

Sīrat Banī Hilāl: The Epic of the Bani Hilal Tribe
 (Part I: Milād abū zēd: The Birth of Abu Zayd
 Recited by ʿAwaḍallah ʿAbd aj-Jaḥil ʿAli

The Epic Poet

ʿAwaḍallah ʿAbd aj-Jaḥil ʿAli is an illiterate epic poet and singer who recites in Ṣaʿīdī Arabic, the dialect of his native Upper Egypt. He was born in the village of Najʿ al-Ḥajīs, Aswan Governorate in southern Egypt and at the time of this recorded performance on January 23, 1983 (lines 1-414) and March 5, 1983 (lines 415 to the end), he gave his age as sixty-three or seventy-three years old. He is the son and grandson of epic singers and he accompanies himself on the large Nubian frame drum (*tār*) following the musical tradition of his family. He sings during weddings, circumcisions, and Ramadan fast-breaking ceremonies in local cafes for public audiences or in private homes for evening command performances.

An epic poet characteristically recites specific tales and episodes based on audience request or by prior economic arrangement with a patron. The Upper Egyptian epic poet ʿAwaḍallah claims he has never performed the birth sequence because listeners prefer the love stories or the battle sequences. However, even when reciting the beginning birth sequence at the request of a Western ethnographer, he follows performance protocol by opening with a praise-poem (*madīḥ*) and closing with an invocation to the Prophet Muḥammad. Opening praise-poems are lines 1-14, 81-84, 179-184, and 310-311.

Text

This section is from "The Birth of Abū Zayd," the first part of the traditional tripartite division of the epic. Part one begins the Banī Hilāl cycle with an account of the marriage of Rizg the Hilali Bedouin to Khaḍra Sharīfa, daughter of the Sharīf of Mecca, and the miraculous circumstances surrounding the birth of their baby son, the hero Abū Zayd. When the Hilali Bedouin Arabs discover Abū Zayd's black skin color, mother and infant are banished to the desert. A magical figure called Khiḍr, "the pillar of the turbaned ones," protects the child from early exile in the wilderness until his first youthful battle against his Quranic schoolteacher (*fagi*). A completed part one ends with Abū Zayd battling his father Rizg until the hero is accepted back into the Banī Hilāl tribe.

Notes on the translation:

Asterisk *: a pause in the recitation.

[Brackets]: poet's explanatory asides.

Line breaks separate praise-poems (*madīh*) from the text.

Bibliography:

For additional texts by ʿAwaḍallah ʿAbd aj-Jalīl ʿAlī and his Egyptian versions see my *The Merchant of Art: An Egyptian Oral Epic Poet in Performance* (Berkeley, California: University of California Press, 1988); and "Arabic Folk Literature and Political Expression," *Arab Studies Quarterly*, 8:2 (1986), 178-185.

How happy are you who praise the Prophet

1

Aḥmad Muḥammad, Who dwells in the city of Yathrib.

I took as my heavenly merit a poem of praise to the One with
kohl-darkened eyes.

I adore the beauty of the Prophet while praising Him.

I adore His beauty, I adore the beauty of the Prophet to Whom we
utter "peace."

O Protector of the oppressed against those who oppress,

I praise a Prophet, Ṭaha,¹ His light is consummate,

Muḥammad of the ʿAdnān, clouds came sheltering Him.

My next words, my words, about the Prophet of good lineage,

Aḥmad was lead by Gabriel on the night of Rajab.

10

I create and make art about the Arab horsemen

with my art esteemed only by clever minds,

with my art esteemed only by perfect minds:

the community of our Prophet, the Hashemite, peace be upon Him.

Said the horseman, Rizg son of Nāyil, Emir of valiant men:

"I want to wed, O bold ones of Hilāl,

I want to wed because I am perfect

I wish to have a girl or a boy."

Said the horsemen who are the brave Hilāl:

"The daughter of Sharīf Gurḍa, king in his house,

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the daughter of Sharīf Gurḍa, from perfect people,

a descendant of our Prophet, the Chosen One, peace be upon Him."

The brave horsemen of Hilāl saddled up.

¹ Ṭaha: a name for the Prophet Muḥammad.

Rizg headed to Sharīf, to Mecca, made straight for Sharīf Gurḍa,
 "I am Sharīf," and Rizg journeyed to his place.
 They were prosperous nobles, fortunate people of times past.
 When Sharīf saw the horsemen descending upon the diwan,
 he slaughtered for them a plump she-camel for their supper,
 he slaughtered for them a she-camel, even honored them more:
 at Sharīf's, they attained happiness, and their desire.

30

Sharīf Gurḍa said: "Welcome, O Arabs,
 what you request, God will provide,
 what you request, we will bring you in excess,
 it will be brought to you, whether near or far."
 Said Rizg the Hilali: "I come to you desiring
 kinship with you, O you the spring pasture for passers-by,
 kinship with you, O you who give spring pasture to guests,
 and your lineage will increase my honor above the rest."
 So said the Hilali, Rizg son of Nāyil.
 Sharīf Gurḍa said: "I want four thousand in money,

40

five hundred strong camels and two hundred young she-camels,
 five hundred choice horses
 and four hundred to carry the loads.
 All these, O clever-minded ones,
 all are gifts for the servants and envoys,
 all are gifts for the servants and slaves.
 This as a dowry for Khaḍra Sharīfa -- to meet her is a joy:
 a hundred Abyssinian women from the land of Upper Egypt,
 a hundred Mamlukes must come to us here,
 these hundred Mamlukes to meet the need

50

to serve the Emirs who have high rank.
 If, O Hilali, these lineages are linked,
 Khaḍra's dowry in wealth is a full coffer,
 Khaḍra's dowry in wealth is a coffer of gold
 like the dowry of her mother. Ask the Arab elders.
 If, O Hilali, your intention is kinship
 on the wedding night, the meal is my duty,
 on the wedding night, by God, dinner is my duty --
 the dowry of Khaḍra who came from my loins.
 If she gives birth to an infant and he grows and matures

60

he will grow to a brave youth, lion-like, he will vex the enemy,

he will grow to a brave youth, of good descent, he will vex valiant men,
a descendant of our Prophet, peace be upon Him."

Said Rizg the Hilali, Emir of valiant men:

"Were you to say something more, God would requite
were you to say something more, I must say to you, it would be my duty."

They brought him the *ma'zun*² and they counted the gold.

She became his wife, from among the women,
the daughter of Sharīf Gurḍa became his wife,
Khaḍra Sharīfa, her honor was pure.

70

They set up for her an elegant royal litter
from atop a high palace whose heights are decorated,
from atop a high palace spaciouly built,
she passed the night telling him: "Your company is a delight, O love."
The white chemise was stained with blood,
O night,
the white chemise was drenched with blood.
A descendant of the Prophet, praise be upon Him.
Khaḍra Sharīfa lived there an entire year. She bore
and gave birth to Shīḥa, with God's leave.
Muḥammad let us pray for Him.

80

*

Praise for Ṭaha, a poem of praise for the Messenger
to Whom His Lord gave happiness and acceptance of prayers.
One who praises Aḥmad, my Beloved, the Prophet, I start to tell,
my art esteemed by clever minds.

Khaḍra gave birth, she gave birth to Shīḥa,
may happiness increase!
She remained with Rizg the Hilali in harmony,
but she spent eleven years
barren. This is the destiny intended by God.
Barren -- this is the destiny intended by my generous Lord --

90

imposing His judgment, light or heavy.
They requested horses for Rizg the Hilali, the prince
to meet with the princes, horsemen and warriors
to meet with the horsemen of the Banī Hilāl.
Their children came out

² *ma'zūn* (Classical Arabic: *ma'dūn*): official authorized to perform marriages.

[The Arabs were seated in the diwan]
 happy and prosperous. Their sons delighted him,
 their sons upon the cushions playing
 like leopards in the vast desert,
 like lions in the vast plains.
 Their fathers' happiness and delight grew greater.

100

Rizg the Hilali eyed them and his wound increased.
 Inside his tent tears poured again
 inside the tent tears poured again
 he cried, wet his cheeks and his handkerchief.
 Khaḍra Sharīfa left, her tears a canal.
 Beautiful as she was, she loved him to the point of death,
 beautiful as she was, by God, unique,
 she cried and felt hardship each night he was absent:
 "Tell me what is the reason for laments, O love,
 O Rizg, you cry, why, why?"

110

What good has weeping done you?
 O Rizg, O you so dignified, why do you cry?
 The tears upon your cheek are flowing swiftly."
 He said to her, "O Khaḍra I beheld during the day
 there is no warrior, knight, nor courageous horseman who has not his son

to play with him --

no knight, nor horseman who has not his son beside him on the cushions.
 I looked, I found myself among them, worthless."
 Khaḍra Sharīfa's tears fell like hissing droplets.
 Rizg son of Nāyil's turmoil was so great, this answer softened her,
 Rizg, son of Nāyil's turmoil was so great, he gave this answer.

120

Khaḍra had reason in her head, but reason departed.
 Then came Shamma, a maiden of noble descent and lofty lineage.
 She gathered her robes, with cheeks resembling roses touched by dew,
 with cheeks resembling roses but touched by dew,
 she entered and found Khaḍra weeping, tormented.
 She said, "O Sharīfa why are you like this?
 You have lost nothing, my cousin, and none has gone astray.
 You lost nothing from the exalted homeland.
 O Khaḍra, why do you weep, why do you have tears flowing?"
 Khaḍra said to her, "O Shamma, I have a problem,

130

it rends the core of my heart and my womb aches
 it rends the core of my heart and my tears are flowing --
 I, if I complain, I, if I complain, O the nights!
 if I complain to the mountain so that it bends
 if I complain to the river so that its waters stop,
 saddened for my sake, and my tears a riverbed,
 my tears pour down upon the bed, O Shamma, they wet my cheeks."
 "O my cousin, O Khaḍra, your Lord feels compassion and He will bestow.
 Whoever abandons something lives without it,
 whoever seeks something of God he will obtain.

140

My Lord is to be trusted to grant bountifully."

[He is to be trusted with what?

With the granting of supplication.

When one says "O Lord" he is entrusting Him with ample
 supplication, that is the one who invokes Him, may He be praised
 and exalted.]

She said to her: "O Khaḍra, arise and cast aside burdens!

Tomorrow we go to this river, we will see its clarity,
 tomorrow we go to the crossing, O coquettish woman,
 we will show you waters that are limpid."

She gathered ninety maidens from the daughters of Hilāl
 they walked alongside Khaḍra like sentinels,
 they walked alongside Khaḍra until they reached the rivers;
 they found translucent water surrounded by birds.

But among them was a bird, black and disturbing.

150

He scattered all the kinds of birds, and cleared them away,
 he scattered all the birds and kept them dispersed,
 he was black, and in his coloring were all the qualities.

Shamma says:

"Supplicate, O maidens, the Lord provides for His worshippers
 though they have no eyes to see

He provides for His worshippers though they have no eyes to see Him,
 the Lord provides for His worshippers from the beginning of the world.
 He knows the drops of dew and the walk of ants."

Khaḍra says: "Give me a lad like this bird,
 black like this bird!

160

I swear to make him possess Tunis and Waḍī Ḥamā,
 I swear to make him possess Tunis by the blade of the sword."
 From this they say she bore a lad
 to Rizg the Hilali fulfilling God's favor.

O You Who cured Job
 O You Who cured Job, he recovered from his affliction
 O You Who cured Job, he recovered from affliction
 O You Who opened Jacob's eyes from blindness
 O You Who raised Enoch to the highest heaven
 O You Who called to our Lord Moses, O my God, 170
 when Pharaoh came and his army was with him
 when Pharaoh came and his army was cut down.
 Moses lay his staff upon the ocean and it parted.
 My generous Lord, You have neither associate nor son, there is only You,
 O Knower of the waters' course
 there is only You O my Lord, Who knows what is in the wilderness
 You subdue the wind, the clouds, and the rain
 I beseech Thee, O light, O radiantly beautiful
 I adore the beauty of the Prophet, let us Praise Him.

*

How happy are you who praise the Messenger
 Whose God gave Him joy and granted supplications, 180
 a praise-poem for Ḥusayn's beauty, I begin to say.
 I praise the Hashemite,
 I adore His beauty to Whom we utter "peace,"
 O Protector of the oppressed against those who oppress.

Supplicate, O daughters and servants of the Hilali Arabs!
 Khaḍra Sharīfa -- her reason failed, lost --
 Khaḍra Sharīfa stopped bearing, but weak with desire
 she came to the royal bed yearning.
 Rizg son of Nāyil came to her after the evening prayer.
 Khaḍra wore silk brocade, she sat with him 190
 she wore brocade of silk, her best clothing.
 Rizg asked for union with her.
 She was happy! And the Lord of the Throne sent her
 an infant who vexes the enemy!
 She bore an infant who vexes valiant men!
 Khaḍra passed the full nine months.
 They approached the Emir Abū Zayd, Emir of valiant men,
 they found the Emir Abū Zayd was blue-black, not resembling his father,
 They found the hero, Abū Zayd the Hilali, the color of a black slave.
 They found the boy coal-black, a strange color, 200
 black, as if from distant Upper Egypt.
 Emir Sirḥān said: "God's decrees are obdurate,
 with God's mercy Who shields sinners,

with God's mercy Who shields the guilty,
his mother and father are both fair, whom does he take after?"
It was an insult so the Arabs convened.

"O, the wrong of Khaḍra, she loves a cloak-bearing slave,
O, the wrong of Khaḍra she seduced a purchased slave."

They said, "Sharīfa is from the best lineage."

When he heard these words, Rizg was overcome. 210

Azgal said to his people: "Listen, O tolerant ones,"

Azgal said to his people: "Listen, O valiant men,
the killing and death of a son of adultery is lawful,
no good is expected from an infant who does not take after his father,
no good is expected from an infant born in adultery!

Divorce Khaḍra, O Rizg, so that you obtain your desire.

Divorce Khaḍra, O Hilali, during this year

I will give you a Zughba woman -- much is said about her

I will give you a Zughba woman, a pleasing one,
she has necklaces of silver and bracelets of gold." 220

When Rizg the Hilali heard these words he was overcome.

He swore an oath and a vow. In anguish he said:

"I will not receive Khaḍra again nor do I want the child."

The Hilali Arabs pleaded with Rizg,

they pleaded with Rizg but he did not consent

they pleaded with Rizg but he refused to consent.

Their bold men cursed him but they returned in vain.

Then came Shiḥa moving slowly.

To her father Rizg she said these words:

"My mother Sharīfa is from the Prophet's lineage. 230

O Rizg, you mistreat Khaḍra whose sin is unseen

O Rizg, O father, you mistreat Khaḍra who has not sinned.

My mother Sharīfa does not know the paths to tread.

Graciously grant Khaḍra a single companion,

graciously grant Khaḍra, by God's truth,

graciously grant Khaḍra, by His truth, the One, the Unique --

He Who is my Lord knows the true state of the boy."

When he heard these words, patience came to Rizg;

when he heard these words, he called out: "O Najāḥ,

listen to my words, for my thoughts are sound: 240

take the lance and the sword and depart for the vast plain,

cast the lance across my wealth, and your eyes will see,

cast it across my wealth, may your will be strong.

Rely upon God, generous and adept,

wherever the lance falls from afar

give to Khaḍra, O slave, as charity --
 lest my son among Arabs be shamed."
 Najāḥ took the lance. While he rode
 the pillar of turbaned ones³ hovered and came to him.
 The pillar of turbaned ones said to him, "Where do you go? 250
 I will plead for your sake, O slave."
 Khiḍr took the lance from Najāḥ as he cast --
 half the wealth of Sirḥān, his wealth divided equally --
 he took half of Sirḥān's wealth, O listeners.
 Praise Ṭaha we have a guarantor!
 He said to him: "O prince of the Arabs, in the name of the Prophet,
 the Guarantor,
 he took your wealth and half of Sirḥān's to be divided equally,
 half of Sirḥān's wealth though not demanded."
 Then came the Arabs:
 "Find us a guardian engaged for hire 260
 find us a guardian from the land of Ḥijāz
 he will take Khaḍra's clothes and even her trousseau
 from here to accompany her to the land of Ḥijāz
 for the sake of her father whose domain we entered,
 for the sake of her father whose generosity is vast."
 They summoned the judge, his name is Manīʿ.
 When he heard these words, he came to them obediently.
 They said, "Here are the ones behind whom people pray,
 here are the ones wanting an imām."⁴
 They said, "We are with him, we will not oppose his words." 270
 They awoke in the morning, they spread out the wide tent.
 Khaḍra approached the judge and kissed his hands,
 she approached the judge and said, "I am Sharīfa.
 I cannot descend to my father for this whole year,
 if I told him Rizg the Hilali has abused us.
 I cannot say these words while I am in Rizg's custody
 I cannot say these words nor speak of it,
 were Rizg to concede generously that I am still his wife.
 Then find me a guardian, I will go to his side
 let me raise the prince Abū Zayd in his custody. 280

³ Epithet for Khiḍr, literally "the green man." In Egyptian folk culture he is a man who achieved immortality and can grant wishes. He is also a teacher of magic and mystical arts who coaches and protects Abū Zayd.

⁴ *imām*: religious leader and judge

Find us a good man, I will raise the prince Abū Zayd with him.
 Let me raise Zayd while he is young.
 O how fate rules over many people!
 He who has ordered our separation from each other, O prince,
 may he be destitute among the Arabs and his women led astray,
 may he be dropped from the bold ones and may he have children
 who are assaulted by the vanguard Hilāl."

The judge struck his palms and said,
 he said, "The land is Zahlān and I am their great enemy."

He said, "The land is Zahlān, I cannot pass through. 290
 Even if a thousand were with me they must die."

The judge accompanied them, they returned silently.
 Then the Atwān Arabs came upon Khaḍra brandishing spears.
 He said: "Attack the tent and bring it down."

Khaḍra Sharīfa emerged veiled:

"Shame on the horsemen who dishonor women,
 shame on the horsemen who dishonor ladies.

This deed is evil, only the wicked do it.

Whoever is pure and his body sound

he never does hateful things 300

he never does hateful things throughout eternity.

Whoever traverses the region travels in safety.

I considered you a tribe with leaders of good lineage.

You turned out to be Atwān Arabs, vile and worthless,

you turned out to be Atwān Arabs, vile and greedy,

the most cowardly of the region, you do not honor a guest!

I beseech Thee, O Knower of languages and wild beasts,

O Provider of the birds in the vast desert."

Muḥammad let us praise Him.

*

God is noble, His coffers full. After my words about His Beauty 310

I begin and make art about the Hilali Arabs,

I turn my words to the hero Abū Zayd,

his turban tilted, his side-fringe aslant,

defender of the Zughba and the Dirayd

and of the horsemen of Najd Hilāl.

From his birth, a child of strength,

Abū Zayd, Abū Zayd, a courageous man,

lacking brothers and siblings

with his sword he vexes enemies.

From his birth the prince is blessed, 320

in the fray he thrashes his rivals,

and he enters his wars eagerly,
 the battlefield, his feastday.
 From his birth he descends to the fray
 in the vanguard with a mighty armspan,
 when horses clash together
 he opens the gates to misfortune.
 O the nights, O the night!

"Shame on the horsemen who dishonor women,
 shame on the horsemen who dishonor ladies. 330

This deed is evil, only the wicked do it.
 Whoever is pure and his body sound
 he never does hateful things
 he never does hateful things throughout eternity.
 Whoever traverses the region travels in safety.
 I considered you a tribe with leaders of good lineage.
 You turned out to be Atwān Arabs, vile and worthless,
 you turned out to be Atwān Arabs, vile and greedy,
 the most cowardly of the region, you do not honor a guest!
 I beseech Thee, O Knower of languages and wild beasts, 340
 O Provider of the birds in the vast desert."

Abū Zayd grew up a horseman riding steeds
 he seizes fools with iron hands
 he reaches his goal against his greatest enemies,
 he reaches his goal with noble people,
 I swear by the life of our beloved Prophet, the Imām of the Sacred
 Precincts.

When he heard about Abū Zayd, Daḡhīr became angry
 He said to his tribe: "Hear me, O listeners,"
 he said to the Atwān Arabs, "hear me, O valiant men,
 let us plunder her horses and even the camels. 350
 Do not leave with the woman or child.

I will abandon her alone in the wild,
 I will abandon her alone in the vast desert,
 O how she will suffer humiliation and disgrace!"
 Then there came a lion, invisible, peace be upon Him,
 Khiḍr, Khiḍr, may God be pleased with Him.
 Then came, a lion, invisible, from the open country,
 walking, quickening his steps,
 walking, quickening, he went to her.

He found Sharīfa weeping; beside her, her son. 360
 The bold Khiḍr dispersed and beat the Atwān Arabs with swords.

He knew their schemes with the aid of God the One,
 he knew their schemes with the aid of God the One, the Unique,
 he turned to Khaḍra and said, "Bring me the boy."

She gave him the hero Abū Zayd,
 she gave him the Hilali, Abū Zayd,
 but the strength to endure did not come to her.

"Name him Barakāt,⁵ my secrets will be his;
 though I become annoyed with him I will be of use to him."
 The pillar of turbaned ones, peace be upon Him, from that time
 armed him. 370

Khaḍra Sharīfa peered about, she beheld Khidr not
 Khaḍra Sharīfa peered about, she did not see him --
 she stared with her eyes, but she could not see him.

Then came Prince Zahlān. He saw an army;
 he identified a green pavilion and around it banners,
 he identified a green pavilion and around it tents.
 They were not Arabs of his tribe and not northerners.

"I will send four horsemen to her, to the mother of the lad.
 She said, "I am a guest of the king, under his protection."

She said, "A guest, O slaves, go bring him the news. 380

Tell him guests have arrived, O generous countenance."
 The slaves went to him right away. They told him the news.
 He came to her and said, "Arise." She entered his tent.

He came to her and said, "Arise, you enter safety,
 raise Abū Zayd in happiness and perfection."

They remained among the Zahlān a long time.

The hero Abū Zayd grew and God made him robust.

The hero Abū Zayd grew up and was brought to a schoolteacher.⁶

He was clever in writing and in prayers devout.

He was advanced in writing before he could read. 390

He was advanced in writing, he had the best answer,
 people of the Quran, because he was upright.

There were other young lads among the Zahlān.

From the day they went to Quran school they were together.

From the day they went to Quran school together, they were with
 each other.

Then came the Emir Abū Zayd. The teacher intended to harm him.

The teacher began and said to the lads:

"Hold him down, I will give him thirty blows,

⁵ *barakāt* = blessings

⁶ *fagi* (Classical Arabic *faqīh*) = Quranic schoolteacher.

hold him down, I will give it to this naughty Abū Zayd."
 They all encircled him, even the teacher. 400
 Abū Zayd fled from them, no one beheld him.
 Abū Zayd fled from them, O listeners,
 he ransacked the corners of the house, left and right,
 when suddenly he found a spear many years old.
 It weighed eighty*ratl*,⁷ Abū Zayd held it level in his hand.
 It weighed eighty*ratl*, including its spearpoint.
 The Emir Abū Zayd carried it in the palm of his hand.
 Then came Khaḍra and kissed him:
 "You distract me, my son, from private sorrows."
 She said, "you distract me from lasting passions." 410
 He said to her: "I will not retreat until I kill the teacher."
 She said: "That would be villainous."
 While they were talking, the teacher arrived.
 Muḥammad let us praise Him.
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While they were talking, the teacher came intending to betray him.
 Abū Zayd brought him a meal that they gave him to eat.
 The teacher behaved shamefully, his sin his punishment,
 the teacher behaved shamefully, and his sin overcame him.
 Abū Zayd went to him, to the Quranic school, as earlier ordained.
 The teacher said to Abū Zayd, "O ill-mannered slave." 420
 The teacher tried to seize Abū Zayd. Abū Zayd hit him with a spear,
 he threw him down.
 The teacher tried to seize Abū Zayd. Abū Zayd hit him with the spear,
 he was thrown,
 his breath left him, and blood flowed.
 Then came the teacher's brother Ru'ḡyān and wrapped him in cloth.
 He went to Zahlān, he requested rescue.
 He went to Zahlān, he said: "O Emir,
 Abū Zayd killed the teacher, the Shaykh."
 The Emir said: "But he is a small child!
 Go now, attend to the school, for your memory is great."
 Abū Zayd's knowledge was perfected by God, his Lord 430
 and his knowledge was perfected out of piety.
 Abū Zayd became the schoolteacher, and the brother, a monitor.
 If a child entered school late, he called to God,

⁷ *ratl* = 450 grams

fearing the hero Abū Zayd would cut short his life.
Muḥammad let us praise Him.

Prose summary of the rest of Part One:

Abū Zayd goes on to kill Daḡhīr, leader of the Atwān Arabs who had tried to humiliate Khaḍra Sharīfa when she was first banished to the desert. The defeated Atwān Arabs join forces with another Arab prince, Emir Jāyil, to attack the Zahlān, the protectors of Abu Zayd and his mother. Emir Jāyil is invincible because he possesses a magic necklace capable of summoning a fighting genie. Abū Zayd flees, but when assured of divine protection by Khiḍr who captures the genie, he returns to battle and defeats his enemies. Abū Zayd and the Zahlān tribe depart for the Hilali Arabs. There Abū Zayd provokes a fight with the Hilali leaders who call upon their strongest warrior, Rizg the Hilali. Rizg battles Abū Zayd while his mother Khaḍra Sharīfa rejoices. It is only at the intervention of Shīḡa (Rizg and Khaḍra Sharīfa's daughter, Abū Zayd's sister) that Abū Zayd's identity is revealed. The family and tribe are reunited.