



Paran, Ishmael, and the Relationship between Judaism and Islam: A Philological Study of Bereshit 21:21

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Abstract: This research seeks to provide a detailed analysis of the importance of Paran (פָּרָן), a desert mentioned in the Tanakh, the sacred text of Judaism, specifically in the Book of Genesis (Bereshit/ בְּרֵאשִׁית) Article 21 Verse 21, through a Philological Study. Philology is a method used in the study of theology and religion to analyze the linguistic structure and meaning of religious texts. This involves comparing a text with other texts that may have different linguistic characteristics. In this particular research, three different text sources for Bereshit 21: 21 will be examined: the Tanakh in Hebrew, the Targum in Aramaic, and the Samaritan version of the Torah in Judeo-Arabic. This research establishes that Paran now refers to a region denoting the location of the Hijaz or the Arabian plains. Several Turāts studies have revealed a clear correlation between the traditions of Judaism and Islam. This study has created possibilities for additional investigations into the predictions of Ishma'el, the offspring of Abraham, within the traditions of both religions.

Keywords: Genesis 21: 21; Ishma'el; Philology; Paran; Judaism.

1. Introduction

Comparative studies of different religious traditions often reveal new perspectives and deepen our understanding of religious phenomena. In this context, the study of the Prophecy of Ishmael in Judaism offers an interesting opportunity to explore how these two religious traditions relate to each other (Smith, 1982). In particular, this study will focus on a text in the Jewish texts, namely that contained in the Book of Bereshit (Genesis) Chapter 21 Verse 21. The verse that tells about Paran/Pharan/Fārān as the area of origin of the Prophet Ishmael 'alayhissalam is part of a textual debate that in its development projected the arrival of the Prophet Muhammad 'alayhi wa sallam.

The debate over this can be found in a number of theological arguments that have been debated for quite some time by a number of experts such as Brill (2012) and van Gelder-Fontaine (1990). Both scholars agree that the Bereshit verse as it is written is a theological polemic verse that becomes a separate claim for Muslims on the truth of Muhammad's prophethood, which consequently gives rise to a challenge to Judaism (Brill, 2012; Fontaine, 2018). McAuliffe (1996), on the other hand, also argues that these verses find their own space for dialogue and confrontation with Christian and Islamic theology, because the symbols of place stated in the verse have a number of interrelations to the same tradition and are in accordance with what is revealed in Islam (McAuliffe, 1996). In the history of Judaic Theology, this polemic can be traced back to 9 centuries ago in the era of Moses ibn Maimun aka Maimonides (רמב"ם) (d. 1204), a Jewish Philosopher and Theologian in his work Moreh Nevukhim (מורה נבוכים) who offered a number of answers regarding this polemic (Shamir, 1974).

The question is, what is the context and meaning of this verse within Judaic theology, including detailed textual studies based on original Hebrew sources that have not been widely carried out. The aforementioned literature—except for Maimonides—generally focuses more on the apologetic debate between Islam and Judaism without paying particular attention to the meaning and context of the words in the verse. Therefore, a detailed philological reading, in which the depth and comparison of available texts and manuscripts is certainly still necessary in order to explain the debate further (Thomassen, 2011). Consequently, then, tracking the Hebrew, Aramaic, and Judeo-Arabic/Arabic texts

of the above verse is important to do. The Hebrew text will refer to the Torah/Tanakh, which is part of the Torāh Shebikhtāv or the written Torah in Judaism (Maulana, 2023; Maulana, Camila, Putri, Hafitzah, & Sidqi, 2023). The Aramaic text will refer to Targum Jonathan written by Jonathan Ibn Uzzeil; (Etheridge, 1862b) while the text in Judeo-Arabic will refer mainly to the Samaritan Torah and Torah written by Rabbi Saadia Gaon (Zewi, 2015).

2. Research methods

This research will use a number of research methods recognized in religious studies, namely the philological method as the main method, which is also supported by the content analysis method. The philological method will be applied to elaborate on the manuscript of the holy book Bereshīt Article 21 Verse 21 as stated to determine the meaning of the text, while affirming the correct understanding of the text (Thomassen, 1999). Through the Philological method, the text of Bereshīt 21: 21 will be analyzed in depth with a focus on the lexicon, grammatical, syntactic, and historical aspects or the context of the emergence of the verse in relation to the meaning of Paran as well as a number of consequences of the meaning of the verse (John Peile, 1880).

The content analysis method functions to collect, classify, and analyze written data related to the research object to obtain other important data outside the Bereshīt and Devārim texts related to Paran, Bereshīt 21: 21, Ishma'el, and/or other related topics listed in literature sources, whether books, interpretations, or scientific journals (Chad Nelson and Jr Woods Robert H., 2011).

3. Results and Discussion

3.1. Paran in Biblical Tradition

Before we delve into the details of how the text of Bereshīt 21:21 is examined from a philological perspective, it seems urgent for us to first understand the context of Paran in a number of biblical literature. Linguistically, Paran in Hebrew is often called מִדְבַּר פָּאֶרָן, Midbar Pārān. In some versions, Paran is also called Fārān or Pa'ran or Desert of Paran in English. Generally, Paran is interpreted as a place mentioned in the Tanakh that refers to a place where the Israelites spent part of their 40 years of wandering from Egypt; it is said that after leaving the Holy Mount, the Israelites headed to Edom and through the desert, and it is also said that they traveled from Midian to Egypt via Paran (Eckenstein, 1920).

In The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia (1915), Paran comes from the word Pā'ran or El-Paran, which is defined as a limestone plateau that stretches from the southwest, more precisely from the Dead Sea to the Sinai Mountains along the western side of the Arabah. In Biblical tradition, some mention this plateau as a wilderness that provided comfort to Ishmael when his father, Abraham, commanded him to leave his previous home. In fact, it is also mentioned that David also hid in the Paran area. This was when he no longer had protection from Samuel.¹ Although it is true that in the end the Paran region provided much comfort due to its fertility and civilization, history records that initially the Paran region was a barren desert.

Paran, in this context, refers geographically to Wadi Paran which is consistent with Nabatean, as explained by Avner (2015, 2021):

"This population, much like other ethnic groups in the Nabataean sphere, assimilated into the Nabataean culture, adopted Nabataean gods, but mainly adhered to its old gods. This was the very population that preserved the biblical geographical name of the region: Paran." (U. Avner, 2015; 'Uzi Avner, 2021)

¹ Lebih jelasnya lagi, sebenarnya Paran tidak banyak disebutkan secara spesifik didalam Alkitab, tetapi orang-orang terdahulu menyimpulkan bahwa letak paran mengacu pada distrik sebelah barat Arabah. Lihat (*The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*, 1915, p. 2247)

This means that the civilization of Paran, as described by historians, was quite metrologically and advanced. Geographically, Avner's statement above also aligns with what is written in the New Illustrated Biblical Dictionary. There, the modern Wadi Feiran community still maintains the ancient traditions of Paran, passed down from generation to generation (Youngblood, 2014, p. 946). This ancient tradition may even still exist today.

Bartlett (1969) describes the location of Paran in his explanation of the relationship between Seir and Edom. He even listed and compared verses in the Bible that describe the two places.

“Thus in Num. 24: 18 Balaam says:
And Edom shall be a possession, Seir also shall be a possession. . . ,
and in the Song of Deborah (Jud. 5: 4) we read:
Lord, when thou wentest forth out of Seir,
When thou marchedst out of the field of Edom . . . ,
with which we may compare Deut. 33: 2 :
Yahweh came from Sinai,
And beamed forth unto them from Se'ir;
He shone forth from mount Paran,
And came from Meribath-Kadesh

A similar theophany is found in Hab. 3:3:
God came from Teman,
And the Holy One from mount Paran” (Barlett, 1969)

Regarding the historical mention of Paran, it is inextricably linked to the story of Hagar's migration to a barren desert. In Islam, it is said that Hagar was commanded to migrate to a barren desert valley. Abraham took Hagar and two-year-old Ishmael with him from Syria and headed southeast. When he arrived at his destination, he was stunned to find the place God had intended was a barren desert, devoid of water and trees. However, because this was a sign from God, Abraham had no other choice (Husna, Hasbi, Putra, & Akbar, 2022). He simply provided his wife and child with food and drink. Abraham left his wife and child without saying a word. Hagar then asked from a distance, "Did God command you to do something like this?" Abraham simply replied, "Yes." Then Hagar continued, "If so, surely God will not waste fate." (Bukhori, 2019). In Bereshit itself, it is also explained that Hagar and Ishmael made Sarah jealous. This is also a strong reason for Hagar and Ismail to be placed in the barren desert of Paran (Lee, 2023, p. 45).

3.2. Implementation of Philological Study on the Text of Bereshīt 21: 21: Analysis of Paran in Biblical Tradition

Bereshīt 21: 21 Torah/Tanakh (Hebrew) version

As mentioned in the introduction, the implementation of the Philological study of Bereshīt 21: 21 will begin with a reading of the Hebrew version of the Tanakh first, which will then be continued with a reading of the Targum Jonathan in Aramaic, and finally followed by an analysis of the Judeo-Arabic/Arabic text of the Torah. Each reading of the textual version of each version of Bereshīt 21: 21 will be accompanied by a number of comments or interpretations from authoritative Rabbis in Judaism before we will try to compare the readings between texts to find contexts that mutually clarify the meaning in the content of the text, which as suspected, can provide one or two specific directions for the prophecy of Ishmael.

The Torah (תּוֹרָה), is actually a part of the Tanakh (תּנ"ך), the Holy Scriptures of Judaism along with the Nevi'im (נְבִיאִים) and the Ketuvim (כְּתוּבִים) (A. Berlin, Brettler, & Fishbane, 2004). In the Church tradition, the Tanakh is better known as the Septuagint (Septuagint/LXX) and is written in Greek, while in English, it is better known as the Hebrew Bible or Old Testament - a term that invites its own polemics

for the Jewish community - (Stefon, 2011). In practice, the Tanakh itself is often understood or referred to as the 'Torah' following its literal meaning which means 'teaching' or 'written teaching' or Tōrah Sebikhtāv (תּוֹרָה שֶׁבִּכְתָּב) (Birnbbaum, 1979). The Torah is composed of five books, namely the Book of Bereshit (בְּרֵאשִׁית) or Genesis, the Book of Shemot (שְׁמוֹת) or Exodus, the Book of Vayiqra (וַיִּקְרָא) or Leviticus, the Book of Bemidbar (בְּמִדְבָּר) or Numbers, and the Book of Devarim (דְּבָרִים) or Deuteronomy (Maulana, Camila, Putri, Hafitzah, & Sidqi, 2023).

Here first we present the text of Bereshit 21:21 in Hebrew:

וַיֵּשֶׁב בְּמִדְבַּר פָּאָרָן וַתִּקַּח-לּוֹ אִמּוֹ אִשָּׁה מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרָיִם

Vayēseb Bemidbār Fārān Vaṭīqah Lō-Imō Ishāh Meeretz Mitrayīm

It means:

"And he (Ishmael) dwelt in the wilderness of Paran, and his mother took him a wife out of the land of Egypt."

In the explanation of Hezekiah ben Menoah, a French Rabbi in the 13th century in his commentary Chizkuni/Hazzekuni, this verse explains how this verse specifically reveals the process of Ishmael's mother, namely Hagar, who chose a woman (אִשָּׁה) from the land of Egypt (מִצְרָיִם) to be Ishmael's wife. It is explained there that previously, Ishmael had married a woman from Moab, but the woman then, in the opinion of his father Abraham, had a number of defects, including lack of manners so that she was not suitable to be a wife. The wife was then divorced, and Hagar then looked for another woman to be a second wife for Ishmael (Menoah, 2013).

Moab (מוֹאָב) itself, is a region today believed to be located in the south-west-central part of Jordan (Britannica, 2023); just to the east of the Dead Sea (Miller, 1997). Moab, in Biblical tradition, is a region whose inhabitants are descendants of Lot (A. Berlin et al., 2004, bk. Bereshit 19: 37-38) and together with the descendants of Ammon denied the Israelite invasion of Canaan which ended in their exile for 10 generations (A. Berlin et al., 2004, bk. Devārim 23: 4). In the 19th century, Miller (1997) noted a number of geographical attempts to document Moab's historical legitimacy by figures such as Ulrich Jasper Seetzen (1805), Johann Ludwig Burckhardt (1812), Charles Leonard Irby and James Mangles (1818), and Louis Félicien de Saulcy (1851) (Miller, 1997).

This explanation of Rabbi Hezekiah, quotes the opinion of Pirkei de-Rabbi Eliezer (פרקי דרבי אליעזר) which is the Midrash of Agaddah (מִדְרַשׁ הַגָּדָה) which contains explanations of texts and emphasis on Biblical stories (Menoah, 2013). As a daughter of Pharaoh, the King of Egypt, what Hagar did is in accordance with what is written in Midrash Rabbah (מִדְרַשׁ רַבָּה), which explains why Hagar chose Ishmael as her wife from his native Egypt. Midrash Rabbah cites Rabbi Yitzhak's argument in the form of the phrase: "Throw a stick into the air, and it will return to the ground." ('Bereshit Rabbah 53', 2022; Freedman & Maurice Simon, 1939, bk. 53: 15). Freedman & Maurice Simon, 1939, bk. 53: 15) This expression seems to describe that no matter how far Abraham and his descendants travel, they will eventually return to their homeland; in this context, Ishmael, who had married a woman from Moab, still ended up marrying a woman from the same region as his mother.

Bereshit 21: 21 Targum Jonathan version (Aram)

The second text of Bereshit 21:21 that we will review is the text of the Targum Jonathan (יונתן בן עוזיאל) or Targum Pseudo-Jonathan or Targum of Jerusalem compiled by Jonathan ben Uzzel, from whose name the Targum takes its name. (Etheridge, 1862b) This Aramaic Targum is written as follows:

וַיֵּשֶׁב בְּמִדְבַּר פָּאָרָן וַתִּקַּח אִתָּהּ אִשָּׁה וְנָסִיבָהּ לִיהִי אִמּוֹ אִתָּהּ אִשָּׁה וְנָסִיבָהּ לִיהִי אִמּוֹ אִתָּהּ אִשָּׁה

Veyatib Bemidbār defārān vunesyev ittā yat 'ādīshā vetarkāh vunsibat leyhi imeyhi yat Fetimā ittā mear'ā demitzrayīm.

It means:

And he dwelt in the wilderness of Paran, and took Adisha as his wife, but divorced her. And his mother took for him Fatimah as her wife, out of the land of Egypt.

It is interesting to find that texts in the same script and different languages contain almost completely different content. Here, for example, it is very clear that even though they both contain the word Paran (פָּאָרָן) which refers to the desert/desert where Ishmael lived, the Targum Jonathan version of Bereshit 21:21 specifically mentions the names of two of Ishmael's wives, namely 'Adisha (עֲדִישָׁא) and Petima (פֶּטִימָא) (Etheridge, 1862a; Maher, 1992); where in the Tanakh version, these two names are not found. Sefaria, in his explanation citing Jastrow's Dictionary, stipulates that the name 'Adisha is what was later known as Khadijah in Semitic pronunciation (Etheridge, 1862a; Jastrow, 1950); while the version edited by Michael Maher stipulates that 'Adisha is none other than what would later be known terminologically as 'Aisya (Maher, 1992). This consideration can be an interesting study to follow up because the name later gained a very important place in Islamic theology, because the names refer to the names of the wives and also the daughters of the Prophet Muhammad sallallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam.

Bereshit 21: 21 version Samaritan Torah (Judeo-Arabic)

The third text that will be part of the analysis of this study is the text of Bereshit 21: 21 of the Samaritan Torah version which was translated into Arabic in Hebrew or Judeo-Arabic script by Rabbi Saadia Gaon (892-942). The verse reads as follows:

וסכן פי בריה אלחגאז פאֹחַד [י]ת לה אמה אמראה מן בלד מצר (Zewi, 2015)
 وسكن في بيرة الحجاز فأخذت له أمة امرأة من بلد مصر

It means:

And he (Ishmael) lived in the desert of Hijaz and his mother gave him a wife from the land of Egypt.

In this manuscript, as written, it is interesting how Saadia Gaon translated Paran (פָּאָרָן) as Al-Hijaz (אלחגאז) in Judeo-Arabic. It is the word Hijaz that in recent studies refers to the region understood as the Arabian plain where Mecca and Medina are today located. In this context, where philology is methodically applied to compare different types of manuscripts, further clarification of the definition of Paran is found.

If for example the Samaritan Torah Version of Saadia Gaon written in Judeo Arabic affirms the existence of Hijaz as a synonym or another word for Paran; the same argument is also found in the Samaritan Torah translated into Arabic by Haseeb Shehadeh (1944-) with the title al-Tarjamah al-'Arabiyyah li Tawrah al-Sāmirin. In Bereshit 21: 21, Paran/ Faran (Varan) which is written is given the note Al-Hijāz (Hijaz) which also strengthens the order of the meaning of the word (Shehadeh, 1989). This means, at the very least, it is certain that there are two manuscript versions of the Verse/Chapter/Chapter of the same holy book in Arabic and Judeo-Arabic translations which then explains that Paran and Hijaz are two different names to describe two different locations. The following is the depiction of Bereshit 21:21 in three different manuscripts:

Bereshit 21: 21		
Torah	Targum Jonathan	Samaritan Torah
וַיֵּשֶׁב בְּמִדְבַּר פָּאָרָן וַתִּקַּח-לּוֹ אִמּוֹ אִשָּׁה מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם	וַיֵּתִיב בְּמִדְבַּרָא דְּפָאָרָן וַיְסִיב אֶתְתָּא יִתְ עֲדִישָׁא וְתִרְכָּה וַיְסִיבִת לִיה אִמִּיה יִתְ פֶּטִימָא אֶתְתָּא מֵאֶרֶץ דְּמִצְרַיִם	וסכן פי בריה אלחגאז פאֹחַד [י]ת לה אמה אמראה מן בלד מצר

From Philology to Intertextuality in the Study of Judaism-Islam Relations: Exploring Bereshit 21:21

Intertextuality is a method that shows the complex relationships between texts, as well as being a bridge between key concepts in religious studies, especially in the biblical tradition (S. Moyise, 2002); Where it plays a role not only in helping the understanding of scripture but also providing a historical and literary approach (Steve Moyise, 2005). As developed in literary studies, Intertextuality can also explain the relationship between pre-canonical biblical texts and their predecessors.(Carr,

2012) Recently, Intertextuality has been used together or interchangeably with Philology to achieve a more comprehensive understanding of the text, (Munari, 2019) while also showing a number of potential connections between a number of diverse religious and cultural traditions (Johansson, 2017; Kwok, 2019).

In this intertextual review, as a development of the analysis that has been carried out above, it is also interesting to compare Bereshīt 21: 21 as has been studied with other verses internally in the Torah in Bereshīt 10: 30. Let us first look at the text in Hebrew:

וַיְהִי מוֹשְׁבָם מִמֶּשָׁא בְּאַרְצָה סְפָרָה הַר הַמִּקְדָּם

(‘The Contemporary Torah Jewish Publication Society’, 2006, bk. Bereshit 10: 30)

Vayhī Moshavam mimeshā voakhāh sefārāh haqedesh

Which mean:

“And their dwelling place extended from Mesha as far as Sephar, the hill country of the East.”

This text was also translated into Judeo Arabic by Saadia Gaon:

כאן מסכנהם מן מכה אלי אן תגזי אלי אלמדינה אלי אלגבל אלשרקי (Gaon, 2024)

كان مسكنه من مكة إلى أن تجد إلى المدينة إلى الجبل الشرقي

It means:

His residence was in Mecca to Medina to the Eastern Mountains.

While it is also interesting to compare the Samaritan version of the Torah translation from Saadia Gaon as follows:

וכאן מסכנהם מן אעלא באכה ספרה גבל אלקדים (Zewi, 2015, p. 265)

وكان مسكنه من أعلى باكة سفره جبل الشرقي

It means:

And his residence is from Bakkah (Mecca) to the Mountains in the East.

This comparison of verses is of course important, in order to affirm whether the land of Hijaz referred to in the Samaritan version of the Torah written in Arabic and Judeo Arabic is indeed the plains of Mecca (and Medina) as understood today. It turns out, as written by Saadia Gaon, that the words Mecca (מכה) and Medina (מדינה) are clearly written in Judeo Arabic; or elsewhere, it is mentioned with a similar word, namely Bakkah, without losing its substance. This text was then followed by Rabbi David Kimchi Radak (1160-1236) who explained that Mesha (משא) or Mecca written in Bereshīt 10: 30 is the place where the descendants of Ishma'el or Ishma'iliyyin (ישמעאליים) performed the Hajj pilgrimage. (Radak, 2003) Rabbi Saadia Gaon's affirmation which was then followed by Rabbi Radak is authoritative proof that the place where Ishma'el lived, namely Paran/Faran, is none other than the land of Hijaz which is today known as Mecca and Medina.

A number of later historical and geographical works on the Study of Religions also describe the Hijaz in its context as a location similar to Varanor Paran (Fārān), as for example explained by al-Muqaddasi/Al-Maqdisi in his work *Aḥsan al-Taḳāsim fī Ma'rifat al-Aqālīm* (Muqaddisī, 2002), which in the early 19th century was translated and edited by Prof. Basil Collins under the title *The Best Divisions for Knowledge of The Regions* (Muqaddisī, 1897). Less than a century later, al-Shahrastānī (1086-1153) in his epic work *al-Milal wa al-Nihal* also included data on the same place when explaining the position of Judaism among the Religions (al-Shahrastānī, 1975). In explaining this, al-Shahrastani quoted a verse from the Torah, which he wrote as follows:

و قد ورد في التوراة أن الله تعالى جاء من طور سيناء, وظهر بساعير, وعلن بفاران و ساعير جبال بيت المقدس التي كانت مظهر عيسى عليه السلام.
و فاران: جبال مكة التي كانت مظهر المصطفى صلى الله عليه و سلم. (al-Shahrastānī, 1975)

It means:

As mentioned in the Torah, God emerged from Mount Sinai, Seir, and Paran/Faran. Seir is the mountain range in Jerusalem where Jesus (peace be upon him) appeared; and Paran/Faran is the mountain range in Mecca where Muhammad (peace be upon him) ascended.

This reading of al-Shahrastānī, apparently comes from verse 2, chapter 33, of the book of Devārīm or Deuteronomy in the Tanakh as follows:

נִאמֵר יְהוָה מִסִּינַי בָּא וְנִרְחַח מִשְׁעִיר לְמוֹ הוֹפִיעַ מִקֵּר פֶּאֱרוֹ וְאֶתָּה מִרְבֶּכֶת קֹדֶשׁ מִימִינֹ (אשדת) [אש דת] לְמוֹ (The Contemporary Torah Jewish Publication Society', 2006, bk. Devārīm 33: 2)

Vayōmer Adonai misīnāi Bā vezārah mise'ir lāmō hōfī'ā me'har Fārān veātāh merivot qodesh mīmīnō esdāt lāmō

It means:

And He said, YHWH comes from Sinai, shines from Seir, and rises from Mount Paran, and draws near from Ribebboth-Kodesh. Light shines from the hand of the Lord.

In some interpretations of the Torah, the three places mentioned - Sinai, Seir, and Paran - are three places that indicate the descendants of the three sons of Abraham; Sinai refers to the Children of Israel who were the followers of Moses, Seir to the descendants of Esau, and Paran to the descendants of Ishmael. The descendants of Ishmael in this context are none other than Muhammad, who if this opinion is considered, then it is correct to attribute Paran as a location in the land of Hijaz, as has been written in Targum Jonathan as follows:

וְאָמַר יְיָ מִן סִינַי אֶתְגַּלִּי לְמַתָּן אֲוִרֵייתָא לְעַמִּיָּה בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל וְדָנַח זֵיו אִיקָר שְׂכִינְתָּיָהּ מִגְבֻלָּא לְמִיתָנָה לְבָנוֹי דְּעֶשָׂו וְלֹא קִבְּלוּ יָתָהּ הוֹפַע בְּהֶדְרָת אִיקָר מִטּוֹרָא דְּפֶאֱרוֹ לְמִיתָנָה לְבָנוֹי דְּיִשְׁמָעֵאל וְלֹא קִבְּלוּ יָתָהּ הֶדֶר וְאֶתְגַּלִּי בְּקֹדֶשׁ עַל עַמִּיָּה בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל וְעַמִּיָּה רִיבּוֹן מְלָאכִין קְדִישִׁין קְתִיב מִימִינָהּ וְאֲוִרֵייתָא מִגֹּו שְׁלֵהוּבִית אִישְׁתָּא פְּקוּדָא יְהִב לְהוֹן (Etheridge, 2006)

Vaammar yeya min Sinai itgeley lemitan Ūrayyitā le'amīh beit Yisrā'il vudnah zīo īqar shekīnteyh migavolā lemītnāh livenū de'esau velā qabilū yātāh hofa' behadrah īqar mitareyrā defārān lemītnāh livenū deyismā'el velā qavilū yātāh hadar veitgeley viqedūshā 'al 'ameyh yisrāel ve'imey rīvan rīveuan milākīn qadīsīn kitav yemīneyh vēoraytā migō shilhobīt eysātā fiqūdayā yehav lehōn

It means:

And he said: The Lord came down from Sinai to give the law to his people in Beth Israel, and the splendor of his Shekinah glory came forth from Gebal to give it to the children of Esau: but they received it not. He shone forth in majesty and glory from mount Paran, to give it to the children of Ishmael; but they received it not. He returned and manifested himself in holiness to his people in Beth Israel, and with him ten thousand times ten thousand holy angels. He wrote with his own right hand, and gave them his law and his commandments, out of flaming fire.

Jonathan ibn Uzzeil's explanation as stated is also in line with Rabbi Sholomo Yitzchaki's (Rashi) explanation, namely:

שְׁהָלַק שָׁם וּפְתַח לְבָנוֹי יִשְׁמָעֵאל שְׂיִקְבְּלוּהָ וְלֹא רָצוּ (Rosenbaum & Silberman, 1929)
Shehālak shām vufātah yismā'el sheyqavluhā velā rātzū

He emerged from Mount Paran, because He went there and presented Himself to the children of Ishmael so that they would accept Him and they also rejected Him.

This historical record, in other words, is also affirmed in the Turāts tradition, which corresponds to the Jewish tradition represented in Arabic and Judeo-Arabic texts. This affirmation is also interesting when viewed, for example, from the perspective of Shehadeh, a Christian, which, in the context of scholarly genealogy, represents a continuous transmission link across three religions (Campbell, 1984; Dodds, 2009). The discourse interrelation of Paran as a location indicating the residence of Ishma'el, of course, continues in a number of early historical documents in Islam written for example by Ibn Hisham (d. 833) in the *Kitāb al-Tijān fī Mulūk Himyar*, which refers to Wahab Ibn Munabbih (d. 737), describing how Fārān is a hill (Tall) located on the outer side of Mecca (Hishām & Munabbih, 1979).

This argument was then repeated by F. Krenkow (1872-1953) who translated Ibn Hisham's work in *The Two Oldest Books on Arabic Folklore*, (Krenkow, 1928) and then also continued in Firestone's (1952-) historical record in *Journeys in Holy Lands: The Evolution of the Abraham-Ishmael Legends in Islamic Exegesis* (Firestone, 1990). Firestone, who besides citing *Kitāb al-Tijān* also complemented his data with data from *Mu'jam al-Buldān* that Fārān is a Hebrew name adapted into Arabic (Mu'arrabah) which became another name for Mecca and also Hijaz, as he wrote as follows:

فاران... كلمة عبرانية معربة: و هي من أسماء مكة ذكرها في التوراة, قيل هو إسم جبل مكة... و هي جبل حجاز.
(al-Hamawī, 1977)

This tradition of Hebrew sentences being transformed into Arabic, which is also a particular development in Judeo-Arabic, is a symbol of the interrelationship between the two traditions of Judaism and Islam. Historically, it is shown that at least during the Middle Ages, 90 percent of Jews lived in the Islamic Empire, making Arabic a bridge of communication between them. (Goldstein, 2021) The use of Judeo-Arabic dialects in this Jewish tradition also has implications for the development of the theological and intellectual treasures of Judaism, as exemplified by Saadia Gaon, and can also be found in a number of other literature such as Maimonides's *Moreh Nevukhīm* (Maimonides, 2002) or Judah Halevi's *Kuzari* (Halevi, 1905).

What After Paran? Considering the Possibility of the Ishmael Prophecy in the Tanakh

Among the logical consequences of this discussion is Ishmael's exalted position in biblical tradition. Several verses in the Tanakh describe Ishmael, as a servant of God, who is heard, cared for, and protected by God, as seen in *Bereshīt* 16:11-12:

וַיֹּאמֶר לָהּ מֵלֶאכֶד יְהוָה הִנֵּה הָרָה וְיִלְדֶתָ בֵן וְקָרָאתָ שְׁמוֹ יִשְׁמָעֵאל כִּי-שָׁמַע יְהוָה אֶל-עֲנִיָּהּ | וְהָיָה יְהוָה לָהּ אֱלֹהִים יָדוּ בָכָל יוֹד לֵךְ לָהּ וְעַל-פָּנֶיהָ
כָּל-אֲחֵיהֶּיהָ יִשְׁכֹּן ('The Contemporary Torah Jewish Publication Society', 2006, bk. *Bereshīt* 16: 11-12)

Vayōmer lah mal'akh Adonai hināh hārāh veyolat ben veqārāt shemō Ishmā'el kī shāma' Adonai el-'anyeh/ Vehū yihyeh fere ādām yadō bakhōl veyad khol bō ve'al vene khāl ehaū yishkhon.

In means:

"Then the angel of the LORD said to her (Hagar), "You will conceive and bear a son, and you will call his name Ishmael, for the LORD has heard of your oppression. / A male like a wild donkey, so will the child be; his hand will be against everyone and everyone's hand against him, and in his dwelling he will be against all his brothers." ('Kejadian 16 (TB) - Tampilan Pasal - Alkitab SABDA', n.d.)

This translation of the verse, which seems to have a negative connotation, turns out to have a meaning that is not in line with the literal explanation in the Tanakh; First, the meaning of Ishma'el יִשְׁמָעֵאל apparently shows that God has heard Hagar's complaints and prayers, as explained by Rabbi David Kimchi (Radak, 1842a) and Rabbi Moses ben Nahman. (Ramban, 1976) Second,

phrases such as 'Fere Ādām' פֶּרֶא אָדָם which in Indonesian means wild donkey, actually shows, according to Rabbi Hezekiah ben Manoah that Ishma'el is a tough adventurer who explores a distant, foreign land. (Chizkuni, 2013a) As a warrior, Ishma'el is a skilled rider and builds social and business relationships with all his colleagues. Ishmael, in the records of Rabbi Hezekiah bin Manoah, is described as a very wealthy man, who has a very wide network, so that he never loses (Yadō bekhōl/ יָדוֹ בְּכֹל) in the various conflicts he faces. (Chizkuni, 2013b) Rabbi Naftali Zvi Yehuda, related to this, emphasizes that Ishmael is a figure of Abraham's son who is firm and harsh towards his enemies, but gentle towards his friends and those closest to him. (N. Z. Y. Berlin, 2009) Considering this, it is not surprising to understand how Ibn Ezra conveys that Ishmael is a figure of a free man who is not bound by anyone's domination or determination. ('Ibn Ezra on Genesis 16', n.d.) Ishmael and his descendants were then assumed to have a strong mentality as someone who was 'stranded' in the desert of Paran in his will and actions, as explained by Rabbi David Kimchi. (Radak, 1842b)

It is also interesting to see how the reading in this literal-translation tradition differs from that present in the Christian tradition. In historical observation, in general, scholars and orientalist understand and explain the story of Hagar and Ishmael simultaneously by using the Jewish and Christian schools of biblical interpretation through the interpretation of Philo of Alexandria (20 BC-50 AD), Flavius Josephus (37-100 AD) and the traditions of the Rabbis or Midrash - as summarized above -. (Walker, 2018) Second, different interpretations begin at this stage, namely when Abraham received a command from God to circumcise his son Ishmael and all the males in his household, including Abraham (Bereshīt 17:23) while another version tells the story of Hagar and Ishmael who were left behind by Abraham in the desert of Paran (Bereshīt 16:6-15; 21:9-20). Third, Ishmael received a blessing from God because of Abraham's descendants, but he was not the promised child that God intended (Bereshīt 17:18-21; Galatians 4:21-31). Another version tells the story of Ishmael's people (Bereshīt 17:20; 21:13,18; 25:12-16). Fourth, the expulsion of Hagar by Sarah (Bereshīt 21:8-21). Sarah gave birth to Isaac, and Abraham made a banquet for him. Sarah saw Hagar, an Egyptian boy, playing and warned Abraham to send away the slave girl and her son, because the slave's son would not share the inheritance with Isaac. God intervened and addressed Sarah's concerns, sending Hagar and her son to the desert of Beersheba. In the fifth stage, both explain the similarities regarding the descendants of Ishmael and their lives during their stay (Bereshīt 25: 12-18; 1 Divrei Hayamīm 1: 29-31). In the sixth stage, there is a difference in the story, one still tells the descendants of Ishmael while the other version is the death of Ishmael (Bereshīt 25: 17) (Carol Bakhos, 2014). The different theological concepts between Judaism and Christianity, meaning that it does indeed imply a different understanding between the two religions, even though their holy source is the same, namely the Tanakh or Old Testament in the Bible. The phrase 'Wild Ass', in this context, is important not to be understood literally without considering other authoritative sources in Judaism as a comparison to the study of the Biblical text.

The story of Hagar and Ishmael in the Tanakh is an important story in the faith tradition of Israel, because in the Tanakh, Hagar and Ishmael are not portrayed negatively, but rather show God's concern for all people, especially those servants of God who receive unjust treatment from fellow humans. They are faithful to the Abrahamic covenant, which gives blessings to all nations through Abraham's lineage (Bereshīt 17:6 and 22:18) (Walker, 2018). God gives this privilege written in Targum Onkelos 21:20 showing that Memra (מִמְרָא) or the word of God always accompanies and accompanies Ishmael's life (Onkelos, Jonathan b. Uzziel, Pentateuch Aram, 1862). Therefore, through this memra or the word of God, Ishmael's life receives a guarantee of protection and care from God in particular, which indicates that Ishmael is not an ordinary human being but a human being chosen by God Allah (Menachem Ali & Etika Noor, 2022).

Linguistically, there is a phrase in the word of God that proves clearly that he is a human being and a Prophet, namely the key phrase "God is with you". In the Christian tradition, the phrase

in the word of God also indicates that the human being receives God's care and protection in his life. Just as Abraham and Ishmael received prophethood through the word of God which reads:

וַיְהִי אֱלֹהִים אֶת-הַנֶּגֶז וַיֵּשֶׁב בְּמִדְבָּר וַיְהִי רֹבֵה קֳשָׁת

Vayhī Elohim et-Hana'ar vayigdāl vayesev bemidbar vayhī roveh qasāt ('The Contemporary Torah Jewish Publication Society', 2006, bk. Bereshīt 21: 20)

It means:

" And God was with the child, and he grew" (Bereshīt 21:20).

The phrase "the child grew" is derived from a typical Middle Eastern language meaning to grow. Specifically, the word was given to Ishmael alone while Abraham, his father did not receive the phrase. Clearly showing Ishmael's position from the beginning of his conception by Hagar was already under the supervision of God, so this marks a special relationship between God himself and Ishmael. This is a way of identifying the prophethood that can be read through the Aramaic tradition or in the Targum, namely by providing an explanation with the use of the phrases "God is with you" and "the child grew" which means not only describing the statement of God's physical presence accompanying Ishmael's life but also accompanying him spiritually. Ishmael reached the age of 137 years and then gathered with his ancestors who inhabited the area called Havilah to Assyria which is located east of Egypt towards Assyria (Bereshīt 25: 12-18) (Robinson, 2013). Hamilton (2012) explains that the term "gathered with one's ancestors" is not just a physical burial, but rather a metaphysical meaning, namely meeting with one's ancestors in the afterlife (Hamilton, 2012).

4. Conclusion

Paran פָּרָן as stated in Bereshīt 21:21 is a location that, through philological methods, can describe the origins of the Hijaz plain today based on classical Judaic textual sources. In its development, a comparison of content between Judaism and Islamic texts can be built within a multi-perspective scientific discourse—historical and geographical—for example, to then provide a clearer description of the life of Ishmael, son of Abraham. This philological study will then, of course, be able to produce sharper discussion results through Biblical intertextual studies, which in this article, as an example, present Bereshīt 10:30 and Devārīm 2:33.

A possible next question is, for example, if Paran has a certain common thread between the traditions of two different religions, Ishmael, on the other hand, also invites its own theological debate, not only limited to his personal figure, but also as the "grandfather" of Muhammad (peace be upon him). This discussion could then culminate in a meeting and struggle between Judaism and Islam with all their theological tools. The prophecy of Ishmael in Judaism and Islam could perhaps be written about in future studies, in the hope of complementing the studies presented today.

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