.

Context: It can be used to describe how the destitute have to console themselves only by looking at things. It can also be used as a manner of mocking or challenging someone to have something beyond their reach.

ما يجد حق الكفن

ma yajid haq alkafan

He does not even have money for the coffin.

This proverb is used to describe the extreme limit of poverty. Money for the coffin comes before money for food, because it is a shame not to be able to buy a coffin for some relative who just died.

Context: This proverb is used in terms of commiseration with people who are extremely poor; it is an invitation to help them.

من أكل ولم يحسب فقر ولم يدري

maan akala walam yahsop faqera walam yadhri.

He who eats without counting becomes poor without knowing.

This proverb encourages people to be thrifty. One has to be economical in his/her expenses. Used by ordinary Yemenis, it describes people who waste money and food. Squandering is culturally as well as religiously denounced.

Context: This proverb is used to encourage people to avoid waste and to be moderate in their life-style.

حق الحرمة للظلمه

hak alharama la aldhalamah

The wealth hoarded by misers shall be spent by careless people.

This proverb dissuades people from accumulating wealth in a stingy manner since the wealth accumulated will be spent one way or another, either in the form of inheritance (by careless heirs who did not toil for the money) or by people who may take it forcibly.

Context: This proverb upholds moderateness of living, and encourages people from being misers.

مال تجزع من تحته ربح ما هو مال

Mall tegza'a min tehtah reeh mahoh mall.

Wealth which cannot stand wind is not wealth.

This proverb encourages people to invest in reliable sources of wealth. Wealth which is prone to end fast is not reliable since rainy days may come at any moment.

Context: Used to point out that people should establish good relationships with lands and others and not rely only on material wealth.

إلي ما بيدك يهدك

Eli ma byadduk ya hidduk.

What is out of your hands can destroy you.

Since asking for loans is sometimes a source of humiliation, this proverb comes as a kind of

confirmation that at times when a person is in need of something he does not have, the failure to have this thing can cause a person's destruction or humiliation (which is equal to destruction).

Most of the time, the thing indicated by this proverb is money or any worldly material.

Context: This proverb is used to show the bitterness of need.

القرش يلعب بحمران العيون

alqirsh yala'b bi humran ala'ywn.

Money changes the hearts of brave men.

This proverb shows the effect of money, so dangerous that even brave men can change their loyalties.

Context: it is used often ironically to say that even brave men can fall prey to money.

هي اللسان لمن أراد فصاحة و هي السلاح لمن أراد قتالا

hia allisan liman arada fasahtan wa hia asselahu liman arada qetaala.

Wealth endows a man with a voluble tongue to speak with and a weapon to fight with.

This proverb implies that wealthy men are always listened to and obeyed, are always win, even if they are not worthy. Strength of character and body are measured here by wealth.

Context: This is used ironically to hint at a fool rich person who is able to have things done using his wealth and not his abilities.

بمالي و لا بعيالي

bimali wala bi a'ayali

(Let the mishap) strike my wealth, and not my children.

This proverb emphasizes that family comes first of all considerations in life. If a calamity falls, a person should first protect his family.

Context: People use this proverb to console a person if a calamity happens to him, e.g. if his son

made a car accident and the car got completely destroyed but the son escaped unhurt.

لا من الاوله و لا من الثانيه

la min lawala wala min althanyah.

Neither from the first one, nor from the second.

This proverb means that if a result of an action has not been obtained at the first try, it sometimes becomes futile to give it a second one. Again, it is also used to indicate the uselessness of both the options available, if there are only two options.

Context: People quote this proverb to describe a person as one who has wasted his life in this world and has done no good to be rewarded for in his afterlife.

ما حد يرجع بقدحه كسره

mahad yraja'a bi qadahuh kissrah

No one will respond to him, he is a poor man.

This proverb is ironic / sarcastic. Rich families are respected in their community; no one dares to talk negatively about them. People might hush up their mistakes and address it as misfortune, but the case will be different when it comes to the poor people, who would be punished and all family named and shamed. Even madness in a rich family would be concealed as bewitchment. Again the poor will be declared a mad person and not given a chance for treatment or help, prison is the only option.

Context: used to condemn favoritism toward the rich and injustice towards the poor.

ما يصلى إلا يربح

ma yasali ela yarbah.

He prays for profit.

This is an ironical statement of those who assume religious piety to make money. Context: It is used to ironically describe people who stop at nothing to obtain wealth, even through hypocrisy.

العين بصيرة و اليد قصيرة

ala'een baseerah wa alyad qaseerah

The eye can see, but the hand cannot reach.

This proverb means that anything whatever its value becomes a problem for you if you do not have the means to possess it.

Context: This proverb is used to justify inability to do something because of poverty or lack of means.

ذي خلقه رزقه

thi khalaqah razaqah

The One who created him will feed him.

This proverb assures people of the divine scheme of things with regard to livelihood. Since God creates a person, God is generous enough to take care of the livelihood of this person. Therefore, this person must not worry about food. In fact, Yemenis believe that only God arranges their means of living. A poor person should not feel sad because he has limited means of subsistence.

Context: used to comfort the poor, or to show their own content with what they have.

الحاصل كثير

alhasil katheer

What is in hand is more than enough.

This proverb encourages a person to value the thing he has even if it looks insufficient or little.

The meaning is: be content with what one has.

Context: used to tell people to adjust their ends with the available means, and not become

greedy.

3.2.9 General Attitudes towards Life

ما تعسر ده الرجال

ma ata'saar duh alrigaal.

What is difficult, share it with others.

This proverb stresses the importance of cooperation and loyalty between men. If a person has a problem which he cannot solve by himself, he should then ask other fellowmen to help.

Context: used to advise someone to share his big troubles with his fellowmen, especially if this person is unable to solve the problems by himself.

من عقله برأسه يعرف خلاصه

min aqluh bi rasuh yaraf khlasuh.

He who makes a decision, knows how to make himself safe.

This proverb indicates that everyone is responsible for their own decisions. Any troubles ensuing from a person's decision are the sole responsibility of that person, and this person has to arrange for by himself to overcome the problems he has created.

Context: used to warn someone that if there are likely problems of an action he intends to do, then this person has to overcome these problems and should not expect help from others.

من صبر ظفر

min sabar dhafar

He who is patient enough will win.

This proverb confirms the value of patience while doing something. In this proverb people prefer patience to hasty decisions since patience entails reward for endurance.

Context: used to tell people to persevere even if they are initially unsuccessful. Although there is bitterness in patience, patience will not finally bring its fruits.

لا كان في شمس كانه أمس

la kan fi shams kanah ams.

If there was an action, it should be yesterday not tomorrow.

The proverb here indicates that a person may promise to do something many times, but not fulfill his promise. For example, a politician promises that he would build a school before the beginning of the next year. Time passes, but he does not do anything and still expects his people to vote for him in the next election. One of his people, perhaps a friend, could use this proverb to remind him that he should do what he promises.

Context: used in general to encourage people to turn their words into actions.

إذا صاحبي راضى ايش دخل القاضي

itha sahby radhi aish dhakhel alqadhi.

If my friend is satisfied, why then the Judge is interfering!

If one who is concerned about a given matter is quite happy with what is going on, why should other people want to argue and make problems? This rhetorical question is used to tell people not to interfere with the business of other people if they are satisfied with the way it is.

Context: it is used to condemn those who interfere in others' affairs without being asked to, especially if the people concerned are content with the way things are.

الحقيقة مرّة

alhaqiqah murrah.

Truth is bitter.

This proverb expresses a philosophical attitude towards truth. In fact, to tell the truth is

sometimes a bitter experience especially if it causes emotional and psychological pain.

Context: it is used to indicate that it is better to say the truth or accept the truth of the matter even if this creates to pain.

يد ما تقدر تكسره بوسه

yad ma taqder teksirih bosih.

Kiss the hand which you cannot break.

This proverb is mostly used in Taiz. Another equivalent proverb in Thamar says: “Kiss the face that you cannot slap”. It means that one should not attempt to inflict pain on those who are either stronger than him, or are loved ones because in both cases damage will be reverted.

Context: it is used either for people who are in low positions and try to criticize and inflict pain on people in a higher position, because such people may retaliate. Or, it is used to advise a person not to harm people that he loves, because by hurting them this person is hurting himself.

ساعة لربك و ساعة لقلبك

sa'a le rabak wa sa'ah le qalbak.

One hour for God and another for heart.

This proverb acclaims moderateness in everything even in religious matters. That is, a person should of course pray for a while, but after that he should enjoy himself.

Context: used to tell that a good balance should be maintained in life and mind.

ما على الرسول إلا البلاغ

Ma 'ala alrasool ela albalagh.

The duty of the messenger is only to convey the message.

Derived from the Quran, *Surah 5*, “*Al-Ma'dah*, verse 99”, this proverb indicates that a messenger's job ends by conveying the message, whether good or bad, and he has no other

responsibilities thereafter.

Context: used to either remind people to treat messengers nicely, or to indicate that the responsibility is now on the shoulders of the person who has received the message.

ما فات مات

ma fat mat

What has passed is dead. (Let bygones be bygones.)

This proverb tells people to leave the past and deal with the present and future prospects, i.e. to confirm that ‘it is not use crying over spilt milk’, or ‘let’s start a new slate’. Context: a proposal to wrap up differences and start anew, or to forget the past troubles and think of the present. It also counsels that one should not waste time thinking about the past but just forgive and forget.

الوعد كالرعد و الإيفاء كالمنطر

alwa’d al-kaalra’d wa al-eifaa’o kalmatari.

A promise is like a thunder, and fulfillment like rain.

This proverb accentuates the importance of fulfilling promises. The sound of a promise is compared to thunder, a herald of rain. The word *wa’d* ‘promise’ relates to two concepts here: a promise to give/do something, and a promise to be present at an appointment. When people give their word, they have to keep it. Yemenis do emphasize the importance of fulfilling a promise as an obligation. Although Yemenis do not pay much attention to timekeeping, they are known to honor their word, especially in things like tribal matters or problem solving.

Context: it is used to remind people to keep their promises or not promise at all.

يوم لك و يوم عليك و يوم لا لك و لا عليك

yawmn luk wa yawmn a’leak wa yawmn la luk wala a’leak.

One day is for you, another is against you, and one day neither for you nor against you.

Another philosophical truth is expressed here, the point of this proverb is that life changes between happiness and sadness or in between.

Context: it is said when a person uses his power against the poor, to remind that his power may not last long and he might be in the same condition someday.

كلما ضاقت انفرجت

kulmaa dhaaqat anfragat

Whenever it comes to a cul-de-sac, a new opening appears.

This proverb means that every difficult situation has an end. Even if there seems no hope at all, a solution will soon appear.

Context: it is used to encourage people to be patient and never lose hope at difficult times.

من بعد عيني لا نامت عين

min ba'd a'yni la naamat a'yen.

After my life, who cares about others?

This proverb may seem selfish but declares that people prefer themselves to others, especially in difficult situations, like in a situation where a person has to save himself first before he thinks about them.

Context: people may use this proverb to say that it is natural to consider themselves first.

القشة ذي قصمت ظهر البعير

al qashaah thi qasamaah dhahr albaa'yeer.

The (last) straw that broke the camel's back.

This proverb seems to have been literally adopted in the Anglo-Saxon culture. It is Arabic in origin, since camels occupy a more prominent place in Arab culture than in the Anglo-Saxon one. This proverb stands as evidence for cross-cultural interaction in terms of proverbs. Literally,

the proverb indicates that the load of a camel had been so heavy that adding one straw broke the camel's back. The metaphorical extension of the proverb implies the end of self-containing or the end of endurance and patience due to accumulative pressure followed mostly by a petty thing. The ensuing burst is not due to this petty thing but rather due to the accumulated grievances.

Context: this proverb is used when there are many causes for a given problem so when another cause, often petty in nature, is added, the emotional explosion or crisis is often mistakenly attributed to the petty cause.

قتلته الدنيا

qatalatah aldonia

Life is killing him.

A Quranic text but commonly used all over the country, this proverb is used to encourage people to take things easy. The people who run in the course of life too hard are said to be “killed by life”, for death is the end of it all. This proverb emphasizes the fact that life does not last forever, so it is better to deal with life's needs and problems in a reasonable way.

Context: This proverb is used as a reminder for people not to take things too hard, but rather in a moderate way.

ليلة العيد تعرف من ليلتها

laylat alqade turaf min leiletha

The day of Eid is known by the preceding night.

Literally, this proverb indicates that Arabs use the lunar calendar to determine the date, and that the day of Eid is determined by the night before (i.e. by sighting the moon). This proverb is mainly used by farmers to indicate their hopes or lack of hope as to whether rain is going to fall

or not, as predicted from apparent weather prognostic signs.

In context, this proverb is used as a metaphor in any situation where you can predict the endings by signs and give a conclusion.

الخط يعرف من عنوانه

alkhat ywraf min anwanuh

A letter's address shows its content.

The address of a letter reveals its contents.

This proverb maintains that one can know the content of a message right from its address. That is to say, the address of the message gives clues as to what the message is all about. The word 'address' here implies not only the locative address of the message, but also the manner of addressing the addressee, i.e. whether polite, impolite, formal, informal, etc.

Context: this proverb is said when there is something good or bad which can be predicted from initial signs.

من كل حدب و صوب

min kul hadbn wa sawp

From every direction.

This proverb is generally used to describe the manner of advent of, say, problems, fighting soldiers, helping friends, etc. These come in huge numbers, and from every direction, that the one who is beset with them does not know any more which one to deal with first.

Context: used to express frustration, especially at difficult times, when there are so many problems to deal with. Also it can be, to a limited extent, used to describe a lot of good things coming or happening at once.

اعمل خير و أرمي في البحر

ea'mal khayar wa armi feeh albaher

Do a favor and throw it into the sea.

This proverb advises people to do favors even for those who do not deserve them, and not expect anything in return.

Context: it is used to encourage people to do good deeds to others no matter what, and not to expect rewards for their good deeds.

دنيا غرارة مكاراة

dunia gharrarah makkarah

Life is deceitful and canny.

This proverb states people's distrust in the vicissitudes of life. One should be aware that bad times may occur at any moment in life, unexpectedly.

Context: it is used express commiseration and disappointment due to unexpected mishap in life.

مثل مال اليتيم

mithl maal alyateem

(Forbidden) like an orphan's wealth.

In Yemeni culture, when a father dies a child's next of kin looks after her/him. The dead father's money or any wealth should be kept safe until the child comes of age and becomes able to deal with his own affairs. A person who misuses an orphans' money will be criticized by his people and it is believed that he might lose his health and wealth as a consequences to misusing the religiously and culturally forbidden wealth of the orphans.

Context: people use this proverb to describe difficulties that they might face when they are doing a task. People also quote this proverb when a meal is too hot to eat.

3.2.10 Time in Man's Condition

كل تأخيره و فيها خيرة .

kul takheerah wa fiha kheerah

In everything that is late, there is good.

The proverb describes that things that come late are good. It is used in a situation when a person delays doing something because he cannot find time or is unable to do it on time. He or a second party might quote this proverb for comfort. Also used to emphasize that God has arranged a time for everything and no one can change the time when things have to happen.

ما احد عليها مخلد

maa ahad aliha mutkhaled

Nobody in this world stays forever.

This proverb accentuates the transitory nature of life. No human is immortal in life. It expresses an outlook, emphasizing the fact that nothing will last forever and all people are subject to death, while time moves on relentlessly. It is used to point out that human actions are often futile as death is waiting on the other extreme point of the line, and therefore one has to be good to others and has to maintain honesty in everything.

Context: this proverb is used to warn people not to follow dubious ways in collecting worldly possessions, and to live a moderate life and avoid the thought that whatever they have will last forever.

رباه الوقت

rabaah alwaqt

He has been disciplined by time.

One who has no manners and does not accept discipline from others will be disciplined by time

in the sense that many thing in life will come and will discipline him/her because he/she will eventually face difficulties that compel him to respect others or because he/she is getting older and has to learn to behave as he matures.

Context: it is used to describe someone who has faced a lot of difficulties in life that he is now in a submissive mood of living. It can also be used of someone who is so wild in nature that people are unable to discipline him, and people believe that life's problems will guarantee to discipline him.

3.2.11 Belief and Religion

Religion is an important part of the Yemeni cultural system which has an indelible imprint on every Yemeni's personality. People use some phrases from the Quran as proverbs. Al-Hamdani (1983) has mentioned that the wide circulation of religious sayings among the people has given them the characteristics of proverbial wisdom. Many of the Prophet's sayings are used as proverbs as well. In his work, *The Prophetic Proverbs* (1981), Al-Hamdani has dealt in some detail with some of the proverbs derived from the Prophet's sayings. People believe in Allah as the One Creator of the world and Life-Provider for people and all things, so no matter how many children parents have, Allah will look after them and no one needs to worry about how to arrange for their upkeep. Business, daily behavior, relationships between individuals and the society are governed by religious rules. As far as the Yemeni mentality is concerned, trust in Allah and praising Him are essential rules for living a comfortable satisfactory life. The following proverbs illustrate this belief:

اسعي يا عبدي و أنا الرزاق

asaa ya a'abdi wana alrazaaq.

You seek, and I Am the Giver.

This proverb is seen as if God were speaking directly to man. That is, man's duty is to run after earning his upkeep, and God will make it easy for man to earn it. This proverb has some similarity in connotation with the English proverb: God helps those who help themselves.

Context: this proverb is mostly used by parents to encourage their children to work and not worry about lack of prospects.

من اعترف بذنبه فلا ذنب عليه

maan a'taraf bi thanbounh fala thanbun a'lyeh.

He who confesses his sin is exempted from the punishment.

This proverb is used to encourage people to confess their sins, wrongdoings and mistakes. Culturally speaking, if someone confesses, people tend to forgive him no matter what the mistake is, especially if someone else has been affected, and nobody knows who the culprit was. Confession here is considered as a gesture of regret, bravery and honesty and should be rewarded by forgiveness.

Context: used to encourage the culprit to confess, or the affected to forgive.

لا إكراه في الدين

la ikrah fi aldeen

No compulsion in religion.

This phrase is originally derived from the Quran, *Surah 2, Al Baqara*, verse 256 which reads: "Let there be no compulsion in religion: Truth stands out clear from error..." This proverb means that religion, belief or conscience is a private matter. Religion must not be imposed by force.

Context: it is used to encourage people to leave others to decide and choose what they think is

good for themselves in general.

ارحموا من في الأرض يرحمكم من في السماء

arhamu man fi alardh yarhmukum man fi alsama

Pay mercy to those on earth so you shall receive mercy from those in Heaven.

This proverb encourages people to be merciful to everyone on earth, to look after the poor and the weak. The belief is that any act of mercy is always rewarded by Allah either in life or in the afterlife.

Context: People use this proverb to encourage the powerful and wealthy to help the poor and advise all people to be considerate to each other.

كل شاه معلقه لأذنها

Kul shah moalaqah la ethnaha.

Every sheep shall be hung by its hamstring.

This proverb is a pastoral metaphor indicating that only the perpetrator of a crime should be punished, and no one else should be punished for someone else's crime. It is only the responsibility of a person to bear his/her deeds whether good or bad and no one is to be blamed for the deeds of others.

Context: used by someone to denounce his responsibility of a crime and his insistence that the true culprit be punished.

نصيبك يصيبك

nasibak yaseebak.

Your fate will hit you.

This proverb reflects the belief in determinism. People believe that whatever has been decided for a person by God will come no matter what this person tries to escape. Whether fate implies

good things or unfortunate things, people cannot escape it. No one can gain more than what has been decided for him by God; and no trouble shall befall someone unless it has been decided by God, too.

Context: People use this proverb either to encourage someone about to take an adventure, or to console someone who already has fallen into trouble.

كل لقمه لأكلها

kul luqmah liakaliha

Each morsel is meant for a certain eater.

This proverb implies that anything one gets in your life has already been arranged by God. With the belief that Allah has arranged the share of everyone in life, people think that whatever has been decided to be the share of someone will be obtained by him/her, and will never be obtained by someone else.

Context: It is used to comfort people when they lose fortune or wealth, and to assure people that if something is meant for them to have, they then will have it.

إذا جاء القدر ما منه مفر

ida jaa alqaddar ma minah mafar.

If fate comes, there is no escape from it.

This proverb reflects the belief of the majority of Yemenis, who are fatalists and believe that most of what occurs in their life is out of their hands and is because Allah (God) arranged it even before their creation. There is always a cautious question whether people have free will to plan for their lives or not, and some people apologize for making unavoidable mistakes using this proverb.

Context: one might use it to justify one's mistake, or others might quote it to console a person for

a fault.

3.2.12 Man as an Individual.

يدي في لقفه و صبعه في عيني

yadhy fi lakfoh wa sbaoh fi a'yni.

My hand is in his mouth and his finger is in my eye.

This proverb picturises two people, one is feeding the other, while the other is hurting the first one. It comments that sometimes harm can come from the people whom a person helps a lot. It is the exchange of favor not only with ingratitude but also with harm.

Context: people quote this when someone that they helped or did a favor for hurts them.

ما يخرجها من الملط إلا رجليها

maa yakhrijha min almalat ela rijileiha.

It is only by her legs that she can get out of the bog.

This proverb indicates that if someone got themselves into trouble, it is their sole responsibility to get themselves out of the trouble. They should depend on themselves to solve their own problems since they made such problems for themselves.

Context: The proverb warns to stay out of trouble, because if they make any mistake after the warning, nobody will help them out of their troubles.

يا جبل ما يهزك ريح

ya jabal ma yohzak reeh.

Oh Mountain, you will not be shaken by wind.

This figurative apostrophe is meant to make a person believe in himself and his own abilities to challenge and overcome obstacle. A mountain cannot be shaken by wind, and a strong person

cannot be hampered by petty shackles and hurdles. Such hurdles may often come in terms of criticism by others.

Context: it is used to encourage people to do what they want to do or think no matter what difficulties and criticism they may come across.

من قرصه بيد غيره مات معذب

min qursah byad gheirah mat mo'athab.

He whose loaf of bread in others' hands dies painfully.

The proverb comments that the person whose necessities are controlled by others will suffer a lot. If one loses the position of decision-making for oneself, one will remain controlled by others.

Context: it is used to advise people to be self-reliant and responsible.

هذا الفرس و هذا الميدان

hatha alfaras wa hath almeadan

Here is the horse and there is the arena.

This is a rural proverb based on historical stories about using horses in the battlefield or race arenas. Nowadays when one claims and insists that he will do something which others could not do or was extremely difficult or hazardous, people challenge him by saying this proverb.

Context: People use this proverb to mock a person who exaggerates his deeds or abilities.

الأمل طويل و الأجل قصير

alamal taweel wa alajal qaseer.

Hope is long and life is short.

This proverb comments of the irony of hope versus life. People keep nurturing hopes to achieve so many things in life, but are sometimes doomed with abrupt death.

Context: this proverb might be used to draw a person's attention to the fact that he should not try

too hard and should also prepare for the afterlife.

أصابعك ما هن سوا

assabak ma hun sawaa.

Your fingers are not all alike.

People use this proverb sometimes to point out that it is impossible and unfair to treat all people or things alike, because it is a heavenly wisdom that variety is intrinsic feature of everything on earth.

Context: used to encourage people to deal with different persons and different things in different ways. For instance, if one of the students in a class made a mistake, it is not fair to punish all students for that student's mistake. Again, somebody should not be good to all people as there are some people who should be treated harshly.

من أعول تكعول

man a'awal takawal.

He who has got kids is worried.

It states that a parent always treats his children with great kindness, worries when he is sick or away, spends everything and times to please them though some children's hearts are hard as a stone. They treat parents with coldness.

3.2.13 Friends and Neighbors

Yemenis have a strong belief in the proverb that says, "As a man is, so is his company" and have very strong opinions about the importance of this aspect in their social life. Therefore, they teach their children to be careful about the company they keep. A man knows his true friends only at

times of disasters and calamities because only true friends do stand by him/her. Older people and parents advise that one should forgive friends and not blame them for simple mistakes. Stressing the importance of being considerate to one's friends at all times, Yemeni culture condemns taking advantage of friends.

عمل له بكل قرية بيت

'amil lah bikul qaryah beyt.

He made a house in every village.

A house here is a metaphor for friends and people one can depend on wherever one goes. This proverb stresses the importance of having reliable friends as they can protect one just as a house does.

Context: used to encourage people to cultivate reliable friends in different places.

من جالس جالس

man galass ganass

He who sits with people becomes like them.

This proverb implies that bad manners are infectious. That is, Yemenis believe that one's company will affect one's behavior. There is also another proverb with the same conceptual meaning: (يقول علي ولد زايد من ساير الكير كير و إلا أمتلى من غباره), literally translated as 'Ali wild Zayed says, "He who accompanies blacksmith's forge will become like it, or at least covered by its black dust". In fact, this proverb can also be a valuable piece of advice to company only those who are good and who have good reputation.

عذر ولا حمار

a'ther walaw himar

An excuse or even a donkey.

Try to find a reason for the sake of your friend.

It advises us to excuse our friends. It also comments that one should try to avoid disagreeing with a friend for unnecessary reasons.

الطيور على أشكالها تقع

alttyoar a'la ashkaaliha taqa'

Birds of the same feather flock together. (Birds of feather flock together.)

This proverb is a very sophisticated piece of metaphor, rhyming in Arabic just as its equivalent in English, indicating that the people sharing the same characteristics normally keep each other's company. In fact, the figurative use of the word *alttyoar* (birds) implies people. Thus, a good person keeps company with good people, and vice versa a bad person chooses only bad people to stay with.

Context: it is used as a comment on the quality of friends a person keeps, often used pejoratively to hint at someone's company and how his/her company has affected this person's behavior.

من لقي أحبابه نسي أصحابه

min leqa ahababah nesaa as-habah

He who meets his loved ones forgets his friends.

In Yemeni culture, sometimes when a person meets his/her loved ones, s/he tends to forget his/her friends. This proverb is usually used sarcastically and jocularly to mock such a person.

Context: Normally friends use this proverb in a jocular manner, especially if they have not been seen for a while and the reason for absence is the existence of someone closer to one of the friends.

احذر من عدوك مرة و من صاحبك ألف مرة

ihthar min 'adoak marah wa min sahebuk alf marah.

Be aware of your enemy once but a thousand times of your friend.

This proverb gives a valuable piece of advice, implying that the pain caused by a friend's is much more severe than the pain caused by an enemy. Besides, it is only a person's friend who can know the weaknesses of this person. An enemy is a clear entity that one has to deal with, but an enemy in the guise of a friend is surely more harmful.

Context: used to point out that not all friends are good and honorable people, so one has to be selective of his friends and to put in his mind the possibility of a friend's betrayal.

الصاحب المخسر عدو مبين

als'ah'ib almukhsir a'dun mubiyeen.

The friend who causes losses for you is a clear enemy.

It is highly emphasized in Yemeni culture that the true friend is the one who shares your laughs and sighs, benefit and losses. Thus, this proverb bluntly states that if a friend causes damage to your life, manners, or reputation, you should consider him an enemy and not a friend.

Context: used to warn friends not to cause any losses, and also jocularly by a friend who wants to pay a share in a treat so that the other friends allows him to pay.

صاحبك و ربك لا تكذب عليهم

sahibak wa rabak la taktheb 'aleahum .

Never lie to your God and your friend.

This proverb stresses the importance of confidence between friends, which should be as transparent as one's relation with God.

Context: it is used as advice to emphasize the importance of trust and confidence in friendship.

صحبته الجيد كسويه

s'uhbat algeed kassobah .

A good friend is like good income.

Like the previous ones, this proverb describes and emphasizes friendship with someone good as wealth that is worth keeping. A good friend is similar to money for the rainy day.

Context: used by elders to advise young people to be careful in selecting their friends and to preserve good friends.

الرفيق قبل الطريق

alrafeeq qabel altareeq.

Choose the journey mate before you choose the road.

This proverb accentuates the significance of being careful in selecting one's friends before starting to befriend them. This is because wrong choice can spoil the 'journey', and the wrong friend can let one down at difficult times. Good friends try their best not to disappoint each other.

Context: used by elders to advise young people to be careful in selecting the friends who they are sure will stand by them at hard times.

Neighborhood Relationships:

This section is intended to include some proverbs which are specifically said in relation to neighborhood and the kind of relationships that have to be established among neighbors. In fact, some Yemeni proverbs view neighborhood relationships as more important than blood relationships. Both religion and cultural values encourage people to establish good relationships with neighbors and even to think about the type of neighbor before one starts to build or buy a house. It is common in Yemen that a neighbor might look after his neighbor's children and property when needed, shares pains and gains with neighbors.

الجار قبل الدار

aljar gabl aldar

Seek the neighbor before you get a house.

This proverb urges people to find a good neighbor before they plan to buy or rent a house. This is due to the belief that a good neighbor is a treasure that can help in difficult situations, while a bad one will always remain a lump in the throat and may even cause a lot of problems.

Context: it is used to emphasize the importance of neighbors' relationships, and to urge a person to leave a certain area if the neighbors are not good.

جارك القريب و لا أخوك البعيد

jarak alqareab wa la akhwk alba'id

A neighbor who is close is better than a brother who is far.

This proverb emphasizes the importance of good neighborhood. Here, if one has an emergency, the good neighbor will rush for help and reach faster than a far brother can.

The proverb elevates the position of a good neighbor, and reflects the importance of maintaining good relations with one's neighborhood.

Context: used between neighbors to indicate mutual respect.

أحفظ مالك و لا تخون جارك

ah'fat' malak wala takhawin jaarak

Secure your possessions and do not accuse your neighbors.

This proverb states that one has to respect neighborhood and not to suspect a neighbor. It gives advice that one should keep his possessions in a safe place instead of accusing neighbors in case of theft. This is a warning for people not to leave their valuable things out and then accuse their neighbors of taking them if they are stolen.

Context: used as one of the advices to maintain good neighborhood relations.

من صبر على الجار حصد الدار

man saabar 'ala algaar hassad alddaar

He who tolerates a neighbor's harm shall obtain the house.

The word 'house' here is a pun: it can be taken to mean the neighbor's house, or a place in the Heavens in the afterlife. People believe that if a person treats his neighbors in a bad way, Allah will forfeit him the house he has, and in the Islamic Shari'a the neighbor has the right to buy the house above all other people – the principle of *shof'ah*. In the other meaning, if a person tolerates his neighbor's harm, Allah will reward him with Heavens.

Context: used to encourage people to put up with their neighbors mistreatment.

3.2.14 Attitudes towards Men and Women

Yemeni society, patriarchic indeed, has a very diverse view of seeing women in society. This diversity arises mainly from the diverse cultures in Yemen and the changes that Yemeni society is going through. Women undoubtedly have a vital role in shaping the society, either by keeping traditions going or by applying the brakes on some of the traditions that are outdated. The society is also busy shaping the role women play and the appearance of women in society. However, the Yemeni society's traditions are firmly linked to its religions. The main religion is Islam. Often, women's position in Islam is misinterpreted. Procreation is considered the most important role of women; the failure to have children sometimes leads to divorce or to the husband having a second wife – polygamy (up to four wives) is permitted by religion and by law provided that the former wife (or wives) agree to the husband's wish to have a second (or third or fourth) wife. Therefore, culturally speaking, a woman without children is sometimes considered as a guest, for she might either leave the house (due to divorce) or stay without having any

authority there. Moreover, women in Yemen play the traditional role of bearing the family's domestic duties and any other duties that a woman might qualify herself to do. They have the role of keeping the cultural traditions alive through the generations. This is mainly passed on by grandmothers through their relations to their daughters and hence their grandchildren. Women in Yemeni culture are also responsible for maintaining the pride and honor of men and *vice versa*. The man is deemed to be the provider for the family and hence has a privileged position in decision-making for all the family. Normally the family trains its male children to take up this family provider position together with its privileges.

However, the man is the decision-maker even in rural areas where women work very hard to provide for the whole family. There is a rigid structure in the Yemeni society in which family members are trained to take up roles and positions depending on their gender and age. Normally with this structure comes the comfort of feeling that one fits exactly in the right place, by keeping up his/her responsibilities and duties. Modernity is posing a challenge to this structure, especially when it comes to how women see themselves fitting in. The education system in Yemen does not differentiate a great deal between boys and girls. This in itself poses the question in women's minds that since intellectually they are equal, there should be no difference in opportunities either of leading the family or deciding to take charge of their own lives without the aid of a male figure. Hence the traditional division of labor is called into question. This fact, coupled with other modernity-related facts including economic ones, enable women with some degree of education to see their role in society as different to their grandmothers'. Although Islam grants complete rights to women as mentioned in "*Al-Nisa* verses" – the word "*Al-Nisa*" means "the women", and ironically there is no chapter in the Quran dedicated to men – Yemenis often look at women with a suspicious eye, describing them

as ignorant and mentally deficient persons.

According to men's commonly-held opinion about women, they are weak on the one hand and evil on the other. As a result they are dominated by men at all stages of their lives. As a child and adult a girl is controlled by her father or brother; later when she marries, she moves under her husband's domination. Parents, brothers and other relatives have the right to interfere in girls' decisions about marriage. Some families can even make other choices for their daughters without consulting them. One should mention here that Islam has highly honored women, and strictly warns men against the consequences of bad treatment or humiliation of women. The woman has full rights as a human being under Islam's rules and it is strongly forbidden to force her to marry according to her parents' choice. However, (mis)treatment of women is governed by customs and tradition, though not by Islam's view. Nevertheless, Yemeni women in general are in a state of continuous struggle for emancipation. This has resulted in keeping women in a place that they have to fight their way out, morally, socially and economically.

This section first presents some selected proverbs that show how Yemeni society (male society) looks at women and then at men.

Attitudes towards Women:

The Yemeni culture is full of proverbs which represent the overall view towards women. In fact, in Yemen, there are two views about women, viz. positive and negative. These will be clear while considering the following proverbs.

النساء كالفوارير

alnesa kaal qawareer

Women are like bottles.

The simile in this proverb is taken from a metaphor by the Prophet describing women. Although the Prophet meant positive connotations – i.e. women are as sensitive as bottle, so deal with them softly and be aware not to break them – the majority of males has misinterpreted this metaphor and has taken it to represent women being as weak as bottles that cannot stand hardness. Some Yemenis believe that women are weak and helpless and should be protected by men throughout their lives, first by their parents, then their brothers, then their husbands and by their sons when they become old.

Context: people who understand the true connotations of the metaphor use this proverb to advise males to be soft to women while others, who have misinterpreted it, use the proverb derogatorily to mock women's weakness.

عقل مرة

'aql marah!

(Like a) woman's brain!

This proverb can be seen as an index of how males regard the intellectual capabilities of women, often described as narrow-minded and thoughtless. Men use it to humiliate women, and show them that they are unwise creatures, mentally unequal to men.

Context: it is used mainly to mock a woman's decision, especially when males regard it as "absurd", and to instigate males not to listen to females' opinions.

نساء رأس البلى و البلية

nissa raas albalaa wal balih.

Women are the head of evil and trouble.

This proverb indicates that women are responsible for all evils, and that a man who keeps

company with women or listens to their opinions will lose everything.

Context: it is used to warn those who make unnecessary relationships with women or works according to their views.

مرة، ايش جهدها

marah, aish gahdaha

A woman, what can she do?

The point of this proverb is to express the idea that women are so weak that they are useless in certain situations.

Context: it is used to tell people that they should not rely on women.

المرّة بعد زوجها

almarah ba'ad zawgaha

A woman follows the husband.

This proverb represents the woman as being a person without will, and always follows what the husband says. From another perspective, this proverb ascertains that women follow men, live where their husbands live, do whatever the husbands ask them to do etc.

Context: it is used to point out that women have to obey their husbands and follow their instructions.

ربها قبل ما تتركب

rabha qabl ma tarkab.

Discipline it (female horse) before you ride.

This proverb is a metaphorical extension comparing the process of taming a female horse to a newly wedded wife. The husband has to train, tame and teach her before he starts his conjugal life with her.

Context: used as a piece of advice for newlywed husbands to discipline and control their women at the beginning of starting their conjugal life.

هن من ضلع اعوج

hun min dhila' a'a waj

Women are created from a curved bone.

This proverb is derived from the Adam-Eve story: Eve, in Arabic Hawaa, is said to have been created from Adam's rib. People take this to symbolize the inferior place woman occupy even from the first moment of creation: they are subordinate. The metaphor of "curved rib" implies that women's views are never straight and should not be listened to. Large numbers of Yemenis consider women as troublemakers or problems in themselves.

Context: Men use this proverb to represent women as not only passive members of society but also as a problematic issue that needs to be sorted out.

المرّة مرة وإن تنمرت

almara mara wain tanamarah

A woman remains a woman even if she tried to become a tigress.

This proverb is an ironical statement of the weakness of women. Physically and emotionally, women are considered powerless.

Context: it is used to symbolize women's weakness even if they try to prove otherwise.

لا تامن المرأة ولو حلفت على الماء

la taaman almarah wa law halafat a'la almaa.

Do not trust a woman even if she has sworn on the water.

The proverb is a hyperbolic exaggeration of the non-confidentiality of women. Swearing by God "one the water" is an impossible act. Here, the implication is even if a woman does this

impossible act, trusting a woman remains an issue in question. Lies and concocting excuses are most of the time associated with women. Although Islam encourages people not to assume that a person is bad or guilty unless they see evidence, Yemenis say the opposite thing about women.

Context: Men use this to tell women that however well they behave they remain evil.

منكسات العمام و جالبات المصائب

muniksat ala'maaym wgalibat almusibeh.

(Women) lower men's turbans, and brings calamities.

(A woman but brings misery and shame.)

A man's turban is a symbol of his honor and manliness. If a woman commits a shameful act, it is said that the turbans of the men in her family are lowered since their honor has been spoiled. Such an act may as well lead to wars and blood shedding. This proverb describes women as trouble both in their husband's houses and with their families. People emphasize that worries about women last a long time. If a girl gets married it means she is a good girl and she brings honor to her family, but if she stays at her father's house, it is an offence as it may be said that she is not a good woman.

ما زعامة من مرة

maa za'amah min marah.

A woman has nothing to do with leadership.

This proverb is used to emphasize that women should not be allowed to become leaders in their society, as they are considered unwise and mentally deficient.

Context: used to mock women's capacity to lead.

لا تشتري ثور خله و لا مرة عوبلية

La tashtary thoar khalah wala marah a'awbalyah

Do not buy a bull from Khalah nor a wife from Al-A'awabil

This proverb is specifically used in Al-Dale'. Khalah and Al-A'awabil are two districts in Al Dhale' Governorate. There is a belief that the bull from that area will disturb its partner under the yoke while plowing the land and work will be spoiled. The same goes for marrying women from Al-A'awbil area, for the women of that area are believed to disturb their husbands' lives. Other Yemeni regions have the same believe, where they prefer facing seven disasters rather than marrying from Ibb, (sab'a masa'aib wala marah min Ibb), (sab'ah madafi'a wala marah min Yafi'a), (mota'h ba 'az wala marah min Taiz). There are many places in which it is advisable not to marry from such places as they cause trouble.

Context: used to warn men not to marry a noisy woman.

On the other side of the extreme, there are many proverbs praising women. In fact, like any culture, Yemeni culture also admits the value and the important roles played by women in society. Woman is considered the other half of the society. She is the mother, daughter, mother-in-law, sister etc. These can be represented by the following proverbs:

الأم مدرسة

alaum madrasatah

Mother is a school.

A very fundamental view towards women is expressed here where a woman is viewed as a school, the source of knowledge and upbringing especially as far as children are concerned. In this proverb, a woman is that part of the society that cares for and disciplines generations.

Context: it is used to indicate the important role played by woman in the society.

البيت المرة و الحب الذرة

albayt almarah wa alhab althorah.

The house is the woman, and the main grain is the corn.

In an agricultural community, people take pride in their women particularly if the women maintain the house well. Just as corn is the main staple crop in Yemeni society, so the woman is the cornerstone for the house. A man's pride in his woman is derived from her success in carrying out her duties as a wife, a mother of his children and a keeper of his house.

Context: used to show the important position of women in society and some men also use it to boast their pride of having perfect wives.

هن شقائق الرجال

huna shaqaaeq alrijal

Women are the other halves of men.

Another positive view is expressed in this proverb where women are viewed as the halves of men in the society. In that, they help men in everything in life. In fact, in spite the negative attitudes towards women, they occupy a very essential position in Yemeni society and this is reflected in Yemeni culture and in its different and several manifestations.

Context: used to acknowledge the right place for women in society.

من صلحت زوجته صلح بيته

man salahat zawjatuh salaha baytuh

He whose wife is good shall have a good house.

This proverb stresses the value of a good woman a precondition for leading a good life. A good wife is seen as the most important aspect in life because she will be the main support to her husband in good and bad days. Context: used to show the value of a good wife.

الزوجة الصالحة درء من النار

alzawjah alsaleha dera' min alnar

A good wife is a shield from hell.

This proverb emphasizes that a good wife will secure her husband from hell in the sense that she will keep advising him to do good things and be aware of bad things. Also, a good wife is a shield in the sense that if her husband is in love with her, he will never think of committing a sin.

Context: used to show the value of a good wife.

Attitudes towards Men:

In the following section, proverbs that represent the Yemeni society's views towards men are presented. A point to be made clear here is the fact that these proverbs represent the Yemeni society's views towards men only when comparing to women. Thus, compared to women, the society has positive views of men. However, it does not mean that the Yemeni society views men to be good all the time. Those who behave badly are considered bad.

من حبه الله جيرة بالعيال

min habah Allah jabarah bil a'yaal.

He who is loved by God is rewarded with baby boys.

This proverb represents a very positive view towards men right from their birth. It reflects the mentality of Yemenis in discriminating between their own children on the basis of their sex. Parents prefer a male child, as baby boys are thought of as the carriers of their fathers' names (family titles), unlike a female child whose children will carry their husbands' names. The one who has a male child will not be considered a "dead person". On the other hand, the one who has only female children may be considered as a dead person even before his death as his name will not be taken by any posterity.

Context: used either to boast having male children, or ironically to mock a person who has only

female children.

ما محارب إلا رجل

maa muharib ela rajul

A fighter is only a man.

Despite the historical facts of female fighters, the Yemeni society, especially in tribal areas, preserve the task of fighting enemies to men only. Women are mocked if they carry arms.

Context: to boast male valiance and mock female weakness, especially at times of war.

الرجال حروف الذهب و النساء عوادين الحطب

alrijal heroof althahab wa alnisa awadeen alhatab.

Men are golden letters; women are wood sticks for fire.

This proverb highly reflects the schism of value between men and women in the Yemeni society: while men are compared to gold as they are the face of the tribe, women's place is firewood, hinting at their constrained place in the house.

Context: This proverb shows how Yemeni society prefers man to woman.

الرجال تقع و ترفع

alrijaal tiqa' wa terqa'.

Men fall bet stand up again.

There is no comparison between men and women in this proverb, despite the slight sly connotation of the ability to stand up being reserved for men only. It is intended to show men as the patient and strong gender. It means that whether the situation is good or hard men are capable of dealing with it.

Context: This proverb is used to encourage a man who has had a misfortune to stand up again and show valiance.

أعطاء المال و الرجال

ia'tuh almal wal alrijal

He is money and male children.

This proverb stands for what a Yemeni man, especially in the tribal areas, might wish for in life.

Context: this proverb is used by Yemenis to refer to a person who has been endowed with the utmost blessings of life, wealth and male children.

ما تعسر اديه الرجال

ma ta'asar edeesh alrijal

Whatever is difficult, men will take care of it.

This proverb indicates the power of men to cooperate and carry out any difficult task, especially if a single person finds it too difficult for him to achieve alone. It implies that men are capable of solving any problem.

Context: It is used to emphasize that men are strong and have the power to face difficulties and obstacles.

الرجال قوامين على النساء

alrijal qwameen 'ala alnisa

Men have authority over women.

Derived from the Islamic Shari'a, this phrase is often misquoted, or partly quoted without the remainder of the phrase which determines the reason for authority, i.e. because men are responsible for sustaining the house financially. Besides, the word *qwameen* has also another meaning other than authority, that is 'caretakers of; those who take care of'. Used in its distorted version, this proverb is immensely and widely exploited by Yemenis to emphasize that women are controlled by men in all aspects of life. (for more proverbs of this kind see Appendix I.)

Context: used to emphasize male authority over females.

3.2.15 Attitudes towards Marriage

Marriage is the only legal relationship for having sexual relationship, children or establishing a family in Yemen. A relationship between couples prior to their marriage is absolutely forbidden by both custom and religion. Therefore, the idea of single mothers does not exist as the birth of children before marriage is a crime. It is important for a man to choose a woman of good values and from a good family. A divorced woman has a limited chance for remarriage as she is the one who is often blamed for the breakup of her marriage.

الزواج نصف الدين

alzawag nis'f aldean

Marriage is half of religion.

This proverb, derived from the Prophet's tradition, emphasizes that marriage is an important part of every person's life and is used to encourage young folk to get married as early as possible (even at an early age). This is because for a Muslim, religious life is perfected by marriage, since marriage keeps men and women away from committing sins.

Context: people use this proverb to encourage youth to marry.

الزواج ستره

alzawag sutrah

Marriage is protection.

A widely held view by Yemenis, this proverb reflects how the society regards marriage, protection for both male (from unhealthy illegal relationships) and for females (protection in all senses of the word).

Context: used to encourage youth to marry and to show them the value of married life.

The following section is divided into two parts: Marriage and Women, and Marriage and Men. The former is discussed first.

Marriage and Women

ما تختار إلا من بين رجال

ma takhtar ela min byeen rijaal

Choose a wife who has lived and grown up among valiant male siblings.

This proverb insists that it is better for a man to have a wife from a good family, than to marry a woman who has no good origin. A man must choose a wife with good manners who has been brought up by a man (father) and among men (siblings) so that she knows how to respect her husband.

Context: It is used to encourage the youth to marry from respectable families, who bring up their daughters according to good ethics.

هذه الدببة من هذه العظية

hathih aldhubiah min hathih ala'wdhiah

This pumpkin came from that plant.

The metaphor here compares a good woman to a good pumpkin, which is the product of a good and strong plant. It is the pride of parents to have their sons and daughters regarded remarkably by society members. If a son or daughter is remarkable and belongs to parents who are remarkable too, then people use this proverb.

Context: It is used to mean that the parents have been successful in bringing up their children. It can also be used pejoratively to indicate bad posterity of bad parents.

ذي ما معه بن عم ناسب

thi ma ma'a bun a'am naasab.

He who has no cousin, must marry from a good family.

This proverb implies that power can be acquired through getting a wife from a powerful family.

Choosing a good wife from a strong tribe enables a man to gain their support and also believed to secure him a baby with a good character

زيارة الطين عمرة

ziarat al teen emrah.

Visiting the farm is like an *Umrah* (i.e. a visit to Mekka).

This proverb implies that parents should encourage their daughters to help their husbands' in farming. By helping their husbands, the reward by Allah is thought to be as great as making a visit to Mekka.

Context: used by parents to encourage their daughters to help their husbands in work.

خذ منهم و لا تعطهم

khuth minnahom wala ta'ateehom.

Marry their daughters but do not marry off your daughters to them.

This proverb offers a classist solution for interclass marriages. A person from a higher social class may at worst marry a woman from an inferior class, but in no way a person of an inferior class is allowed to marry a woman from a higher class. Here, by inferior class, in Yemen means certain occupational –classes like, leather workers, drummers, and the barbers, who remain matrimonially marginalized or isolated though some of them could be rich and beautiful.

Context: this proverb is used to impose the limit for interclass marriages to keep lineage purity or what is called *Al nasab* or *Al aSl* (lineage or origin).

إمساك بمعروف أو تسريح بإحسان

imsak bima'roof ao tasreeh' bi-ih'san

Retained in honor, or released in kindness.

Derived from the Quran: *Surah 2, Al-Baqara*, verse 229, which reads: “A divorce is only permissible twice; after that, the parties should either hold together on equitable terms, or separate with kindness...”, this proverb instructs men as to how they should deal with their wives.

Context: it is used to address those who abuse their wives and try to compel them to live with them under threat and harassment. Husbands should either honor their wives, or grant them divorce respectfully.

Marriage and Men

As there are views established in Yemeni culture about the woman to marry, there are also views regarding the man to marry to. These views are expressed through the following proverbs:

إذا قلت رجالك ناسب

itha qalat rijaalak naseb

If your men get fewer, marry (from a big tribe).

This proverb reflects some social and political dimensions of marriage. Some people marry from other tribes to gain their support. Literally, the proverb states that the one who does not have many men relatives should compensate for that by having them by means of marrying from a tribe which has a lot of men.

Context: This proverb is used where one has many problems and has few men to support him. What he should do is marry from a strong family. In Yemeni culture, it is always believed that a

strong family is one which has a lot of men.

اخطب لبنتك و لا تخطب لولدك

ukhtub libentak wala tukhtab li waladak.

Choose a fiancé for your daughter and not a fiancée for your son.

This proverb offers a hyperbolic expression of how a person gets his daughters married off. The social customs in Yemen dictate that a man proposes a mate for his son, but not for his daughter. It is even often embarrassing for a father to ask someone to come and marry his daughter. But in order to accentuate the importance of having a good husband for one's daughter, this proverb comes to express the fact that parents have a major role in their daughters' marriages. Some Yemenis believe that a husband chosen by the parents will be a right choice, for they know better than their daughters, who have limited contact with men outside their families. Some parents force their daughters to marry men they know nothing about, or sometimes whom they have even never seen, believing that it is best for their daughters.

Context: this proverb is used to stress the importance of marrying off one's daughters to good men. It is often wrongly used to deprive women from their right to choose a husband.

ذي ما معه بن عم ناسب

thi ma ma'ah bn a'm nasab

He who has no cousins should get married.

This proverb states that if one does not have relatives, one should get married, particularly to a bride from a strong family. Relationship through marriage is highly respected by Yemenis and to the best of their ability they show respect to relatives by marriage.

Context: to encourage marriage from strong families and tribes.

انسب الخال يأتيك الولد

insup alkhal yateek alwalad

Look for a good maternal uncle and you will get a good child.

This proverb implies a major belief among Yemenis as far as marriage is concerned. They believe that the nature of the character of one's sons bear a huge similarity with the sons' maternal uncles, while daughters carry similar aspects with their paternal aunts. For this reason, a person in search of a wife is recommended to go for the sister of a strong and good person, thinking that the male children will carry the personality of their maternal uncle.

Context: used to suggest the qualities of a good wife in terms of expected qualities of children.

3.2.16 Attitudes towards Relatives

The family is considered the cornerstone of the Yemeni social structure. A household is usually headed by a male, and is normally based on the Yemeni cultural system of extended families with members from different generations sometimes living in one household. In poor families, other members who are connected by kinship or marriage might help the householder to look after the dependents. Youngsters witness their nation's history as they live their daily life, communicating with their grandparents and observing how their parents treat them to learn their future responsibilities at an early stage of their life. They are encouraged to take responsibility for looking after their parents and relatives in future. Parents, relatives and old people are highly respected by children and young people. This respect is accepted as a cultural and religious value that should not be questioned. Social roles of different members of the family, especially fathers, mothers and elders, are clearly defined. Because children are expected to be protectors of their parents in their old age, early marriage is encouraged to ensure that one has a secure future when one gets old. Relatives usually support each other.

As Yemenis have great respect for their relatives on the maternal side, but less than the respect for the relatives from the father's side since the latter constitute one's belonging. Islam has emphasized the importance of maintaining relationship with relatives, near or distant, and warns the one who breaks off the relationship with his relatives.

الأهل أولى بالمعروف

alahal awla bial ma'ruf

Relatives have the right to come first for your help (before you help others).

This proverb is best expressed in the English one: *charity begins at home*. In fact, such proverb urges people not only to stand by relatives but also to consider them first for any help.

Context: when someone has a charity to give, this proverb comes to show him/her where to start.

ما مال إلا رجال

ma mal ela rijaal

Best wealth/investment is men.

This proverb implies that one of the main duties of children is to protect their parents in old age and to ensure that the parents have a comfortable life. In Yemeni society, not a single group compromises on the belief that disobedience to parents brings a curse and damages individuals' lives. Here, the best investment one can make in one's life is to bring up one's (male) well.

Context: to emphasize the importance of nurturing good qualities in one's children, especially the males, as they are to become the caretakers of their old parents.

دعوة الوالدين مجابه

dhawat alwalidean mugabah

Parents' prayers (for/against their children) are answered by God.

This proverb states that when a parent prays to God for/against his/her children, God will

answer immediately. It is used to point out that parents must be obeyed and respected. If one is successful in that, parents will pray for one, and Allah shall reward one. If one fails, then parents will pray that Allah punish one.

Context: to urge children to obey and be good to their parents.

من قلت رجاله يهون

man qalat rejaloh yahoon.

He who has few men is humiliated.

It has been pointed out earlier that the Yemeni society links power and prestige to the existence of strong men in one's family. If the number decreases, humiliation by other strong families may be expected. Here, strength is not limited to number only: a family may have a lot of men but few of them are strong. The ineffective individuals are not considered "men".

Context: people use this to blame those who do not look after their old parents, and also to sympathize with aged parents who lead a tough life without their children looking after them.

من عاد أمه لا تهمة

man a'ad umah la tihmuh

He who still has his mother around is on the safe side.

This proverb declares the vital role of mothers as the basic caretakers of their children. Mothers support their children regardless of their age; if one has any problem and his mother is still alive she will definitely be there for his help.

Context: used to point out the importance of mothers, sometimes for humorous purposes.

من تروج أمنا فهو عمنا

maan tazoj aumana fahoa a'mena

He who marries our mother becomes our uncle.

In contrast to the Anglo-Saxon culture, where a mother's husband is called father-in-law, Arabic culture puts mother's husband in the position of father's brother, i.e. uncle. This proverb indicates that the one who marries one's mother becomes one's uncle, and should be respected as such.

Context: used often to encourage good relationships between half-sons and stepfathers and to show respect to them. In spite of this, it is known that when a mother remarries, her children often hate their stepfather whether he is kind to them or not, but they cannot deny him. Politically speaking, it is also used to describe the relation between the ruler (mocked as stepfather) and the land (as the mother) to the people (as the children).

إلى ما نفع أمه ما نفع خالته

illi ma nafa' umah ma nafa khaltuh.

He who is not good to his mother will not be good to his maternal aunt.

This proverb indicates the futility of a disobedient son (or stepson). Like the former proverb, this one shows the kind of relationship between stepsons and their stepmother. Arabic culture does not make father's wife a "mother"-in-law, but a mother's sister.

Context: used by parents to express disappointment at a (step) son's disobedience, and also generally to emphasize the importance that one should arrange his priorities and start with important matters, using the metaphor of the closest relative.

اهلك ما يخلوك تهلك

ahlak ma yakhlook tahlak

Your relatives will not leave you to perish.

This proverb emphasizes that one's relatives will do their best to protect one. It, in fact, affirms that one who has many relatives is always respected, making it hard for others to touch one with

any harm.

Context: used by people to boast of their families.

Yemenis believe that children inherit their parents' behaviors: if a father has good morals the child will follow his steps. Likewise, children are thought to imitate their parents' bad behavior. Moreover, Yemeni culture warns against one, showing disrespect to one's children, belongings, etc., as this would lead to others disrespecting them too. The following proverbs are used to emphasize such points.

لا ترجم كلبك يرموه الناس

la turjom kalbak yrgumoh alnaas.

Do not throw a stone at your dog in front of others because they will do the same.

The metaphor of “dog” here is used to symbolize everything and everyone that a person has under his domain. It is taken to imply that even if a person hates one of his relatives or belongings, he should not show that to others, because others will show even more disrespect to them.

Context: it is used to advise that one should hide disgraceful or shameful matters about one's kin, and not talk about them to strangers.

أنا عدو ابن عمي و أنا عدو من يعاديه

ana ‘adow ibn ‘ammi wa ana ‘adow min ye’adeeh

I am my cousin's enemy and his enemy's enemy.

This proverb determines the inter- and intra-tribal relations between men. Sometimes, two cousins may develop animosity, but it soon comes to a halt once an external enemy appears. In fact, they become allies as they are united by blood.

Context: if other people know of a problem between cousins, one of the concerned cousins can

use this proverb to warn people not to think that he would let go with his cousin even if they are not in harmony.

مهرنا في بطن واحدة

mehrna fi baten wahida.

Your mother will not bring you an enemy.

Yemenis say ‘We swam in the same belly’, ‘He is from my mother’s womb’ to mean ‘He is my brother’, or ‘We are from one mom’s belly’ meaning that they are the children of the same mother. This proverb insists that a brother will never turn against his brother and become his adamant enemy.

Context: it is used to advise people to maintain a good relationship with their family and try to solve family problems, and whatever the cause of disagreement may be, they should never turn it into hatred and allow external enemies to have access into them.

الحجر القريبة صلاح الزريبة

alhagar alqareeba salah alzarebah

It is better to use the nearby stone to complete one’s own stable.

This proverb is a metaphor to indicate that it is better to get married from one’s relatives. The phrase “nearby stone” refers to relative girls/boys, described as close stones and their cousins as builders and the family as stable. A girl is supposed to prefer her male cousins as husbands than a husband from another tribe. Likewise, before he thinks of marrying a woman from outside the family, it is considered better to for a man marry one from within the family. The underlying notion is that care and protection should be given to the family and relatives before looking for other people.

Context: used to express respect to the blood relationship and support inter-familial marriages.

ثور عقره مولاہ

thour a'qarah mowlah.

A bull slaughtered by its owner.

This proverb is intended to say that when a person is hurt by a relative the hurt will not be a severe one: whatever the problem is, the blood relation will prevent big damage.

Context: used to alleviate the pain of a hurt coming from relatives, and to prevent outsiders from interfering with inter-familial problems. For example, if a father hurts his son, nobody has an authority to interfere, and the father is not held responsible for his actions.

3.2.17 Solidarity

The social structure in Yemen, where beliefs and values are shared hierarchically among family members, a village, a tribe, and the whole nation, reveals cohesion. Although Yemenis are known to their neighbors as a nation of strong solidarity, Yemenis try to call for social solidarity through their proverbs. Social solidarity is also expressed in Yemeni institutions like the Ministry of Welfare, Almsgiving authorities, mosques and local and tribal organizations. This section attempts to examine some of the proverbs that deal with this important value by showing how the society should protect its individuals and how the individual should be loyal to his society. Concepts like cooperation, respect and consultation are strongly recommended by Yemeni proverbs.

ما عود وحدة ولصا

ma 'awed wahduh walasa

Matchstick alone cannot make fire.

This proverb comments on the importance of solidarity and cooperation. In order for a match

stick to make a fire, there must be a matchbox to ignite it. That is to say, some tasks need more than one person to be fulfilled. A similar proverb in Yemen is: “One hand cannot clap”.

Context: it is used to point out that one cannot live without the help of others, and to highlight the importance of cooperation between groups.

البركة مع الجماعة

albrakah ma'a aljama;ah

Blessing is in being in group.

The value expressed by this proverb is that unity is good. The proverb remarks on the need for support among individuals or group members no matter what their status or capability may be, as God will support all of them together.

Context: this proverb is used to encourage people to work and remain together. In spite of their social differences, people need each other.

عيش و ملح

a'aysh wa milh.

Bread and salt.

This proverb is very famous in Yemen implying a standard of solidarity which is not recommended to violate. If a person has ‘bread and salt’ (i.e. food) with a friend, it entails that they share good and bad times together and not betray each other. In Yemeni culture when one shares food with someone or exchange food with him, one has made an agreement of loyalty with him. Both sides should maintain this unwritten contract that each of them should protect the other and avoid betrayal or any other action against one another. They believe that if one betrays this kind of relationship, you deserve to face the consequences of death or other losses either of souls or of wealth.

Context: this proverb is thus used to highlight confidentiality between people after having food together.

من اجل عينك تكرم ألف عين

min ajal a'ynak takram alf a'yeen.

For your eye, thousands eyes I will cherish.

This proverb comments that if one has good relationship with a member of a family, one consequently respects anyone who is related to her/him. Sometimes, one would forgive a hurt caused by someone close to a friend as a token of respect of friendship.

Context: used to show condescension or forgiveness for the sake of mutual love and respect.

العين ما تعلا على الحاجب

ala'yen matala ala alhajib

The eye never stands higher than its eyebrow

This proverb metaphorically states that those who are of low status will never be higher than those who are of higher status. It used to express social restrictions of the divisions between higher and lower positions in society. However, currently this type of hierarchical classist relationship seems to no longer have a great effect in Yemeni society. Context: now, it is sometimes used in family relationships to show respect to parents or the elders.

قام يحصدها حصده

qam yahsudha hasdtah

He intended to harvest it (i.e. malice), but it harvested him instead.

Philosophical and metaphorically, within an agricultural setting, this proverb is taken to express that if one does something bad to another person, one will get into trouble instead. (Another proverb says: “He who digs a hole for his brother (i.e. any fellowman) shall fall into it himself”.)

In fact, this classical proverb is derived from the Quran, *Surah 35, (Fat'ir)*, verse 43, and has the same meaning.

Context: used to tell that malice has bad consequences for those who use it against others.

المال يجرع و تبقى الوجيه

almaal yajza'a wa tabqa alwejeeh

Wealth goes away and faces remain.

This proverb philosophically contrasts wealth and honor in terms of transience. While wealth is something transient, men's honor and promises remain perpetual. This proverb stresses solidarity in Yemeni culture. It is used to emphasize that everything vanishes and is of little value comparing to honor. True relationship based on mutual love, respect and care between people remains.

Context: People use this proverb to condemn those who change if their wealth increases and to encourage good relationships with others regardless of their wealth.

من شاور ما ندم

man shaawar ma nidem

He who takes consultation never regrets.

This proverb indicates the importance of taking advice and consulting experienced people before commencing on a project or task or for solving a problem. Certain matters which other societies might consider as individual privacy are considered to be family concerns in Yemen. Marriage, divorce, buying or selling are not considered individual matters, so discussions about them might reach beyond the extended family to distant relatives, family friends or even the elders and those considered as wise in a village or small town. A group decision is considered to be a right decision which one will never regret.

Context: this proverb is used to encourage solidarity and to advise people to consult others before taking an important decision.

النصيحة وصية

alnaseeha wasayah

Advice is like death will.

Another aspect of social solidarity is expressed by this proverb. It states that solidarity compels society members to advice each other and to be faithful in giving advice. This proverb has also another implication: if someone does something wrong no one confronts them with their mistakes except the ones who truly care for them.

Context: it is used to encourage people to accept admonition by friends, for they do it for a friend's benefit and out of goodwill.

3.2.18 Beyond Within

As it is the case in any society, Yemenis also feel proud of their country and nation. It is a culturally shameful act if a Yemeni stands still while seeing someone abusing Yemen's reputation or even Yemenis in front of him. Thus, Yemeni culture represents these national sentiments through different kinds of cultural manifestations. One way of showing that is through proverbs.

بلادي وإن جارت عليا عزيزة وأهلي وإن بخلوا علي كرام

belaadi wain jaarat 'alia 'azizatan wa ahli wain bekhelw 'alia kiram.

My homeland is dear to me even if 'she' is hard on me, and my people are the generous even if they treat me meanly.

Pride in one's family and homeland is the gist of these proverbial poetic lines. Even if one

receives the utmost mistreatment in one's country and by one's own people, the country and the people remain the best anywhere.

Context: This proverb is said when one encounters abuse by one's own people or when life is hard in one's own country and yet it is even harder to leave it.

إذا أنت بين القوم اعبد ما عبدوا

itha anta bayn alqaom a'abed ma 'abadu.

When you are among people, worship what they worship.

This proverb uses the hyperbolic element to emphasize the importance of creating a harmonious atmosphere with the people one lives among. Of course, for a Yemen God is one, and what this proverb implies is that if one is among a group and the majority have taken decision to do something, even if it may seem wrong, one has to act with and support them. This proverb emanates from people's belief in solidarity rather than doing what may look right. Another implication of this proverb is that if one goes away and lives in another society, one should respect others' traditions and customs.

Context: it is used to advise people to maintain solidarity with the people they live with.

خلف الشفا اعمل ما تشاء

khalf alshafa a'mal ma tashaa

Behind the border do whatever you want.

This proverb seems at first sight to contradict the previous one, but that is not exactly what it means. In spite of the negative message it instigates (i.e. wrong doing), the meaning is that if someone cannot refrain from wrongdoing, then one must go out of the tribe's border and do what one wants to do.

Context: used to tell people not to do wrong things in their community.

3.2.19 Yemenis as Wise Men

Through their proverbs, Yemenis express their character and mentality. Their proverbs can be used as a window enabling an outsider to know how people in their environment deal with their life. This section includes proverbs that examine human circumstances and conditions in many different ways, especially in terms of good and evil, people's nature and attitudes towards their surroundings, their experiences and wisdom that are drawn from their observation and practice in daily life. However, the following proverbs serve only as an example of such wisdom portrayed through proverbs.

ما زبيبة لا وبها عود

ma zabeebah ila wa biha a'awed

There is no raisin without a stem attached to it.

This proverb stresses the idea that there is no gain without pain. In order to get good results, one has to pass and overcome some difficulties in life.

Context: this proverb can be used to console a person facing difficulties in a project that this is the nature of life and all people go through similar difficulties.

إذا غاب القط لعب الفار

itha ghab alqit la'ab alfar.

If the cat is absent, the mouse will play.

This metaphorical expression indicates that when authority is absent, unruly people will become active. Sometimes, if there is no one to protect one's property, some people may try to mishandle it.

Context: such proverb is used to describe a situation when one who has authority goes away and others do not do their work properly or do what they like without consideration for rules.

ما تحرق النار إلا رجل واطيها

ma tahriq alnaaar ila rijl watyiha

Fire burns only the feet of the one who treads on it.

An implication of this proverb is that problems beset only the people who approach problematic areas. Another implication is that only the one who is in pain or grief feels how painful it is.

Context: it is used either to express one's frustration that others do not feel the pain that one is passing through, or tell people not to interfere in something as they may get hurt by it.

البكاء ما هو للرجال

albuka mahoh lirijal.

Crying is not for men.

Yemenis believe that a man should not cry, and limit crying to women and children. Even if a man has lost a dear one, he should not cry in public.

Context: if a man starts crying, this proverb is used to make him stop. It is mostly used with male children to train them to grow tough in hard situations.

إذا انبطح الثور كثرت سكاكينه

itha anbatah althawr katharat alsakakeen.

If the ox falls, knives will increase.

A very sophisticated metaphor is integrated in this proverb to indicate that if a great person falls in a weak condition, a lot of enemies will try to devour him. The figure of the 'ox' is meant to describe a very strong person who is normally so fearful that his enemies cannot approach him, but when he falls people start to talk freely about him and might even hurt him.

Context: used to describe a strong personality who has fallen, and whose critics and enemies have suddenly increased and shown themselves in public.

قتيل الماء و لا قتيل الظمأ

qateel almaa wala qateel aldhama.

To be killed by water is better than to be killed by thirst.

Yemenis have self-esteem and to Yemeni it is better to die due to surplus than destitution. They prefer to die rather than affording humiliation.

Context: This proverb is to encourage people to take action quickly even if bad consequences may occur, especially if delaying may as well result in bad consequences.

فاز بها عكاشة

faaz biha 'Okashah.

'Okashah has won it.

Derived from the story of one of the Prophet's companions, 'Okashah, who won a chance to touch the Prophet's Seal of Prophethood (on the Prophet's back), this proverb is taken to indicate a person who among all others managed to win a prize.

Context: used when a person has won a reward where anyone could have won it if they tried well.

الفلس تجيب الجن مربطه

alfloos tageeb al jin murabbatah.

Money brings jinn tied.

An exaggerated hyperbole of what one can do with money, this proverb states that with money one can even get the jinn tied and brought over. That is to say, with money one can do everything even the impossible.

Context: used, for instance, to tell a person not to show helplessness in a situation especially if money can be used to deal with it.

كل تأخير فيه خير

kull takhyeera fiha khiera

Every delay has its rewards.

This proverb means that delay sometimes has its positive sides.

Context: It is used as advice for people not do things in haste. It is also used to console people, whose work has been delayed, implying that delay may have been for their own advantage.

تعب رجلي ولا تعب قلبي

ta'ab rijly wala ta'ab qalbi.

To tire my legs is better than my heart.

This proverb implies that if one wants something to be done as well as one desires, one has to do it oneself, because relying on others may lead to spoiling the situation and cause heartache.

Context: It is also used to teach self-dependence.

اللقف مذرب و الركب عضرب

allaqif mathrab wa alrukab a'adhrab.

Mouth is big, knees are weak.

This proverb criticizes the bad habit of spending more money than they can afford either out of goodwill to show off, often when they have guests. It is literally taken to mock those who have big mouths, challenging others for fight, while their physiques are small and weak.

Context: used to mock those who try to show off more than they can afford.

الدين هم في الليل و مذلة في النهار

aldean hamm fi allyael wa mathalah fi alnihar

Debt is worry at night and humiliation in daylight.

This proverb generally describes how debts affect one's mental and psychological state. If one is in debt, he will spend his night thinking of how to pay back, and he will be embarrassed at meeting the debtors during day time.

Context: used to discourage people from taking loans.

وين ما حل الحبيب حل القلب

ween ma hal alhabeeb hala alqalb

Wherever the sweetheart has settled, so does the heart.

This proverb has amorous connotations. But at the same time, it also indicates the tendency for a person to change his/her place of stay wherever this person likes.

Context: used jocularly when someone changes their place of stay due to marriage.

حسن السمعة و لا طول العمر

husn alsuma'a wal twual al'amur.

Good reputation is better than long life.

A very sophisticated expression to indicate the value of honor, this proverb indicates that it is better to live an honorable life, even short, than to live a long life in notoriety. Culturally speaking, Yemenis consider it far better to live a short time having done good deeds that will make people remember the person better than to live a very long time uselessly.

Context: Especially when someone behaves badly and incurs notoriety upon themselves, parents normally quote this proverb to advise their children to behave well, help others and achieve their goals in life.

3.3 Conclusion

The discussion here has dealt with the Yemeni proverbs under the above headings – i.e. Homeland, Social Status, Law and Justice, Casteism and Class, Education, Goals, Morality and Values, Respect and Behavior, Poverty and Wealth among others. In fact, Yemeni culture is immensely full of proverbs which are considered by Yemenis as priceless treasure. Yemenis reiterate proverbs to a great extent because these proverbs reflect their way of life, manners, religion, behavior, mentality experience, faith, wisdom among the many other characteristics. Yemenis always tend to use proverbs to gain authority in speech, to convey the wisdom of their fathers and grandfathers, and to underline their sense of belonging to their culture. In addition, Yemenis feel very proud of having such rich culture. In Yemen, it is believed that proverbs are symbols and signs of good history and good heritage. It has not been the goal of this study to present a comprehensive list of all the proverbs in Yemeni culture, but the fact is the Yemeni culture has a repertoire of proverbs that can serve as ready-made cultural molds to depict almost all aspects of life. Thus, the study has discussed only some examples under each heading, however, for more proverbs, the reader is suggested to read Appendix I where many more proverbs are listed under each heading.

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CHAPTER IV

A COMPARISON OF YEMENI AND AMERICAN PROVERBS

4.1 Proverbs as Viewed by American Society

One of the main concerns of this study is to identify similarities and differences between Yemeni and American proverbs as expressions that may differ in culture and wording but can be used in equivalent situations to express similar or different ideas. To achieve this goal, intensive investigations have been made during fieldwork in the United States. Proverbs presented in this section are drawn from *Dictionary of American Proverbs* (most of the informants from the field of academics said that they are familiar with many of the proverbs in the Dictionary when the researcher showed it to them. There was general agreement that it was a very interesting book, appreciating such effort. But some of them like Shahani, when being asked if proverbs in the dictionary are American, responded that “being an American is such an arbitrary concept—it is too young to name it and define it.” But it was “1 out of every 25 are idioms which I have heard before” for Angelina. For Stephanie, “yes, the book of proverbs is relatively American.” Sultana said, “The book has some parts that are like America, but there are others that are not.” Laura Lucy positively confirmed that “yes I find it to be American as America is made up of so many different groups and some proverbs you will recognize and some you will not because of family and background of place you live in.” Emily Stafford said, “No, the content can easily be transferred to other cultures. The proverbs can be applied to many situations, with many different people, not just Americans.”), and from American informants through interviews and questionnaires. Some interviews were tape-recorded; their transcripts have been used for

analysis. The informants, coming from different age groups and academic backgrounds, were interviewed in various places including churches, hostels, universities, the reading rooms in some of the American libraries and other public places (see App. G).

Yemeni and American proverbs are widely used not only in conversation, oration, or any other spoken form but also in different forms of literary writing. In this dissertation the majority of the proverbs used only in speech are favored based on the vocabulary and meaning: i.e. vocabulary referring to literary, colloquial and vulgar statuses of the words (the researcher did not include many taboo proverbs), apart from referring to dialectal variation. Yemeni proverbs in particular, and the meaning reflecting the theme of the proverb, clearly reveal the attitudes or the opinions of the speakers.

Proverbs belong to everyone in the community. A proverb's message appears to come from the community rather than from the speaker. If one wants to criticize someone indirectly, one can use a proverb. Proverbs are not told randomly in conversations; they, however, mark a complete end of a topic or a complete end of the conversation, or a support for a certain idea in the conversation. People very regularly use proverbs when they are reporting something difficult, or when they are moving from a negative topic to a positive one.

Further, the results of discussions with the informants and data collection via questionnaires revealed that proverbs were more appreciated by old people than by the young ones. One of the informants, from Mississippi and residing in Rockford, considered proverbs timeless and suitable at any time as tools to control social behaviors and to teach good morals. During discussions at the Public Library, some of the informants talked about the American society in past times, when proverbs had high frequency in people's daily conversations, minds and thoughts, compared to the attitude towards proverbs today. Many of these informants

believed that people were more conservative, and traditions and values were more respected when proverbs were dominating the life scenes. American people with a good religious background express a strong belief in the effectiveness of proverbs as tools to teach good morals and values, and many of them were able to draw many proverbs from their memories without hesitation. They were also able to give some equivalent proverbs to the Yemeni proverbs quoted by the researcher. The following list shows the proverbs used in the questionnaires:

1. Yemeni: *mash kul akhdar basal*

Not all that is green is green onion.

2. Yemeni: *alnadhafah min aleimaan*

Cleanliness is from faith.

3. Yemeni: *sadiqak alawal la yaghoraq althani*

Your first friend (comes first)! Do not be enticed by the second one.

4. Yemeni: *akher al'elaaj alkkay*

The last resort to cure is the hot iron.

5. Yemeni: *akrim dhyefak walo kan a'douak*

Be generous with your guest even if he is your enemy.

6. Yemeni: *itha nazala alqadar a'mya albasar*

When fate comes, insight gets blinded.

7. Yemeni: *duq hissab tadum suhbah*

Keep even the credit account with your friend so that friendship continues.

8. Yemeni: *aljenoon finoon*

Madness is an art.

9. Yemeni: *alwaqt madrasah*

Time is a school.

10. Yemeni: *tark al'aadah 'adawah*

Ceasing a habit (of giving alms) is an (indication of) enmity

11. Yemeni: *yoghaddi 'ala 'ain ashams bi-mankhol*

To cover the sun beams with a sieve.

12. Yemeni: *man bakar ma nedim.*

He who starts early never regrets.

13. Yemeni: *dharbah be assaif wala dharbah belqalam*

A strike with the sword is more tolerable than a strike with a pen.

The proverbs used in the questionnaires are Yemeni proverbs. American informants were asked to try to find equivalent or similar proverbs from their society. The total number of informants is 240, divided into two age groups, each group including 120 informants, both males and females. The first group consisted of informants who are less than 40 years old; the informants of the second group were above 40. The majority of the informants in all groups agreed that proverbs are rarely used in daily conversations in American society. Nonetheless, there was a surprising response when they were asked to draw proverbs from their memories, especially when they compared or contrasted Yemeni proverbs to American proverbs.

Questionnaire used for Yemeni scholars:

Group 1:

1. What do you think a proverb is?
2. In your opinion how did proverbs originate?
3. Do proverbs reflect social values?

4. Are educated people still using proverbs?
5. Do proverbs have any utility in the present-day society?
6. When and why do people use proverbs instead of direct sentences?
7. How do you respond if a person quotes a proverb to you, especially if s/he criticizes you?

4.2 Tables

The following tables show the Yemeni proverbs used in the questionnaires and the equivalent ones given by my informants, together with the numbers and percentages of responses by the study groups:

4.2.1 Calculations from American respondents: Awareness levels of given Yemeni Arabic proverbs with their American equivalents.

Proverb 1. Yemeni: *mash kul akhdar basal*

Not all that green is green onion.

American: All that glitters is not gold.

| Age (years) | Total no. of respondents | No. of positive responses | Percentage |
|---------------|--------------------------|---------------------------|------------|
| 18-40 | 120 | 95 | 79.17 % |
| Above 40 | 120 | 110 | 91.67 % |
| Total | 240 | 205 | 85.42 % |

Proverb 2. Yemeni: *alnadhafah min aleimaan*

Cleanliness is from faith.

American: Cleanliness is next to Godliness.

| Age (years) | Total no. of respondents | No. of positive responses | Percentage |
|---------------|--------------------------|---------------------------|------------|
| 18-40 | 120 | 96 | 80 % |
| Above 40 | 120 | 100 | 83.33 % |
| Total | 240 | 196 | 81.66 % |

Proverb 3. Yemeni: *sadiqak alawal la yaghoraq althani*

Your first friend (comes first)! Do not be enticed by the second one.

American: Make new friends but keep the old.

| Age (years) | Total no. of respondents | No. of positive responses | Percentage |
|---------------|--------------------------|---------------------------|------------|
| 18-40 | 120 | 85 | 70.83 % |
| Above 40 | 120 | 95 | 79.17 % |
| Total | 240 | 180 | 75.00 % |

Proverb 4. Yemeni: *akher al-'elaaj alkkay*

The last resort to cure is the hot iron.

American: Speak softly and carry a big stick.

| Age (years) | Total no. of respondents | No. of positive responses | Percentage |
|---------------|--------------------------|---------------------------|------------|
| 18-40 | 120 | 70 | 58.33 % |
| Above 40 | 120 | 88 | 73.33 % |
| Total | 240 | 158 | 65.83 % |

Proverb 5. Yemeni: *akrim dhyefak walo kan a'douak*

Be generous with your guest even if he is your enemy.

American: Love thy enemy.

| Age (years) | Total no. of respondents | No. of positive responses | Percentage |
|---------------|--------------------------|---------------------------|------------|
| 18-40 | 120 | 66 | 55 % |
| Above 40 | 120 | 97 | 80.83 % |
| Total | 240 | 163 | 67.92 % |

Proverb 6. Yemeni: *itha nazala al-qadar a'mya al basar*

When fate comes, insight vanishes.

American: The way things are is the way things are.

| Age (years) | Total no. of respondents | No. of positive responses | Percentage |
|---------------|--------------------------|---------------------------|------------|
| 18-40 | 120 | 63 | 52.5 % |
| Above 40 | 120 | 98 | 81.67 % |
| Total | 240 | 161 | 67.05 % |

Proverb 7. Yemeni: *duq hissab tadum suhbah*

Keep even the credit account with your friend so that friendship continues.

American: Don't mix money with friendship.

| Age (years) | Total no. of respondents | No. of positive responses | Percentage |
|---------------|--------------------------|---------------------------|------------|
| 18-40 | 120 | 91 | 75.83 % |
| Above 40 | 120 | 110 | 91.67 % |
| Total | 240 | 201 | 83.75 % |

Proverb 8. Yemeni: *aljenoon finoon*

Madness is an art.

American: There is a method to his madness.

| Age (years) | Total no. of respondents | No. of positive responses | Percentage |
|---------------|--------------------------|---------------------------|------------|
| 18-40 | 120 | 55 | 45.83 % |
| Above 40 | 120 | 101 | 84.17 % |
| Total | 240 | 156 | 65 % |

Proverb 9. Yemeni: *alwaqt madrasah*

Time is a school.

American: With age comes wisdom.

| Age (years) | Total no. of respondents | No. of positive responses | Percentage |
|---------------|--------------------------|---------------------------|------------|
| 18-40 | 120 | 40 | 33.33 % |
| Above 40 | 120 | 77 | 64.17 % |
| Total | 240 | 117 | 48.75 % |

Proverb 10. Yemeni: *tark al'aadah 'adawah*

Ceasing a habit (of almsgiving) is an (an indication of) enmity.

American: old habits die hard. (the context 'as it is given by the informants' is opposite)

| Age (years) | Total no. of respondents | No. of positive responses | Percentage |
|---------------|--------------------------|---------------------------|------------|
| 18-40 | 120 | 61 | 50.83 % |
| Above 40 | 120 | 89 | 74.17 % |
| Total | 240 | 150 | 62.5 % |

Proverb 11. Yemeni: *yoghaddi ‘ala ‘ain ashams be-mankhol*

To cover the sun beam with a sieve.

American: Don't hide your light under the bushel.

| Age (years) | Total no. of respondents | No. of positive responses | Percentage |
|---------------|--------------------------|---------------------------|------------|
| 18-40 | 120 | 67 | 55.83 % |
| Above 40 | 120 | 89 | 74.17 % |
| Total | 240 | 156 | 65 % |

Proverb 12. Yemeni: *man bakar man nedim.*

He who starts early never regrets

American: Early bird catches the worm.

| Age (years) | Total no. of respondents | No. of positive responses | Percentage |
|---------------|--------------------------|---------------------------|------------|
| 18-40 | 120 | 90 | 75 % |
| Above 40 | 120 | 113 | 94.17 % |
| Total | 240 | 203 | 84.58 % |

Proverb 13. Yemeni: *dharbah bi assaif wala dharbah belqalam*

A strike with the sword is more tolerable than a strike with a pen.

American: The pen is mightier than the sword.

| Age (years) | Total no. of respondents | No. of positive responses | Percentage |
|---------------|--------------------------|---------------------------|------------|
| 18-40 | 120 | 95 | 79.17 % |
| Above 40 | 120 | 115 | 95.83 % |
| Total | 240 | 210 | 87.5 % |

The above tables make it clear that a proverb used in one culture can be understood by people in another culture either by providing an image that has similar associations in the other culture or by supplying an abstract thought for a metaphorical expression. However, those who had knowledge of proverbs were mostly old people; the younger the age of the informants, the less knowledgeable of proverbs they are. The informants who had knowledge of proverbs had gained this knowledge by hearing people around using them.

4.2.2 Calculation from Yemeni university-students' respondents – Awareness level of Yemeni Arabic equivalent of given American proverbs (selected from 'A Dictionary of American Proverbs'):

Proverb a. American: Absence makes the heart grow fonder.

Yemeni : *ab'ed a'n habibak yahibak.*

Stay far from the one who loves you, s/he will love you more.

| No. of respondents | No. of positive responses | Percentage |
|--------------------|---------------------------|------------|
| 80 | 76 | 95 % |

Proverb b. American: We are all Adam's children; silk makes the difference.

Yemeni : *kulina a'yal Adam, wa Adam min turab*

We are all Adam's children and Adam was created from dust.

| No. of respondents | No. of positive responses | Percentage |
|--------------------|---------------------------|------------|
| 80 | 74 | 92.5 % |

Proverb c. American: Aim high, time flies.

Yemeni : *alhathiq kharaj min alsuq a'tal*

The clever person left the market empty-handed.

| No. of respondents | No. of positive responses | Percentage |
|--------------------|---------------------------|------------|
| 80 | 73 | 91.25 % |

Proverb d. American: Alcohol and driving don't mix

Yemeni : *wala taqrabu al salata wa antum sukara*

Do not approach prayers while drunk.

| No. of respondents | No. of positive responses | Percentage |
|--------------------|---------------------------|------------|
| 80 | 60 | 75 % |

Proverb e. American: One bad apple spoils the lot.

Yemeni : *altufaha alkhaysah tufsed ma hawlaha*

A rotten apple spoils the rest.

| No. of respondents | No. of positive responses | Percentage |
|--------------------|---------------------------|------------|
| 80 | 71 | 88.75 % |

Proverb f. American: Boys seldom make passes for girls who wear glasses.

Yemeni : *ma tiknanha min almatar.*

A girl who doesn't deserve protection from the rain

| No. of respondents | No. of positive responses | Percentage |
|--------------------|---------------------------|------------|
| 80 | 40 | 50 % |

Proverb g. American: Good doctors do not treat themselves.

Yemeni : *bab alnajar makhlua'*

A carpenter's door is (always) broken.

| No. of respondents | No. of positive responses | Percentage |
|--------------------|---------------------------|------------|
| 80 | 63 | 78.75% |

Proverb h. American: Laugh and the world laughs with you, cry and you cry alone.

Yemeni : *adhak yadhak ala'lam ma'ak; ebki, tebki wahdak.*

Laugh, the world laughs with you; cry, you cry alone.

| No. of respondents | No. of positive responses | Percentage |
|--------------------|---------------------------|------------|
| 80 | 73 | 91.25 % |

Proverb i. American: Life is not life without a wife.

Yemeni : *al hayah bedun nikah ka alqufl bdun miftah*

Life without marriage is like a lock without key.

| No. of respondents | No. of positive responses | Percentage |
|--------------------|---------------------------|------------|
| 80 | 69 | 86.25 % |

Proverb j. American: One always returns to his first love.

Yemeni : *ma alhobbo illa lelhabeebi alawwali.*

True love is but for the first beloved.

| No. of respondents | No. of positive responses | Percentage |
|--------------------|---------------------------|------------|
| 80 | 59 | 73.75 % |

Proverb k. American: Mohammad has to go to the mountain - the mountain will
not come to him.

Yemeni : *al mubtara' yaji la and altasah.*

The dancer must go to the drum (i.e. not vice versa).

| No. of respondents | No. of positive responses | Percentage |
|--------------------|---------------------------|------------|
| 80 | 70 | 87.5 % |

Proverb l. American: Women are the root of all evil.

Yemeni : *alnisaa raas albala wa al baliyah*

Women are the head of all problems.

| No. of respondents | No. of positive responses | Percentage |
|--------------------|---------------------------|------------|
| 80 | 75 | 93.5 % |

4.2.3 Calculation from Yemeni Public Respondents – Awareness level of Yemeni Arabic equivalent of given American proverbs (selected from ‘*A Dictionary of American Proverbs*’):

Note: the following American proverbs were translated into Arabic, and then presented to the Yemeni respondents to give their equivalents.

Proverb a. American: Absence makes the heart grow fonder.

Yemeni : *Ab’ed a’n habitat yahibak*

Stay far from the one who loves you, s/he will love you more.

| Age (in years) | Total no. of respondents | Total no. of positive responses | Percentage |
|----------------|--------------------------|---------------------------------|------------|
| 18-40 | 200 | 130 | 65.0% |
| Above 40 | 300 | 225 | 75.0% |
| Total | 500 | 355 | 70.0% |

Proverb b. American: We are all Adam’s children; silk makes the difference

Yemeni : *kulina a’yal Adam, wa Adam min turab*

We are all Adam’s children and Adam was created from dust.

| Age (in years) | Total no. of respondents | Total no. of positive responses | Percentage |
|----------------|--------------------------|---------------------------------|------------|
| 18-40 | 200 | 110 | 55.0% |
| Above 40 | 300 | 230 | 76.6% |
| Total | 500 | 340 | 65.8% |

Proverb c. American: Aim high, time flies

Yemeni : *alhathiq kharaj min alsuq a'tal*

The clever person left the market empty-handed.

| Age (in years) | Total no. of respondents | Total no. of positive responses | Percentage |
|----------------|--------------------------|---------------------------------|------------|
| 18-40 | 200 | 140 | 70.0% |
| Above 40 | 300 | 250 | 83.3% |
| Total | 500 | 390 | 76.65% |

Proverb d. American: Alcohol and driving don't mix.

Yemeni : *wala taqrabu al salah wa antum sukara*

Do not approach prayers while drunk.

| Age (in years) | Total no. of respondents | Total no. of positive responses | Percentage |
|----------------|--------------------------|---------------------------------|------------|
| 18-40 | 200 | 80 | 40.0% |
| Above 40 | 300 | 101 | 33.6% |
| Total | 500 | 181 | 36.8% |

Proverb e. American: One bad apple spoils the lot.

Yemeni : *al Utahan al khaysah tufsed ma hawlaha*

A rotten apple spoils the rest.

| Age (in years) | Total no. of respondents | Total no. of positive responses | Percentage |
|----------------|--------------------------|---------------------------------|------------|
| 18-40 | 200 | 150 | 75.0% |
| Above 40 | 300 | 270 | 90.0% |
| Total | 500 | 420 | 82.5% |

Proverb f. American: Boys seldom make passes for girls who wear glasses

Yemeni : *ma tiknanha min almatar.*

A girl who doesn't deserve protection from the rain.

| Age (in years) | Total no. of respondents | Total no. of positive responses | Percentage |
|----------------|--------------------------|---------------------------------|------------|
| 18-40 | 200 | 30 | 15.0% |
| Above 40 | 300 | 40 | 13.3% |
| Total | 500 | 70 | 14.15% |

Proverb g. American: Good doctors do not treat themselves.

Yemeni : *bab alnajar makhlua'*

A carpenter's door is (always) broken.

| Age (in years) | Total no. of respondents | Total no. of positive responses | Percentage |
|----------------|--------------------------|---------------------------------|------------|
| 18-40 | 200 | 148 | 74.0% |
| Above 40 | 300 | 260 | 86.6% |
| Total | 500 | 408 | 80.3% |

Proverb h. American: Laugh and the world laughs with you, cry and you cry alone.

Yemeni : *adhak yadhak ala'lam ma'ak; ebki, tebki wahdak.*

Laugh, the world laughs with you; cry, you cry alone.

| Age (in years) | Total no. of respondents | Total no. of positive responses | Percentage |
|----------------|--------------------------|---------------------------------|------------|
| 18-40 | 200 | 155 | 77.5% |
| Above 40 | 300 | 255 | 85.0% |
| Total | 500 | 410 | 81.25% |

Proverb i. American: Life is not life without a wife.

Yemeni : *al hayah bedun nikah ka alqufl bdun miftah*

Life without marriage is like a lock without key.

| Age (in years) | Total no. of respondents | Total no. of positive responses | Percentage |
|----------------|--------------------------|---------------------------------|------------|
| 18-40 | 200 | 100 | 50.0% |
| Above 40 | 300 | 201 | 67.0% |
| Total | 500 | 301 | 58.5% |

Proverb j. American: One always returns to his first love.

Yemeni : *wama al hubi ella lil habeeb al awali*

True love is but for the first beloved.

| Age (in years) | Total no. of respondents | Total no. of positive responses | Percentage |
|----------------|--------------------------|---------------------------------|------------|
| 18-40 | 200 | 113 | 56.5% |
| Above 40 | 300 | 211 | 70.3% |
| Total | 500 | 324 | 63.4% |

Proverb k. American: Mohammad has to go to the mountain - the mountain will not come to him

Yemeni : *almubtara' yaji la and altasah*

The dancer must go to the drum (i.e. not vice versa).

| Age (in years) | Total no. of respondents | Total no. of positive responses | Percentage |
|----------------|--------------------------|---------------------------------|------------|
| 18-40 | 200 | 120 | 60.0% |
| Above 40 | 300 | 202 | 67.3% |
| Total | 500 | 322 | 63.65% |

Proverb 1. American: Women are the root of all evil

Yemeni : *alnisaa raas albala wa al baliyah*

Women are the head of all problems.

| Age (in years) | Total no. of respondents | Total no. of positive responses | Percentage |
|----------------|--------------------------|---------------------------------|------------|
| 18-40 | 200 | 161 | 80.5% |
| Above 40 | 300 | 280 | 93.3% |
| Total | 500 | 441 | 86.9% |

4.3 Proverbs that are used in similar situations to convey the same messages in Yemeni and American societies:

In spite of many differences between Yemeni and American societies in concepts like time keeping, family relationships and solidarity, throughout the discussions with the informants, it was surprising to find remarkable similarities in the way ordinary people in both societies

express their feelings and ideas in similar circumstances and situations. Further, in spite of the striking similarity in some situations in the way the two societies express themselves, there are differences in other situations. For example, one can claim that Yemenis do not value time by saying that *H'abl almahala yarbut wa yafd'ul* (the rope of deliberation will tie and remain) and they seem to prefer to take things slowly and deliberately in their daily life. In contrast, the American proverb says 'Time flies'. Similarly, *man nisa qadeemu tah* (He who forgets his past goes astray) shows the emotional attachment that Yemenis have for their past; while American people express more openness to the wider world: *as good out of the world as out of fashion*.

One of the striking similarities between Yemeni and American cultures can be seen in the way both cultures regard women. American proverbs describe woman's status in a way similar to that in Yemen or other Arab countries: i.e., men undermine woman's status in society. In American proverbs women are found to be even equated with music and wine as a source of pleasure; they are also compared to geese, monkeys, and dogs in some other situations.

Although, evidence strongly suggests that proverbs reflect human cultures and traditions, sometimes they fail to represent a single exact image of a given society. In several circumstances the positive proverbs call for ideals that people are supposed to live by, rather than describing the reality. Therefore, this section shows pairs of proverbs that differ in their wording but have the same respective meaning and usage among the people of the US and Yemen. The proverbs used were discussed with the informants throughout the fieldwork period.

(Y = transliteration followed by translation of Yemeni proverb)

(A = American equivalent as given by American informants)

Y – laa yuldagh almunin min juh'arin martean

A believer will not be bitten twice from the same snake hole.

A – A fox is not taken twice in the same snare.

The above Yemeni proverb is drawn from a religious environment, while the American proverb employs a hunting environment to express a similar idea – i.e. surroundings where fox hunting is dominant.

Y – (1) rakkab sarjayn wagaa'

He who rides two saddles will fall.

(2) arrass ma bisheel jarrateen

The head cannot carry two pots at the same time.

A – A man cannot serve two masters.

While the setting expressed by the Yemeni proverbs is agricultural (or pastoral), the American proverbs is reminiscent of the days of slavery in the U.S.

Y – Al-kalam al layenah tikser alhajar

Soft word can bend the stone.

A – A soft answer turns away wars.

Proverb users in American and Yemeni society agree that diplomatic solutions are more effective than power. It is noted, however, that the Yemeni proverb uses figurative images to 'sweeten' the taste.

Y – muamal a'la saraab

(Do not pour out your water because) you saw a mirage.

A – Do not count your chickens before they are hatched.

Both the Yemeni herders who live in the desert and the American farmers have successfully used their environment and daily experiences to employ metaphors to warn people not to completely rely on expectations.

Y – beiti beiti ya sater a'wrati.

My home, my home. It covers my weaknesses.

A – East or west, home is best.

Emotional attachment to one's homeland, and one's home, is expressed in both proverbs; homeland is described as the best place by American and Yemeni proverbs.

Y – Ahther a'dwak marah wa sadiqak alf marah.

Be cautious of your enemy once, your friend a thousand times.

A – Your friend close, your enemy closer.

The same idea of maintaining caution, while dealing with friends and enemies is expressed in different words in these proverbs. While the Yemeni proverb warns that more pain can happen due to a friend's betrayal than to a defeat by an enemy, and that one is more vulnerable in the case of a friend's treachery than to the enemy, the American proverb bases caution on watching the enemy more than a friend.

Y – akhartni ala'jala

Haste made me late.

A – Make haste slowly.

The same concept that haste can sometimes cause delay is expressed differently: while the Yemeni proverb is used as an excuse, it is used as advice in the American proverb.

Y – a'sfur fi alyad wala ashara a'la alshajarah.

A sparrow in hand is better than ten on the tree.

A – A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush.

In both proverbs the image of bird is used to express the idea that content with actual earnings, no matter how little they might be, is far better than being greedy as greed in some cases may

forfeit the thing that has already been obtained.

Y – man liqisah alhanash yakhaf min alhabl.

He who has been bitten by a snake becomes scared of a rope.

A – A burnt child dreads the fire.

Proverb users in Yemeni and American society agree that if a person has had an excruciating experience because of something once, s/he will become continuously, and often excessively, suspicious of anything associated with or similar with it.

Y – alghina ghina alnafis

Riches is but in the soul.

A – Poverty is no sin.

Although both Yemeni and American societies suggest a sharp contrast between the rich and the poor through their proverbs, they agree that poverty is not shameful or sinful. The Yemeni proverb refers to riches as a matter of ‘soul’ rather than wealth – antithetic interpretation would be that those who have wealth but not rich ‘souls’ are rather poor, and the poor whose souls are rich are not poor at all but rather rich. Therefore, poverty is not a sin at all.

Y – al aqrabun awla bil ma’aruf

Relatives have the right to come first for (your) help (before you help others).

A – Blood is thicker than water.

Here, blood stands for family and relatives, water for everyone else. Thus, in both societies, importance of kinship and solidarity is given priority in terms of assistance. When someone has something to give, both cultures regard relatives as the ones who should be helped first.

Y – min a’awal tika’awal

He who has got many children has difficulty bringing them up.

A – It takes a village to raise a child.

Both the proverbs express the same idea despite the hyperbolic element in the American proverb. The contexts in which they are used are the same. The Yemeni social structure makes bringing up children a collective social responsibility. A father (i.e. a parent) cannot do everything, and hence gives moral authority to other members of the society to discipline his children. The American notion is that parents alone are not able to raise children because children get influenced all the time by their community and because raising a child is the responsibility of the whole community collectively. So the context in both societies is that bringing up children is not only a parents' responsibility but rather a collective responsibility.

Y – Al saraha raha

Honesty (frankness) is relief.

A – Honesty is the best policy.

In both Yemeni and American societies, honesty and truth are given prime value. In the Yemeni proverb, it is meant that telling the truth will ultimately give relief to everyone. For the American, even if a situation is really bad, honesty would give a better result than the likely consequences of telling lies or hiding information. But while the Yemeni proverb shows frankness to have an emotional and psychological impact, the American proverb presents it as a manner of dealings irrespective of emotions. So one must be honest in life situations, however tough it seems, to lead a virtuous life.

Y – Al haqiqa murah

Truth is bitter.

A – It's the bitter truth.

The Yemeni proverb is used in contexts to say that often the truth is difficult to hear or accept and is often painful, though the proverb indirectly urges people to tell and accept truth no matter what. The American belief is that truth can sometimes hurt, but still must be accepted anyway. But while the Arabic proverb states that truth is generally bitter, the American proverb implies that there are at least two kinds of truth of the situation in which this proverb is used, i.e. the bitter and the not-bitter truth.

Y – Lukili ‘auqda halal

Every knot has a way to unknot.

A – For every problem, there is a solution.

The Yemeni proverb means that there is a solution or an end to every problem. This is used by people to comfort each other at bad times. Likewise, the American equivalent says that there is always a way to get out of problems and one can come out of it. Obviously, the Yemeni proverb has a more figurative way of putting the statement.

Y – Yawmun laka wa yawmun ‘alik wa yawmun la lak wal ‘alik

One day is for you, one is against you, and one neither for you nor against you.

A – Win some, lose some.

The Yemeni proverb states that life generally comes in three ways: good days, bad days, and days that are neither good nor bad. The general implication is that one has to accept life the way it comes and deal with the hard times. Similarly, the same idea of coping with hard times is implicitly urged in the American proverb. The difference between the two proverbs is manifest in wording and classifying “days” of life: Yemenis view life to come in three forms, good, bad or neutral; Americans view life as a matter of win-or-lose. However, both the proverbs deliver the same idea that compromises should sometimes be made in life, and solace can be found on the

bright side of things/days.

Y – Al filus tihdher al jin muqiadah

Money brings jinn tied.

A – Money is power/ Money talks.

These proverbs talk of the power of money, sometimes hyperbolically. The Yemeni proverb implies that it is possible that one can use money to buy peace of mind and comfort, and to eliminate one's enemies. In America the notion is that one can use money to solve problems and get things done. In the proverb "Money talks", the personification of money is used to hyperbolically imply the power one can gain through money.

Y – 'Asidatak matinha

It's your porridge ('aseed) eat it

A – As you sow, so shall you reap.

Both proverbs talk of taking responsibility and acceptance of results of one's actions. A person must face the consequences of what s/he does – bad or good, accordingly. These proverbs remind people to keep being good and do good things.

Y – Ma bada lak hawluh

Whatever you face deal with it immediately.

A – Why put off for tomorrow what you can do today?

These proverbs tell people to get things done promptly, and avoid laziness and accumulation of work. They encourage people to work and do the things that can be done without fail.

Y – Min 'arafa masibat gheruh hanta 'alih masibatuh

He who knows others' misfortunes will find his disaster to be less grave.

A – Learn from the mistakes of others.

The Yemeni proverb comments that if one knows that others have much bigger problems than one's, one will stop self-pity and get the courage to face the problems. Besides, if one knows beforehand how the misfortunes fell on others, one will be better prepared to face them if they occur. This is what the American proverb says, and what the Yemeni proverb partly implies – to learn from others' mistakes to lessen one's own.

Y – Ma yajie al hali ela bi qeer

Sweet cannot be gained without pain.

A – No pain no gain.

The advice expressed in both of these proverbs is that one can get a positive result/achievement only by working hard. Only by toiling and braving rough waters can one gain the sweet side of things.

Y – Min 'aayash al qawm arb'aeen yawman sara min hum

He who lives with a group for forty day becomes one of them.

A – One is known by the company he keeps.

The Yemeni proverb points out that one usually becomes influenced by the people one lives/associates with for long, and starts behaving like them whether good or bad. It is a message to keep good company and avoid bad people. The American proverb delivers the same advice, but said the other way round: one is a good person if one's company is good, otherwise it is the opposite.

Y – Min talaba al 'awla sahera allayali

He who seeks exaltation stays up his nights (working).

A – Slow and steady wins the race.

These proverbs express the importance of being regular and diligent to achieve success and win.

They encourage people to work hard, be perseverant and not give up achieving their goals, however tough or long it takes. It is better to put forth a lot of effort over a long period of time, and consistently, to achieve good things.

Y – Al a‘amalu ba alniyat

Deeds are (interpreted) by their intentions.

A – It’s the thought that counts.

Actions are normally initiated by intentions. Actions done out of goodwill normally yield good results, and even if unexpected bad results occur, people tend to take them lightly. Unintentional mistakes are normally forgiven or considered not grave. But if any harm is intended or deliberated beforehand, no matter how small it may be, people feel offended even if nothing serious happened. Offence is the result of bad intentions more than the actions themselves. Goodwill gestures are deemed highly no matter how petty they are. Both the proverbs reveal that both the cultures share the same attitude towards intentions vis-à-vis actions.

Y – ‘Aqlak bi rasak ti’arif khalasak

(Since you have) your mind in your head, you know how to solve your problem.

A – You have brain, use it.

These proverbs encourage one to use the mind and think well to solve one’s problems instead of complaining or asking others to help solve them. Both the proverbs imply others’ detachment from one’s problems, and both also teach self-reliance.

Y – Ma yakhrijha min al malat ela rijleha

Only her legs can help her out of the bog.

A – Stand on your own two feet.

These proverbs teach one to stand up for oneself instead of reacting in unacceptable, impatient

ways, asking others for help whereas they should help themselves to overcome a problem. The Yemeni proverb implies also that it is one who got one in trouble, so it is the responsibility of one alone to get out of the trouble.

Y – Wama ‘ala al rasool ela albalgh

The duty of the messenger is only to convey the message.

A – I’m just a messenger.

The context of both proverbs is the same though wording shows variation. It is said especially when the message brought is bad, problem-causing, etc. But whether the message brings good or bad news, the messenger must not be to blame. It is rather the responsibility of the one who received the message to deal with its content and not blame the messenger. In both cultures, the proverbs convey the same message, and used especially to tell someone who has received bad news not to blame the ones who told them as they are not the causers behind such news.

Y – Al saaber dhaafer

The patient (person) is a winner.

A – They that have patience may accomplish anything.

These proverbs express the value of the virtue of patience or perseverance. People who endure and keep on doing a thing in the right way and direction ultimately achieve what they aspire for.

Y – Min ghaba ‘ala al basar ghaba ‘an al ‘ayn

He who is far from the eye is far from the heart.

A – Out of sight, out of mind.

The contexts in which these two proverbs are used are alike. People most often tend to forget those who are away. Relationship or closeness tends to grow weaker if people do not see each other often. These proverbs are used ironically in a friendly way between friends to reproach

each other for lack of correspondence especially if they have been far from each other for a while.

Y – Labeej ma tahtah habah

Much scrape and no flour

A – A lazy man is no better than a dead one, but he takes up more room.

The Yemeni proverb is used to condemn a person who talks too much but does not do any fruitful work. In the American proverb, the message is that a lazy man does not benefit anyone, even himself, and thus he is like a dead man, but consumes space and food, materials, etc. So, such a person is condemned in both proverbs.

Y – Etha bulitum fa astateru

If you have been destined to commit a sin, hide it.

A – Don't hang your dirty laundry out to dry.

The Yemeni proverb is derived from the Qur'an. Prudence is encouraged, sin and bad behavior be avoided. But if something sinful has been committed, one should not talk in public about it, nor should one boast of it. The American proverb here indicates that one should not show publicly inappropriate things, which should be kept hidden in privacy.

Y – Al ta'an fi almyet haram

Stabbing the dead man is prohibited.

A – Talking behind someone's back.

These proverbs discourage people from indulging in backbiting. One should be courageous enough to talk directly to a person in case of disagreement or tiff, instead of slandering him behind his back. It is not right to talk badly about someone who is not present.

Y – Min jalas janas

He who stays with others will behave like them.

A – Monkey see monkey do.

A person normally gets influenced by the people around him/her. A person's manners can get corrupted if s/he accompanies bad people for some time, particularly if this person tries to imitate their behavior.

Y – Ana aureed, wanta tureed, wa Allah yaf'al ma ureed

I want, you want, but God does what He wills.

A – What you want is not always what you need.

The Yemeni proverb is used as an advice of comfort people urging them not to feel sad or bad for what they could not achieve: everybody desires something, but only God's will take place. The proverb given by one of the American informants means that one should be judicious in deciding what is the thing to be acquired. People may want something but it may not be needed at all. But this is not the contextually equivalent proverb. The more contextually equivalent English (American) proverb could be "Man proposes God disposes".

Y – Aljar qabl al daar

(Choose) the neighbor before the house.

A – He who has a good neighbor has a good friend.

The Yemeni proverb here tells that one should consider about the nature of the would-be neighbors before one thinks of buying a house etc. That is even considered more important than the house/shop itself which one intends to buy or rent. Likewise, before taking up a joint-business, it is better to think of the partners more than of how lucrative the business itself would be. The American proverb says that if your neighbor is good, one would get help in need. Such neighbors can become good friends.

Y – Min rajama hajar la qudam ma raja'at warah

The stone you throw forward never goes backward.

A – What goes around comes around.

The Yemeni proverb's message is that if one does something which is wrong or undesirable, one will face its consequence sooner or later. As one walks ahead one will come across the stone one had thrown. Similarly, the American proverb says that whatever vibes or actions one puts out into the world will come back to one. So both proverbs tell that one should behave well.

Y – Mukhti ma'a al nas wala museeb wahduh

Being wrong with the herd is better than being right alone.

A – Go with the herd.

The message of both is that to be on the safe side, and for general security, it is better to be with the community or the overwhelming majority even if one thinks that they are wrong than to be alone even if one thinks one is right.

Y – Ab'aed 'an habibak yahibak

Stay far from the ones who love you, they will love you even more.

A – If you love something let it go.

In the Yemeni proverb, the message is that when one loves someone, one should not try to be so possessive. Rather, it is better to remain far from them for a while so that they grow fond of seeing the person they miss. In the American proverb the message is that if one loves something, it is better not to smother it. Rather, one should give space.

Y – Mafi al ma'araj ela Saeed la'araj

Saeed the Lame is not the only dancer in the club.

A – There are plenty of fish in the sea.

The import of both is that there are many choices in life. One should not feel frustrated when one cannot get something/someone. Other choices are available. The Yemeni proverb implies a derogatory tone symbolizing that there are other options than the bad option available.

Y – La taqul bur ela wa qaduh fi al asur

Don't consider it is your wheat till it is in your granary.

A – Don't count your chicken before they are hatched.

The import of both is how one should be cautious and not celebrate before a thing has been done successfully. One should not make final plans about something before it is certain. The context is to advise people to count on something only if they have already got it.

Y – Heith turzaqoon la heath tukhlaqoon

Where you earn not where you were born.

A – Home is where the heart is.

These proverbs tell people to consider living where they get their livelihood (Yemeni proverb) or where they feel comfortable (American). Work is seen here as more important than homesickness. Also, to pursue what one wants to do and achieve in life, one has to become adventurous and move out. Both the proverbs undermine the traditional sense of homesickness and belonging: belonging here is defined as place of work or the place where the 'heart' is.

Y – Qalbi dalili

My heart is my guide.

A – Follow your heart.

Both proverbs tell people to listen to their inner senses, rather than the dictates of logic. Often these senses lead one to good things and destinations. In life, only cold logic cannot lead one to a good or happy life. Sometimes people have to listen to gut-feelings in taking important decisions,

especially when one cannot be very sure inside one's mind.

Y – A'amal taeeb wa armi bih al baher

Do a good thing and throw it to the sea.

A – Pay it forward.

The Yemeni proverb advises people to do as many good things as possible even to people who might show ingratitude thereafter, and not expect anything in return. The belief is good deeds bring good results even at the long run. A good thing should not be kept confined in a narrow section, rather should be spread. According to the American proverb, if someone does something helpful for people, people should not think only of helping that person in return but rather try to help someone else in need, and so on. That person's favor will be returned indirectly when s/he is in need.

Y – Alfadhul qatala al 'ajuz

Curiosity killed the old woman.

A – Curiosity killed the cat.

This Yemeni proverb is associated with an anecdote. Once, a war-game was being held. Women and children were told not to venture out for safety purposes but an old woman got too curious to witness it and went out. One side's archer wrongly thought she was a rival and shot at her and the arrow hit her in the eye and she died. Similarly, the American proverb also says that if one gets too curious, one may get into trouble or even die.

Y – Mahush kul akhdhar basal

Not all that is green is green onion.

A – All that glitters is not gold.

The message in both proverbs is that one should not always make overgeneralizations. Things

can often be deceptive and not always what they seem to be outwardly. One should instead realize the truth about something before making any face value judgments.

Y – Yadi fi fumuh wa asba'auh fi 'ayni

My hand is in his mouth and his finger is in my eye.

A – Don't bite the hand that feeds.

The Yemeni proverb here is quoted when a person for whom one has done a favor or help hurts him/her. It is used to warn ungrateful persons. The implicit meaning is that one should not harm those who are good to one. The American proverb, in a more direct way, tells people not to hurt or disrespect those who help them. In both cases, the proverb is used especially if the favor-receiver is showing signs of disrespect or ungratefulness.

Y – Al risalah tafham min 'anwanaha

The letter is understood by its (manner of) address.

A – Never judge a book by its cover.

The Yemeni proverb says that words and/or actions reveal the attitude of the person who said or did them: these are reflections of characters or intentions. On the other hand, the American proverb provided to me as the equivalent is actually opposite in message. It says that there can be more to something than its outward appearance. This reminds us to remember that a part of something may not completely represent the whole.

Y – Etha kunt baeen al qawm a'abud ma 'abadu

If among other people, worship what they worship.

A – When in Rome, do as the Romans do.

In essence, both these proverbs tell that people should respect other's cultures and not criticize other customs and traditions as they all have their own significances. This is especially true when

one is in a foreign place. Behaving like the “others” would make life much easier, even if sometimes one has to do some things one normally does not do or does not want to do.

Y – Yad ma tiksirha busaha

A hand that you cannot break, kiss it.

A – If you can’t beat them, join them.

The Yemeni proverb metaphorically comments that one should not interfere in matters beyond one’s ability. Also, those who are in lower positions would do better or stay safe if they do not criticize or react against higher-ups. In the American context, it is taken that if one cannot dominate or prevail, better not struggle continuously. It might be better to change oneself and join the others.

Y – ‘Ausforayn bi hajar

Two birds with one stone.

A – Killing two birds with one stone.

Both proverbs refer to the situation in which much success, benefit, and gain is obtained with less effort, like aiming at only one thing and getting two positive results. These results could be accidentally achieved or achieved with intelligence and intention.

Y – Mud rijlak ‘ala qadr al firash

Stretch your legs according to (the length of) your mattress.

A – Cut your coat according to your cloth.

The point of the both the Yemeni and American proverbs is to advise that one should live within one’s income, and spend according to one’s means. It is interesting to point out that one of the young informants of this study indicated that the American equivalent to the Yemeni proverb was “Greed often makes one poor”, an instance – among many – substantiating the argument

that young Americans are losing touch with the cultural contexts of parts of their proverbial databases.

Y – Habl al kadhīb qaseer

Falsehood's rope is short.

A – A liar is sooner caught than a cripple.

In this Yemeni proverb rope is a metaphor for time. If one tells a lie, eventually people will come to know about it. No one can hide the truth for long. So it is a warning for people not to tell lies. Similarly, in the American proverb, there is a warning against lying. It is not difficult to catch a liar than to catch a person who is a cripple because both cannot 'run' well. Both the proverbs use figurative associations to express the same idea.

Y – Duq hisaab tadum suhbah

Do counting even, friendship remains.

A – (In a relationship whether friendship or others) if you keep score, both will lose.

The Yemeni proverb is used to promote good social behavior and advise people to deal with business and friendship as two different issues. Likewise, the American proverb advises people not to mix-up superficial issues, money matters, etc. with a relationship. If every favor is counted, every scratch is remembered, both parties would suffer.

Y – Man asaa eleik aahsin eleih

Be good to the person who hurts you.

A – Love thy enemy.

Both proverbs convey the message that tolerance, love and forgiveness are of prime importance in life. Retaliation might lead to harm only. There is an implicit belief here that if one returns an insult with a favor, the other person may feel ashamed of himself and apologize accordingly.

Another implication is that escalation of enmity can result in more violence while a favorable response to an insult may at least lead to truce. The general message of both proverbs is that love is more powerful in life than hatred.

Y – Ma tahriq al nar ela rijl watiha

Fire only burns the feet that treads on it.

A – If you play with fire, you will get burned.

The Yemeni proverb says that only the one who is in pain or grief feels it. People say this to express frustration when other does not feel for them. The American equivalent for it would be “only the wearer knows where the shoe pinches”. Another meaning of the Yemeni proverb is that those who come to trouble by their own feet will fall in trouble. Thus, the American proverb above is the equivalent of the second meaning of the Yemeni proverb: that is, if one engages in harmful or dangerous activities, one should expect that negative consequences can follow.

Y – Man shaaf asdaq min man sima’a

The one who saw is quite surer than the one who heard.

A – Believe none of what you hear and half of what you see.

The Yemeni proverb tells people not to believe in all that they hear and should instead rely on what they themselves have seen. The American proverb implies that what one hears sometimes turns out to be false. So it is better not to easily believe in what one hears from others and give more weight to what one sees with one’s own eyes. However, sometimes what is seen also can be falsely understood. Both proverbs carry the message that one should always be certain before one makes judgments as they can sometimes be based on false allegations.

Y – Ibn al bit ‘awam

The fledgling of a duck is a floater.

A – Like father, like son.

These proverbs reveal that parents' characters and actions have a direct bearing on their children either by inheritance or upbringing and education. Parents influence their children's characters and careers. The children usually inherit genetic and behavioral personality characteristics, morals and values from their parents in some ways. The context of usage may range from praise to sarcasm.

Y – *Yaseeb al ba'arah wa yukhti al ba'aer*

He misses the camel and hits the dung.

A – All talk no action.

The Yemeni proverb is quoted when someone pretends to be brave and just but when danger comes, they become afraid and fail to do nothing. For example, when a strong man is wrong against a weak one, this person knowingly still sides with the strong one. Such people are unable to do what they said and go against their own words. The proverb given by an American informant as the American equivalent implies that some people keep saying that, in a particular hypothetical situation, they will do many things, but when things happen for real they become afraid or unable to do what they said. It is used when a person means to mock such people. However this proverb is not entirely similar contextually.

Y – *'Adm bil hanjarah*

A bone in the throat

A – A thorn in the side

These proverbs are used for people who are irrational and too difficult to deal with, but cannot be simply left alone. It is difficult to deal with them and yet it is difficult too to leave them alone. They become a source of frustration.

Y – Khuth alhikmah min afwah almajaneen

Take wisdom from the mouths of mad people.

A – Don't judge a book by its cover.

The Yemeni proverb implies that wisdom lies where one expects least: ironically, wisdom may come out of the mouth of a mad person. The American proverb implies a similar message though expressed differently: that is, wisdom sometimes exists where one does not know. Things must not be taken at face value; value sometimes lies within and appearances can be deceptive. The difference between the two proverbs is a matter of contextual use: whereas the American proverb is seen as an advice with serious overtones, the Yemeni proverb is mostly used to poke fun at someone who, unexpectedly and to everyone's amusement, has said something wise. But the Yemeni proverb can also be used in the same context as the American counterpart.

Y – Ma ymlaa gauf ibn Adam ela al turab

Only sand can fill the stomach of the son of Adam.

A – The grass is always greener on the other side.

The Yemeni proverb means that man is greedy by nature and always wants more than he has, therefore only something as available in abundance as sand could satisfy his hunger. Similarly, the American proverb talks of human greed: man always feels he has less than he wants, and is therefore running after 'more'.

Y – Thi ma lah awal ma lah tali

He who has no beginning has no end.

A – People who don't remember their history are destined to repeat it.

What these two proverbs have in common is the importance of knowing one's history, and of having history as well, so as to be able to cope with the future. Both the American and Yemeni

also extend their association to impart derogatory tone of those who are ignorant of their past, since those people are most likely prone to repeat similar mistakes to those that happened a long time ago.

Y – Ma fi samak bila shawk

There is no fish without bones.

A – There is no rose without a thorn.

These proverbs are very apt equivalents of each other. Both use metaphors to indicate that pleasant things also require labor and toil to be obtained. To get the rose, one has to deal with its thorns; to eat a fish, one has also to deal with its bones. There is always some hardship or difficulty to be faced.

Y – Sa'aah li rabi wa sa'aah li qalbi

One hour for my God and one for my heart.

A – All work and no play make Jack a dull boy.

The Yemeni proverb presents an antithetical statement juxtaposing spiritual and mundane needs. The gist of the proverb is that one should always try to strike and maintain balance between these complementary types of need in order to lead a balanced life. More inclination to any side may as well result in extremist attitude to life or the afterlife, often spoiling one or both. The American proverb, too, propagates this idea of balance in life. As there should be time for serious matters, so should there be time for recreation and merrymaking.

Y – Dharbah ba al saeef wala dharbah bil qalam

A strike with a sword is more tolerable than a strike with a pen.

A – A pen is mightier than a sword.

According to the Yemeni proverb, the impact of sustaining physical damage is more tolerable

than that of personal damage in terms of slander. In American society, some American informants maintained that they believe in peace and non-violence to be more powerful than ignorance and force. Inspiring a person to do something is more powerful and meaningful than threatening the same person to do the same something. This proverb is used to advise those who prefer force to negotiations to deal with matters. Both societies believe that the impact created by pen is more powerful than that created by sword.

Y – Al baher yatqaees wabn adam malah qiaas

The sea can be gauged, but humans cannot be.

A – The human race has improved everything except people.

Both American and Yemeni societies agree that humans are very difficult to be gauged. Whereas the depth of a sea, a symbol of mystery, is possible to gauge, the depths of human mind and heart are even deeper, perhaps bottomless. People do not behave in the same manner in all given circumstances. The thoughts and actions of human beings are sometimes too uncertain to be predicted. Their opinions, moods, intentions, estimations, aspirations, dreams keep changing very often. So, we can never guess exactly what lies in the mind of a person. Both proverbs are used when an unexpected or unpredicted behavior by someone takes place.

Y – Al nadhafah min al eman

Cleanliness is from faith.

A – Cleanliness is akin to godliness.

In American and Yemeni societies, cleanliness is given a divine status. In Yemeni society, as cleanliness is very important, people attribute it to one of the characteristics of faith. In American society, cleanliness is considered to be divine. People use these proverbs to reproach those who are untidy, and to appreciate those who are tidy.

Y – Akher zamaan, nataqa al hadeed watkabbar al ‘abeed

At the end of time, iron speaks, and slaves become pompous.

A – Time changes everything.

The Yemeni proverb implies that some signs of the apocalypse or end of time have manifested themselves in “iron speaks”, i.e. through the advancement of technology (TV, radio), resulting at the same time in degradation in moral values. Another sign, which used to be as implausible as “iron speaks”, is the dramatic change in slaves’ conditions, i.e. slaves are not only free but have become pompous. These indications imply palpable manifestations of the change of time, and the proximity of the end of time as well. The American proverb, by contrast, refers only to the ceaseless wheel of change and evolution through time. Both the Yemeni and American proverbs are mostly used to criticize someone who has changed their behavior and became arrogant. There is always a sense of disappointment felt by the users of these proverbs. Moreover, the American proverb is also used to enlighten people not to get surprised by the drastic changes happening in society.

Y – Akhas alkhabaya al soof wa alsbaya

The worst to stock are wool and girls.

A – A whistling girl and an old black sheep are two of the best things a farmer can keep.

There is a contrast between these proverbs. In Yemeni society, the two things considered to be stored the least are women and wool: a girl may become sinister and wool might be affected by moth or mite. Early marriages are therefore encouraged; keeping a girl without marriage for a long time often brings disgrace to a family. In American society, a whistling girl is a shepherd and wool is considered to be the most precious thing. Certain sects of shepherds rear sheep only to obtain wool from them. As there are cold areas in America, production of wool is a profitable

business.

Y – Ekrim dhaefak walu kan ‘aduk

Be generous to your guest even if he is your enemy.

A – Kill your enemy with kindness.

Both proverbs convey the same message of generosity even if there is animosity people have towards opponents. As every society longs to spread positive energy, love, fraternity among its members and promotes positive thinking, Yemeni and American societies advise their citizens to be generous to all including opponents. As per the American proverb, the most damage that you can do to your enemy is to show the greatest kindness making him feel ashamed of his enmity.

One noteworthy point in the Yemeni proverb is that respect and hospitality should be meted out to the guests even when they happen to be your adversaries. It is expressed in Holy Quran that we need to show the best of our kindness to our enemy to make him the most loyal to us of all. This is used to convey that whoever, irrespective of friends or enemies, they are they have to be treated respectfully and generously.

Y – Heen yati al qadar ya’ama al basar

When fate comes, insight gets blinded.

A – Fate can be taken by the horns like a goat and pushed in the right direction.

There is a contradiction between the American and Yemeni proverbs. While in the Yemeni proverb, people accept fate to be like an invincible force in their lives, the American proverb savors of a challenging spirit. Yemenis generally use this proverb for problems or calamities where they have to stand helpless, such as the death of someone close: one had better accept it rather than rebel against “fate”. That is to say, acceptance in such cases is the better of two bitter truths. However, in matters that can be fixed, there are some proverbs to urge people to challenge

fate:

إذا الشعب يوماً أراد الحياة فلا بد أن يستجيب القدر

If, one day, the nation wills to live\ Fate must positively respond.

The meeting point between the Yemeni and American proverbs is fate and how people in these different cultures deal with its dictates. Americans think that they can turn the fate to their favor through assiduous and diligent efforts. Under pressure and problems they will become more rational and wise. Similarity between the two cultures stands on their belief in the existence of fate. While in Yemen people use this proverb to soothe those who have a disaster, the Americans use their proverb when they try to resurrect the spirits of people to disasters bravely.

Y – Duq hisab tadum suhbah

Keep the credit account even with your friend so that friendship will remain.

A – Short accounts make long friends.

One of the socially recommended habits in Yemeni culture is to be generous with friends and also maintain clear accounts with each other: everybody should know what he has to pay before he thinks of what he should obtain. Even among the closest friends, one should return the favors or the borrowed things in a manner showing courtesy as a sign of faithfulness so that friendship lasts forever. This habit appears to be shared by the American culture as well. Both proverbs convey the similar meaning. They emphasize on the need to make deposits into an emotional bank accounts with our friends through courtesy, kindness, honesty and keeping our commitment to them. This is a continuous process. At no stage should one take one's friends for granted. The Yemeni proverb says that to retain friendship with one's friends one should not mix money with friendship. The American proverb conveys the same message. Since the value of friendship is bigger than that of money, it is generally accepted that unclear financial dealings between friends

can spoil it so it is always better to keep accounts clear between friends.

Y – Kul ‘ala ma tahib wa albas ‘ala ma yahib ghaerak

Eat what you like, but dress according to what people like.

A – Eat to please yourself, but dress to please others.

Both American and Yemeni proverbs give prime importance to the way one dresses oneself up. Living in a society, people should always maintain pleasant looks. In both societies, they lay emphasis on how one looks rather than on what one eats. Nobody is concerned much about what one eats. But people are concerned about how one looks. Very often people judge a person according to the way s/he looks.

Y – Man ‘alamani harfan sirtu laho ‘abdan

He who teaches me a letter, a slave for him I become.

A – He who teaches me for a day is my father for a lifetime.

Both proverbs reflect the great status allotted to teachers and mentors by both the Yemeni and American societies. The willed “enslavement” in the Yemeni proverb is an indication of respect, gratitude and lifetime obedience. While the Yemeni proverb promotes the teacher to that of a master – i.e. unquestionable authority – the American proverb uplifts the teacher’s status to that of a father, adding more intimacy to the student-teacher relationship. However, generally, the overall message of both proverbs is to stress the sense of gratitude one should show to those who teach one or added to one’s knowledge.

Y – Kallib wala tizarrib

Use dogs (for protecting an area) rather than a fence.

A – Good fence! Horse high and bull strong.

In Yemeni society, people prefer dogs to fences in saving a house or farm from theft. A dog

alerts its master immediately when a stranger appears in the surroundings. Americans prefer fences in protecting their homes. These fences are constructed in the height of a horse and they are as strong as “bulls”. In fact, these proverbs signify the living conditions of people. In Yemeni society people use dogs more than fences to protect their farms and houses, because intruders can break into fences while in the case of dogs the proprietor will be able to sense the intruders’ presence before they have intruded, and also because thieves are normally cowards and are likely to run away once they hear a dog barking. Irrespective of the means of protection, both societies feel the necessity of protecting one’s property against intruders.

Y – Mahad yaghatti ‘aaeen al shams bi mankhul

Don’t shield the sun beams with a sieve.

Y – Don’t hide your light under a bushel.

Both American and Yemeni proverbs express the futile attempt of someone who tries to hide the truth of a situation using irrelevant excuses or silly attempts because truth is so clear in such a situation. Both proverbs seem to reflect similar perceptions of such context between both cultures.

Y – Sahbak al awal la yaghurak al thani

Your friend is the first, not the second.

Y – Make new friends but keep the old, for one is silver and the other gold

The Yemeni proverb emphasizes the importance of old friends. An old friend who has proved himself worthy of friendship is far better than a new friend who may one day prove to be disloyal. People normally use this proverb to warn a person against leaving a good old friend in favor of acquiring a new friend who might have latent betrayal tendencies. The American proverb conveys that one needs to make new friends but at the same keep the old ones.

Americans categorize friends in terms of precious metals: while the old is gold the new is silver. Both proverbs stress the importance of keeping old friends, but while the Yemeni proverb does not show signs of encouraging new friendships (though it does not discourage people from that), the American proverb does.

Y – Akhir al ‘ailaj al kai

The last resort is the hot iron.

A – The last drop makes the cup run over.

Using ironing for medical purposes used to be common in Yemen (and still to a very limited extent, especially in rural areas). The Yemeni proverb is derived from the ancient methods of curing some diseases. But it has always been uncertain that a disease would be cured by ironing, and because ironing is a very painful experience, people resorted to that method only as a last recourse. It is always doubtful whether ironing will yield the expected results without causing a permanent harm or damage to the organ being ironed. The Yemeni proverb is generally used when one expresses his tendency to use an extreme measure to solve a problem, knowing that the solution may lead to unthinkable and undesirable consequences. By contrast, the American proverb, given by an informant of this study to be the equivalent of the Yemeni proverb, conveys that if one tries to do something beyond one's capacity, the attempt will lead to unthinkable consequences. Both proverbs indicates caution against an extreme measure that one may decide to take to solve a problem since certainty of solution is low and possibility of damage is very likely.

Y – Alharabat katheerah wa alzaqrah wahidah

Many flights (of a fugitive), one catch.

Y – Long runs the fox, but at last is caught.

The Yemeni proverb conveys that no matter how long one runs away from justice, will sooner or later be caught. Normally, this proverb is used by people to warn someone who has taken a loan or borrowed something is dodging the payback or returning the loan or the thing borrowed. We can hope for justice despite many injustices happened. That is, a debtor may try to escape from their sight to avoid giving back what he owes to them, but they will sooner or later catch him one way or another and force him to give back what he owes. By contrast, the American proverb cautions those who venture wrongdoings unstoppably assuming that they can run away from justice. A fox is mentioned as an example for someone who is cunning. Thus, it is used to warn people who make mistakes and try to go scot-free. Both proverbs warn people who try to dodge their duties and obligations, and stress that justice always takes place sooner or later.

Y – Etha thaman al badwi eqsim nusfaeen

If a Bedouin tells you a price, give him half (of what he said).

A – Do not buy at too dear a price.

Both Yemeni and American proverbs convey the same message. The Yemeni proverb reflects the manner of transactions or dealings between urban and nomadic people in Yemen. In Yemeni society, when a Bedouin, a tribal nomadic person who travels from one place to another place tending stock for his livelihood, proposes a price for something he wants to sell, buyers should negotiate and pay him only half of the price. Generally, bargaining is a prevalent feature of the Yemeni markets. However, the unstated implication in this proverb is that Bedouins are either cheats (by raising the prices of what they want to sell) or simpletons (who can be easily cheated by buyers). But the general message of the proverb is that one should not buy something at a very high price especially from someone whom one does not know or is unable to reach thereafter. Similarly, the American proverb conveys that when prices are too high it is

recommended not to buy expensive things unless it is imperative for you. Another implication of the American proverb is that one should not try to do or have something by making excessive sacrifices.

Y – Min bakar ma nidam

He who starts early never regrets.

A – The early bird gets the worm.

Both the proverbs convey that those who start early in their lives always get benefited. These proverbs imply that when there is an opportunity to get a benefit, the first to reach it normally has it. The proverbs encourage people to take initiative to venture into new things and not to hesitate to take up new tasks because nobody has tried them before. The general message is that people should be proactive and innovative to take up new and adventurous tasks. Whereas the Yemeni proverb juxtaposes the process of starting an activity early with lack of regret to convey the message, the American proverb uses the metaphors of bird (man) and worm (prize) to deliver the same message.

4.4 Most common proverbs given by the American and Yemeni informants towards group three of the questionnaire:

According to the data gathered from the questionnaire, in group 3, question number 4, in which the informants have been asked to write down five or more proverbs used by them regularly, the following table shows the frequency of each proverb alongside an equivalent from the other culture. Their being most frequently cited by the respondents on their own, and matching, seems to imply that such thoughts, in common, remain in the minds of human beings most of the times irrespective of which culture they belong to. This seems to suggest that in spite

of all external differences, there is universality in the human nature, indicating the oneness of human endeavor, and how humans try to best meet life's situations, e.g. the sense of belonging, striving for truth and justice, hope for equality, quest for knowledge as early as possible, good conduct, good living conditions, punctuality, awareness of human impermanence, faith, stemming sexual inequality, helping relatives, rationality in making decisions. Such situations are the most important ones as expressed through proverbs.

Homeland,

Y – Love for the homeland is part of faith.

A – Home is where you act the worst and are treated the best.

Justice:

Y – Equality in injustice (to everybody) is (itself) justice.

A – Justice is blind.

Racism:

Y – We are all the children of Adam.

A – We're all Adam's children; silk makes the difference.

Education:

Y – Early education is like engraving on stone.

A – Education is the best provision for old age

Morality and values:

Y – If you are incapable of feeling ashamed, do whatever you like.

A – Behavior is a mirror in which everyone shows his image.

Poverty and wealth:

Y – Content is an inexhaustible treasure.

A – Poverty consists in feeling poor.

Time:

Y – Time is a school.

A – Time is the best teacher.

Belief:

Y – Fear not your destiny.

A – You can't fight destiny; submit to it.

Friendship:

Y – Friendship is a treasure that never fades.

A – Friendship is a great treasure.

Gender:

Y – There is a woman beyond every great man.

A – A man without a woman is like a ship without a sail.

Relatives:

Y – O Soup Distributor, soup should be given first to your family.

A – If you have nothing, go to your relatives.

Neutrality:

Y – Middle is always the best choice.

A – A middle course is the safest.

| Proverb no. | American informants (out of 240) | | Yemeni informants (out of 500) | |
|----------------|----------------------------------|------------|--------------------------------|------------|
| | Frequency | Percentage | Frequency | Percentage |
| 1 | 90 | 37.5 | 150 | 30 |
| 2 | 55 | 22.9 | 112 | 22.4 |
| 3 | 72 | 30 | 214 | 42.8 |
| 4 | 130 | 54.1 | 302 | 60.4 |
| 5 | 49 | 20.4 | 280 | 56 |
| 6 | 32 | 13.3 | 190 | 38 |
| 7 | 45 | 18.7 | 103 | 20.6 |
| 8 | 84 | 35 | 260 | 52 |
| 9 | 29 | 12.1 | 211 | 42.2 |
| 10 | 75 | 31.2 | 200 | 40 |
| 11 | 61 | 25.4 | 116 | 23.2 |
| 12 | 48 | 20 | 201 | 40.2 |

One general conception has been captured from both cultures as an indication of what anthropologists give as a meaning to the word, 'culture' (which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of the society): the proverbs of a culture reflect what the members of the community regard as commonsense, or as a moral to be comprehended. Having commonsense may be, let's say being the economist, or as the Yemeni proverb "Middle is always the best of choices" as cited by the informants, explain and relate to the daily expenditure. An equivalent too has been given by the

American counterparts as they put it: “A middle course is the safest”.

The results indicated in the table above show that, in general, Yemenis people tend to memorize and use proverbs more than their American counterpart do. Some factors seem to have impacted on this result. Yemenis are traditionalists, while Americans tend to modernize their culture and follow cultural vogues or fashions (e.g. the hip-hop, hippies’ cultures). Yemenis appear to have in common more than Americans do. For example, the sweeping majority of Yemenis are Arabs in origin; Americans came from different races. The dominant culture in Yemen is Islamic and most customs and traditions are shared by (or at least known to) everybody; Americans came from different cultures with different ‘religions’ and have various “customs and traditions”. Arabic is the dominant language in Yemen despite dialectal variations particular to each area (intelligible to all, though); although English is the dominant language in America, Spanish is still in use in some areas.

While Yemenis view their proverbs as a part of their cultural heritage, which they should adamantly preserve and pass to next generations, Americans, especially the young generation, seem to reflect a general tendency toward adopting ‘newness’ even in cultural practices. Yemenis cherish their Arabic Islamic culture to the extent that, for instance, when the researcher asked anyone to provide the study with some proverbs, everyone would supply a huge number on the trot. Yemenis are famous for their wisdom among Arabs and Muslim nations. They derive their wisdom from their daily practices with their culture as the basis of what they say or what they do.

Beside to the collection of Yemeni and American proverbs, twelve different proverbs have been analyzed in their own context to show the similar and the common ground of opinions between the Americans and Yemenis. The general aim is to reflect the true human image and to

help correct misguided stereotyping of the “Other” as being completely different rather than mostly similar. For instance, one finds proverbs suggesting the acceptance of the “Others”, e.g. “When in Rome, do as Romans do” versus “If among other people, worship what they worship”. It encourages intercultural tolerance by people and acceptance of other people and of their differences. It seems that all proverbs in this regard lead to one conclusion: “We’re all Adam’s children; silk makes the difference”.

The proverbs cited by the American informants from different places do convey images of ethnic groupings, despite the variations which may be found. The opinions of different groups have been given as samples in Appendix C. For instance, in an interview with one of the American informants, she indirectly confirmed that the American society is still affected by ethnic classifications and racist chauvinism: e.g. “Middle East Ethnic Group” has been categorized officially only after the 9/11. On the other hand, Yemenis, as well as Arabs, traditionally called a black person ‘*a’bd*’, which means a slave, associating blackness with slavery – ironically, there must have been so many Arabs, especially in coastal areas who were not slaves at all. That is to say, the word ‘*a’bd*’ has passed through a semantic process of amelioration (or perhaps deterioration) and extended its meaning to describe also any black person. But since the number of blacks in Yemen and surrounding countries is small, the word caught this meaning being used by the non-black majority. The words ‘*a’bd*’ and ‘*khaadem*’ now are even sometimes used jocularly between friends if one of them has black complexion. Slavery in fact disappeared from Arab countries in general and Yemen in particular a long time ago in history. However, such proverbs as “*a’ql khadim*” (a slave’s mind: i.e. there is no use of asking him for help; or this is a short-sighted or ungrateful person) seem to have remained and passed through generations. Thus, black complexion is no more taken as a social classification of an

ethnic group. People in Yemen associate blackness with actions, rather than with skin: blackness of behavior refers to misbehavior, bad actions or habits.

A critical discussion with some of the Yemeni informants regarding *The ABC of American Culture* by Stan Nussbaum came up with a kind of Ten Yemeni Cultural Commandments, same as what Nussbaum calls ‘The Ten Commandments of American Culture’, which are as follows:

1. You can’t argue with success (Be a success).
2. Live and let live.
3. Time flies when you’re having fun (Have lots of fun).
4. Shop till you drop.
5. Just do it.
6. No pain, no gain (Get tough).
7. Enough is enough (Stand up for your rights).
8. Time is money (Don’t waste time).
9. Rules are made to be broken (Think for yourself).
10. God helps those who help themselves (Work hard).

These ten “Ten Commandments of American Culture” are cultural values and not the “Ten Commandments” of the Bible.

In No. 1, Nussbaum considers success as probably the most praised thing in American life: it relates to so many other characteristics of American life –individualism, freedom, goal-setting, progress, social mobility, making money. Americans want to ‘make a success of themselves.’ This is the “American Dream”, which has attracted millions of immigrants and been taught to generations of American children. Yemenis agree over this: the Yemeni informants

view success as a characteristic of collective life-progress. To the Yemenis, however, the aspects of success in life (e.g. making money, etc.) are achieved by the individual but counted for the group, such as the family, tribe, or even the whole society. Yemenis are very concerned about the way of success than success itself, i.e. honest success that will be accepted by the group, society and by God, and dishonest success (which may include wealth and high status, but not regarded as success). Therefore, there are two important factors for Yemenis to accept a person as successful: honesty and patience/perseverance, and thus they say their first cultural commandment is, "Patience is the key to success".

2. Americans give more importance to privacy and 'selfhood' than Yemenis do. They like to be "left alone". Yemenis like to be in group even though at times they may criticize each other, which may be considered as an attack of someone's private matters or self-esteem. This can be attributed to the Yemenis' belief in religious teachings instructing people to remain together. In the States, to do so is to break one of the most basic rules of American life, as it has been explained by Nussbaum. Yemenis say: "Mistaken with the group, better than accurate alone": this can be regarded the second Yemeni cultural commandment.

3. The writer comments on "the time flies" by saying that

"Americans try to have as much fun as possible. Much of our fun comes through various kinds of entertainment, especially TV. But we also try to turn other activities into fun. Shopping is fun. Eating is fun, and in case it is not enough fun, we will put a playground inside the fast-food restaurant so the kids can have fun playing while the grown-ups have fun sitting and eating. That is why "time flies," that is, time seems to go by very quickly." (p.8)

Yemeni informants considered having too much fun as waste of time; they said fun should be

within the duty, i.e. duty itself should be seen as fun, not the fun in the American way. They do watch TV, do shopping, travel, celebrate, get together, but they consider these as a part of their duties. Yemenis, like Americans, are very time-conscious, but they do not care how much practical they are. Their third commandment for time is “One hour for God and another for your heart”.

4. The author states that by saying “shop till you drop”, it is meant that “Many Americans shop as a form of recreation. Even if we are not shopping for anything in particular, we simply enjoy looking at all the options.” Here, one of the Yemeni informants pointed out that in Yemen the options are very limited compared to the States. Besides, Yemenis are aware that markets normally exhibit a lot of enticing items, which most of the time they are lured to buy. However, Yemenis consider that it is waste of money to buy unnecessary things. Therefore, the Yemeni fourth commandment would be summarized in this proverb: “If your money comes back safe from the market, thank Allah (for that)”.

5. Nussbaum explains the fifth: “We are people of action. We do not like too much planning ... We do not like rules and regulations that prevent action. We get an idea and we want to *just do it*.” However, “Not at all” was the reaction to this American commandment by the Yemeni informants, who said: “Yemenis have to think, plan, and consult the elders before taking many actions in their lives.” Therefore, “He who makes consultation, never regret” is the Fifth Yemeni equivalent commandment. Consultation is seen as the key to success. Planning, checking regulations, or informing people is more valuable than action.

6. In America, according to the writer explaining the sixth commandment, “If someone often complains about how hard something is, they call that person a ‘wimp.’ We look down on such people.” But in Yemen, according to the informants, the concept of life is different: life in itself

is painful, and the one who complains has the right to do so. People take it as the way of life, and normally support and respect the person who struggles to achieve something in life for his own benefit or for his community. The sixth Yemeni commandment would thus be as such: “Sweetness can’t be gained, without pain”.

7. Nussbaum says in his book “Human rights and dignity are so basic to American thinking that we assume everyone else must think the same way. This proverb implies the command, “Stand up for your rights.” In the American Revolution, America as a nation said to Britain, *Enough is enough*, that is, “You have ruled us for long enough. You will not rule us anymore.” According to some of the Yemeni informants, this attitude is also shared by Yemenis. Although Yemenis are religiously instructed to obey their ruler, even if the ruler is tyrant (so long as the ruler obeys the basic commandments of Islam), they may put up with oppression to certain extent but they soon stand up for their rights (e.g. the British colonizers and the Imamate rulers). Hence, the seventh Yemeni commandment would be “From now onwards, cows must be sent back”, implying that the speaker has decided to put an end to an unjust situation.

8. While the eighth American commandment regards time to be as valuable as money itself, it would be interesting to indicate that money in the Yemeni society does not have that much importance in opinion of individuals and people in general compared to their attention to their reputation, faith and health. To the Yemenis, money is a means to serve these purposes, although it can be used as a powerful weapon to deal with a lot of situations: “Money is the root of all evils”, or “Money can force the genies to obey”. But Yemenis, as already been mentioned earlier, do not recommend that time be wasted. Therefore the analogy Nussbaum puts forward may not be fit to describe the Yemeni attitude to both time and money. According to Nussbaum, Americans are very time-conscious and very money-conscious. The eighth Yemeni

commandment would therefore be: “Time is like a sword: if you don’t cut it (with serious work), it will cut you”.

9. Nussbaum comments: ‘Americans think more of changing rules but they obey laws, they say, *Rules are made to be broken*, we never say, “Laws are made to be broken”’. Yemenis do have the motto “No one is above law” to refer to equality of all citizens in legal matters; however, the course of events in the country shows otherwise. Yemenis tend to respect rules and regulations whenever they see that nobody breaches them, but when they find themselves in a legally loose environment, they tend to jump on the bandwagon, sometimes by using “Ibn Haadi’s share”, i.e. bribe in order to “turn around the law”, i.e. ‘use the backdoor’. Yemenis have more than the rest of the world what is called “rules and laws”; they do respect them, but when they apply them, it goes to poor people; strong people don’t obey the rules. That is why Yemenis go by the proverb, “compromise better than straight and long law” that became a rule for Yemenis to solve their problems, instead of going to the courts. “No one is above the law.” is only decoration of the official speech. As many people involved in the discussion said.

10. Nussbaum says:

“In a list of “Ten Commandments,” one might expect that God would be mentioned in the first commandment rather than the last one. But in American culture, God actually does come at the end of the list. For most Americans, God is much less a concern than success, money and time. (There are many Americans who put God at the top of their personal list of priorities, but they are a minority within American culture).” (p.53)

When this commandment was explained to the Yemeni informants, their reaction was very simple that “no worries, most of them are unbelievers and they worship their Almighty Dollar;

for us Allah knows what is in our hearts, and everything is from Him, by Him, and to Him. They cited the last commandment as, “Man proposes but God disposes”.

4.5 Conclusion

The proverbs given by the informants were their own choice, signifying their interest and thoughts towards themselves and their surroundings. A complete picture of the 12 most commonly cited proverbs comes to existence by using knowledge acquired from other sources (informants' interviews) which makes it possible to discern those aspects of the images of the groups which this set of proverbs does not touch; for example, little attention or importance is paid to women's ill-reputation for looseness, issues of virginity, etc. Emphasis has been given to daily usage and comparability, which may be of use in research by making it possible to know new values and cultural aspects from both societies and to react to them accordingly.

These proverbs and other forms of folklore are valuable to social researchers by providing a baseline for the comparison of recent responses to inquiries about social attitudes in different cultures. Folklore preserves more traditional attitudes and forms in which these attitudes are encapsulated. Dominant attitudes and cultural patterns in proverbs from both cultures have been reviewed critically. Framework for the discussion has been formed in terms of four major categories: body or physical self, the individual's status, relationships, and authority. It is presumed that a nation's collective attitudes and characteristics are crystallized, highlighted and indexed by its proverbs. These proverbial attitudes remarkably parallel a catalogue of characteristics frequently assigned to the people of the two countries.

Proverbs preserve the oral tradition of literature in the life of Yemeni and American peoples with regard to their habits, behavior, beliefs and prejudices. A comparative and

contrastive study of their proverbs provides a wider scope for a cultural study comparing both of them (and with other people from another places). Such a comparative study on systematic lines can make it possible to understand to some extent the vital and basic similarities of the peoples of the two cultures. This study has attempted to carry out this task as represented by the study groups. Bearing in mind the influence exerted by one's religious background, it is relevant to pinpoint that the majority in Yemeni society are Muslims while Christianity is dominating in the American society (although religion does not seem to play the same role in the U.S. as it does in Yemen). It is generally observed that religion and philosophical attitudes to life are the most vital parts of any culture. This study of the Yemeni and American proverbs has attempted to establish as objectively as possible close and intimate affinities between the Americans and Yemenis in the intellectual, literary and cultural levels.

Moreover, society is an organized body consisting of people of a thousand types and categories, and family forms part and parcel of a society. Family consists of individuals who, despite the fact that family members can have a lot in common, entertain various views. A society itself can be seen as one big family united by several threads, yet its members sometimes nurturing various ideologies and sentiments. Most proverbs are seen to strengthen such familial communicative ties and enhance one's sense of belonging to one's culture and tradition in various moods. For instance, patriotism and love for one's country is seen as a universal message shared by all communities and cultures: both the American proverb "*home is where you act the worst and are treated the best*" and the Yemeni proverb "*hub alawtaan min aleymaan*" (love of the homeland is part of faith) convey the same message of one's love for one's country: to the Yemenis, loyalty and obligation to one's land are not only a natural duty but also part of faith. The same obligation to one's land can also be seen by the Americans: "He loves his country best

who strives to make it best”.

It is widely believed that education is a systematic and scientific process through which the heart is cultivated. As a matter of course, education is for life, through life and throughout life. It is easy for the potter to mold any vessel in any shape or pattern according to his sweet will and pleasure, provided that the clay is wet (and, of course, he has the skill and the tools). Likewise, the young and tender age is the fittest and the most appropriate period to impart knowledge and mold the right type of character: *Early education is like engraving on stone*. This proverb reflects the awareness of Yemeni regarding the importance of educating children at an early age. In fact, this view is also shared by their American counterparts expressing a similar opinion through the American proverb; *Education is the best provision for old age*.

To cap it all, it has been found that in spite of the fact that some differences do exist between both cultures, which can be ascribed to the difference in ideologies, life-styles, traditions, customs, linguistic factors, religions among others, there seems to be some kind of universality expressed through proverbs. This, in a way or another, is due to the fact that the results clearly illustrate that the points both the culture, viz. Yemeni and American show more similarities than differences. This will be thoroughly discussed in Chapter V, which presents the conclusion of the study as a whole. Suffice it to say here that every language has an expressive power peculiar to it, yet equivalent to that of any other language. In that, whatever is expressed in any language can be expressed in any other language regardless of structuring or wording.

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Chapter Five

Conclusion

In conclusion to this study, it is worthwhile saying that proverbs are still getting into my way from everywhere. Yemeni and American friends keep sending me proverbs, telling me that they heard or used them in so-and-so situations of their daily life. If the main objective of the research was to trace and list all the proverbs in both the Yemeni and American cultures, the end of horizon would be the end of writing. The main focus of the thesis, however, was to show how proverbs can be seen as an index to the points of convergence and divergence between the Yemeni and American cultures. It has been demonstrated how proverbs can sometimes echo the universality of human experience, and how at other times they reflect different views of similar issues. Certain proverbs can be used in different cultures in similar situations, bridging the cultural gap and paving the road for a common ground.

The data that have been collected for this study can be used through the media for broadcasting under any program concerned with comparative folklores or cultures. Such data may help to bring about a better understanding of some of the controversial social issues, i.e. the social attitudes towards women as expressed in folklore and in proverbs in particular, the confusion of mixing social values and traditions with what is considered as beliefs or religious issues. Above all, much more attention should be paid to the continued employment of proverbs in the modern age of technology, the mass media, the internet, and globalization in general (Mieder, 1993). In this context, rational reinterpretations of culture, folklore and proverb lore are

required to make people understand the self and the others, leading to a harmony within and beyond, sharing the similarities and celebrating the differences.

Proverbs stand as oral representation of a community and manifestations of its daily life and the way people live and think. This may provide a better and more honest understanding of those people and their regions. For a long time media has continued to exert a deforming effect on the way American people can imagine others, such as Yemeni Arab people. This has created a bitter sense of indignation among Arabs in general and Yemenis in particular and has often led to a form of extreme reaction in some cases. Based on this, this research has attempted to correct certain misunderstandings in the hope that the concerned communities will be able to build a more 'correct' view of one another.

During the interviews with the experts of folklore, the study of proverbs has proved to echo several important cultural issues. In an interview with Al-Hamadani, he said about the use of proverbs in the Yemeni community:

أنها تستخدم في معظم الأحيان حيث يتردد المثل اليمنى على مسامعي من فئات المجتمع اليمنى المختلفة
لا بد من توجيه الأمثال بصورة ايجابية نحو معالجة كثير من الاختلالات و السلوكيات السلبية في المجتمع
لاسيما تجاه الشباب فهي إجمالاً شيقة و ممتعة و يجب حسن الاستخدام لها في المجتمع.... أن لها تأثير على
المستمع و تغيير في السلوك و ... تعكس ثقافة و سلوك الشعب اليمنى و يتم توظيفها بطريقة ايجابية في
معظم الحالات و هي نوع من أنواع الحوار النقدي و التربية و التوجيه السلوكي التي يتم التعامل معها.

[Translation: [Proverbs] are commonly used as I keep hearing them from the various strata of the Yemeni society They [the proverbs] should be positively oriented to tackling a lot of disorders and negative behavior in the society, especially as far as the youth are concerned. Proverbs are generally interesting and amusing, and they have to be used well.... Proverbs surely have an influence

on the listener and on changing his/her attitude, and ... they reflect the culture and communal behavior of the Yemenis. Most of the time, proverbs are used positively, and they are a kind of critical dialog and a way of cultivation and psychological orientation.]

Similarly, as Finnegan notes, ‘proverbs are used on particular occasions, by individuals in particular contexts and their wit; their attractiveness, their insights, even their meaning must be seen as arising from the context’ (1970). The researcher incorporates this principle (as indicated by Al-Hamadani and Finnegan) as the basis of investigation, with a broader view that proverbs are also conversational ready-made (and can often be created) building blocks, culturally and intellectually. Ethnographic techniques suggested by Hymes (1962) have been employed, and literary criticism is utilized to draw out the significance of proverbs from their natural contexts.

Another point of importance that this research has made is how by using proverbs, speakers remain connected to their culture. Volubility and eloquence are reflection of how well a speaker understands his/her culture and how well s/he is able to put it to words. This point is somehow similar to what Ameen Jamoos (in a conversation) described as cultural chaining or deep-rootedness, where proverbs function as vehicles and as glue connecting a speaker to his/her community and its culture.

Broadly speaking, the genesis of most Yemeni proverbs lies deep in Islamic culture. Yet, local varieties charged with specific regional interests/moods etc., have added a special flavor to Yemeni heritage of proverbs. Thus, here emerges a new source from which Yemeni proverbs are being drawn, viz., typographical divisions.

Proverbs, like many other linguistic and literary messages, have listeners, speakers, messages, and medium. However, the emotional aspect of a proverb gives it a special distinction.

Hence, a proverb can be regarded as a vehicle for an emotionally charged speaker meant to be driven home to the heart and mind of the listener by way of emotional invocation. Besides the issue of emotion, I suppose that there are inexplicable unconscious moments when the use of proverbs complies with no apparent roles and follows no convincing reasoning. Put in a nutshell, if in one situation we manage to pin down a justification for using proverbs, in another situation we may not be able to find any.

Proverb still serves as a vent for many educated people's nostalgia. Indeed, they are among the remaining links to the traditional heritage of wisdom. They help keep certain ethical values in perpetual circulation. Recently, they have emerged with a new role that is, exposing the generational gap in modern Yemeni and American societies and cultures in terms of sharing common principles to have different needs and dreams. Many of the Yemeni and American proverbs have a good message for humanity just like many other proverbs all over the world. Sometimes, proverbs might appear contradictory to each other, but this does not mean that they are inappropriate norms of the society since they reflect the contradiction in life itself.

In her response to the question about American proverbs whether they are still in use among Americans and what roles they play in education and politics such as the proverbs have been used by Barak Obama's speech in Cairo, Emily, Folklore major, Bloomington, Indiana University, Indiana, comments that she does agree that proverbs are still in use in both politics and education, although she indicates that the Americans are "moving onto different types of oral folklore, and that these are things that linger on from the past", because "they [proverbs] keep coming into play in the way we lead our everyday lives". She maintains that she has "found some American presidents who still quote such idioms and proverbs to make their message clear

to the public ... [as a] smart little political move.... So it's a smart way to look back at American history and bring that up, like, localize things".

Despite their short forms, proverbs are known for the poetic quality inherent in them. Some famous literary figures have been distinguished with the use of proverbs and folklore in general. The American poet Carl Sandburg (1878-1967) with his ear close to the ground of proverbial folk speech, composed his long poem "Good Morning, America" (1928) as well as his epic poem "The People, Yes" (1936) (Mieder, 1971/ 1973). They are replete with hundreds of proverbs and proverbial expressions from all walks of life and ethnic minorities of the United States.

Likewise, many wise Yemeni figures, especially Ali bin Zaid, can make the rest of the world recite his lovely poems and sayings. If his poetry has been given its due care in terms of right interpretation and implementation by Yemenis themselves and translated into different languages, for the sake of give and take, several cultural misunderstandings would have been cleared. He was an authority in different norms regarding many aspects of life. His poems too, like Sandburg's, are full with proverbs and wisdoms from the land to people and from people to their land of Yemen and elsewhere. One of his famous proverbs is "Nothing overcomes poverty except cows and agriculture,/ Or the caravans that bring all commodities,/ Or a woman of high origin." Considering poverty to be the reason for humiliation and indicating that money is power, his theory of power for rural people rested on four pillars: cows, agriculture, camels and women of good origin.

Bin Zaid's hope, "Good Morning, Yemen", goes beyond time and place to become "Good Morning, World". His simple message of honesty, justice and peace, opposing the interfering into others' affairs, claiming help, justice, and equality, brings his point of view in

this wise saying: *“The one who feeds someone else’s son will surely depart with him with tearful eyes, and the one who plants someone else’s land will leave it even at the time of reaping”*. His poetry, usually short passages with short lines, reflects wisdom and genius in its real sense, as it depicts nearly everything about rural Yemeni man’s life. Not far off from him, Sandburg saw himself as the voice of the cross-section of American life, being very well aware of the fact that proverbs, despite their conciseness and simplicity, make up the worldview or mentality of practical life (Dundes, 1975/1976). As he put it in section eleven of *Good Morning, America*, it behooved lay-people and scholars alike to “behold the proverbs of a people, a nation”, for they are verbal and cultural signs of their mores and attitudes (1970: 328):

A code arrives; language; lingo; slang;

Behold the proverbs of the people, a nation:

...

Honesty is the best policy.

Historians and men of letters have different opinions about Bin Zaid’s origin, but they agree that he lived somewhere some time in Yemen. So, it is easier to prove that such proverbs are of Yemeni origin, which is not the case of the majority of the American ones. In the case of most American proverbs, it is difficult to ascertain the origin of a proverb and claim that it is purely American. Therefore, the problem of establishing the time when certain proverbs might have been coined in a particular state or region of the United States is even a more vexing proposition. In fact, the question of the origin of any particular proverb becomes a major research project in itself. It is thus extremely difficult to speak of American proverbs, *New England Proverbs* (Mieder, 1975), or even *Vermont proverbs* (Mieder, 1983).

Part of the results of this research concerning how much proverbs Americans informants were able to supply by asking them to give for the questionnaire or during the interviews, many Americans could not remember any at the beginning. The period they took to think of a proverb was longer than that a Yemeni informant took. Yemeni informants, when asked to supply some proverbs (five or more) regarding different issues, gave forty or so without hesitation; Americans hardly gave the five.

One of the findings is that American female informants were more than their Yemeni counterpart and vice versa for male informants. Tape-recording during interviews was not preferred by Yemeni female informants. Some questionnaire papers were left without giving the names or ages. Many American female informants argued about American proverbs which depict women as inferior, fragile and cunning; the Yemeni female informants did not show any objections while answering the questions related to the status of Yemeni women through proverbs. In spite of the various differences between Yemen and the United States in culture, languages, religions, environment, and geographical locations, this study shows similarities between their proverbs, especially in such concerns as health, education, friendship, neighborhood, family, belief and human observations (Chapter IV).

The meaning and the situational message of Yemeni and American proverbs have been examined through comparison as a means of expressing cultural and social values. In some cases, they do differ completely in their cultural source and wording but they can be used in similar situations to express similar or different ideas. Function and meaning have been given more focus, hoping to present through this study the maximum results of the cultural meaning of the Yemeni and American proverbs as many people consider them as indications in both

societies; people express their beliefs, values and attitudes towards their surroundings through them.

The research has attempted to address some questions related to proverbs and their literary, linguistic, and cultural significance. What elements reflect the correlation of qualitative linguistic differences and similarities in proverbial texts' individual cultures – ethnic traditions and the mode of spiritual life – and what has to be ascribed to phenomena typical of many cultures? What facts of language, linguistic stylistics and history of culture must be summoned up to investigate the national sources of proverbs and proverbial phrases of one's own people? And, finally, what is the ratio of internationally disseminated proverbs to proverbs of restricted distribution within the lore of one nation? Kazys Grigas throughout his long and active life tried to explicate some of these issues, especially regarding the national corpus of Lithuanian proverbs and its relationship to European proverbs in his comparative proverb collection *Patarliu paraleles* (1987), *Lietuviu patarles ir priežodžiai* (2000b) that will eventually comprise five massive volumes, as well as numerous essays tracing the origin and international distribution of individual proverbs (Grigas 1995, 1998).

There are many comparative collections which are based on the English language as a recognized world language. One appendix is given to show the American equivalents of Yemeni proverbs analyzed in Chapter III. The proverbs are listed as “English” in the Appendix but, for the most part, they are also hoped to be very much in use in the other parts of the world where English is spoken. After all, these equivalents with their limited number of entries deal with the most common Yemeni proverbs, with almost all of them having classical, Qur’anic, or pre-Islamic origins, i.e., they are to a considerable degree truly indigenous to Yemen. Still there is another problem with these equivalents as they are for comparative purposes and for translators

as well as students of foreign languages. They basically contain a certain Arabic-Islamic paremiological minimum shared by most of the rest of the Arab World's language or at least by such linguistically related languages as the Persian and Urdu languages. And regarding the English language, no distinction is being made to proverbs particular to Canadian, American, Australian and any of the other "Englishes" spoken on the globe. In addition, modern English-language proverbs, no matter what their origin might be, are not listed, even though some of them have entered other languages through loan translations.

However, in any case, there is no doubt that the English-language proverbs in use in the world as well as the United States in particular are a proverbial mixed container and certainly represent quite an international phenomenon. Such proverbs as "One swallow does not make a summer", "One hand washes the other", "Big fish eat little fish" (Mieder 1987:178–228, 2003b), and "Love is blind" go back to classical times and were loan-translated into English. Biblical proverbs like "He who digs a pit for another, will fall into it himself" (Proverbs 26: 27), "Man does not live by bread alone" (Deuteronomy 8: 3 and Matthew 4, 4), "As you sow, so will you reap" (Galatians 6: 7–8), and "He that will not work, shall not eat" (2 Thessalonians 3:10) have entered the English language through skillful Bible translations, and many medieval Latin proverbs have also been anglicized, among them "The pitcher goes so long to the well until at last it breaks", "Strike while the iron is hot", "All that glitters is not gold", and "New Brooms sweep clean" (Taylor 1931: 43–65; Röhrich / Mieder 1977: 37–40). Nevertheless, the English language of Great Britain has its own rich proverb tradition with thousands of well-known texts, as for example "Beauty is only skin-deep", "A penny saved is a penny earned", "A friend in need is a friend indeed", and "The proof of the pudding is in the eating".

Likewise, “*Ma a’ud laSa ela ba a’wdein*”, “*Al raas janb khuh*”, “*Alhub a’ama*”, “*Min hafara hufwatan waqa’a fiha*”, “*Ma ahad ya’aeesh a’la habah wa maa*”, “*Aljazaa min jins al a’mal*”, “*Min shiqi tahana wa man tamana raqad*”, “*A’dil alghiSin ma damuh ya a’dal*”, “*Lyees kul ma yalma’ thahap*”, “*Jadeed qubih kul bali*”, “*Alhusn husn alhal*”, “*Alqirsh al aswad lil yawm al abiadh*”, “*Ma sadiq ela waqt aldheeq*”, and “*Ma yabaan halaha ela bikilatha*” respectively are Yemeni proverbs that echo the proverbs above as if by translation, beginning with “One swallow....” till “The proof of the pudding...”. The Quran mentions many verses setting proverbs as a reminder and exemplary to people, as in (14: 25), “It brings forth its fruit at all times, by the leave of its Lord so Allah sets forth parables for men, in order that they may receive admonition.” The profound effect the Holy Quran has on the development of such Arabic proverbs can be manifest in the proverbs inspired by the meanings of the Quran and the stories of the Prophets: the verses “And the heart of the mother of Moses became void: she was going almost to disclose his (case), had We not strengthened her heart (with faith), so that she might remain a (firm) believer.” (28: 10) can be traced to be the origin of the proverb “more free than the heart of Moses’ mother”.

It is well-known among proverbial experts that such national and international proverb repertoire in the United States has been brought by the British settlers. In Yemen, one of the informants indicated that British settlers also have taken many Yemeni proverbs by translating them into English. This issue is beyond this study and deserves a separate project to discuss it.

Whatever the origin of such similar proverbs, upon the concern of similarity of the cultural meanings, it is significant that this dissertation has attempted to find the similarities and differences between the two cultures. Devices are found in proverbs such as humor, surprise, exaggeration, defamiliarisation, which may help the speaker to make a particular, often sensitive

point to the listener by referring to nature, metaphor and simile, especially in relation to familiar environment and experiences. For example “He who digs a pit for another will fall into it himself” may be cited by a Yemeni or American to warn against the consequences of people’s actions done by relatives and close friends or even some other people. A metaphor has been drawn from the environment where people dig pits to catch the wild animals for food, but the big picture when such metaphor goes beyond that, brings to mind the intention of making the pit to end someone’s life, it is more than the grave, the death or the end to the one who made it in.

Proverbs reveal much about people’s inner life and attitudes towards their surroundings, reflecting various cultural values in given societies, such as, the ‘Ten Cultural Commandments’ of both cultures as mentioned in Chapter IV, where both societies throw their proverbs and can meet and divert. Thus, both look at success with value but Americans consider it more meaningful when achieved individually as ultimate goal in life while Yemenis consider it more meaningful when it is achieved collectively, and it is the success related to actions and behavior which are already determined by the tradition and guided by religious principles. It is the kind of success which considers the present benefit that leads to the great achievement of the afterlife. Regarding the second commandment, it seems that Yemenis willingly want to share and consider what Americans call personal space as public. Time for Americans is short as is the case for Yemenis. But Americans can make use of it by having more fun without thinking too much about the consequence, unlike the Yemenis. Shopping, as mentioned in the fourth commandment, for Americans is fun and enjoyment, but for Yemenis, it is for necessities and if more than that, it is waste of money and time. In the fifth commandment, it seems that having a common ground is not possible since Yemenis are more bound to the extended decisions rather than the personal ones. Pain has different connotations for the two societies: Americans regard

complaining of life's pain as an unacceptable thing which contradicts with what they call 'the American dream' while Yemenis consider pain as a part of life that should be accepted. Agreement occurs where both cultures stand up for their own rights in the seventh commandment. Yet Yemenis still have a long way in achieving such kind of rights compared to Americans. Time as it appears in the eighth commandment for Americans is measured by and counts like money. For example, they can stop even conversation with friends or relatives if that will take minutes of a paid work. Yemenis, on the other hand, cannot stop such talk for the sake of money as they consider that to be shameful. It is in the ninth commandment where Americans differentiate between rules and laws, where they think of changing rules but strictly follow the law. On the other hand, Yemenis do not differentiate between the two. If the rules or laws are applied to all, then only Yemenis adhere to them. The existence of God is there in the tenth proverbial commandment in both cultures but Yemenis give Him the priority in everything.

Many of the proverbs in both cultures are didactic and their advice is often harsh, painful, and even cruel. Yet they are accepted by the people as social norms for control of behavior and promotion of various personal values such as truthfulness, authenticity, health and wealth care, resignation to fate, etc. This can be done through proverbs which have literary devices to sweeten the medicine of advice, making it acceptable and even enjoyable to swallow, with musicality derived mostly from figurative use of language, e.g. repetition, rhyme and rhythm as in the Yemeni proverb "*Min shiqi liqi*". Brevity and condensation occur in both Yemeni and American proverbs; for example "One hand does not clap" with its Yemeni equivalent "*Yad wahdah ma tiSafiq*". There is also the figurative language and imagery showing similarities in expressing people's understanding of life, and urges them to maintain balance in everything in their lives: "*Saa'a li rabi wa saa'a li qalbi*" (An hour for God: another for my heart).

It appears from the investigation of the usage of proverbs in American and Yemeni cultures that both societies emphasize the importance of disciplining children at a young age, and treating the elderly, parents, friends, neighbors, and members of the family with great consideration (though with some difference between the Yemeni and American society in terms of how one show such respect). With the collective nature of the Yemeni society, Yemenis take proverbs more seriously and such relationships are closer and tighter than those in the American culture. In the discussions with the American informants, Americans appear in reality to be more individualistic than their proverbs suggest.

Both cultures have the same viewpoint on women: both underestimate them and compare them to animals or inferior things. For example “*Almarah marah walu tanamarah*” (a woman remains a woman, even if she tried to act brave). But according to some of the American female informants, there was a strong resistance against such proverbs, saying that they can do all men’s jobs with no exception, and it was only men who coined these proverbs as they dominated the society for ages. One of them was Amelia Jayanti from the University of Vermont, Psychology major. In her comment regarding the status of the American woman as expressed by an American proverb, “A woman’s place is in the home”, she opines that “men have been conditioned, for some reason, not to take part of the things women value, like domesticity because it’s emasculating. And that’s changing, [as] there are more and more women that are the bread-winners, and the husband stays home and takes care of the children”. She elaborates, “Men and women have different circumstances, and it’s not a sign of inferiority or anything like that or any difference between male and female between equality or values or even strength of character.” However, she concedes that even in the American society with its clamoring claim of equality and openness, “There’s still a lot of change that needs to happen. I mean just through

media in society, how they portray women as this seductress, this de-headed, fragile woman. And this theme is echoed throughout society...”

From the tables presented and discussed in Chapter IV, it is clear that proverbs have high frequency of use and play a leading role in Yemeni culture. Also, they are never absent from the American society. This research has clarified some significant questions concerning the cultural and social values expressed through the Yemeni and American proverbs. It has shown striking similarities and sharp contrasts between the Yemeni and American cultures regarding many issues such as the relation between men and women, rich and poor, elders and youngsters, racism in color or in professions, and many other issues. In fact, such issues among others need further study as proverbs’ messages in both cultures to discover the hidden secrets of such a phenomenon.

5.1 Suggestions for Future Research

This study has passed through hard times collecting materials for its theoretical background. The scarcity of theoretical references on proverbs, not only with regard to Yemeni proverbs but also the American proverbs, makes further research a necessary fact that needs to be tackled. This situation needs immediate solutions by getting it assigned to scientific research centers or by establishment of independent centers in universities to collect, study, analyze, interpret, and translate the messages carried out by different forms of the lore to the benefit of the folk. This cannot be achieved unless there are experts and well-paid qualified Yemeni translators with a consultation of the elderly people to explain the cultural messages and illustrate with situations when needed.

In addition, future research into the social development of the Middle East in medieval

times will throw more light on the history of the Arabic proverb. Thus, this will hopefully be the researchers ultimate goal in future researches.

The term ‘culture’ is universally considered to indicate a reflection of the manifestation of civilized living, in Yemen the term has come to be infected with religious (in the North) and communal (in the South) connotations without thinking of the specific context of the needs of children and their cultural specifics. It is only by proposing ways to enhance the quality of cultural awareness, the learning of the tradition, folklore, classical and contemporary art forms, introduced in curriculum that we can help the students to appreciate their culture and start thinking of other cultures of the world in a form of comparison which may add to arts, music and literature. Curricula designers should start taking people and their local culture as a part of the curriculum, expecting development and better living of the people ought to take place.

An appreciated subject matter could be an elective subject in the universities, leading to a better understanding of the status of culture, literature, history and science at the educational institutions in the country. The media has created such sense of phobia of the past, which many Yemenis are not happy about. The Yemeni proverbs supporting that unhappiness, ‘*kul balad tubna bi hijarha*’ (each country should be constructed by its own stones), and ‘*Thi ma lah awal ma lah tali*’, (He who has no past has no future): this is a loud and clear call to make use of all facilities we have. Children do not have sufficient understanding of the strengths of their own cultural backgrounds nor are they aware of the cultural backdrop of their friends and acquaintances. What is perhaps more distressing is the fact that they pick up inaccurate, distorted understanding leading to complexes, prejudices and intolerance. School education presently does not provide sufficient opportunities to children to understand either themselves or others. As

indicated in this Yemeni proverb, '*Mithl mashiat al ghurap*' (like the walk of the crow), a new saying can be extrapolated to describe the Yemeni curriculum: 'like the walk of Yemeni curriculum', giving up the origin, adopting the new for long, then again reverting back to the origin. The result is an unpleasant walk and cry. The 'how' to teach does not give space to children to work in groups, to explore and learn together. If children are encouraged to work in group activities, group projects and so on even in the primary grades, gender and other kinds of biases will never get embedded in their minds.

On the other hand, opportunities for imbibing the ability to accept the viewpoints of others, leadership qualities, etc. will routinely become part of day-to-day school life. The present system does not even allow the learner to reflect his on his own, to appreciate the value of privacy either. culture as being understood as the most civilized relationship between humans, a sensitivity to and understanding of those considered 'others' is important. This is the only way of eliminating prejudices, which is the beginning of the most uncultured behavior. Gender sensitivity is something that has to be part of any value system that children should absorb. The quality of cultural awareness can be based on the culture of the locality/ community. Learning should be made 'culture sensitive'; curriculum should be process-based, and experiential, with sufficient flexibility to integrate local culture. So it can accommodate the hopes, aspirations, needs and culture of the local community. The 'terrain of culture' should have sufficient free space for all local languages and dialects. The mother tongue should also be the medium of instruction till secondary stage, so that children do not feel 'threatened' by an alien language thrust upon them. This will ensure that the thinking processes of the child, which happens in the mother/home tongue, do not get hindered. 'Yemeni wisdom' could be involved in developing the 'school curriculum', which could be designed to fuse with the 'general' curriculum. Different

folk art forms, folksongs, stories, riddles, proverbs and games, should be included as ‘text’ material. Conscious efforts should be made to ensure that the illustrations in textbooks reflect local culture.

The teacher should understand the meaning of the Yemeni proverb in this context which says: *‘Da’aynah yafrāh hum, bahrar wa faja’ahum’* (We brought him to teach them happily, he frightened them instead) meaning the teacher should become a friend and facilitator encouraging different cultural patterns and processes. Children enjoy talking about their own lives, their families, what they personally like and dislike and so on. Teachers should be sensitized to encourage them to explore their own as well as alien lifestyles. Teachers should be trained to utilize collections of local folk stories, folk songs and folk ‘knowledge’, proverbs as part of the Teaching-Learning process. The school library should be the nodal point for all ‘cultural’ learning in the school and a carefully selected collection of literature and reference books; it should also have a collection of ‘local literary production’ and so on. Exposure could be through panels of local or other artists at the district, talented local storytellers and writers could be invited to visit schools. Possibility of using audio / video / multimedia could be explored in this regard.

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Appendix A:

Questionnaire for Yemeni University informants

Hello Every Body

I am doing my Ph.D. thesis about proverbs, both American and Yemeni. I am conducting this questionnaire to know what people think about proverbs. The questionnaire also aims at finding the Yemeni proverbs that could be said to be the equivalents of the American proverbs cited below. In case the equivalent is not found, any similar ones conveying one thread of meaning if not all the same meaning could be mentioned, or one with opposite meaning could be provided.

The questionnaire is divided into three groups:

- Group 1 : Answer the questions
- Group 2 : Write the equivalent Yemeni proverb
- Group 3 : Tell me your opinion

Kindly spend some of your time to fill in this questionnaire.

Thank you.

Ali Kasem Ahmed Mosa

(shaibiali@gmail.com)

Informant Profile:

| | |
|------------------------------------|-----------------------|
| Centre for Comparative Literature, | Name: |
| University of Hyderabad. | Age: |
| | Place of birth: |

Group 1:

1. What do you think a proverb is?
2. In your opinion how did proverbs originate?
3. Do proverbs reflect social values?
4. Are educated people still using proverbs?
5. Are proverbs having any utility in the present-day society?
6. When and why do people use proverbs instead of direct sentences?
7. How do you respond if a person quotes a proverb to you, especially if criticizes you?

Appendix B:

Questionnaire in Arabic for Yemeni public

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

استبيان

تم توزيع هذا الاستبيان على مجموعة عامة من اليمنيين

ينقسم الاستبيان إلى ثلاثة أقسام:

القسم الأول: اجب عن الأسئلة

القسم الثاني: اكتب الأمثال اليمنية المقابلة للأمثال الأمريكية المذكورة فيه.

القسم الثالث: سجل رأيك

نرجو منك أخي/ اختلى منحنا قليل من وقتكم الثمين لتعبئة هذا الاستبيان

إعداد: علي الشعبي (الباحث في الدكتوراه – أدب انجليزي)

الاسم: فاتن

العمر:

مكان الميلاد:

القسم الأول:

1. كيف ينظر الناس إلى الأمثال في اليمن؟
 2. ما هي أصول الأمثال اليمنية؟
 3. هل تعكس الأمثال القيم الاجتماعية؟
 4. هل ما زالت الأمثال تستخدم من قبل المثقفين اليمنيين؟
 5. ما الدور الذي تلعبه الأمثال في المجتمع اليمني؟
 6. متى يستخدم الناس الأمثال؟
 7. هل يتقبل الناس الأمثال التي تنتقد من سلوكياتهم؟
- إجابة القسم الأول:

1. ينظر اليمنيون إلى الأمثال باهتمام كبير جدا، وهذه قصة تدل على إن الأمثال لها تأثير كبير عند بعض الناس. بداية يحكى إن قاض في دمار، و هو القاضي احمد العنسي (1248- 1315) خرج إلى بادية لقسمه تركه رجل بين ورثته، و تبين للقاضي و هو يقسم التركة إن على المتوفى ديناً، فاخذ يخرج الدين من أصل التركة، قبل فرز الأنصبة و تعيينها لكل منها، فاعترض عليه الورثة و رفضوا حجة، فبين لهم رأى الشرعة و حكمه في ذلك و قرى عليهم قوله تعالى "من بعد وصية يوصون بها أو دين" فلم ينصاعوا، فاخذ القاضي يضرب هذا المثل لعلى بن زايد (الدين قبل الوراثة) فما كاد الورثة يسمعون هذا المثل حتى استجابوا للقاضي .
2. يقال إن أصول الأمثال اليمنية تعود إلى عصر ما قبل الإسلام.
3. في بعض الحالات، لا غنى عن الأمثال اليمنية عند أي شريحة من شرائح المجتمع اليمني، و أكيد إن بعض المثقفون

- من هو متأثر بتأثيره.
 4. تلعب دوراً أساسياً و الدليل القصة التي تم سردها أعلاه و غيرها الكثير.
 5. يستخدم الناس الأمثال عند الحاجة إليها موجود مشاكل قبله أو غير ذلك.
 6. ليس كل الناس من كان عنده معرفه بالأمثال أو مؤمن بتأثيره أصبحت كالعقيدة عند بعض الناس و بالأخص الشعب اليمني.

القسم الثاني:

ملاحظة: الأمثال في النقاط التالية أمثال أمريكية مترجمة إلى العربية, يرجى كتابة الأمثال اليمنية في الفراغ المحدد مقابل كل منها.

1. "الغيايب يجعل الفرد يشناق" يقابله المثل اليمني (ابعد عن اهلك يخبوك)
2. (كلنا أولاد ادم فقد الملبس يختلف) يقابله (البحر واحد و السمك ألوان)
3. (الطموح كبير و الوقت محدود) يقابله (الأمل طويل و الأجل قصير)
4. (الكحول و السوافة لا يختلطان) يقابله (الزيت و الماء لا يختلطان)
5. (التفاحة العاطلة تخرب الكثير) يقابله (من جالس جانس)
6. (الأولاد نادرا ما يفسحوا الطريق للبنات اللاتي يلبسن نظارات)
7. (الأطباء الجيدون لا يعالجون أنفسهم) يقابله (باب النجار مخلوع)
8. (اضحك يضحك العالم معك, ابكي تبكي لوحدهك) يقابله
9. (الحياة ليست حياة بدون زوجة) يقابله (البيت المرة و الحب الذرة)
10. (الواحد دائما يرجع لحبه الأول) يقابله (حبيبك الأول لا يغرك الثاني)
11. يجب على محمد الذهاب إلى الجبل, الجبل لن يأتي إليه) يقابله (صاحب الحاجة معنى بالطلب)
12. (النساء أصل الشر كله) يقابله (رأى المرأة الصائب بعشر مصائب)

القسم الثالث:

1. دون خمسة أمثال تستخدمها بشكل دائم
 2. استخدامك للأمثال, دائم _ أحيانا أو منقطع؟
 3. هل يتردد المثل اليمني على مسامعك عبر فئات المجتمع المختلفة؟
 4. ما الرؤى الذي تبديه حيال الناس الذين يستخدمون الأمثال؟
 5. هل تعد الأمثال بشكل عام شيقة أم مملة؟
- الإجابات

1. الأمثال المتداولة
- أ. ابن ادم اكبر قشة
- ب. إذا كبر البرى عذب الخال
- ت. لا تربط حمارك جنب حمار المدبر يدبرك من دبور
- ث. ابن البلى يبلى و يحملك حاله
- ج. اسأل مجرب و لا تسأل طبيب
2. استخدامي للأمثال بحسب الحاجة إليها
3. ليست كل فئات المجتمع بل يختلف من فئة إلى أخرى بحسب البيت و اللهجة.

4. رأى حيال الناس الذين يستخدمون الأمثال بأنهم مهتمون و متمسكون بالعادات و التقاليد حسب ما تعلموه من إبنائهم و بيئتهم.
5. بل شيقة جدا و لها تأثيرها الايجابي عند بعض شرائح المجتمع و لاسيما القبلية منها.

ملاحظة : يرجى الإجابة باللغة العربية

Appendix C:

Questionnaire for American informants

Friends,

This is Ali Kasem Ahmed Mosa, a PhD research scholar at the Centre for Comparative Literature, University of Hyderabad. The topic of my research is 'Cultural Practices in Oral Literatures: A Case Study of Yemeni and American Proverbs'. Through this questionnaire I intend to know how certain proverbs are perceived by the people of both these countries. It is requested that you generously contribute to my research by responding to the questions herein. I ensure that your responses will be used only for this research.

Thanks and regards.

Ali Kasem Ahmed Mosa

(shaibiali@gmail.com)

Centre for Comparative Literature,

University of Hyderabad

Informants Profile:

Name:

Age:

Place of birth:

Questionnaire

Group 01

Given below are some Yemeni Arabic proverbs with English meaning. Can you please locate their American English equivalents or proverbs that contrast them?

1. *Mash kul akhdar basal*

Not all that green is green onion

.....

2. *Alnadhafah min aleiman*

Cleanliness is from faith

.....

3. *sadiqak alawal la yaghoraq althani*

Your friend is the first, not the second

.....

4. *Akher al- 'elaaj alkkay.*

Scorching is the last medicine.

.....

5. *Akrim dhyefak walo kan a'douak*

Be generous with your guest even if he is your enemy

.....

6. *Itha nazala al-qadar a'mya al basar.*

When fate comes, insight vanishes.

.....

7. *Duq hissab tadoom suhbah.*

Keep the credit account with your friend, so the friendship will remain.

.....

8. *Aljenoon finoan.*

Madness is an art.

.....

9. *Al waqt madrasah.*

Time is a school.

.....

10. *tark al'aadah 'adawah*

Cessation of regular benevolence is an indication of hatred.

.....

11. *yoghaddi 'ala 'ain ashams be-mankhol.*

Hiding the sun with a sieve.

.....

12. *Man bakar ma nedim*

He who starts early never regrets

.....

13. *dharbah be assaif wala dharbah belqalam.*

A strike with sword is more tolerable than a strike with a pen.

.....

Group 02

1) when do you like to use proverbs and how often do you use them?

.....
.....
.....

2) do you accept proverbs that relate to/criticize your conduct?

.....
.....
.....

3) people who use proverbs are

.....
.....
.....

4) kindly supply some of the proverbs (about 5-7) that you use often

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

Mr. Ali Kasem Ahmed Mosa is pursuing his doctoral research under my supervision. The topic of his research is 'Cultural Practices in Oral Literature: A Case Study of American and Yemeni Proverbs'. As part of it he has to interview American and Yemeni citizens and collect responses to the questionnaire prepared by him. Your co-operation in this regard is most solicited.

Date: 21/02/2009.

Student's details:

Name: Ali Kasem Ahmed Mosa

(Prof. P.R. Dadegaonkar)

Centre for Comparative Literature,

Thesis Supervisor

University of Hyderabad.

Appendix D:

Some Yemeni intellectuals and research Scholars' Opinions towards Proverbs

1. What do you think a proverb is?
2. In your opinion how did proverbs originate?
3. Do proverbs reflect social values?
4. Are educated people still using proverbs?
5. Are proverbs having any utility in the present-day society?
6. When and why do people use proverbs instead of direct sentences?
7. How do you respond if a person quotes a proverb to you, especially if criticizes you?

Sample Replies:

Your Name : Najwa Age : 29 years

Place of birth: Taiz – Shar'ab

Group 1:

1. Proverbs are part and parcel of Yemeni people especially those who are still living in village.
2. I don't know.
3. Yes, I myself it sometimes use proverbs.
- 4.
5. Yemenis use proverbs to give moral lessons especially from old to the young, when the young do something which was not to be done by the old when they were in their ages.
6. Mostly the proverbs are used to give hints to what has been done and sometimes it is not desired. People avoid using direct sentences because it may hurt the person but the proverb gives a moral. Proverbs are like sayings which not to be discussed further or denied. However, they prove to be said and continuously used since long ago and up to now. Proverbs also contain few words but exact and to the point. Speech or sentences may be larger and not specific as proverbs.
7. It depends upon the person himself / herself. For me I accept it and try to learn from it. If it criticizes me, I will try not to do the mistake again but after all I like proverbs very much and feel I learn from them a lot.

Notice:

I am sorry I could not answer most of your questions because I did not have a close exposure to the Yemeni proverbs. That is because I did not live most of my life with grand parents or parents but lived with my sisters who equally do not know much about proverbs.

Your Name: Ibrahim Tajaddeen **Age :** 28 years

Place of birth: Al-Nadirah-Ibb/ Yemen .

Group 1:

1. People in Yemen view their proverbs as a rich cultural heritage from which they can get wisdom and guidelines for a better life at present. Proverbs are not merely. Simple words or strings of words arranged artistically for the sake of delight like other forms of literature. Proverbs are actually meant for didactic purposes. They reflect the outcomes of the life experiences of some wise people in the past. Like other cultural tradition should be given a new life in our present content.

2. I think Yemeni proverbs, like in any other society, originated from various occasions, social, political, economical and religions contents. What is generally observed is that, Yemeni proverbs reflect situations from the lived experienced proverbs reflect situations from the lived – exercises of people in the Yemeni environment and from the social community which was depending mainly on agriculture as the first source of livelihood. Hence, the wise saying and proverbs of such famous persons like Ali Ibn Zaiyd and Humid Ibn Mansour are the most widely used and very often quoted among the majority of the public in Yemen.

3. I think proverbs are widely used by elder generations or let me say, the illiterate member of the society. Among the educated class in our society, some (if any) would prefer to use those proverbs commonly used in the standard Arabic literature and used by popular literacy figures, politicians, and journalists.

4. As I mentioned earlier, the role of proverbs in our society is didactic. Each proverb represents a terse epigrammatic statement which is pregnant with implications and meanings.

5. People use proverbs in various occasions and for each particular content, there should be particular saying or proverb. The use of proverbs requires a kind of skills or tactfulness in the part of the sayer and on the way and context for which he is going to employ the proverb. There are proverbs used in the field of morals and ethics of the community. Others are used to explain certain ways of life. Some will be used to help personality development and in training the characters of individuals. Other proverbs are employed to enhance the feelings of nationalism and belong to the community especially in tribal societies. In short, each context has hot its own text or as it is expressed Arabic “Likuli maqam maqal”.

6. People tend to use proverbs to enhance and enrich their speech and to making their arguments and discussions more effective. A proverb, if in a metaphorical implications and imagery will have more effect on audience.

7. Proverbs are also used ironically to criticize, make fun of or satire the behaviour of others. But I don't think that people will accept being criticized via proverbs especially if they know well the meanings and implications of the proverb used.

Your Name: Taha Hussein Rassam Age : 28 years

Place of birth: Hadaiah Yemen

Group 1:

1. Tradition & wisdom
2. Almost of proverbs from past stories and events.
3. Yes, I think that.
4. I think, there are no rules, they just proverbs.
5. When there is an event.
6. I think for indirect learning or indirect comment & sometimes for joking.
7. Almost of people accept that.

Your Name: Badea A. Mohammed Age : 29 years

Place of birth: Hodaiah Yemen

Group 1:

1. Master Proverbs
2. Arabic language's legacy
3. Yes, Sure
4. It used as a reference.
5. When try to advice some one.
6. Because it has a deep meaning.
7. Some time yes.

Your Name: Mansoor Md. Al Gabali Age : 29 years

Place of birth: Taiz Yemen

Group 1:

1. As a part of the production of the Yemeni Wisdom
2. May be their culture.
3. I think so
4. They are used to convince of some idea or concept.

5. When they want to be brief in expression ideas.

6. Proverbs can express the inexpressible.

7. It depends some accept, and some don't.

People who use proverbs, I think of them as wiser people of more experience in life. I find proverbs very interesting.

Your Name: Waleed Ali Ahmed Age : 24 years

Place of birth: Damt / Yemen

1. According the situations and accents.

2.

3. Yes

4. I keep the traditions & culture

5. Usually when the face similar situations

6. Because I make move sense

7. Yes they do especially education persons.

Your Name: Age :

Place of birth:

1. The people's in Yemen used the proverbs to make solution to any problem in their living in view of the fact that proverbs is extract of experience.

2. The incident

3. Yes

4. I think it made to approach one other aspect between the people's for what happen and what to be necessary immediately in second incident.

5. Often

6. Because the direct sentence to need a lot of words to explain.

7. Yes

Your Name: Age : 29 years

Place of birth: Taiz

1. They believe in them.
2. The origin lies back in history.
3. Yes, we hear them, then we easily memorize.
4. They carry the experiences of earlier and near ancestors
5. When there is an occasion that matches.
6. They carry more meanings in small number of words.
they are easily understood,
we feel more comfortable when we say them than saying long sentences,
the hearer also can easily get the implication,
7. Sometime, if I criticize someone and I feel that his behavior matches with the content, I think he should accept it. But if I am the criticized will feel angry or sad particularly if the content of the adverb is very criticizing.

Your Name: Ali Shahrah Age : 33 years

Place of birth: Ibb

1. I think people in Yemen view their proverbs positively.
2. The origins of the proverbs are The Quran and Hadeeth of the profit Mohammed (Pbuh), Old poetry, famous old persons like Ali Bind Zaid and Al-Humaid Bin Mansoor. Some proverbs are taken from other nations especially after the existence of the media (TV, Radio, Newspapers)
3. Proverbs are still in use among educated people.
4. Proverbs generally are mirrors of the society they are used in. In Yemen, proverbs the past for example, talk about the agriculture which was the main source of income at that time. That reflects the situation of the people. Now a days some proverbs talk about education, technology etc. so in any society, proverbs play an important role in embodying the people (their bahaviour, their level for education, their economy, etc.) and that what is happening is Yemen these days and what happened in the past also.
- 5.
6. Because they don't want to say what they mean clearly or directly. They criticize people indirectly.
7. It depends, some yes, they accept, but some don't

Your Name: Fawaz Age: 31 years

Place of birth: Yemen Sana'a

1. As they are largely used among Yemenis, I think they are highly valued.
2. Proverbs have their origins in the cultural, economical, Political and social condition of a specific period of history / time. They reflect life in general.
3. Of course yes. They are part of their culture memory.
- 4.
5. They are used usually to support one's opinion, to avoid saying something directly, either a secret or a bad things, to avoid hurting other's feelings if direct sentences were used.
6. Proverbs mostly serve better than direct sentences in thermos of brevity, rhetoric and accuracy.
7. It depends on who they are on the way the proverb is said.

Your Name: Amer Ali Sallam Age: 28 years

Place of birth: Yemen / Taiz

1. They like their proverbs, using it.
2. There are many sources, some of them imported from either language.
3. Yes.
4. It has own roles.
5. When they want to influence in indirect way.
6. They want to impact effectively.
7. Yes, sometimes.

Your Name: Al-Muhtadi Age: 31 years

Place of birth: Yemen

1. The people in Yemen used the proverbs to make solution to any problem in their living in view of the fact that proverbs are extract of experience.
2. The incident.
3. Yes
4. I think it's made to approach one other aspect between the people, for what

happen and what to be happen necessary in seem incident.

5. Often
6. Because the direct sentences need to alst of wards to explanation.
- 7.

Your Name: Fouad Ghallah Age: 34 years

Place of birth: Yemen – Ibb – Yarim

1. It is like philosophy and references.
2. Yemeni people experience.
3. Yes
4. It is useful for affecting the behavior of people some times.
5. When there is occasion or certain event.
6. I think stronger way to convey the message.
7. Yes

Your Name: Wafi Qasem Ahmed Age: 18 years

Place of birth: Yemen – Taiz

1. As any normal speech some people like or dislike, but proverbs are really good.
2. They belong to Humead bn Mansour as a wise man represents his people with their experience of life; he and other wise men are the voice of the Yemeni nation.
3. Yes, they are.
4. They give full ideas, because the proverbs are clearer than sentences.
5. People use proverbs through conversation when the situation is required bringing a proverb to advice or to criticize .
6. The nature of proverbs became like a norms for Yemenis, so they are effective to make an actions.
7. They do accept when the proverb matches the situation or the conversation. They are also people do better proverbs can effect on peoples behaviors in the future.

Your Name: Afrah Abdul Kafi Age: 30 years

Place of birth: Sana'a

1. They appreciate them & respect them
2. Old accidents and wise people speech.
3. Mostly yes.
4. Conveying wisdom & supporting speech.
5. To support their opinion.
6. They contain intensified meanings.
7. People interpret proverbs according to their situation.

Your Name: Gamol Qasem Saleh Age: 32 years

Place of birth: Abyan

1. People in Yemen view their proverb with good meanings and for certain accusations and good ideas.
2. I think the origins of Yemeni proverbs are Hamiariah.
3. Yes, it is still in use among education people in Yemen.
4. It active role in Yemeni society.
5. In time which that people think it is important for them.
6. Because people use proverbs instead of direct sentences so that it's their give brief ways.
7. Yes, of course.

Your Name: Anees Tahar Al-Absi Age: 28 years

Place of birth: Taiz Yemen

1. They appreciate high their culture proverbs.
2. I don't know
3. Yes
4. They are used as common sayings
5. To describe some situations.
6. Because they are more effective to convey the message.

7. Sometimes.

Your Name: Maher Ali Abduli Abbar Age: 23 years

Place of birth: Sana'a

1. It is useful with most of the people, almost with uneducated people.
2. With them friend and uneducated people.
3. Not all, but with some of them.
4. There are no roles, but it comes direct with the people.
5. The people use proverb, to make the person notes about his mistake and avoid mak it again.
6. The people use proverb instead of direct sentences to make the person laugh, in some time to show him the mist.
7. Yes, the people accept proverbs with each other.

Your Name: Mohd Ali Qarabesh Age: 32 years

Place of birth: Yemen Dhamar

1. According to the occasions.
2. Yemeni and different cultures.
3. Yes
- 4.
5. Anywhere & everywhere
6. Proverbs are used instead of sentences for may reasons the most important is not to hurt one's feelings.
7. Sometimes.

Your Name: Amr Jameel Abdo Hezam Age: 20 years

Place of birth: Sana'a Yemen

1. From the nature of the society.
- 2.
3. I don't think so.

4. To be suitable for the situation.
5. To show the idea clearly.
6. To attract the people attribution.
7. Independent on that proverbs.

Your Name: Jaklin Mansoor Age: 25 years

Place of birth: Abyan

1. I like using them and try to memorize some.
2. I don't know
3. Yes
4. It simplifies communication and adds a sense of humor to the conversation.
5. When they fed that the situation repeats itself as it happened in the past.
6. Using proverbs saves time and reflects your idea in concise way for instances,
instead of using a paragraph to express your mind, one proverb takes account of that.
7. It depends on the person himself.

Your Name: Ibrahim Abdoullah Age: 23 years

Place of birth: Yemen, Ibb

1. They show view their proverbs in normal way
- 2.
3. Some educated people use it and other no, but its popular with non-educated people.
4. To show people the right way in the life.
5. They use it if there is something happened and they will put in the right place and in the right time.
6. Really I don't know exactly why, but way be they used to use it for long time and maybe they took it as inheritance from their fathers and grand father.
7. Some people they accept it and other no its depend on their behavior to accept or not.

Your Name: Ali Mohammed Ali

Age: 23 years

Place of birth: Thamar, Yemen

1. People view – their proverbs in case if they come across any situation which requires a short cut description for that event
2. In fact I have no idea what are the origins of Yemeni proverbs but I guess proverbs used to be said by uneducated people. In the early days, but there is someone who is popular by these proverbs (Ali Wald Zaiyd) he was one of main persons who said most of the in use proverbs.
3. I believe that proverbs are still in use among educated people too but not as many as it was used by uneducated people.
4. Proverbs in Yemen society play an important role in terms of representing the customs of Yemeni people as well as they view generosity and good manners the clean used to have.
6. People use proverbs in order to exports their impressions whenever they come cross of any situation which requires lot of explanation. That can be represented by few words which carry deep meaning of for that situation. Proverbs act like a short cut description for a big event. It expresses the experiences that a person comes across in his life, keeping, the customs and traditions of Yemeni people.
6. I think people use the proverbs instead of direct sentences because they carry more deep meaning instead of direct sentences as well as it makes the listener to have well understanding of what the speaker wants to indicate.
- 7.

Your Name: Arafat yahya Fadhd

Age : 23 years

Place of birth:

1. As wisdom is guidance
2. Attitudes experience trail
3. Yes
4. Controlling culture
- 5.
6. It is more efficient.
7. Yes they do.

Your Name: Ali Al-Nuzaili

Age : 45 years

Place of birth: Ibh, Yemen

1. They view proverbs as a medium to express one's opinion.
2. Yemeni proverbs come from our ancestors who had experience and knowledge about life and human relations.
3. Yes, they are.
4. They play vital roles in Yemeni society in all daily lives. They are one way of expressing people's opinion in an indirect way.
5. People use proverbs when they want to express their views on a certain situation. For example, when a person wants to give his / her opinion regarding an abrupt occurrence.
6. Because proverbs can convey one's message to others very easily and smoothly. Direct sentences some times make the receptor angry, but proverbs express one's attitude jokingly.
- 7.

Your Name: Abdulrahman Ali Humnd Age : 33 years

Place of birth: Ibb – Yemen

1. Interesting, a way of approaching peoples' behavior towards the right doings. People shun doing mistakes coz of proverbs.
2. The experience of previous generations. Proverbs are considered to be the positive intellectual legacy left to us – wisdom.
3. Yes, they are a source of knowledge and wisdom. So many educated people cite the proverbs when speaking with others.
4. Models for dealing ideality among society members. The rational man/ woman is that who possess the spirit of articulating proverbs.
5. When solving problems
 - Joking
 - Advising others
 - Educating children
 - Description of people, things, sometimes to prove opinions.

6. Proverbs are wisdom oriented

Brief and meaningful

Influential

Educational

Gread need for proverbs

Express cultural specialties.

7. Rational people accept but naïve ones refuse being addressed by proverbs sometimes proverbs describe exactly the different kinds of people behaviours either good or bad.

Your Name: Abdulbary M.A. Age : 36 years

Place of birth: Lahy Governorate

1. People in Yemen view their proverbs with good meanings, in a positive way which serve for the critical or advice meanings that express to a certain proverbs and for a certain occasions.

2. I think the origins of the Yemeni proverbs can refer to either Hemariah or to Sabaeah.

3. Yes, it is still in use among educated people in Yemen

4. It play a positive role in Yemeni Society.

5. People use proverbs when they feel it necessary to that particular occasion.

6. To convey their sayings in indirect ways.

7.

Your Name: Mahmood Mansoor Age : 34 years

Place of birth: Taiz - Yemen

1. In indirect way

2. Arabic

3. Yes

4. It is used instead of long talk

5. When they don't like to speak directly.

6. When there are so many people and the direct sentence may not give the same meaning.

7. Some people accept and the others refuse this way of speaking.

Your Name: Yehia Al-Sabri Age : 30 years

Place of birth: Ibb - Yemen

1. As an essential part of the language and culture.
- 2.
3. Yes, of course.
4. They express feeling, though
5. No, specific time. The use is based on the communicative context.
6. Of course, Yemeni people can use such proverbs to criticize, encourage, activate, motivate somebody.
7. Not, all the people accept them.

Your Name: Mohammed Shromani Age : 31 years

Place of birth: Ibb, Yemen

1. They view them as something referring to their rich legacy and cultural inheritance.
2. It is the outstanding experience and wisdom of those who passed through similar situations having immense knowledge about thereof.
3. Yes, with some kind of diversity.
4. In fact, they play a very important role in recalling the experience
5. Whenever, the discourse of situation requires less words but more meanings and morals.
6. For the force of speech acts they have and their ability of influence more than ordinary words and speech.
7. It depends on the person being criticized some people like, other not.

Your Name: Tawfik Mohammed Age : 30 years

Place of birth: Sharaab

1. Proverbs are actually part and parcel of the Yemeni Society. The people highly appreciate them and use them. Those people who are well-versed of proverbs are considered with high esteem. So, to put it in simple terms, Yemenis are positive when it comes to the use of proverbs and they do approve them.
2. It is, at least for me, difficult to specify a time frame for the Yemeni proverbs. It is even difficult to specify the specific context from which proverbs originate. However, as far as I know, they are deeply rooted in culture and it is often the case that a proverb might have various variants depending on the kind of area the people live in.

3. Yes, they are still used. I could even go on to say that they are a sign of knowledge as well.
4. Proverbs are used to convey information in a brief, considered, eloquent words.
5. People use proverbs in almost all situations. There are no specific restrictions for the use of proverbs except for those that deal with sex or sex-related, they are considered impolite to use in public or among people one respects.
6. Has the same answer of Questions 4
7. Yes

Your Name: Dr. Ameen Ahmed Abbas

Age: 37 years

Place of birth: Zabeed, Hodeidah

Points to ponder over

In terms of Islam's view of Women: Respect, veil aims at protecting women. In terms of proverbs with terms like alcohol etc. why not look for alternatives that make your search for equivalents easier. Is it in your plan to divide and subdivide proverbs into smaller categories to make your tasks of labeling, defining, assorting, etc. easier?

1. As a matter of fact I'm in no position to assure such a BIG question. For me, due to fact that most, if not all, of our proverbs are deeply rooted in our culture. I feel chained to my culture when I hear (or use) Yemeni proverbs. As most lower 0 middle class families, our have been drifted away from the original Yemeni culture. As a consequence, proverbs are the vehicle that takes us back to our roots and the linguistic glue that links man and culture.
2. Broadly speaking, the geneses of our proverbs lie deep in our Islamic culture. Yet, local varieties charged with specific regional interests / moods etc., have added a special flavor to our heritage of proverbs. Thus, here emerges a new source from which our proverbs are drawing, viz., typographical divisions.
3. Very rarely.
4. Despite their rare use, proverb still serve as a vent for many educated people's nostalgia, indeed, they are among the remaining links to our traditional heritage of wisdom. Moreover, they help keep certain ethical values in perpetual circulation recently; they're emerged with a new role that is exposing the generational gap in modern Yemeni Society. Through them we can tell our culture, Yemen is rich in culture and Arab in general but Arabs do not export their culture with their oil. Not only that, they do not make use of either of them.
5. Proverbs are like many other linguistic messages. There are listeners, speakers, messages, and a medium in any proverb. However, the emotional aspect of proverbs given them a special distinction. Hence, a proverb a vehicle for an emotionally charged speaker to the heart and mind of the listener are used primarily in rare moment of emotional invocation.

6. I think besides the issue of emotion, I've just discussed, there are inexplicable unconscious moments when the use of proverbs complies with no opponent roles and follows no convincing reasoning. Put in a nut shell, if in one situation we manage to pin down a justification for using proverbs, in another situation we may not be able to find any.

7. Some do, other don't. the addressee's mind-set, his or her psychology, his or her relation with the speaker, the message and the context, are all important catalyzes in the addressees reaction to the proverb(s).

2. Very rarely.

3. Occasionally – indeed, now a day, proverbs use is on the wave. They're used mainly by older people and their use is rather sponge.

4. I look them highly – they preserving the wise sayings of our culture.

5. Used decently, proverbs will always be interesting.

Your Name: Khaled Nasser Ali Age: 30 years

Place of birth: Dhamar City

1. They are viewed as refueling the values principles keeps a pan which the society in looked, Proverbs are part of an day –to-day life and an considered as the truly wise overweighing answers & comments to some questions.

2. Proverbs are very old and i think the origin is difficult to face. Generally Proverbs are the product of the society whose norms and beliefs are stashed in called according to certain realign rules. Proverbs are also the invention of the common sense of same people in the society. Still, same proverbs are the outcome of certain, real events in the remote past history. The result of real stories happened in the past. Upon considering those incidents people come out with a lesson which was them phased, beautifully worded so that it can fit the purpose concerned.

3. Definitely Yes

4. Proverbs have a functional role to play in our society. They are methods of directing people to more socially accepted harms. They are used to enlighten advice, inform and teach people. They are the best way to discuss & explain or simplify the most sophisticated issues.

5. People tend or resort to using proverbs when they feel unable to clarify some points. Or want to convince others or bring an agreement to amend; they serve as reinforcing or consolidating maxims that support the speaker's point of view.

6. In doing so, people dissociate themselves. How? There are two types of presenting on argument or whatever, subjective and objective. And I think, by using proverbs, people dissociate / detach themselves from the point being expressed. Direct sentence are personal representation of self.

In another, people use proverbs as they are seen final comments or terminators to a dispute or discussions. Still people tend use proverbs because the majority are poetical – rhymed, alliterated

etc. and so they are close to mind easily comprehended I so remembered than ordinary use of consequently, they are more effective and to the point than direct sentences.

7. Not always.

Your Name: Zakaria Alameri Age: 27 years

Place of birth: Yemen

1.

2. The origins of Yemeni proverbs are inherited from generation to another, and there is no specific period for it.

3. As I notice not all educated people are using the proverbs.

4. I don't think so that there are roles for the proverbs, we are using them freely without any restrictions.

5. The people using proverbs in different situation.

6. Because the situation comes equivalent with proverbs so no need to say same thing only that proverb.

7. Yes, they do accept.

2. I am using the proverbs rarely.

3. Sometimes

4. The people who use proverbs are wise people

5. Proverbs always interesting.

Appendix E:**Samples of responses towards questionnaire by American informants****Name:****Age:** 44**Place of Birth:** United States**Group 02**

- 2. Yes, if they make sense
 - 3. Usually well read
 - 4. Treat people as you want to be treated
- Love your neighbors as yourself
- Don't' kiss & tell
- distance makes the heart grow fonder
- Ignorance is bliss.

Name:**20****USA****Group 02**

- 1. I don't use them often but when I do they are usually in a humorous context.
- 2. I can appreciate them or be offended by them
- 3. Wise or educated
- 4. The elephant in the room, different strokes for different folks.

Name: Emily**Age:** 21**Place:** New York**Group 02**

1. I don't think I use them very often and I usually don't notice them if I do.
2. I don't usually take their meaning literally or think about them, more things you just say.
3. Old fashioned
4. Do unto others as you would have them do unto you.
Six to one, half a dozen to the other
An apple a day keeps the doctor away
Too many cooks spoil the broth.

Name:

Age: 38

Place of Birth: Florida, USA

Group 02

1. I do not use proverbs ever
2. Yes, I do usually accept proverbs that criticize me
3. Well lettered
4. I do not knowingly use proverbs.

Name: Taylor Salisbury

AGE: 21

PLACE: MISSOURI USA

Group 02

1. Use Proverbs on occasion to flower conversation.
2. Yes
- 3.
4. Life isn't fair

Like trying to find a needle in a haystack

Keep you friends close, your enemies closer

Almost only counts in horseshoes and hand grenades

There's more than meets the eye

Its just the tip of the iceberg.

Name:

Age: 31

Place: California USA

Group 02

1. I rarely use them in life or conversation, may be the moral lessons are applicable but I will rarely say them.
2. I think it is always constructive to acknowledge my faults.
3. Superstitious
4. Love thy neighbor as thyself

Shit happens

Do not leave for tomorrow

Live each day as it is your last.

Carpe diem.

When in Rome...

Name:

Age: 27

Place: New Jersey

Group 02

1. I only use them when joking around and I use them very rarely.
2. I don't ever think of them in relation to myself.
3. Usually older or in books or movies.
4. Make new friends but keep the old

The last straw

Eye for an eye

Early bird catches the worm

Teaching and old dog new tricks.

Name: Hope Smallwood

Age 21

Place: Springfield, Illinois USA

Group 02

1. I rarely use proverbs.
 2. Yes generally
 3. Clever and witty
 4. Time flies when you are having fun
- The grass is always greener on the other side
- An apple a day keeps the doctor away.

Name: Laura Reynolds

Age: 21

Place: New Orleans, Louisiana USA

Group 02

1. I think I might start to use them now.
 2. Sometimes.
 3. Awesome
 4. Green with envy
- The golden mile
- Needle in a hay stake
- An apple a day keeps the doctor away
- Too many cooks spoil the broth

Name:

Age: 38

Place: Connecticut USA

Group 02

1. I seldom use proverbs.
2. Yes, but my conduct is criticized
3. Verbose and supercilious
4. Never look a horse in the mouth.

A wolf in sheep's clothing.

Pearls before swine.

The straw that broke the camel's back.

Name: Ellie Hall

Age: 40

Place: Arlington VA USA

Group 02

1. I think that Arabic proverbs are essentially American also based on this definition. I use proverbs a lot to articulate a point.
2. Definitely proverbs are often used as mirrors to reflect one's own actions. Thoughts, attitudes etc either by ourselves or friend or family although criticism is often not accepted willingly, I personally do try to accept criticism especially clearly, poignant criticism that can be understood appreciated, as seen with criticism via proverbs .
- 3 . Are people of all races ages, generations proverbs to them are a cross cultural phenomena often used to instill a cultural value in a person
4. The way things are, are the way things are

Time heals all

Everything happens for a reason

Boys will be boys

Kill 2 birds with 1 stone

Bury the hatchet

Name: Mariel

Age: 41

Place: USA

Group 02

1. I use them on ironic situation or in conversation generally when talking to elders.
2. Yes, proverbs can be applicable to various occasions in life.
- 3.
4. The way things are, are the way things are
Only time heals

Name:

Age: 32

Place of Birth: United States

Group 02

1. I don't use proverbs
2. No. I prefer peoples original thoughts.

Name: not mentioned

Age: 21

Place of Birth:

Group 02

4. The grass is always greener on the other side

Name: Vina Nillbach

Age: 21

Place of Birth: Boston MA USA

Group 02

1. I use proverbs rarely usually they're used as a way to give advice or reflect on an event.
2. I think proverbs are a good reflection of cultural values, but no one should be held accountable to them.
3. usually older people
4. Practice makes perfect

An apple a day keeps the doctor away

If at 1st you don't succeed, try, try again

Only time will tell

Wake up and smell the coffee

Time flies when you're having fun

Age aint nothing but a number

Name: Kyle barrette

Age: 25

Place of Birth: USA

Group 02

1. In meteorically sense to teach basic principles or prove a point.
2. Proverbs are usually taken not seriously and are considered frivolous.
3. Academics, traditional elders.
4. Time is money

The bottom line is the dollar

Shit or get off the pot

He who asks receives

Take it with a grain of salt.

Name: Emily

Age: 43

Place of Birth: New York USA

Group 02

1. I very rarely use proverbs, when I do use them its mostly to be sarcastic.
2. I don't really take proverbs as truth most of the time.
3. older, somewhat clichéd
4. His like trying to find needle in a hay stack.

Once in a blue moon

Don't cry over spilled milk

Keep your friends close, your enemies closer.

Remove the beam in your eye before worrying about the speck in your neighbor

Turn the other cheek

Eye for an eye, tooth for tooth

Ashes to ashes, dust to dust.

Name: not given

Age: 40

Place of Birth: Wyoming, USA

Group 02

1. When writing essays, I use them very rarely.
2. yes, everyone is entitled to their own opinion.
3. Generally literarily inclined
4. Don't throw stones to a glass house.

Don't count your chicken before they are hatched

Don't cry over spilled milk

Turn the other check

Shit happens

Love your neighbor as yourself.

Early bird catches the worm

Time flies when your having fun.

Can't have your cake & eat it too.

Name: not mentioned

Age: 29

Place of Birth: Ohio, USA

Group 02

1. I don't often use proverbs that have been well established I prefer to make up my own.
2. Not generally "Universal" wisdom; proverbs don't always apply to highly particular situations.
3. Unwilling to create their own unique ways of expressing themselves.

4. such is life

Name: Thomas Hartman

Age: 21

Place of Birth: USA

Group 02

1. I use proverbs every day, they are a good way to express.

2. No

3. Well read

4. Everything bigger in Texas.

Name: not given

Age: 31

Place of Birth: Connecticut, USA

Group 02

1. Sometimes, often used sarcastically or in jest.

2. Sometime they can be treated as negative.

3. Educated is being honey.

4. Old hat

Different strokes for different folks

Green with envy

Swimming in denial

Elephant in the room

Name: Beth Marty

Age: 21

Place of Birth: USA

Group 02

1. I do not typically use proverbs in my daily life.

2. Yes when they are appropriate to the situation, I accept them.

3. Cool

Name: not given

Age:

Place of Birth: New York, USA

Group 02

1. I don't use proverbs very often, they don't cross my mind.

2. Yes.

3. Every one

4. Shit happens

Get a grip

You snooze, you lose

Name: Alexis

Age: 20

Place of Birth: NY USA

Group 2

1. I don't usually use them

2. Doesn't change my opinion

3. Sometimes, mostly on TV

4. Interesting

Name: Rachel

Age:

Place of Birth: Chicago, USA

Group 2:

1. I don't really use proverbs

2. very rarely

3. No opinion

4.

Name: Anjali Chaudry

Age: 20

Place of Birth: Arlington, Texas USA

Group 2:

1. More often than I realize. I think we often say them without thinking about them.
2. Sometimes
3. I think everyone uses them sometimes
- 4.

Name: Carlen Curtis

Age: 20

Place of Birth: New York, Texas USA

Group 2:

1. I don't use proverbs very much at all
- 2.
3. Proverbs are very interesting its especially interesting to see how they've been passed dawn through time and have changed throughout time.
- 4.

Name:

Age: 21

Place of Birth: Wisconsin, United States

Group 02

1. I use them when I want to make a point through analogy.
2. I general don't appeal to proverbs for consideration of conduct.
3. Generally older
4. I don't really use proverbs

Name: Carolyn Herman

Age: 24

Place of Birth: Wisconsin USA

Group 2.

1. Actually, I almost never use proverbs. I'm sorry. There aren't very many American proverbs, as most of our saying come from the Bible (Hebrew or Aramaic), Shakespeare (England), Britain and Europe. Our only truly American Proverbs come mostly from Ben Franklin, Mark Twain, and a few other writers. But Ben Franklin is the biggest one; see "Poor Richard's Almanac".

Name: Gabriela

Age: 21

Place of Birth: Venezuela

Group 2:

1. Occasionally
2. yes
3. They have a good memory for interesting points of reference.
- 4.

Name: Alisa Asgar

Age: 21

Place of Birth: USA

Group 2:

1. not hardly ever
2. no not often
3. They are old fashioned & trite
- 4.

Name: Katherine

Age: 21

Place of birth: Pennsylvania, USA

Group-2

- 1) rarely or never

- 2) no
- 3) weirdly
- 4)

Name: Elizabeth czarrvett

Age: 20

Place of Birth: USA

Group-2

- 1) I enjoy using or proverbs in a joking way when someone does something that I want it
- 2) If they are applicable, I accept them
- 3) Wise (and sometime cliché) well-read and old (my grandma)
- 4) “When in Rome”

Knowledge is power, ignorance is bliss

Beauty is in the eyes of the beholder

Name:

Age: 53

Place of birth: The States

Group-2

- 1)
- 2)
- 3)
- 4) Shit or get off the pot

Shit happens

Time heals all wound

Time will tell

Practice makes perfects

Necessity is the mother of invention

Time flies when you are having fun

An apple a day keeps the doctor away

Don't kiss & tell

Name: Matt Clements.

Age: 21

Place of birth: MA, USA.

Group-2:

- 1) Only frequently in conversation but I do like them they seem old fashioned to me
- 2) Yes, but still it seems 2 old fashion so I may not accept
- 3) Older than me my grand parents' age
- 4) None really.

Name: Veena Senra.

Age: 20

Place of birth: Los Angeles, USA.

Group-2

1. Sometimes in conversation.
2. Yes
- 3.
4. 1. Old is gold
2. Time heals all wounds
3. Don't kill the messenger
4. Shoot for the moon, you will reach the stars
5. Straw that breaks the camel's back
6. Necessity is the mother of all invention.

Appendix F:

Samples of Yemeni social strata's opinions towards Yemeni proverbs

دكتور احمد على الهمداني

المكان : م/ عدن – الشيخ عثمان

الأسئلة:

- 1- كيف ينظر الناس إلى الأمثال في اليمن وما هي أصولها و هل ما زالت تستخدم من قبل المثقفين اليمنيين؟
- 2- ما الدور الذي تلعبه الأمثال في المجتمع اليمني و كيف يستخدمها الناس و يتقبلها حين تهدف إلى انتقاد أو تقييم سلوك ما؟

الإجابات:

- الأمثال في اليمن جزء من الموروث الثقافي للشعب اليمني خصوصا و الشعب العربي عموما و ق درج اليمنيون على التعبير عن انتقادهم و نصائحهم و عن ما يعايشونه في واقعهم من خلال الأمثال التي هي حكم مختصرة ذات معان كبيرة و عميقة و هي رسائل قصيرة فعالة.
 - ترتبط أصول الأمثال اليمنية بالبيئة المحلية في الريف و الحضر و هي خلاصة لتجارب الأجيال اليمنية في مراحل تاريخية مختلفة تناقلها الأجيال و تستخدمها على نطاق واسع.
 - لا زالت الأمثال اليمنية تتداول و يتم الاستشهاد بها في كل مناحي الحياة و لا زال المثقف اليمني يتعاط مع هذه الأمثال التي تعكس حالة معينة من الارتباط بالواقع الثقافي و الاجتماعي اليمني.
 - تسهم الأمثال في نقد كثير من الظواهر السلبية و توجيه سلوك كثير من الناس و نقدتها في حالات كثيرة و هي آليه فعالة في واقع المجتمع اليمني يتعامل معها المتعلمين و غير المتعلمين على السواء.
 - تستخدم الأمثال من قبل العامة من الناس و الخاصة عندما يواجهون موقف ما و نقد ظاهرة سلبية و للتعبير عن موقف تجاه ظاهرة جديدة لا يقبلونها أو لتمجيد سلوك ايجابي.
 - كثير من الأمثال يقبلها الناس و بعضها ذات الطبيعة النقدية ينفرون منها و لا يقبلونها و لكنها في الحياة متداولة فيما بينهم كأمر واقع و إن تم رفض التعاطي مع جزء منه لأسباب ذات صلة بذات الشخص الموجه (المثل) النقدي مباشرة.
 - و في سياق إجابته عن استخدام الأمثال في المجتمع اليمني قال أنها تستخدم في معظم الأحيان حيث يتردد المثل اليمني على مسامعي من فئات المجتمع اليمني المختلفة و أضاف قائلا لا بد من توجيه الأمثال بصورة ايجابية نحو معالجة كثير من الاختلالات و السلوكيات السلبية في المجتمع لاسيما تجاه الشباب فهي إجمالا شيقة و ممتعة و يجب حسن الاستخدام لها في المجتمع.
 - و في أسئلة المقابلات أبدى راية كواحد من مستخدمي الأمثال في حالات كثيرة مؤكدا أن لها تأثير على المستمع و تغيير في السلوك و أجاب على إذا ما كانت الأمثال تعكس ثقافة و سلوك الشعب اليمني و كيف تبدو الآراء و تحل المشاكل قائلا أنها تعكس ثقافة و سلوك الشعب اليمني و يتم توظيفها بطريقة ايجابية في معظم الحالات و هي نوع من أنواع الحوار النقدي و التربيية و التوجيه السلوكي التي يتم التعامل معها.
- 2- الاسم: مثني بن مثني الشعبي

المكان: الشعيب الضالع

و في إجابته على الأسئلة أعلاه قال إن الأمثال قواعد و سلوكيات حسنة و أداة لتقييم السلوكيات العامة فبعضهم يأخذها بصدر رحب و يجعل منها قواعد للسلوك الذي يجب أن يسلكه يوميا حيث تمثل سلوك أخلاقي اجتماعي راقى و البعض يتأثر منها و يصعب عليه تقبلها و ذلك لعدم وعيه لما تتضمنه من معاني و أخلاقيات رفيعة كونه يأخذ منها السلبي لمحتواها.

3- رشيدة عاتق حنش الكلدی

المكان: كريتير - عدن

و في إجابتها على الأسئلة أعلاه قالت أنها تلعب دورا هاما جدا في حياة الشعب لكونها محلية عربية إسلامية دينية فالناس يعتبرونها جزء من حياتهم و وسيلة للتعبير عما في داخلهم و لتقريب المعنى للآخرين في ظل موضوع الحوار و الحدث حيث بعضها يبنى قديم خالص و الآخر منقول من لغات و لهجات أخرى فقد أصبحت و سيلة للتمسك بالتراث اليمنى كوسيلة لنقله لجهة ما و لكن قد يكون لها دور سلبي إذا استخدمت بشكل غير صحيح كان تستخدم للسخرية من الآخرين فيجب أن تستخدم حين يطرأ موقف مماثل لموضوع المثل لأخذ الموعظة و العبرة أو الإحاطة و اخذ الحذر و قد تكون للضحك و التسلية.

4- رانية قيزان عبد الغفور

المكان/ عدن

و في إجابتها على الأسئلة أعلاه قالت ينظر إلى الأمثال بنها خلاصة تجارب من واقع التجربة اليمنية و ع الحياة حيث تقوم ببيان أفكارهم و توضيح وجهان النظر و توطيدها و ذلك عند حدوث حدث يتفق و قصة المثل حيث يستطيعون التأثير و الإقناع برأيهم عند استخدامها و بأسلوب شيق

5- سحر أنيس على

المكان/ عدن

و في إجابتها على الأسئلة أعلاه قالت إن الأمثال تلعب دورا هاما في حياة الناس فهي محلية عربية إسلامية حيث تقوم باختزان الأفكار في حالة تشابه الموقف مع المثل و من الجيد أن يستخدموا ما توصل إليه أسلافنا من الخبرات

6- الاسم: على مثنى الحداد

المكان/ الضالع - الشعيب

و في إجابته على الأسئلة أعلاه قال ينظر الناس إلى المثل على أنها تراث شعبي و يجب الحفاظ عليها و أصلها حكايات من الواقع و حكم و وصايا عاشها الناس فلها دور مهم في إيصال الفكرة بإيجاز عند النقد و تصحيح الأخطاء. الشعب اليمنى متمسك بالتراث و الثقافة م على وجه الخصوص الأمثال فهم يعتبرونها مصدر الحكمة و هو ما أكدته الرسول محمد صلى الله عليه و سلم عندما قال: "أتاكم أهل اليمن هم أرق أفئدة و ألين قلوبا، الإيمان يمان الحكمة يمانية"

7- عفت هادي العمري

المكان/ كريتير صيرة

و في إجابتها على الأسئلة أعلاه قالت ينظر الناس إلى الأمثال كأنها جزء من حياتهم و وسيلة للتعبير عما في داخلهم تقريب المعنى للآخرين في ظل موضع الحوار و الحدث فهي وسيلة للتمسك بالتراث و نقله كما تعكس مدى ثقافة المجتمع لأخذ الحكمة و الموعظة

8- على العبادي

المكان/ حجة

و في إجابته على الأسئلة أعلاه قال البعض يعتبرها جزء من التراث تعكس الواقع اليمني و تستخدم عند الحاجة حسب فهم القائل للمثل الذي يعبر عن سلوكه ليطابق الواقعة التي حدثت لمساعدته على إبداء الرأي في ذلك

9- هدى الحكيمى

المكان/ عدن – صيره

ينظر الناس إلى الأمثال في اليمن نظرة تقدير و إجلال لأنها أصبحت ضمن النسيج العام للمجتمع اليمني فتستخدم حسب الموقف الذي يقتضيه فأصولها جاهلية تم تبلورت بطابع إسلامي مع ظهور الإسلام ثم أضيفت أمثلة جديدة مع ظهور الأحداث السياسية المختلفة لتناسب البيئة اليمنية فهي وسيلة لتوضيح الكلام المراد شيء حسي يقرب المقصود و يربط اللهجة بالفكرة كإعطاء رمز دون الإفصاح عنه و إظهار اللباقة و القدرة على الربط بين الموقف و معالجته باستخدام المثل . فاستخدام المثل دليل خبرة و ثقافة و معلومة غزيرة و قدرة على ربط المثل بالموقف و هذا يحتاج إلى ذكاء ذهني غير عادى.

10- صالح الحاشدى

المكان/ رداع

قال إن الأمثال ينظر لها بشكل جيد و دائما تستخدم في الواقع, فهي يمنية عربية ناتجة من الواقع تستخدم عند الضرورة لمعالجة موقف ما من قبل ناس ذوى خبرة بالحياة.

11- سارة على المحضار

المكان/ حضرموت

قالت إن الأمثال ينظر إليها على أنها تطرح في موقف سار أو سلوك إنسان أو طبيعة حياتهم تداولها القدماء و استمرت إلى يومنا هذا كي تنتقد أو تغير بعض السلوكيات و المواقف, فقد يتقبلها البعض و الآخر يجدها ساخرة لاذعة.

12- منال منصر بازراعة

المكان/ حضرموت

قالت بأن الأمثال ينظر إليها الناس على اعتبار أنها مواقف يتعلم فيها المرء مهما اختلفت في المكان و الزمان فأصولها يمنية عربية بحتة, و هي موجودة منذ العصر الجاهلي, فمنها ما اندثر و منها ما تطور و منها ما أضيف حسب الحاجة المرتبطة بالزمان ز المكان فهي ما زالت تستخدم من قبل ذوى الخبرة و التجربة لتلهب دورا فعالا من خلال الموعظة و الحكمة على صورة مثل و ليس كل الأمثال تنقل الحكمة.

13- سارة احمد يسلم حنتوش

المكان/ الإمارات دبي

قالت أنها ليست من مستخدمي الأمثال بشكل كبير و إنما بنسبة محدودة و قالت إن الأمثال تعكس ثقافة و سلوك الشعب اليمني و لكن لم يتم توظيفها بشكل كبير و قالت "و إن كنت الأخير زمانه لا تأتى بما لم تستطع به الأوائل"

14- عبد الله ناجى راشد

المكان/ حالمين – لحج

قال ينظر الناس إلى الأمثال كحكمة تحكم السلوك و الأفعال, فهي تنطلق من الواقع المعاش فيأخذ بها في الظروف المطابقة لها فقد تساعد على تعديل السلوك إذا تقبلها الناس, و قال انه من مستخدمي الأمثال مضيفا إن الإنسان قد يشعر بصحة

سلوكه من عدمه أو أفعاله أو تصرفاته و عند سماعه للمثل يعمل حالة تقييم لذاته و في الغالب قد يقيم الإنسان فعله أو سلوكه أو تصرفاته كون الأمثال تعكس ثقافة و سلوك أي شعب و هي لا تستخدم إلا لأداء غرضها و تأثيرها قائلاً "فاقد الشيء لا يعطيه"

15- سعيد عبد الله سعيد ساكت الكثيرى

المكان/ شبوه

قال بان الناس ينظرون إلى الأمثال اليمنية بأنها شيء راسخ في حياتهم الاجتماعية يستخدمونها كل يوم و يمارسونها كخطوط مهمة يسبرون عليها حيث يظن الكثير من الناس أنها دائماً صحيحة و هي ليست دائماً كذلك بل قد تصيب و تخطئ، فهي ناتجة عن حادثة حدثت في القدم و تلخص ذلك الحدث في شكل قول موجز بليغ تداوله الناس فيما بعد باعتباره نتاج لذلك الحدث كخبرة متراكمة سواء من ذلك الشخص أو الجماعة و أصبحت تلعب دوراً كبيراً في حياة الناس في المجتمع اليمني حين يتخذوا على ضوءها كثيراً من القرارات لتحقيق هدف ما و يستطيعون بالمثال أن يحذروا أن يتجنبوا الأخطاء و يبلغوا الصواب و يتعضوا من الآخرين في كل تعاملاتهم في هذه الحياة.

16- زهراء رياض

المكان/ عدن

قالت بان الناس ينظرون إليها و كأنها حكم تساعدهم على فصل النزاعات و الثار و علم الخطى و عواقب الأعمال و ما يرجع لهم من ذلك فقالت أن الأمثال تساعدها شخصياً على تفهم الأمور و في كثير من الأحيان على تقبلها و إن كانت للمعاتبه فانا لا أحس منها لأنها تحمل معان ثقافية عميقة و مفيدة جداً فقد تكون اغلب الأمثال الشعبية باللغة العامية و هي من وجهة نظري قد تكون مفهومة أكثر و غرضها أعمق و بالخص من قبل الذين لا يحيطون باللغة العربية الفصحى جيداً. و قالت إن ما أورده من الأمثلة هي ما تسمعه دائماً من الناس مثل "وراء كل رجل عظيم امرأة" أو "خير الكلام ما قل و دل".

17- عبد الله على باكدادة

المكان/ حضرموت

يقول بان المثال ينظر إليها بأهمية بالغة باعتبارها مرجع الحياة الاجتماعية فأصولها يمنية عربية إسلامية إنسانية فلها دور كبير في ترسيخ العلاقات الاجتماعية و جسر للتواصل مع بقية الثقافات الأخرى مؤكداً على أنه من مستخدمي الأمثال عند الحاجة لاستخدامها

18- سهيل فيزان عبد الله

المكان/ عدن

الأمثال مهمة جداً في الحياة لكونها يمنية عربية إسلامية إنسانية فمن خلالها نخزن التجارب و الأفكار حيث يتم استخدامها في حالة تشابه الموقف مع المثل.

19- حنان حامد

المكان/ شبوه – حبان

قالت ينظر الناس إلى المثال على أنها تطرح حل لموقف سار أو سلوك بدا. أصول المثال اليمنية توارثت من القدماء و خصوصاً الحكماء منهم أمثال الحميد ابن منصور و على بن زايد و بعضها من القرآن و السنة و الشعر الجاهلي أو الحديث حيث استمرت إلى يومنا هذا فما زالت تستخدم من قبل المثقفين اليمنيين فأحياناً يتطلب من المثقف نقل أو إيصال راسلته إلى عامة الشعب فيضطر إلى استخدام المثل ليجعل رسالته واضحة و بليغة فيفهمها كافة فئات الشعب و منهم البسطاء من الناس.

قالت إن الناس ينظرون إلى الأمثال على أنها أمثال شعبية قديمة كان أجدادنا و آبائنا يستخدمونها و يداولونها فيما بينهم و أنها حاليا تعد من الطراز القديم و قد تكون من نتاج القبائل اليمنية منذ العهد القديم فهي تعد من التراث و الأدب اليمني و لذلك كان دورها في تذكير أبناء الحاضر بتراث أجدادهم فالإنسان مهما بلغ من التقدم الحضاري و التكنولوجي فلا بد له أن يعود أحيانا للماضي. مع العلم أن معظم الأمثال اليمنية يتم تداولها في الوقت الحاضر بشكل شبه يومي و إن كانت ليست بنفس لهجتها و لونها القديم حيث تتردد على مسامعي من فئات المجتمع اليمني، الشيوخ و الشباب على حد سواء، فالمهتم بالأمثال يعتبر من المثقفين و المهتمين بالتراث القديم و حبذا أن يتم ربطها بالحياة المعاصرة فهي شيقة و مفيدة و مسلية أحيانا.

Questions:

1 - How do people look to the proverbs in Yemen and what are their origins and are they still used by the Yemeni intellectuals?

2 - What is the role played by proverbs in Yemeni society and how people use and accept their criticism when aimed at evaluating any behavior?

Replies:

1. Dr. Ahmed Ali Al-Hamdani

Location: Aden- Sheikh Othman

- Proverbs in Yemen are part of the cultural heritage of the Yemeni people in particular and the Arab people in general and the Yemenis have accustomed to proverbs to express, criticize and advice as a result of what they experience in their reality through them as short wisdoms of deep meaning and they considered as an effective brief messages.

- Yemeni proverbs are much related to the local environment in rural and urban areas, and they are a summary of Yemeni generations in different historical stages passed over them, and are used widely.

- Yemeni proverbs still in use and are cited in all aspects of life, and they are still quoted by the intellectual which reflect the Yemeni social and cultural reality

- Proverbs characterized as having the ability to criticize many negative aspects and guide to the best and they are an effective mechanism in the reality of the society dealing by educated and non-educated people alike.

- Proverbs are used by the general public and private when they face a situation, or to criticize a negative phenomenon and to express their attitude toward a new phenomenon which they do not accept it or to glorify a positive attitude.

- Many of proverbs accepted by the people but those of the criticism nature, people do not accept them, even they averse to cash, but both proverbs do exist in reality and being circulating among people, whatever, the part that people do not deal with them, that is up to the dealer's

personality. As a fait accompli, and have been refused to deal with part of it for reasons related to the same person against (Ideal) cash directly.

- And in the context of answering on the use of proverbs in Yemeni society, he said: proverbs are used most often as I hear them cited frequently by different people from different classes of the Yemeni society. He added, 'proverbs should be directed positively towards addressing many of the imbalances and negative attitudes in society, notably towards young people. Proverbs are interesting and enjoyable and should be of good use in society.

- And in the questions of the interviews, showing the banner of one of the users of proverbs in many cases, stressing that have an effect on the listener and a change in behavior. And responded to if proverbs reflect the culture and the behavior of the Yemeni people and how proverbs give suggestions and solve problems? Commenting on that, he said: yes, they do reflect the Yemeni culture and behavior, they positively directed for most cases. Proverbs are a kind of critical, educational and behavioral dialogue that is dealing with.

2. Muthanna bn Muthanna Shuaibi

Location: Al-Dhala

In response to the above questions, he said: the proverbs are good norms, rules and a means to evaluate the public behaviors. Some take them as a model for his daily life, because proverbs being as a high conduct for them, others do not because they do not understand the good values of the proverbs; they take only the negative side of them.

3. Rasheedah A'tiq Hanash Alkildi

Location: Crater - Aden

And in answering the above questions, she said that proverbs play a very important role in the lives of people for being a local- Arab Muslim and religious sayings. People consider them part of their lives and a medium to express what in their minds and to bring meaning to others under the theme of dialogue, an event where some of them are old pure Yemenis and the other transfer of languages and dialects. Some have become as tool to convey the Yemeni heritage, but some may have a negative role if used incorrectly, as if they used to make fun of others. They must use when a similar attitude to the issue of a particular situation occurred to bring an advice or to avoid risk or maybe just for fun.

4. Rania Fayzan Abdul Ghafoor

Location : Aden

In answering the above questions, she is seen proverbs as a summary ruslt of the reality of the Yemeni experience type. they make their opinions clear and express their thoughts deeply, when an incident occur similar to the story of the proverbs, then only they can make an effort and convince other.

5. Saher Anis

Location : Aden

And in answering the above questions, she said that ,the proverbs play an important role in the lives of local people as they considered asa local, Arabic, Islamic, where they preserve ideas in case the situation with the similarity of the proverbs are matched , and that is good to use the findings of the experiences of our ancestors

6. Name: Ali Muthana Al-Haddad

Location : Dhala - Shuaib

And in answering the above questions, he said that, people consider proverbs as a public heritage and it must be preserved due to their original stories of the Yemen reality and they are rules of the commandments have been experienced by elder .They play an important role in delivering the ideas, briefly for criticism and correct mistakes. Yemeni people are attached to his culture and heritage, proverbs in particular as a source of wisdom which has been confirmed by the Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him when he said: "There has come the people of Yemen,they are tender in hearts and soft in soul, faith is Yemeni and wisdom alike."

7 . Effat Hadi al-Amri

Location : Crater Sira

And in answering the above questions, she said that, people look to the sayings as if they were part of their lives and a medium to express what's inside them to make the meaning to others clear in light of the subject of dialogue and the event, as proverbs deal as a way to hold on to heritage and reflection of the importance of wisdom among the Yemeni people.

8. Ali Al-Hadi

Location : Hajah

And in answer to the above questions, he said: some Yemenis considered proverbs as a part of their heritage as a reflection of their reality. They use them whenever the situation is required according to the wit of the user who wants to describe the situation precisely.

9. Huda al-Hakimi

Location : Aden

And in answer to the above questions, she said: Yemenis highly appreciate and respect their proverbs as proverbs became part of their social networking to be used according to the situation. The origin of the proverbs is from Jahliyah (pre-Islamic era) have taken an Islamic taste during the Islamic time. some new proverbs have been added during the political conflict to fit the situation, as a tool to clarify the speech as a concept associate the dialect with the idea metaphorically showing the command of language by bringing a proverb.

10. Saleh Alhashidy

Location : Rada

He said that, the sayings are viewed well and always used in daily life as they are from the real life dealing with real situation to handle an issue by the experts.

11. Sarah Ali Al-mihdhar

Location : Hadramout

She said the proverbs viewed as an out come from an incident happened in the past or a human experience seen by ancestors and said as metaphorical comment which still continuing till now. some people accept them, some not.

12. M. Bazar'a

Location : Hadramout

She responded by saying that, proverbs have been viewed as an attitudes for learning no matter of time or place, as they are pure Yemeni Arabic since the days of Al-jahilyyah (pre-Islamic era) some proverbs vanished, some developed and new have come according to the need of the situation, they still in use, specially by expert of life to play a good role of wisdom and advice in a form of proverbs, and not every proverb convey a wisdom.

13. Sarah Hantoush

Location : United Arab Emirates Dubai

She said that, she is not of the proverbs' users greatly. Added, proverbs are the conduct of Yemeni culture.

14. Rashid Abdullah Naji

Location : Hajja

He said people look to proverbs as wisdom to guide the behavior as they are coming from the real life and it is good if people behave accordingly. He added that he is one of the proverbs users. When you hear a proverb you may change your bad habit to good one. They are the mirrors that show the culture of any nations .He quoted :*faqid al shai la yatih*(The loser can't give).

15. S.Alkathiri

Location : Shabwah

He said that people of Yemen look at their proverbs as something which is deeply rooted in their daily social life taking them as a true lines taking in consideration, though it is not because some proverbs could be wrong at present as it was right in the past quoted by individual. In Yemen many people the make many decisions according to the proverbs as guidance or alert towards life and people.

16. Zahra Riyad

Location : Aden

She said that the people view proverbs as if they are rules which help them to separate the conflict and overcome revenge, and learn from them the consequences of the experiences to understand things in life, even if they criticize her because she knows they have a good and deep cultural meanings, some could be in homely language, and they become understandable for all members of the society. She added what she have mentioned of proverbs, she actually hear them from other people such as *wara kul rajulun a'dheem emraah* ("Behind every great man, there is a woman,"), and, *khayr alqalam ma qala wa dal*, (the best of speech is to be significant)

17. A. Bakadadah**Location : Hadramout**

Said that Yemeni proverbs are dealing with seriously as they are the reference of social life as their origin is Yemeni-Arabic- Islamic and universally humanitarian which have a great role of binding the social relation and as a bridge connected all nations to share different cultures. Bakadada emphasized that he is one of many proverbs' users in Yemen

18. Suha Abdullah Vayzan**Location : Aden**

Proverbs are very important in life for being a Yemeni Arab, Islamic, humanitarian, it is through store experiences and ideas where they are consumed in the case of similarity of the situation and the proverb.

19. Hanan Hamed**Location : Shabwa - Habbaan**

Said people look to the proverbs as that they poses a solution to position happened or behavior shown. Proverbs are inherited from ancestors, especially the wise of them like Al Hamud bn Mansour or bin Zayed and some of maybe from Quran and Sunnah or Islamic poetry. they continued till days and are still used by educated sometimes it is required from intellectual to transfer, or deliver his message to the public quoting some proverbs to make his message clear and eloquent, so all audience can get the message easily including the ordinary people.

20. Maha Arshad Mohammed Ahmed**Location : Taiz**

She said that, people view their proverbs as public old sayings which have been used by our grandfathers and our sons used and they are now considered old-fashioned and may be a product of the Yemeni tribes since the ancient times. They are considered as part of the heritage and Yemeni literature, and therefore their role is to remind sons at present of the heritage of their ancestors. No matter how the advancement of technology is, for man it is a must to return, sometimes to the past. We know that most of the proverbs are being in daily use at the moment though not of the same old word or meaning, hearing them by elders as well as by youth.

Those who are interested in proverbs are considered as an educated people, who pay attention to their heritage, and it is beneficially to link them with the modern life, they are informative and entertaining sometimes.

Appendix G:

Samples of American informants opinions towards American proverbs:

I'm Amelia Jayanti from the University of Vermont. I'm a psychology major.

So here we are quoting from the speech of Obama in Cairo, he mentioned such a proverb that maybe you are familiar with. "We do unto others as we would have them do unto us." How can you relate this proverb to the context of Obama's speech, and can you comment on that?

That's called the Golden Rule. It's pretty prevalent within Christianity, Islam, and Judaism. I think what Barak Obama is trying to address in his speech is how Muslims have been treated since 9/11. There was a lot of prejudice, discrimination, acts of violence throughout the United States, a lot of tension with xenophobia. Which happens a lot after a war, once a war begins you need to find someone to blame. The discourse in the States was a criminalization of Muslims, making them bad, fundamentalist extremists. They didn't take the time to teach the American public about Islam, they wanted to keep them ignorant so they could remain the enemy face, and I think Barak Obama is acknowledging this. In addition, our policies and how they worked in the Middle East have been atrocious, and have led to the dehumanization of the people of Islam. So I think what Barak Obama is calling for is to end those injustices, and to have everyone around the world work together to promote a sense of peace, to change the problems our whole world is facing. For instance, in Guantanamo Bay, we held them without charge, which is not something we would have let any other country do for Americans. So "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you." Even just crazy things like the extraordinary rendition camps and the torture prisons in Eastern Europe are a big infringement on Muslims—I mean, Muslim children are taken into these, which are terrible, and held there for years. America's really treated Muslims terribly, I mean, we have a long history. It didn't just start after 9/11. It's been going on. But because they've been isolated within America, they didn't have a backing for people stand up for them. Before 9/11, people probably didn't even know what Islam was. A majority of Americans probably had no idea. And they still don't really even know. I mean, Christians that complain so much about Islam, about these crazy extreme fundamentalists, don't even realize how many connections, how many similarities these cultures actually share. I think they would be shocked if they found Jesus was considered a bruff. And that's what our media and policy makers want us to believe; they don't want to give Muslims a human face.

This also, he's mentioning some sura from the Holy Qu'ran, and from the Holy Bible, "we have created you, male and female, and we have made you into a nation of tribes so that you may rely upon another." and the whole of the Torah is for the purpose of peace. And most of the Holy Bible, tells us to be peacemakers, and servants.

I think Barak Obama's trying to—you see, you can't discriminate against another individual, is if you know the other individual, if you understand their culture, if you understand your similarities, and if you see them as a person. It's really important that he draws these conclusions, showing that we all want the same thing. The hard thing for Barak Obama is that he doesn't really have—basically what's happened in the past, leads a lot of Muslim nations to distrust him. So it's harder for him to show that we're peacemakers, since Americans haven't

been doing that. And think this is the change that he wants to make, to create a common goal for the religions, all the people of the world, to come together not as strangers but as friends.

So he's forming such common goals, trying to construct a new path for all nations to come together to a mutual understanding, and he deeply relies on such quotations, such sayings which will be familiar.

Also, there are a lot of Christians in Cairo. So even if there is a lot of hostility between Muslims and Christians, so maybe that's another thing, to bring them together.

Do you think that this quotation, these common proverbs, help to make the message clear for the people? By quoting from the Qu'ran, the Bible, and from the cultural heritage, he's quoting in order to make his message clearer and more familiar to the nations.

Yea, all that matters is a string of connotations. These are good things that people would stand by, they would say that they would believe, and that they would promote. So the fact that all of these religions are saying the same thing speaks really powerfully to what he wants to do. Showing that we are all unified in what we want for this world. Using proverbs echoes it because it brings all these cultures to a common ground. Society and they use these proverbs to reinforce how people perceive women, and therefore how women are supposed to act. And if you deviate, then you're not a woman. If a woman's not fragile as a glass, then what is she? Then she's a man, right?

Yea! This is okay, I'm not saying to support this...

"A bag of fleas is easier to keep watch over than a woman." This is terrible. This basically reinforces the prejudices and sexism towards women that women are promiscuous, dangerous, deceitful, helpless, fragile, and not strong in self.

What do you think that this notion is not only the states that it is all over in the world?

The fact that it's all over the world, it starts evolutionarily. Think about the primitive stages of man, the woman was pregnant, the woman could not do work, so the man has to do the work. But once we get into civilizations, where women are taken out of that, it's more community partnership, but really that's how it started all over the world. And then it became this whole thing, women are the ones that create life, they're seen as survival of different tribes, different groups, they're something to be protected. That protection, oftentimes, is losing their control. In order for a woman to be protected, she's not going to be able to be free. And then you get into the women that try to subvert authority and the conventions of her day through whatever means were available to her. If that was using her sexuality to get some powerful position to marry a wealthy man to have some kind of control, to have some kind of power. There's this whole thing about, I guess because a woman wasn't allowed to be promiscuous—for whatever reason that may be, the male honor mostly—that's seen that a woman can't have sexuality, can't be sexual, at least as sexual as a man, and for many reasons, that has always been something that is taboo, it makes men uncomfortable to talk about it. They see them as the daughters and the wives which, in essence, were we men's property. You got your dowries, you paid. A wife was an investment to continue the family name, the lineage, the concentration of the male power. So they use all these different ways to constrain women to make them fragile individuals so men can keep their power.

How can you relate this proverb to the present status of American women? “Women in class are always a danger”—I have read something about women in the States—they let her reach something called the glass ceiling. As an American girl, how can you explain this?

I want to say it's changing, and it is to some extent, there are more women in universities, more women getting their doctorates than men actually. Eventually they will be in the top positions hopefully, but there is still a lot of sexism and discrimination against women. The fact that a woman menstruates, she will be crazy and can't do her job for that week. They don't want to hire a woman because she's going to get pregnant, then just take off and never come back to the job.

Such things, do you take them into consideration? The biological issues?

What issues?

Like being pregnant.....

Well, yea, but that's not a woman's burden that she gets pregnant. You could be like a country like Sweden.

Do you think there is more emotional effort than men for a baby?

I think men have been conditioned to, for some reason, not take part of the things women value, like domesticity, because it's emasculating. And that's changing, there are more and more women that are the bread-winners, and the husband stays home and takes care of the children. It's more common, it's definitely not the majority, but it is there. Men and women have different circumstances, and it's not a sign of inferiority or anything like that or any difference between male and female between equality or values or even strength of character. It's just a pure biological thing. They're the future, they're the ones making the future, so we should respect that instead of chastising women for making that gift.

So in short, how do you evaluate the status of women in your country? Are you satisfied?

No, definitely not. There's still a lot of change that needs to happen. I mean just through media in society, how they portray women as this seductress, this de-headed, fragile woman. And this theme is echoed throughout society...

Seeing is believing.

It's the results of the scientific revolution, and that development of having concrete evidence for something that they can believe in and reproduce. We use it for things that aren't so concrete as well. Some may say something about somebody's success, whereas the evidence for that might be a bit shaky, but they'll point to specific instances where they have succeeded in reaching their goals, and claim that as the idea of “Seeing is believing.” It's the idea that you can trust what it is that is before you.

Ok, and in this regard also, like, this is an old kind of proverb, since they've been found in newspapers...Like this, “enough is enough” has been repeated for 15000 years and “Time will tell is 14,000. Why do you think this kind of repetition and using the idioms and

proverbs in newspaper and in daily life in America, why would some people think they are old and they have no use in life, but this is the research that shows that...

I think they certainly do have use. The reason we have these expressions and they are used as they are, like you said, they are idioms, people use them in American culture, just because people identify with them and recognize them easily. Just because someone doesn't use these phrases everyday, they're going to recognize them as common motifs.

Do you find such universality? I feel we do have the same ideas about time.

There are certainly a lot of similarities between cultures, there's certain things that are universally true. And the perception of that is going to be inherent within humanity. That being said, you're going to have some of these ring true for everybody, regardless of whether they live in western society, or if they've been transplanted to western society, or even if they live outside of western society. Cultural specific are there such as the common sense of American that they prefer independence as in line with the American dream. Like here, you have this concept of "Boys will be boys,"

Let's have a short discussion about what does it mean, to what extent you accept or reject the idea.

Exactly, again, I think everybody—and not everybody may phrase it the same—but I think there is some consistency that these messages would hold and can probably be found in a lot of different cultures. It's just how they phrase it.

Let's talk about time. Time is very important, we have "Time flies." How do you pay attention to time, personally?

Well, in American specifically, we have a lot of emphasis on success and being busy and filling your life. Personally, before I came here, I was working two jobs and I would have 16 hour days. The time I spent outside of work was minimal, and usually spent sleeping. We value time heavily, and we base on that how much we will accept for a salary, the benefits for what we are actually doing, which effects how we perceive ourselves and how we perceive time. For "Time flies," it's kind of idiomatic to America, this concept of flying implies how quickly something is going, and time flying puts strain on how much time we think we have. The general Judeo-Christian ethic that is almost inherent in western society, we have this concept of one life. It's not like here in the east where we have multiple births, and multiple chances to achieve property, wealth, a family, the things we categorize as humans as success. It's just kind of bolstered by everything we say. A lot of the idioms we say...

This concern, the idea of time, it is a sign, or told by your parents or your friends, by your experience of life in the States, by reading, the idea itself—how did you come to be aware of it?

Well, you have it from family, from teachers, from employers. If you look at just the number of phrases you have here. This is a top ten list? It looks like at least three of them use the word time specifically. More than half of them refer to time and how you're spending it. It does put a lot of emphasis on how we are living and how we are spending our time. Even that concept of spending, we equate that with money. In Hindi, you use separate words. In America we use

spending for time, money, and anything else we do.(Chris McCurdy, I got to Elizabethtown College, in Pennsylvania).

Hi, I'm Emily ____, I go to Bloomington, Indiana, Indiana University, I'm a Folklore major.

It's my pleasure to have you here . For me, it's very important to talk to you since you're a folklore major, so you provide a lot of information for my research, about American folklore, as we try to find things in common. So, here is one article talking about the present situation of the approach of American folklore. If you'd like to comment on that, and relate at least one or two proverbs to such text.

Sure, I think the approach to American folklore obviously has been changing over time. They used to do more ethnographies of people who people deemed different from themselves. And now, people are looking more at the entirety of the population and finding specific folk groups within it. So... if you want to do a classic proverb, "You can lead a horse to water, but you can't make him drink."

Would you like to construct the situation of this proverb? To whom could it be said, the meaning?

The meaning is based when people had horses and things, and they would guide them around and this was just a commonplace activity. But people still use it today in contexts like, say, there's a kid and you're sending this child to school, and they're getting terrible grades and being disruptive, you can say, "Oh, well, you can lead a horse to water but you can't make him drink." Meaning you can pay for this kid to go to school, and you can do all these things, but you can't make him learn things? It's an intrinsic thing.

So you do think this plays positive or negative in education? You mentioned the education, learning aspect of it. So it's like, ok fine, I send my kid to the school, and it is his own business to go where, I mean, the subject he has interest in.

I think the way it would be contextualized in this situation, say you're the parent, and you sent your kid to school, and I'm your friend, and you're like, "Why is my child getting such terrible grades?" And I would say it to you to kind of make you feel better because you're taking responsibility for your child not learning, but really you've done everything you can.

So what I've found, is like, this saying, you know, you can apply it to several contexts, it's not only in education. You can use it in politics, in economy, in different situations.

You can apply it to any situation that has that kind of disavowal, you know, I tried, but I couldn't make this happen.

So you do think this kind of proverb, do they end up with a story or do they begin with a story, the coining of it?

I would say proverbs have often come from fables, which are stories, they're moral stories for children usually that end with a proverb, that's one of the things. So often we'll get proverbs from that, which is just like the moral of the little story, which is usually an animal tale. But here are also proverbs that exist by themselves, a lot of them, I don't know.

Do you think there are a lot of them which came from a religion background?

I think that would be an accurate statement. If you look at the way fables are constructed, and how they are such a moral, a type of moral learning, and people...I don't know if they would originate from religion, but they would be reflected in religion. So you could go to a church, or a temple, and say this, like, as a passing moral advice or something like that.

Do you think they're still valid? And people, with the convincing proverb right now, does it still play a certain role in society and language?

I think they do. Um, I mean, you could argue that we're moving onto different types of oral folklore, and that these are things that linger on from the past, because, I mean, I personally haven't heard any new ones being generated. But, I think that they keep coming into play in the way we lead our everyday lives, like the old ones and the tradition in that. So like, if you're procrastinating, someone might say, "A stitch in time saves nine," or throwing advice out, "Early to bed, early to rise makes a man healthy, wealthy and wise" kind of thing. So probably, I would say they're still applicable, people still say them.

Also, I've found some American presidents; they still quote such idioms and proverbs to make their message clear to the public. What do you think, what is the importance? Because as we know, much of the president's speech will be prepared by somebody who is a specialist.

I think it's a smart little political move. I mean, you could phrase something differently, but by bringing in an idiom that most people in the nation know, it might be helpful. Also, Benjamin Franklin was one of our national heroes, and he's one of the few political people that people just tend to think really good things about. And he, in his "Poor Richard's Almanac," recorded a lot of proverbs, and possibly made a few up himself. So it's a smart way to look back at American history and bring that up, like, localize things.

So for how to trace proverb historically, do you think it's easy to trace them? Or difficult?

I think like many things it's impossible to trace. I know that in the second wave of folklore they were looking for the ___ type, or the original of every story or every tale, and I think because this is oral culture it is impossible to know. Even if you look in "Poor Richard's Almanac," and it's recorded there, did Benjamin Franklin write that, or is it something he's just recording? Was he a folklorist? Or is he generating new things?

So it's still debate. There's no assurance that this is his own coining or somebody else.

I would say it's impossible to know for certain. I think you could trace them to general areas or general times based on what they're saying possibly, or when they've been recorded in people's journals and things.

Like in this dictionary, a dictionary for American proverbs, we find the classification. They mention the proverb, and give the area.

Oh!

So it's recorded in the district in Michigan, New York, something like that. Every one is like that. So let's have a look at this if you've heard about it. Like, "Naked we came, naked we go."

What does that one mean?

Yea. Are you familiar with this?

Well, you're born naked, and when you die, well, you might be clothed when you die, but still, you're not there so you don't have the clothes, per se. It's a way of saying something against greed, I would say. Some people will gather things their whole lives and save all this money and not be sharing, but in the end, the things that matter aren't really material. Like clothing, or like shelter.

So this proverb, we admit it reflects the reality. We come like this and we go like this.

You could also say that to comfort people, maybe. If they're having a tough time with finances, or you could use it as a warning. Like kind of a playful warning so people aren't actually offended that you're saying, "oh, you're not being very giving, you're keeping all of your things to yourself, and hoarding all your money and not having any fun." So you could just say, "Naked we come, naked we go!" Like, let's go hang out!

I'm Martin from University of California, Santa Cruz, and I'm here in Hyderabad doing the SIP program. I'd be happy to talk to you.

What is your response to your president's speech in Cairo? As it has much advice in a form of sayings.

Well this is one of the cornerstones of the democratic world. Leaders should be responsible to what the people wish their governments to be. From the very start, America has been the pioneer of this way of government. We have our representatives, our president who is elected popularly, and in this way, through the actions of people, they can influence policy to get them to write laws which start to benefit the majority. And for any nation to progress and to live up to its full potential it needs to take into account everyone who is living in it. I think what Obama is trying to say here, he is speaking out against sort of the dictators and modern day kings of some Islamic countries—Saddam Hussein would be one, he makes a few references to that—and I think that his belief is that the best thing for Muslim people is to be able to have a say in their policy. I think that's important as well. I don't think it's America's right to impose—I think it needs to grow from within these countries. I think that's what Obama is trying to say.

I'm David; I'm from the University of California, Los Angeles.

So proverbs, as you know are imperative from generation to another. It has it's own specific message that depends on the context. So we can take proverbs that are included in some songs and some lyrics that you are familiar with. If you'd like to give some examples...

The first one that comes to mind is “Can’t Buy Me Love” by the Beatles. That was, you know, in the 1960s. It was very much in context with the time. In America, in the 1960’s there was this movement, it was very, um, kind of free love, the hippies, the immaterial, there was a whole movement toward the immaterial, and material possessions were shedding that, giving that away. And the lyrics, “Can’t Buy Me Love” kind of, there are a typical western proverb that money doesn’t bring all happiness, and so that kind of reflected the social feeling of the time. And then, in the 1980’s when it was the Reagan administration and all about consumerism in American. There was kind of this backlash from the 60s, you get Madonna coming out with this song, “Material Girl,” which is all about, essentially, the exact opposite philosophy. She’s talking about joy in all this material wealth that she’s accumulated through all these people she’s loved, or who loved her. Whereas, the Beatles, you’ve got “you buy me a diamond ring my friend, if it makes you feel alright.” And then “Material Girl,” you’ve got this music video, and she’s dressed in diamonds and pearls, so, I don’t know, I think it’s very much a product of the time, especially in terms of songs.

What about that any proverb which is, you know, you can find it about money, if you remember any.

There’s another song from the early 80s, actually it’s a Beatles song, “Money, that’s what I want.” But off the top of my head, I can’t bring any to mind. There are some that I just can’t recall. That’s cool. We have here, like uh, hm, like this one here, “Money is not everything, money cannot buy everything.”

Yea, you’ll see that.

What does that mean, how can you understand that?

I think it’s definitely, um, a product of the times too. In the 60s it meant a lot more than it did in the 1980’s. And again, I think it’s saying that love is everything, that money can’t provide love, you can have everything else, but you still won’t be happy, you still won’t be fulfilled, because you won’t have love. You’ll have material wealth, but it’s really this immaterial love that you need to be a fulfilled person, a satisfied person. Money isn’t everything, but love is everything.

So this kind of proverb makes sense nowadays in America?

I definitely think so. Whether it makes more sense now than it did twenty years ago is definitely debatable, but I think it definitely, in American culture, people definitely know that, and I know people that will buy that and people that will scoff at it. It goes both ways. Regardless of how you take it, it’s a very important philosophy. Especially the youth in America, which has idealism, holds a lot in that lyric.

Thank you!

I hope to see this whole paper and everything! :D

Hi I’m Ali from Yemen, working on proverbs, American and Yemeni, on cultural aspects. Here we have this book on Children and Proverbs speak the truth. I’d like to have your name and your university back home, and then we’ll go for a small discussion.

My name's Jen Bar, I'm a anthropology and creative writing double major and the university of California riverside we have this title of this book. have you any comment?

The idea that children and proverbs speak the truth? I think that when you talk about proverbs, it's, uh, just starting with proverbs speak the truth, is that they're very deep sated uh cultural ideas about what is right. You've heard the phrase common sense, proverbs reflect what each culture's common sense is, the wisdom. And children speaking the truth, children have a much less complicated view of the world which is a lot less uh it's not as complicated by views that socio-cultural structures put on top of us, if this makes any sense. Proverbs and children have a simple view of the world. It's not complicated by politics, by economics, by um, many of the socio-cultural constructions that we make that tend to make our lives more complicated.

We have here one paragraph saying that how can we understand proverbs according to their context?

Yea, I mean, everything's related. If you're going to go by Levi-Strauss's structuralism or something, or Clifford Geertz's. Someone paraphrased him by saying man is suspended by webs of his own meaning. In the idea that people create everything, everything is related to these cultural constructions that we make, that are artificial, that we artificially put upon the world. We are inculturated into certain cultural structures and that is how we view the world. If it is outside of our cultural structure, frameworks, then we don't really understand it. I guess how proverbs would fit into that, is that proverbs reveal the basic tenants of cultural frameworks through which people view their world.

How can you relate such, you know, ideas that we have just mentioned, to the so-called American proverbs and American culture?

Well, just like any culture, American culture is also more revealed in basic tenants, basic ideals and values through proverbs, these are the common sense things, these are the building blocks of our value system. What's interesting about American culture is that American culture is inherently a collage, it's such a mixture, we get proverbs and such from different cultures.

So the same way you got the culture is the same way you got the proverbs.

Proverbs travel with language, stories travel with language.

So we can move to one small paragraph, like Proverbs in Prose Literature. "There exists a long tradition of investigating literature for various types of folklore materials. Literary historians as well as folklorists have long realized that traditional forms of folk expressions as fairy tales, legends, folk songs, jokes, riddles, proverbs, proverbial expressions, etc." (Wolfgang Mieder *American Proverbs: A Study of Texts and Contexts*, 143). So how do you support this, and to what extent?

If we're going to talk about fairytales, they're the archetype of most literature. I think you could argue that much literature; much popular literature anyway, is based on some fairytale archetype. I could easily produce for you a couple thousand of Cinderella. In that way, it's definitely...you see proverbs, fairytales, folktales, they steadily reoccur in literature, and people are constantly borrowing from traditional folk and fairytales.

Do you think writers still make use of them?

Oh yea!

Literature—

American literature?

Novels, short stories, even in speech?

Yea, I would say more in pop culture. I think the literary genre tends to be more art focused, it tends to be more character driven, which um, so the focus is to create real characters, so they might not draw from folktales quite as much. But popular literature, the romance novel genre for example, which is one of the highest grossing book industries in America, so many of them borrow from the fairytale archetypes. Boy meets girl, boy loses girl, they find each other in the end, everybody's happy. Which you can see in the classic fairytale like Cinderella or Donkey Skin, lots of those. And people, basically, we grew up with these stories as children, you can make references to them, most people are going to understand what your reference is. Newspaper headlines might refer to "It's a Cinderella story!" when some woman marries a man who's ridiculously wealthy, kind of thing. They form the basis of a lot of our thought, a lot of our beliefs. It's the, as I said, they're the most basic manifestations of our culture framework lens through which we view our world.

So can you find some songs which repeat the same kind of famous sayings and proverbs?

Proverbs? Do you want proverbs?

Sayings and proverbs

That is famous? Oh, but the obscure ones are so much more fun.

But "it takes two to tango," or something.

Yea, you see that in a movie. Three's...uh, one's...shoot, how does that go? Two's company, three's...too many?

A crowd.

Three's a crowd. Thank you. Too many cooks boil the broth.

Money buying you love, the chorus is repeated.

Yea, money can't buy me love. I can't think of any specific examples.

Anyway, the ones you mentioned, how do you put them? What is the importance on the audience, how they get the message in that context? Of the song?

I don't know if there's a song that says too many cooks spoil the broth, I'm going to retract my statement on that. Um..Three's a crowd...I can't think of specific instances, but I think part of it is the power of proverbs. Like any other symbol, if we're going to be drawing from symbolic anthropology and such, a symbol will acquire many meanings, and you can use that symbol

differently and it will acquire many meanings. For example, I was just out in the city, and you see a billion “Vote for the hand!” You can see hand as a helping hand, or associated with the Congress party, or you can see it as strength, it’s multi-layered. All you have to do is see a hand, and all of these meanings that immediately come up. Proverbs work in the same way in a more sociolinguistic sense.

Do you think, as an American, do you think you will find similar ideas and background with other cultures?

I think you can find some things in common, yea.

And universal characteristics?

I think there are definitely universal human characteristics. Proverbs may be different too because they’re so linguistically based, and languages are so different.

But they express the same idea.

Yea, exactly. And just as a cheesy example, it’s the only one I can think of right now, in American you might say something like, “it’s always the quiet ones.” And in German I just found out it’s “still wasse sind tief” or “still waters are deep.” So...I think many of these things do reoccur.

But how can we trace this? Which is the one that came out of the other?

I don’t think you can.

Is it difficult ?

No, I don’t know, I don’t think it’s necessarily true. I mean, there’s diffusion here that these things have one origin and then they spread. On the other hand, I think it’s perfectly possible that many of these cultures came up with it independently. Some things you can trace, most definitely, but other times...You know, I’ve done a little research in trying to find the origins of Cinderella. One of the oldest versions they found was in Egypt, and then they found on in 6th century China. Then it pops up in Europe later. But there is no reason why this fairytale would have traveled at that time. I think people will definitely come up with the same ideas. Some things are just true no matter what.

Thank you so much.

I’m Michael Ohoda I go to Gettysburg College in Pennsylvania.

The speech of Barak Obama in Cairo. To summarize this point, he mentioned kind of how to be close to others, because he is the representative of the states, and he’s delivering a speech to the Muslim and Arab people. Here, I’m quoting from his speech, “I have come here to seek a new beginning between the United States and Muslims around the world.” So we do accept this, because we have some very popular sayings that say, “Let us start from the beginning.” And in the same time, there is a proverb that says, “Let bygones be bygones.” Are you familiar with this American proverb, and how can you relate this proverb to the speech of Obama?

Well, “let bygones be bygones” is definitely a common expression. I guess when you have an interaction with a friend, you have a bad fight, you end up saying, “We’ll put it behind us.” I think Obama’s saying the same thing. There’s been some general history between the East and West, the Muslim nation and the United States, but it’s time for that to change. I think that’s what the message is. We want to move past the problems and make progress; it’s the only way we’re going to get anywhere.

Okay, um, the first one is “The grass always looks greener on the other side.” That one I would say to a friend if they were complaining about their legs, and saying “Oh, I want to be that person, because that person’s legs look so great.” I would say, “Oh, well, the grass always looks greener on the other side.” what it means is that, yea, their life may look amazing and great right now, but if you were actually in their life, it may not always be so good. It’s like you’re life isn’t as bad as you think it is, but it always looks like someone else’s life is better than yours.

So how can you apply this proverb—to whom? The parents can apply this to children?

I think it can be applied across the board. You can say it to a friend who is worrying about the fact that their life isn’t that great and they like someone else’s life better. You can apply it to adults if they don’t like the job they have and they’re saying I want this promotion because this job looks better. You can say, that job looks better because you’re not doing it. You can use it with children who want that person’s candy, something that simple. It can be used in a very complex way, but it can be used in a very childlike manner as well.

What do you think people go through to make this common? They express their opinions through proverb, because it is short and so effective?

I think people use this proverb because it has inherent ideas inside of it. So it’s not only saying that the other side is better, but it’s also saying that it’s not so great. It has an implication that it looks great, but it’s not so great.

So even some proverbs, if you want to criticize the other, whatever it is, so he will not feel offended, because it is not your own proverb, you are repeating something which is in the society.

Exactly. It’s a given, a norm, it’s something everyone will understand and everyone has learned the basis of it, even if it hasn’t been generically taught in schools.

Let’s move to the next one.

“The early bird gets the worm.” Obviously, it’s talking about the person, in this case the bird, who goes out the earliest will get the worm because there will be more worms to choose from. This is applied to people who are looking for jobs, or trying to be successful in school, because the one who starts first is the one who usually is successful because it seems like they are trying the hardest. The fact that you’re waking up early implies that you have a lot of ambition that you want to start early, and you want to try hard. I would use that talking to a student, like if you start a paper early, you’re going to get a good grade, so you could use it in the sense of procrastination. So you’ll do better. Or you could use it to a person who goes to a store the earliest, gets the best food or the best quality.

So earlier you related this proverb to education—education, jobs, anything that takes ambition. The person who starts the earliest and works the hardest will get the most of what they’re doing.

Now...

“Birds of the feather will gather together.” This one talks about why you’re friends with this person, and not this person, why you’re in a group with this person and not this person. People who are alike usually will go with people who are similar to them. You’re not going to be friends with someone who you hate. Say you hate the environment and you just want to pollute, you would never be friends with someone who is an environmentalist, and cares a lot. That relationship wouldn’t work. So people who are similar will be friends, will be together; people who are dissimilar will not be together.

I think this is the meaning. If we think about from where we come, which environment, which is the background to give this proverb, does it has an agricultural background, an educational, or is it a religious proverb?

I think it’s a social proverb. People use it to explain why society divides the way it does. Why people have relationships with the people they have relationships with.

What I mean is maybe people while observing the birds, they are gathering together in the same color, so apply that, and they’ve taken that notion and that idea. Yes, in this one, you’re talking about the characteristic of the bird; you’re talking about how their feathers are similar. Whereas with humans, you’re talking about innate characteristics—

Is it a metaphor?

Yes, exactly. It implies different things, not only how they look, actually it has nothing to do with how they look in this case, even though it says its about an outward characteristic of looks, when you apply it to humans, it more of an inward characteristic of feelings, thoughts, the way you interact with society, that kind of thing.

How do you evaluate how the way that proverb put the meaning in such a precise way, and very effectively?

I think it shows the relationship of human beings, and shows that they’re more likely to be friendly with people who are similar to them, so it makes it easier to say something like that. It’s useful because if someone’s complaining about why they’re not friends with this person, you can say, “Well, birds of a feather flock together.” You don’t have to say, “Well, you’re not similar because of this, this, and this” it just sums it up in an easy sentence that you can use.

Do you want more? Yea, just kind of explore.

I can do “a watched pot never boils.” Obviously it’s talking about patience. If you’re sitting there like, you want this to happen, you want this to happen, you want something to happen, it’s never going to happen. Because you want it so much, that it’s all you can think about. Whereas, if you don’t think about it, you leave it off to the side, it will happen in its own natural course. It will occur. It’s not only with food or cooking. In general, patience in life is a good thing. If you get it

off your mind, it will occur. I don't think it's anything that's scientifically proven. But humans, if they're impatient, time will go very very slowly. And it seems like nothing is ever going to happen because you're just waiting and waiting and waiting for it and you can't think of anything else. But if you leave it, put it to the back of your mind, come back to it later, then something's going to happen because you're not overly obsessed with it.

And we can't ignore the source, the hungry man waiting for the food to be ready, and that moment is so long, so maybe he coined that term. Maybe it's related.

Can I have your name and university back home?

My name is Chia Jaynayek and my university is the University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee, and my major is Global Studies, Security.

I'm David Boesher. And I'm doing my undergrad at St. Joseph's University in West Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

Here, brother, I'm quoting from the speech of Barak Obama in Cairo regarding hijab. He says, "That is why the US government has gone to court, to protect the right of women and girls, to wear the hijab, and to punish those who deny it." So how can you respond to this speech from your own point of view, that hijab became a part of the American identity that should be protected?

Well, if the hijab became a large part of American culture, I would hope and I would like to say that it would be treated as any other religious symbol worn by anyone. And in that sense, ideally, you would like to say that people wouldn't be discriminated against wearing it, so on and so forth. But anywhere in the world you have your conservative sectors, you know in the US, where people might have some type of problem with it. It's hard to say until it happens. But I would like to say in the majority of the world, it wouldn't be much of an issue. I guess the discriminations that stand; it's hard to say mostly because we don't really know what would happen and if there were more Muslims in the forefront of American culture, because the populations are still growing and stuff.

I'm Josh Seradnik . I'm getting my bachelors degree at Loyala University of Chicago.

Here I'd like to ask you about what I found through the speech of Obama in Cairo. It reminded me of a Yemeni proverb, which says "War and ploughing are done by reasoning." Also, I remember the American proverb, which says, "The pen is mightier than the sword." So, here, Obama said, "We also know that military power alone is not going to solve the problems in Afghanistan and Pakistan." So, how can you relate this speech to the American proverb?

I would say the quote that President Obama said in his speech earlier would definitely relate to "the pen is mightier than the sword" quote because he's saying, where we have been at war with Afghanistan and Pakistan, and the results of military action haven't given us the response or what we wanted, he's saying we need to break away from using the sword, or in this case

military power, and then just switch to diplomacy and human relation and talking. Communication would be better than using military force or power.

Tom, I go to the University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee, and I am a film and new video major.

Welcome.

A man without...

Ok...A man without a horse is a man without legs. To me that's like saying that is sort of like an old western saying that means American independence—sort of—you have to do everything your own way, on your own, and if you can't do that, like, you can't have independence as a man. That you're not going to be successful, you're not going to get anywhere, you're not going to make any money. Um, it's sort of American, it sounds like something John Wayne would say. Um, I guess the people who would use that are anyone, like, an American businessman trying to say you have to do things on your own to make it in American society. But basically now, we use that saying as like, maybe you need your own car keys, or your own house, or your own property, or anything that you can own. Because you own horses, the idea is that, like, in the 1800s or something, if you have more horses or more cattle, or more men working for you, you're more successful. So if you don't have any horse or any property, you don't even have land, so you're nothing. You're just nothing. From the original context, it's sort of like an insult, but now we just sort of use it as, "You should get a car," or "You should take a step forward," like in owning property, or just having a way of doing things on your own.

Good, okay. Thank you. Let's move to the second one.

A man's home is his castle."

That's the same one. That one's actually very close: "A man's home is his castle." Again, it's sort of the same, but more specifically about your place of living, and probably where your family lives. It's the place where the man's in control. I don't know who would use it now. But I guess I just hear people using that sort of saying, like, once you enter someone's house, you're sort of following their rules. That's pretty universal to anywhere in America. Anyone would say that, rich, poor, a man's home is his castle.

Oh, yea! "Sour grapes can never make sweet wine." My mom uses that to insult me to tell me I'm being stubborn, that I should be listening to her. She'll call me a sour grape, or my little brother a sour grape, or my dad a sour grape. It means, like you should finish your dinner first, or do something constructive, or "listen to me." It may be more of a middle class type thing too. It also sounds like something my grandma would say, but in a different context, almost like a little bit stronger of an insult. Like, you're not listening to me, as like, something important about my family. Something more important, because you're not listening to your mother. It's more of a funny one, it has a lot of comedy to it. It's not very serious.

It's almost like we say, "Stop being a sourpuss." We say that one as well. Like, if you're a bad person, you're not going to amount to something, you're not going to be a nice person just like that. You have to change your attitude and look at things differently.

It's not used about serious issues; it's used about silly issues.

But its meaning is to change that.

It's like asking someone to change something that's really not important. Like, you shouldn't care about it. I can't think of an example of where my mom would say that, but she's called me a sour grape a hundred times. It might even be a saying specific to where my grandma's from, a sour grape, she's from Louisiana. I guess it sounds like a southern thing. She's from the southern part of the US, and I'm from the most northern part of the US. She says it all the time, more than anyone else I know.

The researcher has interviewed some American informants, who have a good experience in the field of education, representing different opinions as they came from different backgrounds.

There was face to face interview, giving them their own time, and a group discussion followed to elicit different viewpoints as the informants represent different schools in the US. Especially the question regarding the integration of education with culture as being incorporated or included in the American curriculum was discussed. Here we start with Emily from St. Ambrose University stating her own personal experience responding to the researcher's question that if culture important to be embedded in the curriculum? She says:

"...yes, culture is very important to education within a country. Each place or country has its own identity and it would be best to be taught from someone that understands all aspects of the students. This would include their culture through curriculum and teaching by one from the same culture. Having a teacher from outside your culture, from personal experience, only causes confusion because they have different ways of looking at things, same thing it goes to the curriculum". (Emily Stafford. St. Ambrose University)

-The American curriculums (in California) hold a very strong nationalistic, *not* cultural tendency. American culture doesn't exist; it is an ambivalent, rootless society with no historical roots with only superficial unity based on politics and forcibly on-going issues that are *not* even of American nature. America is the epitome of conformism, most would say the nation promotes individuality, but this is rather far from the institutionalized truth. The level of nationalism that exists in the social-cultural existence of America is engraved in the media, work system and the systematic social cooperation in schools and civil societies to/in the nation. (Shahani Salcedo. California State UNI; Long Beach)

-the diversity represented in American schools is difficult for me to judge because of the homogeny of my class. It is obviously more centered on American history and experience and more could be done to prepare them to be wiser and better world citizens. If a student is expressing that they are having a hard time with anything though, every effort is made so that student can learn to the best of their ability, whether it is additional resources provided by the teacher, a free private tutoring, or additional time on exam. (Lucy, Iowa University)

-I think the American education would depend on where you are. It is not the same for everyone in the urban, rural, and suburban areas. America is a country that is filled with many cultures and religions, the original people that are native to America are the Native American. (Sultana Karim-Lock Haven University Roselle, NJ, USA.)

-the American curriculum does not really reflect the diversity of modern American culture. We learn in history classes about all of the cultures that make up America-but as far as today's

culture goes, I don't feel like I get a feeling for what our identity is in its entirety. We can take sociology classes once we get to university-but until then we don't really study culture in general. Politics probably influence the curriculum to some extent. But even then, in my experience, they don't seem to influence it that much. (Angelina Giovannini -UCLA, SDSU)

-For me, American culture is an amalgamation of cultures, and so, I'd like to see the schools teach more about other cultures, for example, Arizona's recent pan of teaching about Hispanic culture infuriates me. Personally, my high school offered African-American, European, and Asian history classes. I also felt that my history teachers who taught us history did a good job explaining America's multicultural past. (Stephanie Jean. University of Kansas, Lawrence, KS6604S)

Appendix H

Samples of American informants' views towards ethnicity

Daniela Benjamin

Black

- Life Circle – In capitalistic society – Individualism. Old age homes for old people-when you get married & have few kids, elder mainstream white society people are affluent. Family took care of grandparents-- no sense of giving back to parents. Lesser back to the community.

The American dream: You do – making it big – no matter what society you come from

Mexican family live together – girls get married sooner, have kids and stay at home.

Black people need to live-- we should do that-- the children may not go to good school

- Racism is so deeply in the mind. We still think inferior – white feel they are superior. This complex is within USA. Schools in Black society are hard - Schools in white locality is great. The racism is not our-- People are conditioned to believe they are inferior.

Black man killed, shot at back by police-- people take photo on cameras phones, not put on media – Mainstream people – communal--- if white person --- it happens with black and Latino - less than Human.

Lot of people riot – the dead person left -- people thought it was mundane. Protests – case is going on – Black Professor – was going home-- lost key, tried to break own lock-- neighbor called police came-- showed ID – still police arrested - It happens all the time.

- On the way back from wedding-- one white guy too – check the car of black people – white left- many black people are in prison. Stupid laws – people think we are criminals –

- opening in mainstream (music, athletics) this how we see to make ourselves big, confident. - Evil – Should not be part of the society.

- History – not real, - sexuality is becoming more liberal, there is sanction from religion too, as the religious people are trying to stop it.

- Black: Any body who uses violence, creates more violence – if more power is exerted on people – people aren't truly behind you.

Proverbs related to Daniela's talk:

1. Black is black, white is white:

Color neutrally- sharp contrast;

Racially- black can never be as good as white

2. Black will never take another hue:

Neutrally - black color absorbs all other colors;

Culturally - black will never improve or change, loss of hope in improving the black

3. Two blacks don't make a white: even two blacks cannot be equal in value to a white.

4. The devil is not as black as he is painted: blackness is associated with evil thing and sometimes

even the devil is not as evil as the black

5. No lies are white, they are all black - bad things/behavior always are termed as black

Joshua

Caucasian

– Pen is mightier than sword.

We have been at war and the results were not enough- conversation, communication would be better than using power.

There is a history which taught from parents to children, collective teaching. Learning from History - we simply trust what we hear.

David Bursioner

Caucasian

Regarding Hijab :

Hijab became large part of American community. I hope it would be treated respectfully – some people may have a problem with it. We really don't know, as the Muslims are not much in USA.

Charley

Caucasian

American and Yemeni proverbs are very similar – because they part knowledge – Role of father in American society-- different kind of reverence for teacher, knowledge, respect -- can be very friendly relation ship – my teacher respects me, that is why he takes time to spend with me.

Sofi

Caucasian

Each state varies; in Texas if you show publicly (gay) you may be killed. Most part it is driven by religion. In California the marriage was legalized – people voted. Church put lot of money in advertisement against it.

In case you aren't married, you cannot visit them in hospital; my grand had to lie to visit her friend.

Michael Lahocha

Place : Gates for college

State : Pennsylvania

caucasian

“..... New beginning between USA and Muslim world -- Let us start from beginning

American proverb-- let bygones be bygones!

There has been a general history between east and west – between USA and Muslims -- but it is time for that to change, message -- we want to move away from problem and work for progress.

Emalia Jayenti

Psychology

Mixed

Post 9-11, How Muslims were treated -- isolated-- criminalization of Muslims – enemy face-- policy how they intend in middle east-- end of injustice.

Result: Work for peace everywhere together

Camps -- torture – were Muslim children -- America has treated Muslims badly – Americans don't know Islam; don't know the similarities between Christianity and Judaism

i. Historical background - America has

ii. Common goals, trying to construct.

About women:

Women can't do jobs properly, pregnant, need protection, A lot of things need to be done – more Ph. D done by some-- not satisfied with the status of women in America. Ceiling glass -- a concept which is very strong, but it is not true – as the media portrays the women of USA in a typical different way. Police, teachers, bosses, judges see us not serious – the appointment are also racist. Black and white man with equal qualification – the preference will be given to white man, white man is thought be intelligent, knowledgeable and serious.

“Caution is the parent of safety”

Please explain this proverb.

1. Anna Feuer

Columbia University (New York)

Caucasian (White)

Take precautions to ensure your safety you would use this proverb to advise some one to be careful in a precarious situation.

Women's virginity:

For the most part, this proverb is no longer relevant to 21st century America, pre-marital sex is widely accepted, and women have gained sexual liberation beginning in the 1960s. However, American women still do face stigma and objectification. Certain part of the country, such as the Midwest and the south promote abstinence-only education. These areas of the country tend to be more religious (Christian and catholic). On the liberal coasts, women's sexual freedom is generally accepted without a problem. While women are still valued for their looks and sexual appeal, they are not required to abstain from premarital sex.

Women's obstinacy: this stereotypy is still very relevant today. There is the trope of the "bitch" that applies to women in powerful positions; many Americans believe that women cannot ascend to positions of power by merit or intellect alone, and must have attained their position by shrewd or corrupt means. The strong and significant dislike of Hillary Clinton is a good example of how Americans reacted to a strong, well educated and ambitious woman who tried to compete with men. While men may use whatever means necessary to attain power, women are stereotyped as cunning, irrational, immoral, and bitchy. It is very difficult for a woman to rise on merit without facing misogynistic criticism.

2. Elizabeth Jitus – yakum

Occidental college (Los Angeles)

Caucasian (white)

In order to be safe, one has to exercise caution. I would use this proverb in a situation where I wanted to urge someone to be cautious, when I was worried for someone's safety.

"A simple maiden in her flower is worth a hundred-coats-of-arms"

I think that woman's virginity in America is important in that it is still a "big deal" to lose one's virginity. However, I don't think that commonly people living in the U.S idolize virgins in the way the above proverb states. it is only in certain regions of the US where women are expected to remain virgins until marriage.

"Cunning women" seen as negative, irrational, emotion – driven.

A common proverb used often in the US is "hell hath no fury like a woman scorned" -- in the modern society one can see this in the idea of the "bitch", often a high-powered women who is viewed as cunning, sneaky, harsh and unattractive. A perfect example of this is Hillary Clinton who was slandered repeatedly during her campaign for President.

Stereotype that women are not as smart as men:

When I was very young, my grand father said to me ‘you know Elizabeth, you’re really smart you can be a nurse’ here he paused “or maybe even a doctor”. the impression I got from this was that I was starting off behind my male peers, at least in the eyes of my grandfather.

Ethnic stereotypy:

Caucasian – white “normal” culturally constructed

African American – POP culture lands power

Hispanic – culture considered immigrant culture

Native American – less than 1 %

Asian / pacific culture – “Model Minority” considered non-violent, concerned about education assimilated easily.

Middle eastern -- added after 9/11

3.Hillary Krentzman, Hilarykrentzman@gmail.com

Columbia University (NY, NY)

Caucasian (white)

I understand this proverb as the most reliable path to safety is to take careful measures at all times, or to be “cautious”. I would use this to advise someone to think ahead in situations in order to maintain safety.

I think that the concept of virginity is mainly important on an individual level rather than a widely accepted approval or disapproval of woman’s sexual choices. For the most part, issues of sexuality are highly private, unless a woman becomes pregnant or has some other health issue that requires outside involvement. As a result of the emphasis on individual choice depending on relationship circumstances, maintaining virginity as a measure of “virtue” is often criticized especially given the double standard for men and their sexual liberties as individuals beyond the quantification of their “worth” based on the “moral” standards of behavior.

This perspective is pervasive in the US, but of course it is not the same in ultra-conservative groups or regions where girls usually have less individual discretion over life choices.

“Cunning” has a negative connotation-- it means plotting, calculating. The implication of this cult is that in order to be successful, a woman must be aggressive, hard, “bitchy” and self-serving.

Many industries dominated by men, especially politics and finance-- women who are in power are given the stereotype of “bitchy” and possessing male qualities. They are often accused of being lesbians while this is a cultural stereotype. It is slowly breaking down. You should look at criticism of Hillary Clinton’s personality in the 2008 presidential elections.

Appendix I:

Selected Yemeni proverbs with their American equivalents

Homeland

1. Y من ترك داره قل مقداره-

min tarak daruh qal miqdaruh

He who leaves his home (country) loses his dignity.

A- East or West, home is the best

2. Y- إلى ماله أول ماله تالي-

eli maluh awal maluh taley

Whoever has no beginning has no end.

A -Everything must have a beginning

3. Y- الغربة كربة-

alghorbah qurbah.

Expatriation is but suffering

A- A man's home is his castle

Social Status

4. Y- من تعالى ردى-

min taala; ' radas

One who is up does not show mercy to one who is under him.

A -The big fish eat the little ones, the little ones eat shrimps, the shrimps are forced to eat mud

5. Y- ما علا طير إلا وقع-

ma 'alaa tyrun ila waqa'a

Whatever high the bird gets, it must come down.

A- Everything that goes up must come down

Law and Justice

6. Y- لكل قاعدة شواذ-

likul qa'edah shwath

Every rule has exceptions.

A -There is no rule without an exception

7. Y- أنا رب ابلي و الكعبة لها رب يحميها-

an rab ebili wa al Ka'ba laha rab yahmiha

I protect my cattle, Kabaa has God.

A- The only safety is in God

Casteism and Class

8. Y- اشترى لك عبد أفضل من تربيته-

ishtari lak a'bad aftal min tarbiatuh

Buying a slave is better than bringing him up.

A- Better bad buy than a good loan

9. Y- خاو لك خادم-

khaw lak khadim

Do not consider a slave a brother as the slave is forgetful.

A- No gratitude from the wicked

10. رو الحليم النجد

raw alhaleem alnajer

A hint is enough for the wise.

A- To one who understands, few words are needed.

11. ينتقل مثل عيال العسن

yatanaqal mithl a'yaal ala'wsan

He who changes his host is like the kitten.

A- We do not always gain by changing.

12. Y- سمحنا له يتفرج راح يرقص

samhna lah yatafraj rah yarqus

We told him just watch, but he went to play.

A -Give him a finger and he will take a hand

13.Y- ما جودة من خادم

ma gawdah min khadem.

Goodness is far from the nature of slaves.

A- Crows are black the world over

14. Y رجعه ذي بها بي

raja'ah thi biha bi

The wound of the princess is cauterized on the maid.

A- When fools make mistakes, they blame it on the providence

15. Y- فوق المسكينة يا عون الله

fawq almiskeenah ya a'wn alah.

The anger with the wife from a noble origin is let out on the maid

A -The poor man pays all

16. Y- يا لابس ثياب الناس كنك عاري

yaa labis thiab alnass kinak a'ri

He who dresses up with others cloths is naked.

A- Borrowed clothes never fit

17. Y- ما يساوى شعرة في رأسي

maysawi sha'rah fi rasi

Not worth a strand of my hair.

A- Every ass thinks himself worthy to stand with the king's horses

18. Y- كله اخضر و كل اخضر بصل

kuleh khadhr, wakul khaddar basal

Everything green is not green onion

A- All that glitters is not gold

19. Y- فوق كل ذي علم عليم

fawq kul thi a'lmun a'leem

I have a master, but my master has one too.

A- Everyone has his master

20. Y- يحكمه أصله

yahkumuh asluh

The origin is the only reflection.

A- Like father like son

B-

Education

Educational and Moral Principles

21. Y- من أَعول تكعول

man aawal taqawal

It is easy to give birth to a baby, but it is difficult discipline him/her up.

A- It takes a village to raise a child

22. Y- العصي لمن عصي

ala'sa leman a'sa

Unsubmissive, stick for him

A- Spare the rod, spoil the child

23. Y العلم في الصغر كالنقش في الحجر

ala'ilm fi als'ighar kalnaqashi fi alh'ajar

Learning at young age is like sculpturing a stone.

A- What we learn early, we remember late

24. Y- من له طبيعة بالبدن ما تروح إلا بالكفن

men lah tabeatoh bi albadan ma truh ela bilkafan.

He who has a habit along with him, it will last.

A – Bad luck lasts like one's nails.

25. Y- اشبع ولدك و أحسن أدبه

eshbe'a waladak wahsen adhaboh

Feed your son properly and discipline him.

A- Spare the rod and spoil the child

26. Y- كثر الصنع تنجي من الفقر

kuthar alsinaa tinji min alfiqer

Many skills keep poverty away.

A- In fair weather prepare foe foul

27. Y- الصدق نجي محمد

alsedhq naja mohammed.

Telling truth saved Mohammed

A- The truth shall make you free.

28. Y- من تصبح بالكذب ما تعشى به

min tasabaha bil kathb ma ta'asha bih

He who gains breakfast by lying cannot gain supper.

A- Honesty is the best policy

29. Y- الصراحة راحة

aSaraha rahaa

Frankness is comfort.

A- The truth will come to light.

30. Y- الضحك بلا سبب قله أدب

athehq bela sabab qillat adab

Laughing without reason is indecent.

A- Laugh at someone is to be laughed back at.

31. Y- ابعد عن الشر و غنى له

aba'id a'an alsharr wa ghanilo

Keep away from evil and sing for it.

A- Avoid evil and it will avoid you

32. Y- ما حك جلدك مثل ظفرك

ma h'aka jildak mithil dhifrak

Nothing scratches your skin like your own fingernail.

A- Serve yourself if you would be well served

Goals, Morality and Values

33. Y- عذر أقبح من ذنب

a'uther aqbah min thanb

An excuse is worse than a sin.

A- Sin has many tools but lie is the handle which fits them all

34. Y- من جالس جالس

maan jaalas jaanas

He who stays with others will behave like them.

A- Tell me with whom do you live and I will tell you who you are

35. Y- الفتنة اشد من القتل

alfitnah ashadd min alqatl.

Causing discord is worse than killing.

A- A hypocrite destroys his neighbor with his mouth.

36. Y- إذا صاحبك عسل خلى منه وسل

itha sahebak a'sal khali minah wasal.

If your friend is honey for you, do not become greedy.

A- If your friend is honey, do not lick him up altogether

37. Y- ما حد يدخل من الطاقة

ma had yadkhul min altaaqaah.

No one enters through the window.

A- Do not put the cart before the horse.

Respect and Behavior

38. Y- من اكبر منك بيوم اعلم منك بسنه

min akbar mink ba yaum a'lam mink ba sanah.

He who elder than you in one day is knowledgeable than you by one year.

A- Experience is a dear teacher

39. Y- من علمني حرفا صرت له عبدا

man a'lamani harfan sirtu lahu a'bdan

He who taught me one letter, I became his slave (I am indebted to him)

A- Who teaches me for a day is my father for a lifetime.

40. Y- الجنة تحت أقدام الأمهات

aljanah tih't aqdam alumahat

Paradise is under the feet of mothers.

A – Mother's love is the best of all.

Poverty and Wealth

41. Y- الحال من قلبه بقلبه

alhal min qalbah biqalbah

Neither poverty nor wealth lasts long.

A- Everything has its time

42.Y- كلنا فقراء إلى الله

kulina fuqra ela Allah

Poverty is not shame.

A- Poverty has no kin

43.Y- قنع بالقليل يأتيك الكثير

qena'a ba alqaleel yateek alkatheer.

He who does not endure poverty will not endure wealth.

A- Use the little to get the big

44.Y- حيث ترزقون لا حيث تخلقون

hyth tarzaqwn la hyth takhlaqwn

Wealth is a home abroad.

A- Money recommends a man everywhere..

45.Y- مفرح عياله و عاصبها بصلته

mufrah a'yaluh wa a'sibha bi salah

Time pass with his kids, stomach is empty.

A- A cold hand, a warm heart.

46.Y- الفقر في الوطن غربه

alfiqar fi al watan ghurbah

Poverty at home is estrangement.

A- Poverty has no kin

47.Y- طريق الأمان ولو مسيرة ثمان

tareeq alaman walu maseerat thaman.

Keep to the safe road even if it takes eight days journey.

A- Better one safe way than a hundred one which you cannot reckon.

48.Y- ما يدخل المبرع إلا سائر

ma yadkhul almbra' ela sater.

He who does not have power should not jump high.

A- Know your limitations and go not beyond them.

49.Y- غبن ثالث لمن زادت عليه الديون

ghubn thalith min zadat a'leeh aldeewn

A- poor man without debts is rich.

50. Y- شمه و لا تطعمه

shumah wala tata'muh.

The poor man eats with his eyes.

A-when in great need anything will do.

51. Y- ما يجد حق الكفن

ma yajid haq alkafan

He who has nothing does not enshroud his father.

A-An empty bag cannot stand.

52. Y- من أكل و لم يحسب فقر و لم يدري

maan akala walam yahsop faqera walam yadhri.

He who eats without counting becomes poor without knowing.

A- Without frugality none can be rich, and with it, few would be poor.

53.Y- حق الحرمة للظلمه

hak alharama la aldhalamah

Stolen money is benefitted by the tyrant

A- Ill gotten gain is no gain at all.

54. Y- مال تجزع من تحته ربح ما هو مال

mall tegza'a min tehtah reeh mahoh mall.

Wealth which cannot stand wind is not a wealth.

A- Wealth unused may as well not exist.

55. Y- إلى ما بيدك يهدك

eli ma byaduk ya huduk.

What is out of your hands plots against you.

A- Wealth is not his that has it but for his who enjoys it.

56. Y- القرش يلعب بحمران العيون

alqirsh yala'b bi himran ala'ywn.

Money makes ugly things look beautiful

A- Money makes the world go round

57. Y- هي اللسان لمن أراد فصاحة

hia alisan liman arada fasahtan.

Wealth is better than its owner.

A – Wealth makes many friends.

58. Y- هي السلاح لمن أراد القتال

hia alsilah liman arad alqitala.

Money is a sword's prop.

A- Money talks

59. Y- لا من الاوله و لا من الثانية

la min lawala wal min althaneeh.

Not from this life not from the life after.

A- You cannot lose what you haven't got.

60. ما حد يرجع بقدحه كسره

mahad yraja'a bi qadahuh kissrah

No one will respond to him, he is poor.

A- Poor has no friends

61. Y- ما يصلى إلا يربح

ma yasali ela yarbah.

He prays for profit.

A- Benefits turn poison in bad minds.

62. Y- العين بصيرة و اليد قصيرة

ala'een baseerah wa alyad qaseerah

The eye can see, hand can't reach.

A- Ability is of little account without opportunity.

General attitudes towards life

63. Y- ما تعسر ده الرجال

ma ata'saar duh alrigaal.

What is difficult, share it with others.

A -Difficulties are things that show what men are.

64. Y- ذي خلقه رزقه

thi khalaqah razaqah

The one who created him will feed him.

A- God sends every bird its food.

65.Y- من عقله برأسه يعرف خلاصه

min aqluh bi rasuh yaraf khlasuh.

He who has his own decision, can save himself.

A- He who follows his own advice must take the consequences

66.Y- الحاصل كثير

alhasil katheer

What is in hand is much.

A- Little makes a lot

67.Y- من صبر ظفر

min sabar dhafar

He who is patient enough is winner.

A- He that is patient finds his foe at his feet

68.Y- لا كان في شمس كانت أمس

la kan fi shams kanah ams.

If there was an action, it should be yesterday not tomorrow.

A- Don't put for tomorrow what you can do today.

69.Y- الحقيقة مرة

alhaqiqah murah.

Truth is bitter.

A- Truth is heavy; therefore few wear it.

70.Y- يد ما تقدر تكسره بوسه

yad ma taqder teksirh bosih.

Strong hand that you cannot break, kiss it.

A- If you can't beat them, join them.

71.Y- ساعة لربك وساعة لقلبك

sa'a le rabak wa sa'ah le qalbak.

One hour for God and another for heart.

A- None but the wise man can employ leisure well.

72.Y- ما على الرسول إلا البلاغ

ma'la alrasool ela albalagh.

The duty of the messenger is only to convey the message.

A- I am only the messenger.

73.Y- ما فات مات

ma fat mat

What has passed has passed.

A- Let bygones be bygones.

74.Y- الوعد كالرعد

alwa'dd kaalra'dd.

A promise is like a thunder.

A- Promise is a debt.

75.Y- يوم لك و يوم عليك و يوم لا لك و لا عليك

yawmn luk wa yawmn a'leak, wa yawmn la luk wala a'leak.

One day is for you, another is against you and one day neither for you nor against you.

A- Luck is bound to change.

76.Y- من عقله برأسه يعرف خلاصه

min aqluah bi rasoh yarif khalasoh.

Use your mind; your problem will be over.

A- You have a brain, use it.

77. Y- كلما ضاقت انفرجت

kulmaa dhaaqat anfragat

Whenever it proves difficult, it brings salvation.

A- There is an end for every route.

78. Y- حيث ترزقون لا حيث تخلقون

hayth turzaqwn la hayeth tukhlaqwn

Leaving home is better than staying and being miserable.

A- No man is a prophet in his own country.

79. Y- من بعد عيني لا نامت عين

min ba'd a'yni la naamat a'yen.

After my eye let other eyes not sleep.

A – Self loves itself the best.

80. Y- القشة ذي قصمت ظهر البعير

al qashaah thi qasamaah dhaaher albaa'yeer.

It is only the last straw that broke the camel's back.

A- The last straw will break the camel's back.

81. Y- قتلته الدنيا

qataltah aldonia

Life is killing him.

A- Life is one long way of getting tired.

82. Y- ليلة العيد تعرف من ليلتها

laylat alqade turaf min leiletha

The day of Eid is known by its night.

A- What we know is the measure of what we see.

83. Y- الخط يعرف من عنوانه

alkhat ywraf min anwanuh

A letter's address satisfies you

A- The address of a letter reveals its contents.

84. Y- من كل حدب و صوب

min kul hadbn wasoup

From every direction bad.

A- Misfortune comes in bunch.

85. Y- اعمل خير و أرمى في البحر

ea'mal khayer wa armi feeh albaher

Do a favor and throw it into the sea

A- If we like to do a thing, we do it well

86. Y- دنيا غرارة مكاراة

dunia ghararah makarah

Life gives birth to pain.

A- Life is mystery that death alone may solve.

87. Y- مثل مال اليتيم

mithl maal alyateem

As hot as an orphan's wealth

A- Don't stick your hand in boiling water to see if it is hot.

88. Y- كل تأخيرها وفيها خيرة

kul takheerah wa fiha kheerah

In everything that is late, there is good.

A- Better come late to church than never

Time in Man's Condition

89. Y- ما احد عليها مخلد

maa ahad aliha mutkhaled

Nobody in this world is permanent.

A- As a man lives so shall he die; as a tree falls, so shall it lie

90. Y- الوقت من قلبه بقلبه

alwaqt min qalbah bi qalbah.

Do not trust time. It is unstable.

A- Time and tide wait for no man.

91. Y- رباه الوقت

rabah alwaqt

Time is the best discipliner.

A- Time is the best teacher.

Belief and Religion

92. Y- اسعي يا عبدي و أنا الرزاق

asaa ya a'abdi wana alrazaaq.

Man has only to seek and God will care for him.

A- God helps those who help themselves.

93. Y- من اعترف بذنبه فلا ذنب عليه

maan a'taraf bi thanboun fla thanbun a'lyeh.

He who confesses his sin is out of it.

A- A fault confessed is half redressed

94. Y- لا إكراه في الدين

La ikrah fi aldeen

No compulsion in religion.

A- Live and let live.

95. Y- ارحموا من في الأرض يرحمكم من في السماء

arhamu man fi alardh yarhmukum man fi alsama

Comfort people on earth, you get comforted by God in Heaven.

A- You always help yourself by helping others.

96. Y- كل شاه معلقه لأذننها

Kul shah moalaqah la ethnaha.

Every lamb is hung by its guts.

A- Men are punished by their sins, not for them.

97. Y- نصيبك يصيبك

nasibak yaseebak.

Your fortune will hit you.

A- Fortune always leaves one door open in disasters

98. كل لقمة لأكلها

kul luqmah liakaliha

What is not your fate will drop from your mouth.

A- You cannot fight destiny, submit to it.

99. Y- إذا جاء القدر ما منه مفر

ida jaa alqaddar ma minah mafar.

If fate comes, it cannot be avoided.

A- You cannot escape your fate

Man as an Individual.

100. Y- يدي في لقفه و صبعه في عيني

yadhyfi lakfoh wa sbaoh fi a'yni.

My hand is in his mouth and his finger is in my eye.

A- Don't bite the hand that feeds you.

101. Y- ما يخرجها من الملط إلا رجليها

maa yakhrija min almalat ela rijileiha.

His legs only help him out of the mud.

A- God helps those who help themselves.

102. Y- يا جبل ما يهزك ريح

ya jabal ma yohzak reeh.

Oh, mountain you will not be shaken by the wind.

A- The harder the wind, the deeper the oak becomes rooted.

103. Y- من قرصه بيد غيره مات معذب

Min qursah byad gheirah mat mo'athab.

Whoever has his bread in others' hand dies painfully.

A- The bitter bread of dependence is hard to chew.

104. Y- هذا الفرس و هذا الميدان

hatha alfaras wa hath almeadan

Here is the horse and here is the field.

A- The proof of the pudding is in the eating.

105. Y- الأمل طويل و الأجل قصير

alamal taweel wa alajal qaseer.

Hope is long and death is short.

A- Death keeps no calendar.

106. Y- أصابعك ما هن سوا

assabak ma hun sawaa.

Your fingers are not equal.

A- Different strokes for different folks.

107. Y- من أعول تكعول

Man a'awal takawal.

He who has got kids is worried.

A- It takes a village to raise a child.

108. Y- عمل له بكل قرية بيت

a'amil lah bikul qaryah beyt.

He made a house in every village!

A- An old friend is a mount for a black day.

Friends and Neighbors

109. Y- من جالس جالس

Man galass ganass

He who sits with people becomes one of them.

A- A man is known by the company he keeps.

110. Y- عذر و لا حمار

a'ther walaw himar

An excuse even a donkey.

A- Try to find a reason for the sake of your friend.

111. Y- الطيور على أشكالها تقع

alttyoar a'la ashkaaliha taqa'

Birds of same feather fly together.

A- Birds of a feather flock together.

112. Y- احذر من عدوك مرة و من صاحبك ألف مرة

ihthar min 'adoak marah wa min sahebuk alf marah.

Be aware of your enemy once but a thousand times of your friend.

A - God protect me from my friends; my enemies I know enough to watch

113. Y- الصاحب المخسر عدو مبين

als'ah'ib almukhsir a'dun mubiyeen.

The friend who spoils your life is a clear enemy.

A- False friends are worse than open enemies.

114. Y- صاحبك و ربك لا تكذب عليهم

s'ah'bak wa rabak la taktheb a'leahum .

There are no secrets from your God and your friend.

A – A true friend is your second self.

115. Y- صحبه الجيد كسوبه

s'uhbat algeed kassobah .

A good friend is like good income.

A- A faithful friend is the medicine of life.

116. Y- الرفيق قبل الطريق

alrafeeq qabel altareeq.

Loyal friend is before the journey.

A- Better have a friend on the road than gold or silver in your purse.

117. Y- الجار قبل الدار

aljar gabl aldar

Seek the neighbor before you get a house.

A- A good neighbor is a precious thing

118. Y- جارك القريب و لا أخوك البعيد

jarak alqareab wa la akhwk alba'id

Your close neighbor is better than your distant brother.

A- Better neighbor near than a brother far

119. Y- أحفظ مالك و لا تخون جارك

ah'fat' malak wala takhoin jarak

Secure your possessions and do not accuse your neighbors.

A- Blame not others for the faults that are in you.

120. Y- من صبر على الجار حصد الدار

Man saabar 'ala algar hassad alldhar

Who tolerates a neighbor's harm, God will bequeath him with his neighbor's house.

A- A moment's patience is a ten years' comfort.

n. Attitudes towards Women and Men

121. Y- النساء كالفوارير

alnesa kaal qawareer

Women are like bottles.

A- Women are wacky.

122. Y- عقل مرة

'aql marah!

Woman's brain is imperfect.

A- Women are vain: they'd rather be pretty than have a good brain.

123. Y- نساء رأس البلاء والبليّة

nissa raas albalaa wal balih.

Women are the head of evil and trouble

A- Women are the root of all evil

124. Y- مرة, ايش جهدها

marah, aesh gahdaha

Woman, what can she do?

A- A woman is only a woman.

125. Y- المرأة بعد زوجها

almarah ba'ad zawgaha

A woman follows the husband.

A- Women, cows and hens should not run.

126. Y- ربها قبل ما تتركب

rabha qabl ma tarkab.

Discipline her before she comes rude.

A- We cannot control the news we get, but we can control the news we start.

127. Y- هن من ضلع اعوج

hun min dhila' a'a waj

A woman is created from a curved bone.

A- You can never pin a woman down to an answer.

128. Y- المرأة مرة وإن تنمرت

almarah mara wain tanamarah

Even if the woman were a tiger she would remain a woman.

A- A Woman is only a woman.

129. Y- لا تأمن المرأة ولو حلفت على الماء

La tamin almarah wa law halafat a'la almaa.

Do not trust the woman even if she has sworn God on the water.

A- If it is a secret, do not tell it to a woman

130. Y- منكسات العمائم و جالبات المصائب

muniksat ala'maaym wgalibat almusibeh.

A woman but brings misery and shame whether they are married or stay at their parents' home.

A- There is hardly a strife in which a woman has not been a prime mover.

131. Y- ما زعامة من مرة

maa za'amah min marah.

A woman will not be given leadership.

A- A woman's place is in the home.

132. Y- الأم مدرسة

alaum madrasatah

Mother is a school.

A -The mother's heart is the child schoolroom

133. Y- البيت المرأة و الحب الذرة

albayt almarah wa alhab althorah.

The woman is the support of the house and the corn is the best seed of plants.

A- A house without woman and firelight is like a body without soul or spirit

134. Y- هن شقائق الرجال

huna shaqaaeq alrijal

Women are the other halves of men.

A- A man is only half man without wife

135. Y- من صلت زوجته صلح بيته

Man salahat zawjatuh salaha baytuh

The one who got good wife leads a good life

A - A wealthy woman is the crown of her husband

136. Y- الزوجة الصالحة درء من النار

alzawjah alsaleha dera' min alnar

A good wife is a shield from hell.

A- A good wife and health are a man's best wealth.

137. Y- من حبه الله جبره بالعيال

Min habah allah jabarah bil a'ayaal.

He who is loved by God is rewarded with a baby boy.

A- The son is the light of the house.

138. Y- ما محارب إلا رجل

maa muharib ela rajul

A fighter is only a man.

A- A man can do a lot of things if he has to.

139. Y- الرجال حروف الذهب و النساء عوادين الحطب

alrijal heroof althahab wa alnisa awadeen alhatab.

Men are gold's letters, women are sticks of wood.

A- A man of straw equals a woman of gold.

140. Y- الرجال تقف و ترقع

alrijaal tiqa' wa terqa'.

Men to depend on.

A- A man can do a lot of things if he has to.

141. Y- أعطاه المال و الرجال

ia'tuh almal wal alrijal

God gave him the men and wealth

A- He was born with a golden spoon

142. Y- ما تعسر اديه الرجال

Ma ta'asar edeesh alrijal

Whatever is difficult, men will take care of it.

A- As a man is, so he sees.

Attitudes towards Marriage

143. Y- الزواج نصف الدين

alzawag nis'f aldean

Marriage is half of religion.

A- Marriage is a quick solution to more problems

144. Y- الزواج ستره

alzawag sutra

Marriage is protection.

A- He that takes wife takes care

145. Y- ما تختار إلا من بين رجال

Ma takhtar ela min byeen rijal

Choose a wife who lives and grew up with father.

A- An undutiful daughter will prove an unmanageable wife

146. Y- هذه الدببة من هذه العظية

hathih aldhubiah min hathih ala'wdhiah

This fruit will match its plant.

A- Observe the mother and take the daughter

147. Y- ذى ما معه بن عم ناسب

thi ma ma'a bun a'am naasab.

He who has no cousin must marry from a good family instead.

A- Before you marry, 'tis well to tarry.

148. Y- زيارة الطين عمرة

ziarat al teen emrah.

Let your daughters get married and always help them.

A- He that stays in the valley shall never get over the hill

149. Y- خذ منهم و لا تعطهم

khuth minnahom wala ta'atehom.

Get married from them but do not marry to them.

A-The daughter of a spry old woman makes a poor housekeeper

150. Y- إمساك بمعروف أو تصريح بإحسان

imsak bima'roof ao tasreeh' bi-ih'san

Retained in honor, or released in kindness

A-Do unto others as you would have them do unto you

151. Y- إذا قلت رجالك ناسب

itha qalat rijaalak naseb

If you have fewer men, get them by affinity

A-Marriage is a quick solution to more problems.

152. Y- اخطب لبنتك و لا تخطب لولدك

ukhtub libentak wala tukhtab li waladak.

Let your son choose his wife by himself but choose a husband for your daughter.

A- Marry your son when you please and your daughter when you can.

153. Y- انسب الخال يأتيك الولد

insup alkhal yateek alwalad

Look for a good maternal uncle and you will get a good child.

Attitudes towards Relatives

154. Y- الأهل أولى بالمعروف

alahal awla bial ma'ruf

Relatives are first to be helped

A-Where there is a voice there is a relative.

155. Y- دعوة الوالدين مجابه

dhawat alwalidean mugabah

Parents' prayers for their children are answered by God.

A- Parents are God's most gifted ministers

156. Y- من قلت رجاله يهون

Man qalat rejaloh yagoon.

He who has few boys is humiliated.

A- Who has no son has no satisfaction

157. Y- من عاد أمه لا تهمة

man a'ad umah la tihmuh

He who has a mother around, do not worry about him.

A-Being good is the mother of doing good.

158. Y- من تزوج أمنا فهو عمنا

maan tazoj aumana fahoa a'mena

Whoever marries our mother we call him uncle.

A-My friend's friend is my friend

159. Y- إلى ما نفع أمه ما نفع خالته

illi ma nafa' umah ma nafa khaltuh.

He who does not benefit his mother will not benefit his aunt.

A- If you do not obey your mother, you will obey your step mother

160. Y- اهلك ما يخلوك تهلك

ahlak ma yakhlook tahlak

Your relatives will not leave you to suffer.

A- If you have nothing, go to your relatives

161. Y- لا ترجم كلبك يرموه الناس

la turjom kalbak yrgumoh alnaas.

Do not throw your dog in front of others because they will do the same.

A-Do not spit into the well you may have to drink out of

162. Y- مهرنا في بطن واحدة

mehrna fi baten wahida.

Your mother will not bring you an enemy.

A- Your mother's love is the best.

163. Y- الحجر القريبة صلاح الزريبة

alhagar alqareeba salah alzarebah

Better to use the nearby stone to complete one's own building.

A- Better a neighbor near than a brother far.

164. Y- ثور عقره مولاه

thourn a'qarah mowlah.

A bull slaughtered by its owner.

A- The ox knows its owner.

Solidarity

Solidarity as seen in Yemeni proverbs:

165. Y- ما عود وحدة ولصا

ma a'wed wahduh walasa

Matchstick alone cannot make fire.

A- One hand can't clap

166. Y- البركة مع الجماعة

albrakah ma'a aljama;ah

Blessing is in being many.

A- Union is strength.

167. Y- عيش و ملح

a'aesh wa milah.

Bread and salt.

A- Bread and butter.

168. Y- من اجل عينك تكرم ألف عين

Min ajal a'ynak takram alf a'yeen.

For your eye, thousands eyes I will cherish.

A- Proof of faith is in obedience.

169. Y- العين ما تعلأ على الحاجب

ala'yen mataala ala alhajib

The eye never stands higher than its eyebrow.

A- You can't keep a good man down.

170. Y- قام يحصدها حصده

qam yahsudha hasdtah

Malice surrounds its perpetrators.

A- Malice drinks its own poison

171. Y- المال يجزع و تبقى الوجيه

almaal yajza'a wa tabqa alwejeeh

Wealth will go and faces remain.

A- To find friend in the market better than money in the purse.

172. Y- من شاور ما ندم

Man shawar ma nidem

He who takes consultation by many never regret.

A- Public opinion is second consciences

173. Y- ارحم من في الأرض يرحمك من في السماء

arham man fi alaredh yarhumuk man fi alsamaa.

Give mercy take mercy

A- Live and let live.

174. Y- النصيحة وصية

alnaseeha wasayah

He who does not like you will not advise you.

A- Ask advice of your equals, help from your superiors

Beyond the National Group

175. Y- بلادي و إن جارت عليا عزيزة أهلي و إن بخلوا على كرام

belaadi wain jaarat 'alia 'azizatan wa ahli wain bekhelw 'alia kiram.

My home, people are the best even they treat me bad

A- My country, right or wrong

176. Y- إذا أنت بين القوم اعبد ما عبدوا

itha anta bayn alqaom a'abed ma 'abadu.

When you live with people, do as they are doing.

A- When in Rome, do as the Romans

177. Y- خلف الشفا اعمل ما تشاء

khalf alshafa a'mal ma tashaa

Beyond the border do whatever you want.

A- Better free in a foreign land than serve at home.

Yemenis as Wise Men

178. Y- ما زبيبة لا وبها عود

Ma zabeebah ila wa biha a'awed

There is no raisin without a stem attached to it.

A- No rose without thorn.

179. Y- إذا غاب القط لعب الفار

itha ghab alqit la'ab alfar.

When the cat is away, the mice will play.

A - While the cat's away, the mice will play

180. Y- ما تحرق النار إلا رجل واطيها

Ma tahriq alnaaar ila rijl watyiha

Fire burns only the one who treads on it.

A -A watched fire never burns

181. Y- البكاء ما هو للرجال

albuka mahoh lirijal.

Crying is not for men.

A- Boys don't cry.

182. Y- إذا انبطح الثور كثرث سكاكينه

itha anbatah althoar katharat alsakakeen.

If the ox falls, knives will increase.

A- If ox is down, many are the butchers

183. Y- قتل الماء و لا قتل الظما

qateel almaa wala qateel aldhama.

To be killed by water is better than to be killed by thirst.

A- Thousands drink themselves to death before one dies of thirst

184. Y- فاز بها عكاشة

faaz biha a'wkashah.

A'wkashah has won.

A- Never too late to win.

185. Y- الفلوس تجيب الجن مربوطه

alfloos tageeb al jin murabbatah.

Money brings jinn tied.

A - Money runs the world

186.Y- كل تأخير فيه خيرة

kull takhyeera fiha khiera

Every delay has its rewards.

A- Slow and steady wins the race.

187. Y- تعب رجلي و لا تعب قلبي

Tab rijly wala ta'b qalbi.

To tire my legs is better than hurt my heart.

A- Self is the best servant.

188. Y- اللقف مذرب و الركب عظرب

allaqif mathrab wa alrukab a'adhrab.

Mouth is good, legs are weak.

A- Large mouth, small manners

189. Y- الدين هم في الليل و مذلة في النهار

aldean hamm fi allyael wa mathalah fi alnihar

Debt is worry at night and humiliation in daylight.

A- Rather go o bed supper less than run in debt for breakfast

190. Y- وين ما حل الحبيب حل القلب

ween ma hala alhabeeb hala alqalb

Where the sweetheart has settled, heart likes to be there.

A- Home is where the heart is.

191. Y- حسن السمعة و لا طول العمر

husn alsuma'a wal twual al'amur.

Good reputation is better than long life.

A - A good reputation is better than money

Notes:

**Qur'an* is the Holy Book of Muslims. There are 114 Surah (Chapters) in it. Islam holds that the Qur'an was repeatedly revealed from Allah to Muhammad orally through the angel Jibrīl (Gabriel).

**Hadith* means "narrative" or "talk." With the definite article *al* it is used in the special sense meaning a "Tradition of the Prophet" (*Hadith nabawi* or *al-hadith*).

* *Sunnah* is the collections of the Prophet Mohammed (PBUH) speeches, it signifies those people who strictly follow the prophet and they are known as Sunnies. Quite opposite to Shi'a regarding the legitimacy of the first three caliphs.

**Ali Bin Zaid* is Yemen's favored wise man who was well-acquainted with tribal norms and agricultural seasons. His poetry, usually short passages with short lines, reflected wisdom and genius in its real sense, as it depicted nearly everything about rural Yemeni man's life. Likewise, there's disparity over the period in which he lived. Some, including Yemeni poet and thinker Abdullah Al-Baradouni, believe he lived before the coming of Islam, while others assert that he lived after that. Still others maintain that he lived in recent centuries; however, no one has any proof.

* *Thousand and One Night* is also popularly known as the Arabian Nights.

*The *Jahiliyya* means the "Time of Ignorance," that is, the pre-Islamic era in the Arabian Peninsula.

**Dhamaar* is a place in Yemen which is known for producing judges.