

Burton, *Pilgrimage*, ii, 175, quotes a Major Price as suggesting that the word has nothing to do with the birds but is another calamity in addition, the name being derived from **أَيْلَة** a *vesicle*. Sprengel indeed as early as 1794 (see Opitz, *Die Medizin im Koran*, p. 76), had suggested a connection of the word with smallpox, deriving it from **أَب** = *father* and **أَيْل** = *lamentation*, and stating that the Persians use the word **أَيْلَة** for smallpox. This theory has some support in the tradition that it was smallpox which destroyed Abrahā's army,¹ but it is difficult to see how the word could be of Pers. origin for it occurs in Pers. only as a borrowing from Arabic, and doubtless from this passage.

Carra de Vaux, *Penseurs*, iii, 398, has a suggestion that it is of Persian origin, and would take the **طيرا ابابيل** as a mistaken reading for **تير بابيل** = *babylonian arrows*, which caused the destruction of the army. The suggestion is ingenious, but hardly convincing, as we seem to know nothing elsewhere of these **تير بابيل**.

Apparently the word occurs nowhere in the early literature outside the Qur'ān, unless we admit the genuineness of Umayya's line—

حول شيطانهم ابابيل * ريون شدوا سنوراً مدسورا (Frag. 4, l. 3, in Schulthess' ed.), where it also means *crowds*. If it is to be taken

as an Arabic word it may possibly be a case of **توكيد الاتباع**, especially

in view of the expression quoted from al-Akhfash **جاءت ابلك ابابيل**.

The probability, however, seems in favour of its being of foreign origin, as Cheikho, *Naṣrāniyya*, 471, notes, though its origin is so far unknown.

إِبْرَاهِيمُ (*Ibrāhīm*).

Occurs some 69 times, cf. ii, 118 ; iii, 30 ; xlii, 11, etc.

Abraham.

¹ See Sprenger, *Life*, 35.