

Obsolete Words and Lexical Ignorance: a Lexical-etymological Study on Sarah's Laughter between the Qur'an and the Bible

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Abstract

This research aims to clarify two concepts, namely lexical ignorance and obsolete words, through a lexical-etymological analysis of the Arabic verb (ḍaḥikat) used in the story of Sarah and glad tidings of Isaac in the Qur'an, as well as the Hebrew word (רְחַץ שֶׁ-הֵוֶה) which was translated as (laughter) in the Bible from the same story. We started this study with a brief explanation of the two concepts: lexical ignorance and obsolete words, and their relation to the problematic of metaphor (al-majāz) in the Qur'an. Then, guided by the documentation provided by ancient Arabic dictionaries, we reviewed the Arabic root (ḌḤK) and the vocabulary derived from it. The meaning of the verb (ḍaḥikat) used in the Qur'an was also reviewed, along with the arguments offered by commentators and linguists. Additionally, we explored a new hypothesis regarding the etymology of the name "Sarah" in light of the Quranic context, while discussing the meaning of the Hebrew word (רְחַץ שֶׁ-הֵוֶה) and its relation to the root (S/H/Q) in the Bible, and proposing new translations consistent with the reinterpretation of the Qur'anic verb (ḍaḥikat) that we introduced.

Keywords; Breastfeeding, Laughter, Lexical Ignorance, Obsolete Words, Sarah.

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Introduction

The Arab heritage had a strong focus on documenting Arabic lexica. Starting from the second century AH, many dictionaries and specialized linguistic books were written. Ancient linguists aimed to explain different types of words, including those called (nawādir; plural of nadir, rar) or (mumāṭah; plural of mumāṭ, obsolete). To find precise meanings or resolve disagreements about these kinds of words, scholars, like Al-Farāhīdī (d. 175/791) or Al-Kisāʿī (d. 189/805), often look to pre-Islamic poetry or consult Bedouins (al-a'rab). Despite the abundance of pre-Islamic poetry and the extensive efforts of linguists in compiling this lexicon, there are still many lexical entries whose meanings remain unclear or uncertain. Moreover, classical and scriptures may contain words that have been interpreted according to a new terminology, rather than their historical meanings, which, for one reason or another, have become obsolete. One of these words that we think may have been misinterpreted is the verb (ḍahīkat ضحكت) from the story of Ibrahim's wife when she received the glad tidings as stated in the Qur'an, and the Hebrew word (צַחֵק צַחֵק) from the same story in the Bible.

One of the most important objectives of this study is to emphasize that etymological studies are still, contrary to popular belief, capable of contributing to the understanding and interpretation of ancient texts in a scientific manner, especially since Arabic has ancient linguistic sources that enable researchers in etymological studies to document meanings in an acceptable way. The study also demonstrates that ancient Hebrew texts require Arabic sources to clarify their meanings, given that Arabic, with its two branches, Northern Hijazi dialects and Southern Yemeni languages, retains the roots of ancient Semitic vocabulary more than other languages. The main purpose, then, of this study is to attempt to answer a complex question that we chose to formulate as follows: What is the accurate interpretation of (ḍahīkat ضحكت) and (צַחֵק צַחֵק)? And what relation does it have to the concept of lexical ignorance as well as the concept of obsolete words? These two questions lead to further sub-questions: How are the names (Isaac) and (Sarah) related to the Qur'anic verb and the Hebrew word? How did commentators and linguists interpret the Qur'anic verb, and what reasons contributed to their varying views on its meaning? How can we use the new understanding of the Qur'anic verb's meaning to improve our interpretation of the Hebrew word?

The reason behind this problematic is our interest in the theme of literal and figurative usage in the Qur'an, a theme that is directly related to what we call (lexical ignorance). We suppose that this problematic is essential for the following two reasons:

- Firstly, it offers a practical approach to understanding the concept of lexical ignorance.
- Secondly, it employs scriptures to reconstruct the meanings of words that many people believe are not included in them.

This study includes a brief explanation of lexical ignorance and obsolete words through an applied example from the Arabic lexicon, with a review of the meaning of the root (ḌHK) and its derivatives in ancient Arabic dictionaries, and a presentation of the scholars' opinions on the meaning of the Qur'anic verb (ḍahīkat ضحكت) in Sūrat Hūd. After introducing the study's methodology and main results, we discussed these results with a detailed presentation of the linguistic findings we utilized in the research. We first presented the main results of the study, then discussed them in three sections focusing on a new conceptualization of the root (ḌHK) and the meaning of (ḍahīkat), a new hypothesis regarding the relationship between the name (Sarah)

and the adjective (fi-ṣarrah) in Sūrat Al-dhāriyāt, and a new translation of texts related to Sarah's laughter and the root (S/H/Q) in the Bible.

1. Literature Review

1.1 *Obsolete Words and Lexical Ignorance: a Brief Explanation*

Through the examination of various Qur'ānic verses and words, it becomes evident that what we have labeled as "lexical ignorance" forms the foundation for arguing that they are employed in a figurative sense. This ignorance is an outcome of the semantic shift that transpired within the Arabic lexicon, a change that obscured some of the Arabic roots' initial meanings. It is required to go back to the derivational origin of the Arabic lexicon and Semitic languages in general to explain the literal meanings of the Arabic lexicon and to distinguish these meanings from the new conceptual nuances. Any specialist in Qur'ānic studies would undoubtedly recognize the prominent position occupied by the term "Gharīb al-Qur'ān" in linguistic books and the Islamic exegesis (tafāsīr) of the early centuries. This term was specifically employed to describe challenging or difficult words found within the Qur'ānic text. This difficulty in understanding is indeed a result of the concept of "lexical ignorance," which can vary from one individual to another and across different historical periods. The use of the term "Gharīb al-Qur'ān," just like "Gharīb al-Ḥadīth," in the titles of several books indicates the significant attention given to the issue of "lexical ignorance" during those initial centuries. Many modern lexicographers think that one of the defects in old Arabic dictionaries, particularly those created before the 10th century, is their inability to distinguish between the literal and metaphorical meanings of the lexical entries. Yet, it would be a mistake to label this as a defect. Instead, it sheds light on the awareness of the early lexicographers who understood the intricate nature of Arabic lexical entries, recognizing that they resist such simple classifications, despite the late appearance of the term (Al-majāz) in Arabic rhetoric*. The ancients' method was based on the concept of semantic expansion (Al-ittisā' الاتساع), which is a somewhat vague concept. However, what we are interested in is to make it clear that many metaphorical meanings are, in fact, a sort of semantic specialization (Al-takhsīs التخصيص).

To provide further clarification, let's take an example of the word (bukā'), which signifies the act of crying. What is the semantic core* of the root (B/K/Y)? Presently, its sole attributed meaning is "to cry, to wail", and it proves challenging to encounter individuals familiar with any alternative usage of this root. This matter doesn't relate to recent centuries. Instead, it's evident that during the initial century of Islam, the meaning of the root, beyond crying, remained largely unknown to the majority of Arabs. Away from the verse of Al-Dukhān (29): "Fa-mā bakat 'alayhimu as-samā' u wal-arḍ", meaning: "they were lamented by no one [lit. Neither the heavens nor earth shed a tear for them]" (Badawi and Abdel Haleem, 2008, p. 109), which can be interpreted as grounded in the concept of implicature (iḍmār), signifying (the people of heaven

* - It is important to note that Al-Zamakhsharī in his dictionary (Asās al-balāghah) was the first to, systematically, separate the literal meanings from the metaphorical meanings of lexical entries.

* - By "the semantic core," we mean what is called in Arabic "Al-ma'nā al-miḥwarī" (المعنى المحوري). This concept is based on the theory of "Al-ishtiqāq al-akbar" (الاشتقاق الأكبر), which was applied by Aḥmad ibn Fāris in his dictionary, Maqāyīs al-Lughah.

and the people of earth). After the first two Hijri centuries, some linguists dealt with the root (B/K/Y) and its entries on the basis that the primordial connotation revolved around the notion of weeping. This perspective is underscored by the remarks of Al-Zamakhsharī (d. 538/1143), who denotes that the expression "bakat as-saḥābah (The cloud) fī arḍihim (in their land)" functions as a metaphor (*majāz*) (1998, Vol. 1, p. 73). However, upon revisiting the etymological origins of the root and consulting dictionaries that precede Al-Zamakhsharī's compilation, it's clear that this view is not only wrong but also goes against the well-established pattern of how the root's meaning has changed over time. Al-Ṣāhib ibn 'Abbād (d. 385/995) explicitly affirmed that the connotation of crying in the verb (*bakā*) is taken from the expression: "bakat as-saḥābah", which signifies rainfall (1994, Vol. 6, p. 343).

In his etymological dictionary, Ibn Fāris noted that the root encompasses two primary meanings: (crying) and (absence or insufficiency of something). While the former meaning is familiar in linguistic usage, the latter -less frequently employed- is used for the camel whose milk is little, the verb for this one is (*baka'a*), and the associated adjective or noun is (*baki'ah*) (Ibn Fāris, 1979, Vol. 1, pp. 285-286). In truth, a broader exploration of the uses of this linguistic root in ancient Arabic lexica provides us with a deeper comprehension of its core meaning. As we interpret it, this fundamental meaning denotes the emergence of clear or white fluid from an enclosed space in a minor or intermittent manner, whether it is tears, rain, or milk from a female. We know that the verb and the first meaning are common in the ancient Semitic languages, but the verb and the second meaning are also found in the Biblical Hebrew in the meaning of (balsam-tree), and as a verb for "give little milk, of camel, i.e. drop, drip" (Brown, 1906, p. 113). Al-Bakāh in Arabic, according to Ibn Sīdah (d. 458/1066), is a name for the plant or tree which gives off white milk when it is picked (2000, Vol. 7, p. 117).

Considering this perspective, the probability that the verse from Al-Dukhān (29) is a parable (*Mathal*) of God's mercy suggesting the absence of rain from the sky and the non-emergence of water from the earth, such as from springs, becomes more likely. This constitutes a rejection of the mercy of God upon them (al-Ḥillī, 2016, p. 465). As water is symbolized as mercy, and the use of the verb "bakat" -which signifies a small amount of water being released- serves to deny even the slightest hint of mercy from reaching them.

The etymological source of the root must be traced to (B/K) and its phonetic equivalent (B/J), fundamentally signifying the notion of cutting, splitting, and opening but more important in the context of a liquid, mainly water, As in the case of the root (B/J/S), which signifies "to cause water to gush out," (Badawi and Abdel Haleem, 2008, p. 76) as seen in the Qur'ānic verb (*inbijās*). The purpose of adopting this etymological approach extends beyond merely addressing the issue of lexical ignorance and its relationship to the concept of metaphor as an inability to know the basic meaning of a word. By studying the root (B/K/Y), we can see that the main semantic features of the verb (to cry) in Arabic are not related to the sound (weeping, or screaming) as much as they are related to tears, and this is important in understanding the semantic field of crying in Arabic, as well. It's especially useful in explaining what the verb (*dahikat*) really means in the story of Isaac's birth in the Qur'an.

After discussing 'lexical ignorance' and providing this example, and subsequent to the clarification that the word (*buka*) signifying (human crying) represent a semantic specialization of

the semantic core of the root (BKY), our focus shifts to the scrutiny of the central verb in our research, namely, the verb (ḍaḥikat ضحكت) from Sūrat Hūd (71). However, before delving into the verb's semantics and its relationship to the narrative of Abrahām and his wife's encounter with the angels, as well as its connection to the name Isaac in the Qur'ān and the Bible, we will begin with a lexical analysis and an exposition of the perspectives of commentators and linguists.

1.2 The Root (ض ح ك/ḌHK) and the Meaning of (Ḍaḥikat ضحكت) in Earlier Works

In the Qur'an, the root (ض ح ك/ḌHK) is mentioned ten times. All derivatives of this root have been used to denote the concept of (laughter), except in one context in which linguists and commentators differed. This exception is the verb (ḍaḥikat ضحكت) in Sūrat Hūd (71). To determine the semantic core of this root and its derivatives, we shall adopt the same approach as in the first example. Ibn Fāris noticed the closeness in meaning between the root (Ḍ/H/K) and the root (Ḍ/H/A), both of which originally signify emergence and revealing (Vol. 3, pp. 391-393). Arabic derives from the second root the concept of (al-ḍuḥā الضحى) which means the morning brightness. Although Ibn Fāris did not mention the relation between the concepts of laughter and emergence and revealing, the relation is clear if we consider that the teeth and molars that emerge are known in Arabic as (al-ḍawāḥik الضواحك) plural of (al-ḍāḥikah الضاحكة). The non-Arab Muslim in the early centuries who came to the Arabian Peninsula from Gorgan for example or the contemporary Arab only knows from the meaning of the verb (ḍaḥika ضحك) the specific concept of (laughing), and he cannot know the relation between the two roots (Ḍ/H/K) and (Ḍ/H/A) without consulting old dictionaries. Though this example may seem naive, it reflects the reality of what we call lexical ignorance with regard to the Arabic lexicon, and we must note that the same root is found in other Semitic languages such as Hebrew and Syriac with minor differences.

The semantic core of the root is present in many things in Arabic lexicon. Ibn Fāris (1979) mentioned some of them, such as the clouds accompanied by lightning, it is called (al-ḍāḥik الضاحك). The same adjective is given in Arabic to the stone that shines brightly in the mountains, whatever its color. Likewise, the clear path is called in Arabic (al-ḍaḥūk الضحوك), and if you fill the basin with water until it overflows, this action in Arabic has a special verb which is (aḍḥaka أضحك), it is not surprising that honey is called by a name derived from this root, which is (al-ḍaḥk الضحك) (Vol. 3, p. 394). The name itself is used to refer to snow in Arabic according to the author of Kitāb al-'ayn 'ayn (Al-Farāhīdī, 1984, Vol. 3, p. 58). On the same page of the dictionary, the author mentioned the verse of Abrahām's wife whom the messengers gave her good tidings about her pregnancy which is in Sūrat Hūd (71): "Wa 'imra'atuhu qā'imatun faḍaḥikat fabashsharnāhā bi Ishāq".

Nevertheless, his interpretation of the verb (ḍaḥikat) is different from what we find in the translations of the Qur'ān that we have, he said: "Ṭamithat (طويت) which means she menstruated" (Al-Farāhīdī, 1984). In Yusuf 'Ali's translation we find: "And his wife was standing (there), and she laughed: But we gave her glad tidings of Isaac, and after him, of Jacob" ('Ali, 1990, p. 604). The same thing we find in French translations such as the translation of Albert Kazimirski (d. 1887). Conversely, he made an important comment referring to the meaning of menstruation, which heralds the possibility of having a child (1844, p. 183). Apparently, it seems that most of the ancient interpreters and linguists rejected the meaning of menstruation in the verse, Abū Zakariyya-al-farrā' (d. 207/822) said that this meaning has not been heard from a reliable source (Vol. 2, p. 22). The same is true for Abū al-'Abbās Al-Mubarrad (d. 285/899) who

said: "This is something that the Arabs do not know, and they do not know (al-ḍaḥīk الضَّحِكُ) except in contrast to crying" (Al-Saḡānī, 1977, Vol. 5, p. 218). Depending on the common interpretation, commentators have assumed that there is a hysteron proteron (taqdīm wa ta'khīr) in this verse, i.e., Ibrahim's wife laughed after she heard the good news of the birth. Or she laughed before the Annunciation because she felt safe.

Maḥmūd al-Alūsī (d. 1854) mentioned other reasons suggested by the commentators to answer the reason for laughter (1994, Vol. 6, pp. 294-295), yet, our attention turns to him due to his more comprehensive delineation of the various viewpoints regarding the significance of (al-ḍaḥīk). The opinion suggesting the meaning of (al-ḍaḥīk) is menstruation is attributed - according to him- to Ibn 'Abbās, Ibn 'Umar, Mujāhid ibn Jabr and 'Ikrimah. Most linguists, in his estimation, do not deny that (al-ḍaḥīk) means menstruation. It appears that Maḥmūd al-Alūsī embraced both interpretations, although he lent support to the concept of menstruation. This endorsement is reinforced by three ancient poetic verses mentioned in the works of ancient linguists, and he argued those who denied the meaning of menstruation with a clear jurisprudence rule, which is: The one who affirms takes priority over the one who denies, and the one who has memorized has a proof over the one who has not (*wal-muthbit muqaddam 'alā an-nāfi' wa man ḥafīz ḥujjah 'alā man lam yaḥfiẓ*).

Before Al-Alusi, Al-Muntajab al-Hamadhānī (d. 643/1245) presented six interpretations regarding the meaning of the verb (ḍaḥīkat) (2006, Vol. 3, pp. 493-494), with five of these interpretations associated with the concept of "laughter". The divergence, however, is in the context that made Sarah laugh. Concerning the sixth interpretation of the verb (ḍaḥīkat) it corresponds with the previously mentioned meaning of "menstruation". It's worth noting that al-Hamadhānī mentioned an abnormal Qur'ānic recitation (Qirā'ah Shādhah) attributed to Muḥammad ibn Ziyād al-A'rābī (d. 231/845), which is (ḍaḥakat) with (fatḥa) instead of (ḍaḥīkat). However, the more significant aspect is his objection to Ibn Jinnī (d. 392/1002), who rejected this recitation, with an important statement when he said: "And perhaps it is a rare dialect that didn't reach Abu al-Faḥ, because the person behind this recitation is Muḥammad ibn Ziyād al-A'rābī, and [he is a person of stature and esteem]" (Al-Muntajab, 2006, Vol. 3, p. 494) (*Wa-lā 'allah lughayyah * lam tabluḡ aba al-faḥ; li'anna qāri'ah Muḥammad ibn Ziyād al-A'rābī wa huwa huwa*). This recitation serves to distinguish between the two meanings, particularly addressing the concept of menstruation according to al-A'rābī. The change in the vowelization of the letter brings about a change in the meaning of the word in Arabic, as seen in both of the two recitations of verse 33 from Sūrat Al-Aḥzāb (Ibn Khālawayh, 2006, p. 349): "wa qarnā fī buyūtikunna", which is the qirā'ah (recitation) of Nāfi' (d. 169/785) and 'Āṣim (d. 127/745) meaning: "And stay in your houses", and: "wa qirnā fī buyūtikunna", which is the

* - The term (lughayyah) is a diminutive form of the term (lughah), which was used by ancient scholars as an equivalent to the contemporary term (lahjah) meaning (dialect). There are several terms that ancient Arab linguists employed in Arabic dialectology, but what was conventionally recognized is that the term (lisan) equates to (language), (lughah) corresponds to (dialect), and (lughayyah) corresponds to (rare dialect).

qirā'ah of Ibn Kathīr (d. 120/737), Abū 'Amrū (d. 154/770), Ibn 'Āmir (d. 118/736), Ḥamza (d. 156/772), and al-Kisā'ī (d. 189/804) meaning: "Maintain honour in your houses". In light of the considerable disparity among scholars regarding the authenticity of certain non-canonical Qur'ānic recitations beyond the established seven or ten, the analysis of al-A'rābī's recitation, a distinguished Meccan qāri', and Ibn Jinnī's subsequent critique, serve to illuminate the presence of this archaic usage from the root (Ḍ/Ḥ/K), whether the meaning of the verb is indicative of menstruation or something else.

To provide a comprehensive understanding, one should examine the narrative's context in another Sūrat, particularly within Sūrat Al-dhāriyāt (29), where it is stated: "Fa aqbalat 'imra'atuhu fī ṣarratin fasakka wajhahā wa qālat 'ajūzun 'aqīm". The context of the story in Sūrat Al-dhāriyāt is not so much a context of joy as it is a context of astonishment and fear, especially for Abrahām. It can be seen that they did not agree on the meaning of (ṣarra صرّة), both for the ancient commentators, and for those who translated the Qur'an into English. We can note that Yusuf 'Ali (1990) was influenced by the interpretation of (al-ḍahik) in the first Sūrat when he translated this verse by saying: "But his wife came forward (laughing) aloud: she smote her forehead and said: "A barren old woman!" (p. 1614), while Marmaduke Pickthall (1948) translated it by saying: "Then his wife came forward, making moan, and smote her face, and cried: A barren old woman!" (p. 541). Commentators and translators can usually differ in the interpretation of a verse, in contrast, the difference cannot reach this extent. Despite the fact that the story is narrated in several verses, two contradictory interpretations cannot be combined. What is meant is that the context is one, therefore, it is not possible for Sarah to have cried and laughed in the same circumstance, or in other words, those who translated this verse cannot differ to the point of contradiction.

Al-Zamakhsharī (1987) quoted the interpretation of Al-Ḥasan al-Basri (d. 110/728), in which he said that Sara came to her house and was in a corner looking at them, because she felt the heat of the blood, so she slapped her face out of shame" (Vol. 4, p. 402). Sharaf al-ddīn Al-ṬṬaybī (d. 743/1342) commented on this text by saying that the author of (Al-Muqni') said that the heat of blood means menstruation, like (ḍahikat ضحكت) from Sūrat Hūd (71) (Al-ṬṬaybī, 2013, Vol. 15, p. 25). We found that some of the ancient scholars chose this opinion and believed that it was more accurate, including Sibṭ ibn al-jawzī (d. 654/1256) who said that it is a sign of pregnancy (2013, Vol. 1, p. 439). We also found that Muḥammad Husayn Al-ṬṬabāṭabā'ī (d. 1981), one of the Shiite commentators, chose to refer to (al-ḍahik) in the sense of (menstruation) primarily and his evidence is that the good news came after that (Al-ṬṬabāṭabā'ī, 1996, Vol. 10, p. 323). Despite this, we can notice that the commentators and translators of the Qur'an treated the verb (ḍahik) in the sense of laughter as if it is the semantic core. We can explain this with the opinion of one of the late Iraqi scholars, 'Abd al-Qādir Mullāḥuwaysh (d. 1978), who said that whoever interprets (ḍahikat) in the sense of menstruation has distracted it from its literal meaning, this is because the reality of (al-ḍahik) is the joy that appears on the face because of the gladness of the soul (Mullāḥuwaysh, 1965, Vol. 3, pp. 136-137). We must note that those who deny the meaning of menstruation in (al-ḍahik) are the scholars of Kufa and not the scholars of Basra, although we know that the scholars of Basra are firmer in the matter of language sources.

Furthermore, we must take into consideration that one of the recent modern Qur'anic dictionaries -which was authored by El-Said M. Badawī (d. 2014) and M. A. Abdel Haleem- mentioned the meaning of menstruation first in the explanation of the entry (ḍahikat) (Badawi and Abdel Haleem, 2008, p. 546).

In fact, the meaning of menstruation appears to lack coherence with the primary meaning or the semantic core of the root (Ḍ/Ḥ/K) or with the context of the verse. Yet the mere suggestion of this interpretation can be considered as evidence that the concept of (laughter) can also be transcended. Ibn Fāris' study of the root (Ḍ/Ḥ/K) and its primary meaning was not inclusive of all semantic elements. For us, the only one who found the correct semantic core of the root was M. Ḥ. Jabal, he explained it as the protrusion of a thing white and clear from what surrounds it in a conjoined manner, like the clear road that emerges strongly from what is around it, the teeth between the lips, the white honey in its beehive, the white stone in the mountain, and the emerging fruit of the palm trees and plants (Ġabal, 2010, pp. 1273-1274). This meaning is correct, that is why M. Ḥ. Jabal denied that (ḍahikat) in the story of Ibrahim's wife was menstruation, and chose the meaning of (laughter), which is the subject of our study.

Suzanne Pinckney Stetkevych is a contemporary scholar who has examined the interpretation of the verb "dahika" in relation to menstruation within the contexts of the Qur'ān, Arabic poetry and the bible in terms of (double entendre) (1996, pp. 13-41). Her approach to the meaning of menstruation in the verb (ḍahik) was a metaphorical and anthropological approach, as she studied one of the poetic verses in which some linguists mentioned that the meaning of (ḍahik) is menstruation. This metaphorical approach made her mention the root derivatives (Ḍ/Ḥ/K) as figurative meanings added to the the basic denotation, which is (laughter) (1996, pp. 26-27). She thought that there is complex verbal play in the Qur'ānic and Genesis story. It is clear that the aim of Stetkevych's study was not to clarify the true meaning of the verb (ḍahikat) in the Qur'anic verse or in the Book of Genesis as much as it was an explanation of the wordplay or double entendre between the meanings of (laughter) and (menstruation). However, it's important to acknowledge her significant insight that it might be feasible consider the basic meaning of the root to be on the order of "to burst forth," or "to flow uncontrollably" (1996, pp. 28-29).

We have already mentioned Al-Alusi's reference to three specific verses, where certain linguists have contended that the root (Ḍ/Ḥ/K) was utilized to connote menstruation. Stetkevych ignored these verses and studied another poetic verse from poem of Ta'abbata sharran, where he said: "Taḍḥaku aḍ-ḍab'u li-qatlā hadhaylin ... wa tarā adh-ḍi'ba lahā yastahill", meaning: "The hyena laughs (taḍḥaku aḍ-ḍab'u) over the slain of Hudhayl; you see the wolf grinning above them" (1996, p. 15). It's apparent that she chose this line because it was mentioned in a complete poem attributed to its author. Unlike other verses that were mentioned like monostichs and not attributed to any poet. However, excluding these verses could potentially lead to a misunderstanding of the genuine connotation of the verb (dahikat) within the Qur'anic narrative. This is particularly important because one of these verses we'll examine employs the root (Ḍ/Ḥ/K) with a girl rather than a female animal, marking a significant contrast.

2. Methodology

Adopting a literal reading of the Qur'anic vocabulary isn't primarily an ideological choice; rather, it arises from the awareness that the Qur'ānic lexicon significantly differs from that of pre-Islamic poetry, especially concerning the precision in word selection, regardless of the longstanding debate concerning the doctrine of the inimitability (iʿjāz) of the Qur'ān and its manifestations. Relying solely on pre-Islamic poetry isn't sufficient for a precise understanding of the Qur'anic vocabulary. To achieve this, it's crucial to explore these words etymologically while also considering their meanings in other Semitic languages. Still, this etymological aspect is the most important element in which our approach differs from the approach of Amīn al-khūlī (d. 1966) in his literary approach to the Qur'ānic text *. Stetkevych's poetic approach, along with the perspectives of certain linguists and commentators concerning the meaning of the root (Ḍ/Ḥ/K), significantly diverges from our approach. I believe that the inability to ascertain the literal meaning of the Qur'anic root inevitably leads to the illusion of metaphor. Yes, within the context of the poetic experience, we can deem Stetkevych's approach acceptable, aligning with what Walker Percy (d. 1990) called (metaphor as mistake). This study is categorized under comparative linguistics. Specifically, it focuses on the comparison of texts between the Arabic and Hebrew languages. Accordingly, our methodology was developed through the collection of information from scriptures, dictionaries, classical literary texts, and Qur'ānic commentaries. In the beginning, we studied the derivatives of the Arabic root (Ḍ/Ḥ/K) in the old Arabic dictionaries, and we discovered that the semantic core of the root goes beyond the concept of (laughter). Moreover, the disagreement between commentators about the verb (ḍahikat) in the story of Sarah and the birth of Isaac in the Qur'an was an incentive to continue searching for the correct interpretation of the verb. The existence of the same story in the Bible and the fact that the verb (ḍahika ضحك) is common in Semitic languages made us review the English translations of Genesis verses that mentioned the story and the Hebrew word for (laughter).

The ambiguity of the English translations regarding the verse of Sarah's laughter in Genesis and its differences, and the confusion it caused in terms of the grammatical structure, made us go back to the Hebrew origin of the text. So we re-analysed the text, and searched for the word (צחוק ṣə-ḥōq) in the Bible, where we found it in the book of Ezekiel as well, so we re-analysed it also in light of our analysis of the Arabic root and its derivatives. The Jewish Biblical exegesis, especially what we found in the Midrash Rabbah about Sarah's story, and the Arabic poetic verses, especially those from the pre-Islamic era, helped us confirm our hypothesis about the meaning of two words in Sarah's story, both in the Qur'an and in the Bible. As with any etymological study, this research was based, in the part related to the analysis, on phonetic laws known in Semitic languages, mostly with regard to phonetic substitution (Ibdāl), which explained the development of derivatives of the Semitic root (Ḍ/Ḥ/K). We have extended our analysis beyond Hebrew texts alone. Instead, we have re-examined pre-Islamic poetic verses that incorporate vocabulary derived from the two Arabic roots, (Ḍ/Ḥ/K) and (S/Ḥ/Q). And we presented different explanations according to our hypothesis. Transliteration was necessary, whether related to Arabic and Hebrew vocabulary or applied to certain texts, such as poetic verses and specific lexical definitions. Additionally, we translated citations from ancient Arab lexicographers and commentators into

* - See the discussion about the literary approach in paper of Naṣr Abū Zayd: The Dilemma of the Literary Approach to the Qur'an, pp. 8-47.

English while ensuring the original meaning in the source language was preserved as accurately as possible.

Those who review the study sources can notice that most of them are older references, which is mainly due to the fact that the issue at hand is related to religious language and the meaning of a Qur'anic verb and an ancient Semitic root. This means that we needed to refer to the sources that preceded the Holy Quran, specifically the pre-Islamic Arabic language, as well as the opinions of ancient linguists and commentators, who are closest to the context in which the Qur'anic verb and the ancient Semitic root were used. As for modern studies, I must emphasize that they did not discuss the issue we are studying. The reason for this is that the studied Qur'anic verb does not seem to require a lengthy analysis, nor is its meaning typically viewed as problematic. Additionally, the relationship between the Qur'anic verses and the biblical verses about the miraculous birth of Isaac, like other similar verses, is often studied from a narrative perspective, and we rarely consider the linguistic and lexical issues that may exist among them. One last point I must clarify is that this study took a long time and required several reviews related to the Arabic Qur'anic verb, the Hebrew vocabulary, and the biblical texts. As the reader can notice, it is quite intensive because the constraints of the paper limit detailed explanations. Additionally, answering the study's problem and its sub-questions requires addressing all the aspects discussed in the article, including the phonetic study of vocabulary and roots, reviewing the opinions of commentators and linguists on the Qur'anic verses, critiquing the ancient explanations of the poetic verses relied upon to understand the Qur'anic verb, re-evaluating the English translations of the Hebrew vocabulary and the related biblical texts, and comparing the Qur'anic verb and Hebrew vocabulary in light of the verses' contexts and historical references

3. Results and Discussion

3.1 The Main Results of the Study

In this lexical-etymological study, we searched for the meaning of the verb (ضحكت *ḍaḥikat*) in Sūrat Hūd (71) from the story of Sarah, and the Hebrew word (צָחַק *ṣə-ḥōq*) in Genesis (21:6) from the same story. In the final analysis we found the elements that led commentators to misinterpret the verb (ضحكت *ḍaḥikat*) in Sūrat Hūd (71), and the reasons why translators mistranslated the word (צָחַק *ṣə-ḥōq*) in Genesis (21:6). In these reasons we found a clear example of the concepts of obsolete words and lexical ignorance. Lexical-etymological comparison showed that the previous studies confused two meanings of the proto Semitic root (Ḍ/H/K) or (S/H/Q), these two meanings are: laughter, and breastfeeding, considering that the root's primary meaning is the emergence of a white thing from a closed place. This primary meaning applies to (laughter) through the appearance of white teeth, which are called in Arabic (Al-ḍḍawāḥik الضواحك), it also applies to the appearance of milk from the breast, its name in Arabic, according to our analysis, is (al-ḍḍaḥik الضحك), it is also a name given to honey and snow.

The verb (ضحكت *ḍaḥikat*) in Sūrat Hūd (71) is not derived from the concept of laughter (الضَّحْك al-ḍḍaḥik), but rather from (الضَّحْك al-ḍḍaḥik). Thus, we interpreted the verse in the sense that Sarah found milk in her breast, which is a sign of pregnancy, then she received the good tidings about the birth of Isaac. It is an interpretation that invalidates the meaning of menstruation mentioned by some commentators and linguists, and preserves the original arrangement of the meanings of the Qur'ānic verse. This interpretation was supported by our literary analysis of pre-Islamic poetic verses, especially the verb (أسحق *aṣḥaqa*) from the ode of

Labīd (d. 661) which we believe the ancient linguists misunderstood. According to our analysis, the Hebrew word (רָחַץ שֶׁ-הֵוֵה) in Genesis (21:6) is equivalent to the Arabic word (al-ḍaḥik الضَّحِك) phonetically and semantically. The Hebrew word (רָחַץ שֶׁ-הֵוֵה) is from the root (S/H/Q), it is the Arabic root (Ḍ/H/K) itself, according to the phonetic laws that we applied in the study, and according to the derivatives of the root (S/H/Q) in Arabic as well. This Semitic word has two meanings: the appearance of milk from the breast, and the second is the milk itself.

The repetition of the Hebrew root (S/H/Q) in Genesis (21:6) in the same context was a reason for misinterpretation the first word (רָחַץ שֶׁ-הֵוֵה) to mean (laughter) like the second verb (יִשְׁחַק, yišḥaq). The name of (Isaac) is from the first word not the second, it is equivalent to the Arabic name (الضَّحَّاك Al-ḍaḥaḥāḥ), meaning pollen. We have explained the relation between pollen and the derivatives of the root (Ḍ/H/K) in Arabic, through this explanation it is possible to understand the symbolism of the name and its relation to (רָחַץ שֶׁ-הֵוֵה). Our new interpretation was supported by what was mentioned in Midrash Rabbah about Sarah's breast and its likeness to a fountain. It is also supported by our analysis of a text from the Book of Ezekiel, where we found the word (לִשְׁחַק lišḥaq) derived from the root (S/H/Q) in the context of breastfeeding. We have retranslated the text according to the new analysis, while clarifying the wrong translation of this word as well as that of the Hebrew verb (עֲלָא ulēa'ag). The name (Sarah) was also explored etymologically, revealing that the adjective (fi-ṣarrah) in Sūrat Al-dhāriyāt conveys the concept of a breast full of milk. This interpretation is supported by the context of the story, Islamic narratives, and lexical analysis. Apart from Arabic and Hebrew, we found words in non-Semitic languages that are phonetically close to the sample we studied, and its meanings revolve around breastfeeding and milk. However, we shall discuss and elaborate on these findings in the next three sections of the study.

3.2 The Root (Ḍ/H/K) and the Meaning of (Ḍaḥikat): a New Conceptualization

3.2.1 Semantic Issues with the Claim that (Al-ḍaḥik) Signifies (Menstruation) in Ancient Arabic Poetry

One of the verses mentioned by scholars as evidence that (al-ḍaḥik) comes in the sense of menstruation is the poet's saying: "Wa 'ahdī bi Salmā ḍaḥikan fī lubānatin ... wa lam ya'dū ḥuqqā thadyihā an yaḥlumā". This verse was mentioned by S. Al-'Awtabī (d. 5th c/11th c) (1999, Vol.3, p. 412), but the word (lubānah لُبَانَة) has been distorted in other sources, where it was written as (lubābah لِبَابَة) (Al-Baydāwī, 1998, Vol. 3, p. 141), We concluded that the few sources that made reference to this poetic verse either misunderstood it or failed to properly explain it, and we do not know how they missed the mention of the breast in the verse. Abū miḥal Al-A'rābī (d. 230/845) gave us an explanation of the word (لِبَانَة) in his work "Kitāb al-nawādhir" which is: "Durrā'atun talbasuhā al-jāriyatu tughatṭī bihā sadrahā wa thadyayhā" (Al-A'rābī, 1961, p. 365), meaning: A type of clothing that a young girl used to cover her chest and breasts.

Within this passage, the poet mentioned that he had known his beloved Salmā for a long time. Describing her as a young maiden, he provided a clear description of her breasts, which was apparent in the second hemistich. Still, there were scholars who suggested that the term "(ḍaḥikan ضاحكا)" could be interpreted as a reference to menstruation, although this interpretation lacked accuracy. Actually, they have tried to find an interpretation of it because it

was presented in the masculine form. The accurate interpretation, however, is that it came in this form because it is an adjective for the breast and it is also masculine in Arabic. Such as the adjective (الحالق al-ḥāliq), which we shall study later. The entirety of the poetic verse serves as a delineation of the young woman's breast, an attribute often encountered in the works of poets. Otherwise, it is uncharacteristic for poets to delineate women by referencing menstruation. In fact, the name (lubānah لبانة) also means in Arabic the need and desire, and it is derived from the root (L/B/N), which revolves around milk, like the name (labān لبان) meaning breast (Al-Farāhīdī, 1984, Vol. 8, p. 327).

The etymology of the name (Isaac إسحاق) is directly related to the verb (ḍaḥikat). The scholars have chosen that the name is arabised from the Hebrew (yiṣḥāq) (Jeffery, 1938, p. 60), meaning (the laughing one); because he laughed a lot, or because people laughed when he was born (Al-Mustafaoui, 1966, Vol. 5, pp. 83-84). In fact, the original Semitic word in Hebrew Scripture is (צחק), due to the lack of the letter "ḍ" in Hebrew, it is pronounced with the letter "s" instead. Noting that the Hebrew root (S/H/Q) appears in several texts in the Bible. However, the word for (laughter) in Hebrew, originating from this root, was only documented in two places, which we will discuss later. Islamic scholars were aware that the meaning of (iṣḥāq) in Hebrew is (الضحك al-ḍḥaḥk), this is what was transmitted from Aḥmad ibn miskawayh (d. 421/1030) (Al-Sūyūfī, 1974, Vol. 4, p. 70). This Arabic name, meaning (al-ḍḥaḥk), is the name given by Arab historians to the Persian mythological figure (Zahhāk-e Mārdoush) (Ukaša, 1990, p. 508), knowing that lexicographers do not know the origin of the Persian name Yet, the Arabic name does not mean "the one who laughs," as we will clarify; rather, (الضحك al-ḍḥaḥk) specifically refers to one of the names of the emerging fruit (Al-ṭṭal الطلع) when it emerges from the spathe.

We estimate that the name (Isaac) is directly related to the root (ض ح ك/DHK) but the connotation is related to the woman's breast milk, and to the phonetic form developed from the root (ض ح ك/DHK) which is (س ح ق/SHQ), we have in Arabic this phrase: "aḍḥaka al-ḥawḍa" (Al-Azharī, 2001, Vol. 4, p. 56), i.e., "He filled the basin until it overflowed", we also say in Arabic that the palm tree (ضحكت ḍaḥikat) or (أضحكت aḍḥakat) when it ejects the emerging fruit (الطلع) (Kurā, 1988, p. 245). To reinforce our viewpoint, we need to focus on the word (Ḥāliq حالق), which means the udder that is almost full. The ancient linguists mentioned a poetic verse where this word is used with the verb (أسحق aṣḥaqa), which is similar to the verb (aḍḥaka). The poetic verse is attributed to Labīd where he says: "Ḥattā 'idhā ya'isat wa aṣḥaqa ḥāliqun ... lam yublihī 'irdā'uhā wa fiṭāmuhā" (Al-Farāhīdī, 1984, Vol. 3, p. 37). In Kitāb al-'ayn, in which we found this verse, the author defined the entry (al-iṣḥaq) as: "'irtifā' u al-ḍḍar' wa luzūquhū bi al-baḥn", meaning: The rising udder attached to the abdomen. Abū Bakr Ibn Durayd (d. 321/933) in his dictionary mentioned the same poetic verse and he said: "Aṣḥaqt al-nnāqatu 'iṣḥāqan 'idhā 'irtaf' a labanuhā wa qalla" (1987, Vol. 1, p. 532), meaning: The milk of the camel became little. While we find that the explanation of Abū Bakr ibn al-qūṭīyyah is clear when he said: "the udder is attached to the abdomen, and its milk is over" (1993, p. 74). It is clear that the definition of the entry given by the author of Kitāb al-'Ayn differs from those given in dictionaries that came after. The initial definition lacks any indication of diminished milk volume within the breast. Instead, it solely presents two distinct elements: the elevation of the udder and its attachment to the abdomen.

3.2.2 Rethinking the Meaning of the Verb (asḥaqa): A New Interpretation of a Pre-Islamic Verse

The verse mentioned above is from the ode of Labīd where he described the speed of his she-camel. Labīd likened his she-camel and its speed to an onager (wild ass) first, then to a feral cow. The context of this poetic verse revolves around the second analogy, that is, about the feral cow that lost her fawn after being eaten by wolves. After days of hiding, it was pursued by the hunters, so it fought their dogs, killing and wounding a number of them. As a result, her fear drove her to sprint away more swiftly. We believe that linguists misunderstood this poetic verse which affected the lexicographers' understanding of the verb (أسحق asḥaqa) and even the word (الحالق al-ḥāliq). The second part of the poetic verse means that the udder of the cow did not become obsolete due to breastfeeding and weaning. The explicit denotation signifies the udder's non-emptiness; however, commentators surmised that the poet implied udder emptiness. This implication is not linked to breastfeeding and weaning but rather to sentiments of sadness and fear. The commentators were influenced by the misunderstanding of the verb (asḥaqa) in the first part of the verse. The English translation of this poem was influenced by the opinions of these commentators too, such as Michael. A. Sells (1989) translated this poetic verse by saying: "Until, hope gone. Her once-full udder dries. Though suckling and weaning. Are not what withered it down" (p. 40).

We have already said that the verb (asḥaqa) is another form of the verb (aḥḥaka). Besides, we also found that the verb (حلق Ḥalaqa) has the same meaning as (al-ishḥaq) mentioned by the author of Kitāb al-'ayn. In fact, if we use the verb (حلق Ḥalaqa) with the udder, this means that it is filled with milk and that it is also high (Al-Farāhīdī, 1984, Vol. 4, p. 40). This conclusion can be drawn from the poem itself. The poet first compared his fast she-camel to an onager being pursued by a donkey before comparing it to a scared, feral cow being pursued by hunters and dogs. However, in the first analogy, the poet made a very important point when he described this onager, specifically, he described her udder with the word (ملمع mulmi'): "aw mulmi' in wasaqat liaḥqaba lāḥahu ... ṭardu al-fufūli wa ḍarbuḥā wa kidāmuhā". Sells' translation of this poetic verse was correct, as he says: "Or a sheen-of-udder, mate of a rutted white - belly. Gnashing and kicking, the driving off of rivals. Has turned him sallow" (Sells. 1989, p. 37).

The word (ملمع mulmi') is an adjective for the onager's udder, whose pregnancy became clear through its udder, which shines due to the milk. This word is derived from the verb (الما' المع alma'a), which is similar to the verb (أسحق asḥaqa) in terms of the morphological form (af'ala). This explanation demonstrates the error that the poem's commentators made in misinterpreting the verb (asḥaqa), since the poet cannot compare his she-camel to one animal with a full udder, then to another with a dry one. Noting that the circumstances surrounding the two animals, which the poet used in his analogy, are very similar. A verse similar to the first one was cited by Abū 'Amr Al-shaybānī (d. 206/821), it is attributed to a poet called (Ibn al-rriqā'): "Ḥattā 'idhā ya'isat wa alma'a ḍar'uhā ... wa ra'at baqiyyata shilwihī fashajāhā" (Al-ṣaybānī, 1974, vol. 3, p. 206). No one, other than Abū 'Amr Al-shaybānī, mentioned this poetic verse in this form, and no one mentioned this poetic verse and the entire poem except Yāqūt al-ḥamawī (d. 626/1229), but with (asḥaqa) instead of (alma'a) and (Yabisat يبيست) instead of (ya'isat يئست) (Al-ḥamawī, 1995, Vol. 5, p. 203). It is very clear that the verb (asḥaqa) is close to the meaning of the verb (alma'a), if it is not the same meaning. Abū Mansūr al-Azharī (2001) explained this verb by saying that when it comes to a camel, it means that she has become pregnant, and when it comes to the udder it

will release milk (Al- Azharī, Vol. 2, p. 257). In fact, Abū Bakr Al-Anbārī (d. 328/940) gave us a precise definition of the word (al-mulmi') in Labid's poem when he said: "She is the onager whose pregnancy appeared in her udder because it shines due to the milk" (Al-Anbārī, 1993, p. 541). Needless to say, the root (LM'/ع م ل) denotes a rapidly lighting object. It's important to note that the poem frequently refers to water, rain, and fertility. In fact, the commentators of the poem disagree on the meaning of the verb (ashḥaqa). We see that Al-khaṭīb Al-Tabrīzī (d. 502/1109) (1934, p. 155) understood this verb in the sense of rising of the udder (irtafa'a) before he cited the interpretation mentioned by most commentators, i.e., the meaning we are attempting to disprove. Likewise, he referred to Al-asma'ī's narration of the poetic verse with the word (ذهلت dhahalat) instead of (ya'isat يئست) meaning that she forgot.

Within Arab culture and its poetic tradition, and based on George Lakoff's theory of living by metaphors, we find that there is a clear and persistent tendency to draw comparisons between the she-camel, the palm tree, and the clouds. With this tendency in mind, our suggested interpretation of the verb (ضحك) naturally arises from these analogous associations. We believe that (الضحك al-ḍḥak) for a camel and a woman is drops of breast milk, we say in Arabic: ḍahikat āl-nnaḥla (the palm tree), meaning: "It ejects the emerging fruit (Al-ṭṭal')" (Al-Farāhīdī, 1984, Vol. 3, p. 58), and the name in both is (الضحك al-ḍḥak). The verb (ḍahikat) in this phrase is a clear example of lexical ignorance and obsolete words. Most modern linguists analyzing the phrase "ḍahikat āl-nnaḥla (the palm tree)" will choose that it is a figure of speech; because the primary meaning of the root (Ḍ/H/K) for them is laughter. That is why we find that modern Arabic does not use derivatives of this root except for vocabulary related to the concept of (laughter). The usage of the verb (ضحكت ḍahikat) in this instance is literal rather than figurative, based on the original meaning of the root (ḌHK) which is not laughter as we explained through the ancient Arabic dictionaries. The meaning of the verb (ضحكت ḍahikat) in this phrase is a semantic specialization from the semantic core. The same verb with the same form is used in Sarah's story from Sūrat Hūd (71) to denote breast milk in a literal sense according to our new conceptualization.

However, what is the meaning of (ashḥaqa)? The verb (ashḥaqa) is the same as the verb (aḍḥaka) with phonetic substitutions that Arabic has preserved from the Proto-Semitic language. The letter (س) is the letter (ض), which Hebrew does not have, and the letter (ق) is the letter (ك). Another lexical root close to the root (س/ح/ق/SHQ) is the root (س/ه/ق/SHQ) which we found in old dictionaries. It's interesting that Ibn Durayd said that the verb from this root is an obsolete one (fi'l mumāt فعل ملمات) (Ibn Durayd, Vol. 2, p. 853). Ibn Fāris (1979) believed that this root denotes length and extension (Vol. 3, p. 110). But what concerns us is the word (al-ssahwaq السَّهْوَق), the author of Kitāb al-'ayn defined this word by saying: "all things that are saturated (by water) like tree stalks" (Al-Farāhīdī, 1984, Vol. 3, p. 362). 'Alī Ibn Sīdah (d. 458/1066) gave us a precise definition of the word when he said: "the thing that is filled with water (Ā-rrayyan) before it grows" (Ibn Sīdah, 2000, Vol. 4, p. 117). We estimate that there is a substitution between the letter (ح) and the letter (ه). This substitution is also found in (sahaka سهك) and (Saḥaka سحق), because the meaning is one (Ibn al-ssikīt, 1998, p. 92). In Arabic, we also find the verb (دحقت dahqat), the name from it is (dāḥiq) like (ضاحك), which is a verb related to the female and to pregnancy, it means the emergence of water from the womb (Al-Farāhīdī, 1984, Vol. 3, p. 42),

the substitution here is obvious between the letter (د) and the letter (ض) and between the letter (ق) and the letter (ك).

Earlier, we mentioned the ancient Arabic expression: "aḍḥaka al-ḥawḍa" which means: "He filled the basin until it overflowed", we have found in old dictionaries a verb that resembles the verb (aḍḥaka) and has the same meaning, which is the verb (أزهق). We say in Arabic: (أزهق الإناء), which means: He filled the vessel (Ibn Fāris, 1979, Vol. 3, p. 32). The verb (أزهق) is another form of the verb (ashḥaqa); because there is a phonetic substitution between the letter (ز) and the letter (س). We also found the verb (أدهق) with the same meaning, which is another form of the verb (aḍḥaka), we say in Arabic (الكأس أدهق) and its meaning: he filled the cup (Ibn Fāris, 1979, Vol. 2, p. 307). The phonetic substitution is clear here between the letter (د) and the letter (ض), and between the letter (ق) and the letter (ك). The verb (أدهق) is from the root (DHQ/ د ه ق), and in this sense, the word (دهقا) is mentioned in the Qur'an, specifically in Sūrat Al-naba' (34): "Wa ka'san dihāqan" which translates to: "and a full cup", furthermore, it is very important to note that Ibn Duraid mentioned that the meaning of the verb (دهك dahaka), with (ك), is the same as the meaning of the verb (سحق saḥaqa) (Ibn Durayd, 1987, Vol. 2, p. 681), although he means the concept of crushing. One of the verbs close to it phonetically mentioned by Abū 'Amrū Al-shaybānī can confirm the opinion we have chosen, which is the verb (دك dakka), which he claims means "heavy watering" (1974, Vol. 1, p. 259). One of the derivatives of the root (S/H/Q) is used in the Arabic language with the eye and tears, we say in Arabic: "Saḥaqa al-'aynu al-ddam'a" meaning: Tears fell from the eye (Ibn Sīdah, 1996, Vol. 4, p. 372). As a matter of fact, we can use the verb (أدمع adma'a) with the (cup) instead of (أدهق adhaqa) and the meaning is the same. It is important to note that the analogy here is one, whether it is related to the woman's breast and the milk that is released from it, the vessel or basin that is filled with water, the clouds in which rain and snow come down, the palm tree and its fruit, or tears falling from the eye...etc.

3.3 A New Hypothesis Regarding the Relationship between the Name (Sarah) and (fi-Ṣarrah):

As previously stated, linguists and commentators did not find sufficient linguistic evidence in pre-Islamic poetry to agree unanimously on the meaning of the word (Ṣarrah) in Sūrat Al-dhāriyāt. Especially since it was only mentioned once in the Qur'an. Three opinions have been mentioned regarding the meaning of this Qur'anic word: moaning and groaning, shouting, and the meaning of the gathering, meaning that it came in a group of women (Al-Māwardī, 2012, Vol. 5, p. 371). Although the basic meaning of the root (Ṣ/R/R) is (gathering) without any doubt; Contemporary dictionaries and even Qur'ān Commentaries ignored this meaning, and settled - as is the case with Abdel Haleem and Badawī's Qur'anic dictionary- for the meaning of (loud cry) or (great commotion) (Badawī and Abdel Haleem, 2008, p. 521). It will be difficult for me not to comment on the relationship of the basic meaning of this root to the concept of breastfeeding and mother's milk, as I will propose a new interpretation of the Qur'anic word that agrees with the basic meaning of the root and with what was stated in ancient Arabic dictionaries, and with my new interpretation that I propose for the meaning of the verb (dahikat). Ibn Fāris suggested that the meaning of the name (Ṣarūrah), meaning the man who has no desire for marriage among the Arabs*, is taken from the word (Ṣirār), meaning the cloth with which a camel's breast is covered so that its calf does not suckle it (Ibn Fāris, 1979, Vol. 3, p. 285).

* - Ibn 'Abbās (d. 68/687) reported that the prophet said: "Lā ṣarūrata fīl-Islām." meaning: There is no Sarurah in Islam. see: (Al-Nīshāpūrī, 1990, vol. 1, p. 617).

We can understand the meaning of the root (Ş/R/R) through the roots (A/Ş/R) and (A/S/R) which indicates the meaning of (restriction), which we find in vocabulary such as the verb (asara) meaning (to capture). The name "Şarūrah" is derived from the Arabic verb "Şariya," which signifies the accumulation of water, tears, or milk without flowing, "Şariyat al-nāqah" in Arabic means: The milk accumulated in the camel's udder (Al-Farāhīdī, 1984, Vol. 7, 151). This camel is called in Arabic "al-ŞŞarrah" or "al-muŞarrāh" (Al-Azharī, 2001, Vol. 12, p. 78). Likewise, we find a jurisprudential term related to this concept, which is "At-taŞriyah" (Al-Qāḍī, 1999, vol. 2, p. 1073), it is a term that expresses a jurisprudential issue based on a hadith attributed to the prophet, wherein the sale of sheep or camels possessing the "muŞarrāh" characteristic is prohibited. What is meant is that it is not permissible to sell a sheep, cow, or camel whose udder has been tied and has not been milked for a period of time, with the intention of deceiving the buyer into believing that they naturally produce a significant amount of milk.

Based on our understanding of the meaning of the Qur'anic, the meaning of the sound or shout is excluded, only the meaning of the gathering of fluid remains, which in this case is Sarah's breast milk. That is, (Fi Şarrah) is a description of Sarah's state when she came to Abrahām and his guests, and if we adhere to the phonetic laws in the Arabic dictionary, we will find The word itself, with a phonetic substitution, is (sallah), and its meaning according to Ibn Fāris is dew and little water (Ibn Fāris, 1979, Vol. 3, p 276). If the adjective "Şarūrah" for a man refers to semen, then the adjective "Şarrah" for a woman refers to breast milk, both of which, in terms of etymology, indicate a state of accumulation and fullness. While in the Hebraic tradition, the name "Sarai" was changed to "Sarah" as stated in the Book of Genesis (17:15). In the Islamic tradition -according to the narration of Wahb ibn Munabbih (d. 114/738) about Sarah's dialogue with Jibrīl- it changed from "yasārah" meaning a barren woman to "Sarah" meaning a woman who is capable of pregnancy and breastfeeding "Wa qāla lahā Jibrīl: Kunti Yasārah Lā Taḥbalīn. Wa Şirti Sārah Taḥbalīn wa Turḍi 'īn" (Al-Kermānī, 1988, vol. 2, p. 688). Although we do not have a clear explanation for the name change in the Hebrew and Islamic traditions, or for the meaning of the letter (ya), it is important to note the mention of the issue of breastfeeding in the narration of al-tabi'i (the successor) Wahb ibn Munabbih, especially when we know that he had a wide knowledge of Jewish and Christian traditions (Isra'iliyyāt).

Hence, we tend to believe that the name Sarah, even though it's not mentioned in the Qur'an, is directly related, from an etymological perspective, to her situation described in Sūrat Al-dhāriyāt. That's when she came to Abrahām and his guests with breasts full of milk, feeling overwhelmed with embarrassment. According to the Islamic narration (Al-Nasafī, 2019, Vol. 14, p. 51), the angel Jibrīl told her to look up at the roof of the house, made of dried palm trees. When Sarah looked upward, she saw that the palm trees had miraculously become lush and fruitful. Jibril comforted her, explaining that this was due to the divine command. It is important to read this narrative in its religious context, which includes some symbolic meanings, namely, from the perspective that humans are the creation of God, as stated in the Prophetic hadith (literally: the building of God "Al-insān Bunyān Allāh") *. Thereby, Jibrīl's words become a metaphor for Sarah herself, meaning that the house made up of dried palm trunks is Sarah who was Barren, and the roof is a sign of the breasts that have become fruitful. In the next section, we

* - The authentic sources of the Prophet's hadiths haven't documented this hadith, and we tend to believe it's more akin to Judeo-Christian texts (Isra'iliyyāt). Nonetheless, some sources have mentioned it as a prophetic hadith. See, for example: (Al-Zamakhsharī, 1987, vol. 1, p 551).

will explain the origins of this metaphor and its relationship to the verb (ḍaḥikat) and to the name (Isaac) as well.

3.4 Sarah's Laughter and the Root (S/H/Q) in the Bible: a New Translation

The female and the date palm* have a considerable number of shared lexical entries that pertain to the concept of pregnancy in Arabic language, in what follows, we shall mention a number of these entries: The palm tree and the woman share the root (BSQ/ق ب س) or (BṢQ/ق ب ص), we say: (Basaqat Āl-nnakhlah) i.e., the date palm has become long and complete, and we say: (absaqat alshāt) meaning: the sheep (or the woman) shed milk from her udder a month or more before giving birth (Al-Farāhīdī, 1984, Vol. 5, pp. 85-86). The female and the palm tree share the root (LQH/ح ل ق), which is a root for fertilization, we use the same verb to describe this process that takes place on the female and on the palm tree, which is the verb (alqaḥa ألقح) and (laqqahā لققح), and one of the names for pregnancy in Arabic is (al-laqaḥ اللقح) (Al-Farāhīdī, 1984, Vol. 3, pp. 13-14). Likewise, the woman and the palm tree share the root (QR/ر ع ق), we say (āqir عاقرة) meaning: a barren woman, and we say (āqirah عقره) to the palm tree (Al-Farāhīdī, 1984, Vol. 1, p. 151).

It is natural for a woman to secrete milk at the beginning of her pregnancy, with the change in breast size and color that accompanies pregnancy. The Jewish Biblical exegesis have preserved important references about Sarah's ability to breastfeed, and the miracle that happened to her breasts when she nursed people's children having that Abraham convinced her to uncover her breasts so that people can see the miraculous breastfeeding, as stated in Midrash Rabbah (Freedman & Maurice, 1961, p. 468).

3.4.1 The Hebrew Word (Ṣə-ḥōq, al-ḍaḥik) and the Notion of (Breast Milk): A New Translation

We explained in the previous section that the meaning of (ḍaḥikat) in the story of the angels with Abrahām's wife is that it means that she found milk in her breast; As a sign of pregnancy. The ancient Arabic lexicon helped us with this interpretation; as we have clarified that the root (ض ح ك/DḤK) means the emergence of a white thing from a closed place. Yet, the use of the Bible to explain the Hebrew word is very necessary. We note that the Arabic translation of Genesis (21:6): "And Sarah said, God hath made me to laugh, so that all that hear will laugh with me" (The Contemporary Parallel Bible, 2004) is: "Qad ja'ala Al-lāhu lī ḍaḥiqan, kullu man yasma'u yaḍḥaku lī" (Al-kitāb al-muqaddas, 2004, p. 34). It is a literal translation from the English translation that does not suit the Arabic grammatical structure, and the cause is what we assume to be an inaccurate translation of the Hebrew scripture.

Even the English translations of the Hebrew scripture are different, we found in another translation, for example: "Sarah said, "God has brought me laughter, and everyone who hears about this will laugh with me"" (The Contemporary Parallel Bible, 2004). We assume that the repetition of the Hebrew root (S/H/Q) in one phrase was a reason for translating and interpreting the first word (צחוק ṣə-ḥōq) to mean (laughter) just like the second verb (ישחוק yišḥaq). In fact,

* - The date palm symbolizes life among Arabs, and we cannot lose sight of its association with the birth of Jesus in the Qur'an in Sūrat Maryam (25): "Wa huzzī 'ilayki bi jidh'ī al-nnakhlati tusāqit 'alayki ruṭaban janiyyā". We also find that women are likened to a palm tree with breasts being likened to clusters in the Song of Solomon (7:7).

(סָחַח *ṣə-ḥōq*, al-*ḍḍaḥk*) in this verse refers to breast milk with two meanings: the appearance of milk from the breast, and the second is the milk itself. The first one is from (Al-*ḍḍaḥk* الضَّحْكُ) as a gerund (Masdar مصدر), the second is from (al-*ḍḍaḥk* الضَّحْكُ) as well but as a noun, despite the fact that the second verb (יִשְׁחַח *yiṣḥaq*) truly means (will laugh). This is almost what happened with the Arabic root (Ḍ/Ḥ/K) and its derivatives, including the verb (*ḍaḥikat* ضحكت) from *Sūrat Hūd* (71). The difference is that, in addition to the poetic verses we found in the pre-Islamic literature that helped us confirm the meaning of breast milk that we claimed, the ancient Arabic dictionaries maintained the derivatives and meanings of this root. The Hebrew verb (אָשַׁח *ā-śāh*) that was translated by (has brought) or (hath made) in Genesis (21:6) has been used in Genesis (1:11): "And the fruit tree that yields fruit according to its kind" (The Contemporary Parallel Bible, 2004), and in Genesis (1:12): "Their kind and trees bearing fruit with" (The Contemporary Parallel Bible, 2004). It is important to note the use of this verb with fruits in the sense of (to produce) and (to give) something. This meaning is coherent with breast milk (Al-*ḍḍaḥk*) and the meanings of the Hebrew root (S/Ḥ/Q) and the Arabic root (ḌḤK). The Arabic word with this connotation is (آتَى *ātā*), often translated as (gave), However, this translation does not include all the semantic elements of the Arabic verb. The Qur'an used this verb with trees and their fruits, such as (palms), and with the books revealed to the Messengers, etc., but most often this verb is used with something that God gives to people in a mysterious way. According to our analysis and translation of the Hebrew scripture, the text can be translated into the following: "And Sarah said, "God gave me milk breast, and all who hear will laugh with me".

The alternative interpretation we provide explains the story of the great feast hosted by *Abrahām* when he weaned *Isaac* as stated in Genesis (21:8). As we quoted from the *Midrash Rabbah* the feast was an opportunity for people to make sure that *Sarah*, despite her old age, was the one who gave birth to *Isaac*, not *Hagar* or another woman. These are the people that *Sarah* referred to by saying: "All who hear will laugh with me". But what is the evidence that *Sarah* gave birth to *Isaac*? It was her breast milk when she, publicly, nursed the children of these people. This is the reason for the rhetorical question we find in the same context in Genesis (21:7): "And she said, who would have said unto *Abrahām*, that *Sarah* should have given children suck?" (Stevenson, 2010, p. 71), and in the translation of the Aramaic *Peshitta*'s version: "And she said, "Who said to *Abrahām* that *Sara* will breastfeed children?" (Bauscher, 2020, p. 23).

The context is obviously related to breasts and breastfeeding. However, the contents of Genesis (17:1) are suggestive of a more nuanced interpretation of the account of *Isaac*'s birth that we are proposing. In this verse we find the problematic name known in biblical Onomatology (*El Shaddai*), which is usually translated as: (God Almighty): "When *Abram* was ninety-nine years old, the LORD appeared to him and said, "I am *El-Shaddai*—'God Almighty.' Serve me faithfully and live a blameless life." This name was utilized within the context of announcing the forthcoming arrival of *Isaac*'s birth, but it was mentioned in several places in the Book of Genesis and in the Bible in general mainly in the context of fertility. *David Biale* has studied this term closely, offering different opinions on its etymology, from the meaning of "mountain" and "plain" to its literal meaning of "breasts", based on *William F. Albright*'s (d. 1971) opinion, who argued that the original meaning of *shadu* was probably "breast" (*shadwi* in Old Akkadian, *tud* in Ugaritic and Arabic, and *shad* in Hebrew) (Biale, 1982, p. 23). *David Biale* tried to explain the transformation of "El Shaddai" from the "god of breasts" into the "almighty god of war" in the bible. In exploring the etymology of *El Shaddai* and its connection to the significance of the breast,

David Biale refers to the notion of suckling in the Egyptian language. He suggests that if the name Shaddai originates from Akkadian, the term "breasts" would not conflict with its original context. However, it might be more appropriate to explore for a similar term in Egyptian, where "shdi" serves as a verb meaning "to suckle" ((Biale, 1982, pp. 248-249). We presume that our new interpretation of the Hebrew word (לְשׂוֹדֵן *ṣə-ḥōq*) provides new evidence for the meaning of the name El Shaddai.

3.4.1 The Hebrew word (*Liṣḥōq*) in the Book of Ezekiel and the Notion of (Breast Milk): A New Translation

The second context in which the Hebrew word for (laughter) appears according to the translations of the Bible is in the Book of Ezekiel (23:32-34), it is also a context related to breasts and breastfeeding: "Thou shalt drink of thy sister's cup deep and large: thou shalt be laughed to scorn and had in derision; it containeth much. Thou shalt be filled with drunkenness and sorrow, with the cup of astonishment and desolation, with the cup of thy sister Samaria. Thou shalt even drink it and suck it out, and thou shalt break the sherds thereof, and pluck off thine own breasts" (The Contemporary Parallel Bible, 2004). The phrase: "laughed to scorn and had in derision" is a translation of the Hebrew text: (לְשׂוֹדֵן וּלְלֵאג) (לְשׂוֹדֵן *liṣḥōq*) according to our analysis does not mean laughter, rather it indicates breast milk as in Genesis (21:6) (לְשׂוֹדֵן) (*ṣəḥōq*). The word (לְלֵאג *ulela'ag*) includes a Semitic root (ל/ע/ל) (ل ع ق) (L ' k) which means (licking). Thus, the meaning of the phrase revolves around the licking of breast milk, a meaning consistent with the text that preceded it and the one after it; to make the meaning of the verse complete. It is clear that (thou shalt be laughed to scorn and had in derision) is a parenthetical sentence, and it is incoherent with what comes after it, i.e.: (it containeth much). According to our analysis and translation of the Hebrew scripture, the text becomes as follows: "Thou shalt drink of thy sister's cup deep and large: thou shalt lick the milk breast (לְשׂוֹדֵן *liṣḥōq*) that containeth much". Compared to the above, we must note that the verb (יָנַק) whose origin is (נָק) (*yanāq*) in Genesis (21:7) where Sarah said: "who would have said unto Abrahām, that Sarah should have given children suck?" means (to suck), and it is close to the root (ל/ע/ל) (ل ع ق) as we are aware that there is a substitution between the letter (נ) and the letter (ל) in Semitic languages. It's worth noting that our approach to exploring the etymology and understanding of this term closely follows the established methods employed by Bible scholars and lexicologists in general. In his essay on the etymology of "El Shaddai," William F. Albright (d. 1971) himself noted that a majority of his predecessors attempted to trace the name back to a familiar Hebrew root, or in some cases, to an Arabic root believed to have become obscured within Hebrew language (Albright, 1935, p. 181).

Beyond scriptures, Arabic dictionaries, and Semitic languages, and without ignoring phonetic differences and the possibility of linguistic borrowing, we learned that the root (D/H/K) refers to milk in various languages. One of these languages is English; where we find the word "dug". Charles Mackay (d. 1889) expounds upon this word, characterizing it as "the teat of a female among the lower animals, from which the young suck nourishment" (Mackay, 1877, p. 149). Mackay introduces various views on its origin. He posits the potential derivation from the Belgian term 'Duyght,' connoting a faucet from which milk is drawn. Furthermore, he posits a plausible association with the Hebrew terms 'dod' and 'dodin,' signifying a pap or teat. But the most important is the origins of this word in other languages such as Icelandic (*deggia*), to give suck, Swedish (*daegia*), to give suck, Swedish (*dagga*), Danish (*dagge*), to suckle a child. Nevertheless, it is obvious that the Semitic root (ل/ع/ق) (ل ع ق) (*DHK*) or (س/ح/ق) (*SHQ*), which we have already described, is the source. It is possible to link these words and roots with the two English

verbs (to suck) and (to suckle), due to the phonetic and semantic similarities. The hypothesized Hebrew origin (דָּד) (dad) is compatible with the Arabic root (ث أ د/د TH'D), which revolves around the meaning of dew in Arabic (Ibn Fāris, 1979, Vol. 1, p. 398). Noting that the Arabic word that is equivalent to (breast) is (ثدي ثدي). The Sanskrit root (Duh) and its derivations (like dugdhé) indicates the meaning of milk (Lanman, 1888, p. 171), and the word for (milk) in Hungarian is (tej) (Takács, 1996, p. 224). We found this word in Persian as well, and it is (دوغ dūgh) meaning milk, old Arabic dictionaries have quoted it as (دوق) (Ibn Barrī, 1985, p. 90). Lastly, within an old etymological study that has come to our attention, the author astutely observes that the term "education" is due to the word (dug), to give milk, it is a natural analogy between educating and nourishing as for the word (alumnus), a student who gets nourishment intellectual food from his learned mother (Jolly, 1905, p. 224) and we know that alumnus is from (aler), to suckle, nourish.

Conclusion

As has been demonstrated in this paper, the theme of Sarah's story and the glad tidings of Isaac's birth in the Qur'an and in the Bible is not laughter at all, but rather the miracle of breast milk as evidence of the pregnancy, and the fact that Isaac is Sarah's son. Accordingly, the etymology of the name Isaac must be related to this connotation. This comparative linguistic study between the Arabic verb (ضحكت ضحك) in the Qur'an and the Hebrew word (צָחַק צחוק) in the Bible clarified the concept of lexical ignorance, its relation to obsolete words, and how new figurative meanings in Semitic languages overlap with their initial, old meanings. This semantic overlap directs the interpretation of scriptures written in these languages, which may cause errors in exegesis and translation. However, the comparative historical study of vocabulary in the light of old dictionaries and commentaries can correct these errors.

I humbly believe that this study confirms what Angelika Neuwirth called the 'invisible text', that is, how scholars read the Qur'anic text through the lens of its later commentaries instead of reading it as a literary artifact (Neuwirth, 2007, p. 117). I also believe that the study expresses the concept of Qur'ānic confirmation (Tasdīq), meaning that the Qur'anic lexica may assist in understanding ambiguous or misunderstood and mistranslated words in the Holy Bible, this (Tasdīq) is not only related to the narratives of the prophets in Jewish and Christian traditions but also to the use of ancient Semitic vocabulary that we assume was employed in religious texts before the Qur'an. The Qur'an could have used another verb to express the meaning of "the milk breast", just as it could have employed a complete phrase to describe what happened to Sarah. Yet, the choice of the verb (ضحكت ضحك) may have been intended, as explained in this study, as a form of linguistic confirmation. This choice particularly addresses the People of the Book (Ahl al-Kitāb), who might find in the use of this verb evidence that the Qur'an is "divine revelation". For this reason, I consider this study a preliminary attempt to explore this "Quranic pattern," in which I identified several Quranic terms that follow the same pattern. In closing, I prospect that the scholars of Biblical studies and Semitic languages will review the results of this study, as well as the scholars of Qur'anic studies. Future studies should concentrate on examining further examples of derivatives of common Semitic roots and their meanings in scriptures, taking into account that the Hebrew root (S/H/Q) in the Bible requires an extended study.

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