

**ALI IBN ZAID, THE SAGE OF PEOPLE: THE COMMON SENSE AND
FOLKLORE AS THE PHILOSOPHY OF FUTURE
GRAMSCIAN APPROACH**

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Abstract

The social and geographical existence is the reflection of the consciousness of people which can be seen through the common sense. The relationship between the peasantry society and its culture in contrast to the industrial construction of the consciousness of people are explained according to Marx and Gramsci theories of economy and mode of production. When the mode of production is peasantry relying on the farming activities, we can find the elements of peasantry and rural components in the life of people_ preliminary and primitive modes of life such as cows, farming calendar, oxen, the plough, wind, etc. are prevalent features in all aspects of society and particularly in the common sense.

Ali Ibn Zaid, the well-known as the sage of people in Yemen, is representative and reflected all these elements through a huge oral-verbal heritage. He is the one whom all farmers and peasants have taken as the optimal example of their career. They always follow his sayings and his farming calendar in running their activities.

This study examines how Ali Ibn Zaid's language _ his sayings, proverbs, and verses – fulfils Gramscian idea for he is the person who combines philosophy, religion, social laws and personal experience and makes them the everyday norm of Yemeni life and that makes them a strong concrete component of Yemeni social, historical and cultural structure.

The common sense_ critical background

"The popular element 'feels' but doesn't always know or understand; the intellectual element 'knows' but does not always understand and, in particular, does not always feel. The two extremes are therefore pedantry and philistinism on the one hand and blind passion and sectarianism on the other"

(Gramsci, 1971)

Gramsci is, in his own words, a typical example of the "organic intellectual" who is considered as a "thinking and organizing element of a particular fundamental social class" and distinguished by his role "in directing the ideas and aspiration of the class" to which he organically belongs. He is one of the "popular", "great masses" and he does not deny his origin, instead, he devotes himself to the masses and spends his life to defend their right of existence, adhering to their cases, and to bring them what has been taken by the traditional and vulgarized intellectuals- who put themselves forward as autonomous and independent, dominant social group. He personified his ideas in his life career, linking himself to the masses and working classes throughout his directive political role which culminates in his establishing to the Italian communist party.

As an organic intellectual, he is not specialist, in turn, he writes almost in all fields of thoughts and his writings are characterized by their diversities of which the linking thread is the rights of the masses. According to him, all people are intellectuals and all people are philosophers and all people are politicians; yet all people are active participants in the course of human history; moreover, for him man is the "history" itself ". One could say that the nature of man is 'history'"(SPN, p.355). For him, all people are intellectual based on the functions they undergo within their contexts, all people have something to do, and all of them are participants in the formation of human life:

Although one can speak of intellectuals, one cannot speak of non-intellectuals, because non-intellectuals do not exist.... There is no human activity from which every form of intellectual participation can be excluded: *homo faber* cannot be separated from *homo sapiens*. (SPN, p. 9)

He continues:

Each man... outside his professional activity, carries on some form of intellectual activity, that is, he is a 'philosopher', an artist, a man of taste, he participates in a particular conception of the world, has a conscious line of moral conduct, and therefore contributes to sustain a conception of the world or to modify it, that is to bring into being new modes of thought. (SPN, p. 9)

If the masses are not considered to be non-intellectual, in that strict division between the mental and the manual does not exist anywhere in reality, Gramsci does not place all forms of consciousness on an equal footing. Thus, he distinguishes between 'common sense' on the one hand, and 'good sense' on the other. The former is used to denote those conceptions of the world possessed by the masses, but which contain contradictions of various kinds. The typical worker may have one cluster of religious or ideological beliefs based on little more than tradition and which support the status quo. For example, that the king rules on the basis of divine right, that women are inferior to men, that people in positions of power deserve the economic benefits they receive because they are subjected to greater risks, etc. - and another quite different cluster of beliefs 'implicit in his activity and which in reality unites him with his fellow workers in the

practical transformation of the real world'. (SPN, p. 333). The task of the intellectual (and political party as 'collective intellectual') involves elaborating these 'progressive' elements into a coherent doctrine, or 'good sense'. Such good sense is thought by Gramsci to be crucial if the 'fundamental social group' in question is to establish its hegemony across civil society, up to the level of the state.

From this perspective, we can find that the most dominant concept in his writing about masses is the "common sense" which we are going to approach in this paper. However, before our approach to this equivocal term, it is better to start with a brief historical background to the mainstream of thought that has prevailed the historical context in which Gramsci has posed his writing as a sort of combating to the dominant ideas. Such writing has marginalized the masses and working classes and cancelled their roles designating them as passive participants who do not have any real function. In other words, those who are incapable of thinking.

Enlightenment Traditions

The Enlightenment tradition did not accord any recognition to the feeling of common people, thereby; it was capable of establishing for philosophy_ a physical distance from the 'crowd' and their 'percept'. A peasant is still treated in terms of this construct as an 'uneducated person of low social status, living in the countryside' (Longman 2015). The continuation of the pre-Enlightenment tradition is more subtle. Philosophy is here some kind of systematic rendering of the chaotic world of sense perceptions. This philosophy locates sense-perception in everyday existence, and has been content to take, just as they are, the feelings, intuitions or ideas of everyday existence. Thus, a common man's structures of feelings are not only meaningful, but these are the only structures that philosophy must rely on for 'ultimate truth'. All talk of 'reasoning' or "understanding" in order to establish the meaning of the human world is meaningless, for such talk is only based on arbitrary choice of explanatory schemes.

Gramsci's Concepts of Common Sense

Gramsci distinguished between different forms of thought according to their level of formal organization, coherence and critical capacity. 'Common sense' denotes the uncritical and partly unconscious way of perceiving and comprehending the world that has become 'common' during a certain epoch. It is the incoherent set of beliefs, generally held assumptions, opinions, and ways of seeing things and of acting, which have become common in any given society. (SPN p.321-323). Common sense is a product of history and part of the historical process and 'every social stratum has its own 'common sense' and its own 'good sense' which is basically the most widespread conception of life and of man.

Gramsci's formulation of "common sense" provides a way for thinking not only about the knowledge and practices of subordinated people as well as those of professionals who work in the institutions of civil society. Gramsci talks about "common sense" as being one of the forms of knowledge and practice that is characteristic of subaltern people. He characterized "common sense" as continually changing, multiform, fragmented, contradictory, ambiguous, incoherent, inherited from the past and uncritically absorbed by the masses, and influenced by [more coherent] ideological systems, such as religion, philosophy, and science (SPN p. 325-343, 419-425). Gramsci also portrayed "common sense" as conservative, in that new truths are accepted only with exceptional evidence (SPN p: 423).

Past and present philosophical currents contribute to common sense in that they leave behind sedimentation of common sense and this also constitutes a document of their 'historical effectiveness' (p.326). As can be deduced from the above, common sense is continually transformed with scientific ideas and philosophical opinions that have entered ordinary life.

Philosophy and theory for Gramsci are instruments, which permit the creation of an intellectual order superseding common sense and religion. At the same time, in accordance with his wide conception of intellectual activity, he considers it necessary to destroy the 'widespread prejudice that philosophy is a strange and difficult thing just because it is the specific intellectual activity of a particular category of specialists or of professional and systematic philosophers.' (p. 323).

Theoretical construction and the 'philosophy of praxis' must imply a criticism of common sense, basing itself initially on common sense, renovating it, and making it critical and coherent. This constitutes a part of the collective process of developing a common and coherent conception of the world. From an episodic and disjointed conception in which we belong simultaneously to a multiplicity of human groups, there emerges a critical and coherent conception of our membership of a particular grouping or class, which shares the same mode of thinking and acting, thus making possible, in the words of Marx, often quoted by Gramsci, the transformation of ideas 'into a material force.' In order to accomplish this process the intellectuals must remain in contact with the 'popular' groups or base groups, and in this contact find the source of the problems in the practical activity and common sense of the 'masses' (p. 330).

Along the lines of Marx's views of popular beliefs, Gramsci describes "common sense" as being solid and imperative, and providing norms of conduct (p: 423- 424). He states, "Religion and common sense cannot constitute an intellectual order, because they cannot be reduced to unity and coherence even within an individual consciousness, let alone collective consciousness" (p.326). Based on this formulation of "common sense," Gramsci believed that it was the task of "organic intellectuals" to develop a "philosophy of praxis" which would criticize both common sense and the ideologies and philosophies that influence common sense. According to Hoare and Smith, the editors and translators of Selections from the Prison Notebooks, Gramsci used the term "common sense" to mean "the uncritical and largely unconscious way of perceiving and understanding the world that has become 'common' in any given epoch" (p. 322). In contrast with a "philosophy of praxis" for which Gramsci envisioned unity of theory and practice.

We should not confuse Gramsci's notion of common sense with its normal use in English. Gramsci emphatically does not conceive of common sense as practical wisdom that contradicts theorizing or dogma. Instead, it is a literally thought that is common to a social group, or common to society as a whole. Thus, although he is largely interested in the common sense of the popular classes, and how a hegemonic bloc can intervene in it and shape it to their ends, he acknowledges that every social stratum has its common sense which is 'continually transforming itself, enriching itself with scientific ideas and with philosophical opinions which have entered ordinary life' (p.326).

Yemeni background

What is a great importance for us is Gramsci's attitude toward philosophy in which he destroys the common belief that associates with philosophy not for centuries but may be from the date of its origin and forms the general framework of it as a specific field of knowledge which is confined to specialists and intellectuals. In turn, popular people or masses have not anything to do with it. Gramsci refutes this idea by his declaring that all people are philosophers and all people are intellectuals by the virtue of thinking and using language. However, we can say that it is unfortunately that Gramsci's ideas do not reach to my country for many reasons. Consequently, we are still under the old belief and people still think that intellectuals are only those who can read and write or those who can speak fluently or, in other words, those who use language in a pedantic and academic sense.

It is worth mentioning that Yemeni intellectuals are neither traditional nor organic but fake or pseudo-intellectuals who confine the process of thinking for themselves and deny it from the rest of community. Yet, they nourish the common belief in the consciousness of people who believe now of being unable of thinking because they are not intellectuals. The great loss that we suffer from now is not that people's will is broken but that great part of our cultural heritage is lost because of our pseudo intellectuals who convince people that our heritage is a sign of illiteracy and backwardness. Moreover, they make people believe that our folklore is a sign of barbarism and it should be abandoned.

It seems that they fulfil the task of destroying our cultural heritage taking advantage from the simplicity and illiteracy of people. However, for all these reasons we have made up our mind to make this paper about one, if he is not the only person, who constructs and shapes the whole cultural heritage of Yemeni society specially in the field of folklore. Concerning this topic, particularly the issue of folklore, we think, the best introduction is to start with Gramsci's words:

It is essential to destroy the widespread prejudice that philosophy is a strange and difficult thing just because it is the specific intellectual activity of a particular category of specialist or of professional and systematic philosophers. It must first be shown that all men are philosophers, by defining the limits and characteristics of the "spontaneous philosophy" which is proper to everybody. This philosophy is contained in: 1- language itself, which is a totality of determined notions and concepts and not just of words grammatically devoid of content; 2- "common sense" and "good sense"; 3- popular religion and, therefore, also in the entire system of belief, superstitions, ways of seeing things and of acting, which are collectively bundled together under the name of "folklore".(p.323)

Gramsci argues that folklore is a key form in which people's worldviews are stored and transmitted. As a living 'conception of the world and life', folklore overlaps significantly with his category of common sense. Common sense is indeed, he writes, 'the "folklore" of philosophy', since, like philosophy, it is a way of thinking about the world that is grounded in material realities.

Common sense is not a single unique conception, identical in time and space. It is the "folklore" of philosophy, and, like folklore, it takes countless different forms. Its most fundamental characteristic is that it is a conception which, even in the brain of one individual, is fragmentary, incoherent and inconsequential, in conformity with the social and cultural position of those masses whose philosophy it is. (p.149)

Unlike philosophy, however, common sense is unsystematic, heterogeneous, spontaneous, incoherent and inconsequential, a 'chaotic aggregate of disparate conceptions' that holds together 'Stone Age elements', the principles of advanced science and 'intuitions of a future philosophy' (p. 324).

Ali Ibn Zaid: the sage of people

Cultural background

Ali Ibn Zaid is the most influential person on Yemeni culture. He is the most popular, in either past or present, and the most well-known figure among all the different and diverse classes of Yemeni society. In urban as well as in rural, by peasant, religious men, students, teachers, youth and old people as well; all of them know Ali Ibn Zaid and repeat his sayings occasionally.

Unfortunately, though his position in the consciousness/collective unconsciousness of Yemeni society that makes him play an important role in the everyday life of this society, we cannot find any historical documents that can help in shedding the light on his life. Moreover, there is no any modern methodological study tried to unveil the ambiguity that encloses the whole aspects of his life. In turn, the historical period he belongs to and the time of his birth and death are still unknown; however, what we find solely some predictions that relate him to the 7th or 8th A.D. However, the effort that the Yemeni poet, Abdullah Albaradoni, has done is of good use to some extent for he is the only one who pays a sort of attention to Ali Ibn Zaid and he has devoted to him a whole chapter in his book, *The Folklore and Cultural Arts in Yemen*. One can say that Ali Ibn Zaid is an integral part of Yemeni culture. He has a significant influence on the life of Yemeni people. Moreover, we think that it is not a matter of exaggeration if we say that he is a parallel or an equivalence of the Yemeni identity. He is the conformation of Yemeni way of life, and his sayings are usually taken for granted and no one questions or opposes them. Yemeni people refers to him as the sage of people. Though the uncertainty of his time some historians, depending on his sayings, tried to trace the place that he lived in. however, according to that they surmise that he lived in Yemeni village called Mankth which locates in the central part of Yemen. What leads to this conclusion is the incessant repetition of the name of this village in many of his sayings and poems in additional to his description of so many villages which are not far from Mankth.

Well-being of all species (the genies, the people and birds) is in Mankth.
(Albaradoni.p.90)

Oh thee white beautiful girls of Mankth stop thine gossips. (my grandmother)

Types of Ali Ibn Zaid's Legacy

Ali Ibn Zaid was a farmer and a poet; nonetheless, his legacy is in an oral form. People repeat his sayings, proverbs and poems and passing them from generation to generation. No one thinks of collecting them in written form until 1950s when a Russian Orientalist makes an attempt to collect and publish some of them in form of booklet which is unfortunately unavailable. The major and dominant element in Ali Ibn Zaid's legacy is the issues of agriculture and farming.

Peasantry Society and family relationship

His legacy reflects the nature of peasantry society in details. His sayings reveal the different kinds of prevalent relationships in the peasantry society and that govern everything within it. He covers all the aspects of peasantry life ranging from the relationship with animals to the relationship with the whole community passing through the relationships within family. He provides us with useful advices concerning the relationships with children, wives, in-laws, neighbours, and the whole society. Moreover, he provides us with useful advices concerning the relationship with farm and animals.

-My son avoid being indebted. Widespread saying

-Your sons are your wealth. Famous proverb

-I thought that my land is my sons but I come to realize that my sons are my land.
(Albaradoni. 1981, P.110)

-The nephew is the foe of his uncle. Widespread proverb.

- The shoe of your kin is better than the face of your sister. (my grandmother)¹*
-The one does not provide secure to his neighbour, ought not to feel secure in his home.
 (Albaradoni.p. 1981, p.108)
-He is merely a wife of his wife the one who beats his neighbour's wife.²

Status of Woman in Society

Ali Ibn Zaid's legacy reveals the central part that woman plays in the peasantry society. Woman is a fundamental element in this society and the tasks that she undergoes are not make her a man's partner only but they make her a dynamic source of life in this society. She does not confine to growing children and taking care of the household but she helps in farming activities. Moreover, Ali Ibn Zaid looks to the good woman as being the only shelter from poverty and famine.

The well-bred woman who descends from a well-known tribe is the only shelter from famine and poverty. She can manage to afford us with food all the time. She does that by reducing the amount of food during harvest season and when the time of drought comes, she gives us from what she has stored. (famous verses known in Yemeni society.)

Nature as a source of economy

One can say that Ali Ibn Zaid is an objectification of Marx's model of the base and superstructure in which he states that the characteristics of noneconomic spheres of human social life depend upon the nature of economic activity. We can notice that Ali Ibn Zaid legacy does not go beyond the boundaries of peasantry activities and they deal with the issues and the relations that come out of the farming, as it is the main economic activity in the peasantry society. For Marx the economic base is composed of the force of production and the relation of production. Consequently, we can say that farming is the base which composed of forces of production such as the land, the man, and the nature. Moreover, the production relations are the relations that emerge between all these forces of production.

The individual and social consciousness that Ali Ibn Zaid's legacy reveals is completely conformed to Marx's model. He is concerned with the issues of man and woman in their relation to each other and in the sub-relations that are produced by this relation.

- Some women relieve pain and some are the source of it. (Famous saying)*
-Some of women are of good upspring (like the good cows) and some of woman like dry wheat (which characterized by its tiny grain and usually full of thorns).
 (Albaradoni.p.123)

In addition to man and woman as the main forces of production in the peasantry society, we can notice in Ali Ibn Zaid's legacy what indicates to the relationship of them with the other forces of production such as animals, and particularly, that play essential part in the process of farming such as goat, sheep, cow and especially ox:

- The peasant's ox is his horse. (Widespread proverb)*

¹ According to my grandmother, he has said this saying when he has gone to his sister's house to ask her some corn but she has told him that she does not have any thing. However, his kin has come and gives him the corn; consequently, he has said this saying.

²Yemeni society is a masculine society; hence, they refer to the man who lacks the moral values of manhood as a woman. Ali Ibn Zaid has said that the one who attacks another man's woman is the lowest kind of men he is double woman for the attacking of any woman has considered as a matter of shame

-O our ox I wish you the long life of Yemeni crescent which is being old at the last night of month it born again in the next night. (Famous verse)

-Sheep are the best animals; if the summer comes, they become pregnant and if the guest comes, you will feed him with a sheep, nonetheless, if something threatens the sheep he can escape to a secure place, and sheep also provide you with wool and ghee. (Famous verses)

Land is also a main force of production in the peasantry society; however, Ali Ibn Zaid heightens the value of the land and he indicates to its significant position in so many of his sayings and poems. He provides farmers with so many recommendations which help them to identify the best kind of fertile soil and he prescribes a lot of activities that can help in increasing the fertility of soil and the time of doing that which all in general will result in getting good harvest.

-For a prosperous life, a piece of land or an obedient son is enough. (my grandfather)

- I have not seen anything better than land ever. Famous saying

-The land cannot be eaten by wolf and the drizzle cannot cause any harm to it. Widespread saying.

-If you do not work in your land from the morning to the night, you ought to give up farming.

-If you do not plough your land in the autumn and winter, do not expect any harvest.

-The commercial business is the land of curved terraces.³

-My land is protected by its terrace (as the cities are protected by forts), if the flood comes at night I never getting worried about it. (Widespread saying)

Sources of happiness

We can notice that Ali Ibn Zaid emphasizes that the causes of happy and luxurious life are in the availability of the basic peasantry things which are the cows, farming and camels in addition to the good woman. He does not insist on the availability of them all instead, he explains that the existence of one of them is enough and he summarizes this in one of his wonderful short popular poems which one can consider it as a brief explanation of Marx model of economy. In four lines, Ali Ibn Zaid brings together all the forces of production in peasantry society:

-There is no shelter from famine and poverty except by: cows, farming, or the camels that carry goods,

-or The well-bred woman who descends from a well-known tribe is the only shelter from famine and poverty. She can manage to afford us with food all the time. She does that by reduce the amount of food during harvest season and when the time of dry comes, she gives us from what she has stored. (famous verses known in Yemeni society.)

-And for cow, he emphasizes that: the one who does not plough his land in the early morning by two good oxen, his children are going to beg food in the night from the surrounded villages.

-Who can bring the water from the well except healthy cows and the beautiful young girls? (Albaradoni.p.124).

Actually, Ali Ibn Zaid gives a special account to the cows in his sayings because of the important roles they play in the peasantry society. It is out of question that cows are fundamental elements in peasantry life. They also are regarded as the cornerstone of this society. Ali Ibn Zaid describes

³ In Yemeni peasantry society, people used to refer to the best and the most fertilize land, as it is the land of the curved terrace.

cows, particularly ox. In so many of his sayings he refers to the close relationship that joins him with his ox.

-O our Saadah (she donkey) you are our mother after the death of our father (the ox). (Famous verses).⁴

-For me to plough with an exhausted ox is better than commercial business. (Widespread saying).

He describes the different kinds of oxen and he differentiates between them according to their capacity which is determined, for him, according to their colours. However, he recommends farmers to obtain a specific kind of oxen if they want to get a plenty of crops.

-The white ox is like the noble man, and the red ox is like the sultan whereas the best of the black ones is like the slave. (my grandfather)⁵

-If you do not plough with a white ox, you have to give up farming. (famous saying)

-If you go with white, you will come back with a plenty of harvest. (Famous saying)

Ali Ibn Zaid's Ideology

One is tempted to say that Ali Ibn Zaid is a unique example of human ideology, or at least he has the power of ideology. He stands alone as a single different ideologist who does not want to be one and who does not want to project his example on others. He does not want to dominate or to rule over others. His ideology is not an aim to get authority or to resist hegemony. His ideology solely presents people the best and simple way of living a good and honourable life. Yemeni People usually refer to him when they want to support themselves; to support their point of views, their opinions in this or in that occasion, or when they want to do something or to justify something they have done they find in his sayings the source of power that no one can stand before it. His sayings are the vivid evidences of the rightness or wrongness of any person in Yemeni society. He is the standard, according to which, Yemeni people measure and judge themselves in their everyday life. "He is every man in Yemeni society, his age represents all Yemeni ages and his village represents all Yemeni villages; his sayings represent all Yemeni dialects and for that he is the representative of all Yemeni people"(Albaradoni.99). He does not represent any ideology, for he himself is an ideology which is constructed of personal knowledge, accurate observation to the surrounding nature, wit and wide experience of life.

Ali Ibn Zaid's works as a parable

Ali Ibn Zaid's sayings, proverbs and poems are not isolated or separated items, but they have their own context. They are usually included in a context of story or parable and they have a sort of moral value, or in most accurate words, they serve individual or social purpose. However, they are usually come as a conclusion or an end of a specific action or event. Yemeni people used to narrate or tell a story or any specific event that has happened to Ali Ibn Zaid, which is of course an identical to the present situation. At the end of the story, the narrator or the speaker tells the people what Ali Ibn Zaid has said enhancing people to take his saying in their account concerning what they are going to do or to not do in the present situation.

Non-existence of religious elements

⁴ He has said this saying after the death of his ox which he has referred to as his father.

⁵ In this verse, Ali Ibn Zaid explains the best types of the oxen which are the white ones and he has recommended them to the peasants.

Though Ali Ibn Zaid's legacy does not provide us with a certain attitude toward religion, many of his sayings are not conformed with the religion of society from one hand and from the other, one can say that they comply with Yemeni cultural values and Yemeni social norms. We think that his legacy reflects what Gramsci has said concerning religion in its relationship with common sense:

"It is to be observed that religion is an element of fragmented common sense. Moreover, common sense is collective noun, like religion: there no just a common sense, for that is a product of history and a part of historical process.(p.325-326)

The most noticeable thing in Ali Ibn Zaid's legacy is the likely absence of the religious element. There is a clear contradiction between his legacy and religion in certain cases when he refers to religion. However, it seems to be true that the religion has a marginal influence on Yemeni society either in past or in present. Ali Ibn Zaid's acts are not in accordance with the instructions of the religion as his sayings reveal. Moreover, when he comes to the matter of religion, he talks about it in a negative way. He seeks refuge in the stars and asks them to support him:

O Thuria, save me the prosperous summer has gone. (Albaradoni. 1981 P. 93)⁶

He also represents a sort of secular and materialistic aptitude in the matters of earning his living which comes into contrast with the familiar religious aptitudes which recommend people to depend on God in earning their lives; however, Ali Ibn Zaid deals with the factual objects and presents a pragmatic conduct concerning this thing.

-None can earn his living while sitting home. Well-known proverb

-If you want to escape from hunger, you have to go to Alsahool valley.⁷

-O my eye, do not be deceived by God; there is no farming, but on the banks of creeks or beside Hawma's well. Famous saying.⁸

Ali Ibn Zaid believes that the man is the maker of his own fate and he does not believe in the chance or luck or any metaphysical elements.

Time has its ups and downs, so do not be defeated, keep struggling and with the passage of time you will find your luck. (Albaradoni.120)

We can say that Ali Ibn Zaid is the antithesis of what Gramsci has said about religion as it is "the philosophy of multitude" (SPN,p.407). In turn, his legacy in Yemen becomes the religion of multitude. People's belief in his sayings and poems is more than their belief in religious instructions. Thus, Yemeni society governs and runs their activities and everyday life not by religion but by social and tribal norms and to the heart of these norms are Ali Ibn Zaid's sayings, proverbs and poems which form the centre of Yemeni social and cultural heritage. We can find an unequivocal contradiction between some of his sayings and religious instructions:

-Be wrong with your brothers and do not go right alone⁹. (Famous saying).

-Nonetheless, some times he comes into an accordance with and goes hand in hand with it.

⁶ Thuria is the name of famous star. When it appears, it is a sign of the beginning of the seeding season. This star appears usually in the beginning of spring.

⁷ Alsahool Valley is the most famous valley in Yemen which locates in the central parts of Yemen. It is characterized by the fertility of its land which mainly grows maize and corn.

⁸ Here, he displays a pragmatic attitude in which he explains that one should not rely on the season of rain in his farming activities. He clearly has said that the farming cannot be happened, except beside the rivers or beside Hawma's well which is known by the continuity of its water.

⁹ Islamic religion insists its followers to go right and to stop any misbehaviour or any aspect of wrongness.

The debt of the deceased should be paid before distributing his inheritance between heirs¹⁰. (Famous saying)

Ali Ibn Zaid as a representative of the Yemeni Character

Ali Ibn Zaid is a typical representative of the Yemeni character_ its wit, insight, wisdom, self-esteem, courage, generosity, sense of community, its adventurous nature and its chauvinist nature. However, it is clear that his sayings and poems reveal all these characteristics and there is no need to go cross them in details. Instead, we will explain one of them, which is the sense of community, in a sort of detail after mentioning some of Ali Ibn Zaid sayings which seem to be of a splendid significance and they deserve to be written in golden letters:

-I am confused about the time, the threat comes from the most secure place and secure comes from the most source of threat. Famous verses

-Ali Ibn Zaid says: the one who comes closer to the bellows will be burn or at least be spotted by its blow. Widespread proverb

-The one who harms others ought not to complain when he is being harmed.(Famous proverb).

-The repercussions of the oppressor's deeds will affect his upbringing. (Widespread notion)

It is needless to say that the peasantry societies are organic societies which characterized by the communal nature. The whole is responsible for the individual and the individual is responsible for the whole community:

The communal nature is an eminent element in Ali Ibn Zaid's legacy because he is from a peasantry society which inherits the collective cooperation through generations:

When the flood sweeps away the house of anybody all people come to help; when anybody gets scared all people come to bring him secure; people used to go for seeding, farming and harvesting in groups, they play and amuse themselves together and they go for war together"(Albaradoni.(1981 p.105)

We can find a plenty of sayings, proverbs and poems that express the communal nature of Ali Ibn Zaid's society and time:

-When a man calls his cousins for help it would be shamed if they do not respond¹¹. Widespread proverb

-The one who does not offer help to other, no one will help him when he needs.(Famous saying)

-And the one who eludes in the moments of crisis, will not any one bring him back if he goes out the community. (Albaradoni.108)

Ali Ibn Zaid's Farming Calendar

Ali Ibn Zaid's legacy reflects one important aspect of his character which is, in addition to his practical wisdom, his good and accurate knowledge of astronomy particularly that concerns with the seasons of rains and farming. Actually, Yemeni farmers in the present time depend completely on his sayings in running their farming activities and there is a peasantry farming calendar regulates its movement of time according to Ali Ibn Zaid's legacy. Moreover, what

¹⁰Islamic religion gives priority to the debt of the dead person and it emphasizes that the debt should be paid to the debtors before distributing the inheritance between the heirs. Here, we find conformation between him and religious rules.

¹¹ There is a social norm in Yemeni society that obliges every man to give a share of his money in the time of crisis or during war; this payment is called Ghorm and from this word, the term Gharam is become the general name of every man in the society.

makes his calendar accessible to the farmers is its association with animals' and birds' meeting seasons in general and migration seasons for the latter in particular.

-O ye pigeon, tell the grape's farmer if they do not fertilize their vines they will not get any harvest¹². Famous saying.

-O ye the stars of Alib that bring strong sandy winds, the maize seems to be ripe and the hoopoe go back to its nest¹³. (Albaradoni (1981) p.111)

-If the drizzle coincides with warmth, that is a sign of the ninth, otherwise it still a sign of eleventh¹⁴. (Albaradoni.(1981) p.111).

Ali Ibn Zaid's legacy reveals that he has a wide experience in the nature and its seasons. His sayings concerning that are unchangeable as the laws of nature. He is the sage of land and biographer of wind and stars. He records all of his empirical observations and his examinations of the natural phenomena and makes them theoretical knowledge.

-When the Saturn enters scorpion orbit, and the moon is encircled by a faint light, you should leave your home and go down Sumarah¹⁵. (Famous saying)

- I have a sign in the dawn time if it becomes very red I realize that the heavy rain is coming. (Famous saying)

-The strong western wind is a sign of autumn and the eastern breeze is a sign of summer. (Well-known norm).

The growing of grape is in eleventh, and in seventh its fruit are ready. (Famous saying)

Conclusion

As we take Gramsci's notion of common sense as the base and the starting point of this study, it is better also to conclude it with Gramsci's words. According to Gramsci's philosophy "is not just the abstract cogitation of a few professional intellectual but a concrete activity in which, implicitly, all men are engaged."(SPN, p.321) However, "philosophy is a conception of the world"(p.348), and "every philosophy is the expression of a society, it should react back on the society and produce certain effects, both positive and negative". (p.346) Furthermore, taking in our account his acceptance to Croce's definition of the religion as " a conception of the world which becomes a norm of life".(p.344). We can say depending on the previous Gramsci's ideas and depending on what we have written about Ali Ibn Zaid and according to what Ali Ibn Zaid's legacy reveals, that he is the best example and the living human representation to what Gramsci's has said about philosophy and philosophers. Ali Ibn Zaid is a real philosopher who plays an important part in the life of Yemeni people, and his sayings, which are his conceptions of life,

¹² The pigeons start their migration toward southern parts of Yemen which is the only place that can grow grape; yet he recommends the farmers there to fertilize their nurslings as soon as they see they pigeons otherwise they are not going to have any harvest.

¹³ Alib is one of the parts of peasantry calendar – which consists of eleven seasons; the number of the days of each ranging between nine and fourteen days and some of them regulate two times – which start at the late of summer and it brings with it dust that helps in the process of ripping. However, in this season, the hoopoe, which is one of the spring's signs, disappears and it keeps staying in its nest.

¹⁴Seventh and eleventh also two seasons of Yemeni peasantry calendar; the eleventh is the last season of the winter and the seventh is the second of the spring.

¹⁵ Sumarah is the highest mountain in the central part of Yemen. It separates two different agricultural areas; in turn, in the lower part the farming still runs during the autumn season whereas the farming activities stopping in the upper parts, and that what makes Ali Ibn Zaid recommends the farmers of the upper parts to go to work in the lower parts. However, the beginning of the autumn coincides with the entering of Saturn into scorpion orbit.

become the norms of Yemeni people. His legacy becomes the religion of Yemeni multitude. He affects the Yemeni life on its wide range and he plays a significant part in the Yemeni culture. If the language means “culture and philosophy if only at the level of common sense” (p.349). One can say that Ali Ibn Zaid's language – his sayings, proverbs, and verses – fulfils this Gramscian idea for he is the person who combines philosophy, religion, social laws and personal experience and makes them the everyday norm of Yemeni life and that makes them a strong concrete component of Yemeni; social, historical and cultural structure.

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