

opinion of Shaidhala. "Said Abū'l-Ma'ālī 'Azīzī b. 'Abd al-Malik,¹ these words are found in the Arabic language for it is the widest of languages and the most copious in vocabulary, so it is possible that it was the first to use these words which others then adopted."²

The swing of the pendulum in the opposite direction is represented at its furthest extreme by those who say that the very fact of the Qur'ān being in Arabic is a proof that it is not a Divine Book, for had it been a heavenly revelation it would have come down in one of the Holy tongues, i.e. Hebrew or Syriac. Unfortunately, we know little about the supporters of this opinion, but the fact that at-Ṭabarī considers it necessary to refute them would seem to show that they exercised no inconsiderable influence in certain circles. Such an extreme position, however, was never likely to gain general acceptance, and the popular view among such as were constrained to admit the conclusions of the philologers as to the existence of foreign words in the Qur'ān, was that this was not strange in view of the fact that the Qur'ān is the final revelation. The Qur'ān itself states that when a Prophet was sent to any people he preached in the language of that people so as to be understood by them. Thus, e.g. we read in xiv, 4,

“وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَا مِنْ رَّسُولٍ إِلَّا بِلِسَانٍ قَوْمِهِ لِيُبَيِّنَ لَهُمْ” and we have sent no Prophet save in the tongue of his own people that (his message) might be plain to them”. So it is obvious that the Qur'ān, being sent to the Arab people, must be in Arabic, but since it sums up and completes all previous revelations, it is only to be expected that technical terms of Hebrew and Syriac or other origin which were used in previous revelations should be included in this final revelation. Moreover, as the Qur'ān is intended for all peoples, one should not be surprised to find in it something from all languages,³ a

¹ i.e. Shaidhala, whom as-Suyūṭī frequently quotes among his authorities, *vide Itq*, 13; *Mutar*, 45. ² *Itq*, 315.

³ at-Ṭabarī quotes in favour of this idea the savant Abū Maisara at-Ṭabrī al-Jalīl, whom as-Suyūṭī, *Itq*, 316, also quotes, adding that Sa'īd b. Jubair and Wahb. b. Munabbih were of the same opinion, and that Ibn an-Naḡīb claimed that one of the خصائص of the Qur'ān distinguishing it above all other Scriptures, is that while it was revealed in the tongue of the people to whom it was first sent, it also contains much of the tongues of the three great Empires of Roum, Persia, and Abyssinia. Dvořák, *Premělu*, 11, 12, points out that some Muslim writers have illustrated this point by taking the tradition of the seven احراف to refer to seven different languages from whose vocabulary something is used in the Qur'ān. Here, however, there is no question of “languages” but of different Arab dialects (cf. as-Suyūṭī, *Itq*, 110; Ibn al-Athīr, *Nihāya*, i, 250, 251), so this is really irrelevant to the discussion.