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MEANINGS OF THE NON-ARAB NAMES OF THE PROPHETS THROUGH CONTEXTUAL INDICATION

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ABSTRACT

This study explores the meanings of certain non-Arab (foreign) names of prophets mentioned in the Holy Qur'an by returning to the original meanings of these names in their respective languages, and by clarifying the role of Qur'anic contextual indication in weighing between these various meanings. The study also presents scholarly opinions on the occurrence of foreign names in the Qur'an. It highlights that when a foreign name undergoes Arabization, it must be adapted to the norms of the Arabic language, and thus cannot remain entirely in its original form. The study concludes that contextual indication plays the most influential role in preferring between the different interpretations of the non-Arab names of prophets. Sometimes the Qur'anic context confirms the original foreign meaning after Arabization, and at other times it negates it. The research employs inductive and analytical methodologies in examining Qur'anic verses as well as linguistic and exegetical sources to provide a comprehensive understanding that supports the study.

KEYWORDS: Foreign Name, Prophets, Indication, Context, Contextual Indication.

1. INTRODUCTION

God sent prophets as bearers of glad tidings and warners. In the verses of the Wise Book, twenty-five prophets are mentioned by their proper names, while the names of others remain concealed from us. Of those whose names are revealed, four are Arabs: Hūd, Šālīḥ, Shu‘ayb, and Muhammad—peace be upon them. Consequently, the remaining prophets are not of Arab origin, and their names are foreign, having entered the clear Arabic Book of God:

“(It is) an Arabic Qur’an, without any crookedness, so that they may become righteous.” [Az-Zumar 39:28]

Such names are therefore considered *mu‘arrab* (Arabized), similar to other expressions whose origins are said to be non-Arabic. A study of these names becomes necessary, since many of them appear in the Bible in forms that are similar or different from their Qur’anic forms—sometimes due to the reordering of letters such as in “‘Īsā” and “Jesus,” or due to substitution, as in “Ibrahim” and “Ephraim.” This prompted a deeper examination of these names as they appear in the Qur’an and the Bible, assisted by lexicons of Semitic languages and references specializing in Biblical exegesis when needed, along with connecting each foreign name to its meaning within the Qur’anic narrative in which the prophet’s story is mentioned.

1.1. Research Questions

The research aims to answer these questions:

- What is a foreign (non-Arab) name, and how is it Arabized?
- What are the scholarly opinions regarding the existence of foreign names in the Qur’an?
- What are the meanings of the prophets’ names as they appear in the Qur’an?
- Is there a relationship between contextual indication and the meaning of the name?

1.2. Research Objectives

This study seeks to:

- Define the foreign name and clarify the process of Arabization.
- Present scholarly opinions concerning the entrance of foreign names into the Qur’an.
- Identify the meanings of the prophets’ names mentioned in the Qur’an.
- Explain the relationship between Qur’anic contextual indication and the meaning of each prophet’s name.

2. METHODOLOGY

The study addresses the names of five foreign

prophets whose names appear explicitly in the Qur’an, following the chronological order of their missions.

The study adopted the following approaches:

- Inductive method: By tracing the non-Arab prophets’ names in the Qur’an and in the Bible, along with what exegetes have written concerning them and other relevant works.
- Comparative method: By presenting and discussing differing scholarly opinions, particularly from linguists and exegetes.
- Analytical method: Through linguistic and semantic analysis of the Qur’anic verses.

2.1. Previous Study

Hammoud (2008) examined names of prophets, whether Arabic, foreign, or Arabized, as a linguistic study aimed at revealing aspects of *i‘jāz* (inimitability) in the Qur’an. Upon reviewing it, errors in preference (*tarjih*) were found due to the author’s limited exposure to ancient languages—Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek—from their primary sources, and the lack of comparison with Arabic.

Mahmoud’s (2012) study traced Qur’anic verses in which prophets are mentioned consecutively, addressing the chronological order of prophets—whether it agrees with their missions to their respective communities or includes precedence or delay in mention. This topic differs greatly from the objective of the present study, which focuses on weighing between meanings of prophets’ names through contextual indication.

Study Plan This study consists of an introduction, two chapters, and a conclusion.

Its structure is as follows:

Section One: Definition of the Research Terminology.

First Requirement: Definition of the foreign (non-Arabic) name.

Second Requirement: Definition of contextual indication

Section Two: The Occurrence of Foreign Terms in the Holy Qur’an and the Preference between Their Meanings.

First Requirement: Scholars’ views on foreign terms in the Holy Qur’an.

Second Requirement: Preferring between the meanings of the foreign (non-Arabic) names of the Prophets.

Conclusion: The conclusion presents the most important findings and recommendations reached by the study.

Section One: Definition of the Research Terminology Before addressing the main themes of

the study, it is necessary to clarify the meanings of the terms used therein.

First Requirement: Definition of the Foreign (Non-Arabic) Name:

First: The Name in Linguistic Usage: The word *name (ism)* is derived from *sumūw* (elevation), and the initial alif in *ism* is an added letter (Al-Farahidi, 1979 AD). The root letters *sīn*, *mīm*, and *wāw* denote elevation and loftiness, as the name serves as a means of identification and indication of meaning. It is said *samā* (he rose), *yasmū sumūwwan*, meaning “to rise” or “to be elevated.”

A name is that by which its bearer is elevated and by which they are known throughout their lifetime. For this reason, the Prophet encouraged choosing good names for children in Islam, both male and female.

Second: The Name in Terminological Usage: A *name (ism)* is that which denotes a meaning in itself, independently of any association with time.

It is divided into two types:

1. Concrete noun (اسم عين): a noun that denotes a meaning existing independently by itself, such as *Zayd* and *‘Amr*.
2. Abstract noun (اسم معنی): a noun whose meaning does not exist independently by itself, whether its meaning is existential, such as *knowledge*, or privative, such as *ignorance* (Al-Jurjani, 1983 AD).

Third: Definition of the Foreign (Non-Arabic) Name: Al-‘ajamī (Foreign) and al-‘Ajamī (non-Arab):

Al-‘ajamī (الأعجمي) is person whose tongue exhibits *foreignness*—even if he is ethnically Arab. Also, Al-‘ajamī (العجمي) is a person whose lineage is non-Arab—even if he speaks fluent Arabic. The term *‘ujm* also applies to animals because they do not speak. The two prayers *ṣuḥr* and *‘aṣr* are called *al-‘ajmawān* because the recitation in them is not performed aloud (Al-Anbari, 1992).

One of the precise distinctions used by Arab linguists is: al-‘ajamī: one whose speech in Arabic is heavy or unclear, and al-‘ajamī: one whose *origin* is non-Arab. Accordingly, the foreign (non-Arab) name is a word that denotes a meaning by itself, without association with time, which entered the Arabic language from other languages—whether it is a proper noun or an abstract noun.

Second Requirement: Definition of Contextual Indication (Dalālat al-Siyāq)

The term *dalāla* is derived from the root *dāl-lām*, which has two foundational meanings: (i) To clarify or reveal something through a sign as in “I guided (dallaltu) the person to the path,” and: “He indicated

(dalla) something.” A *dalīl* (evidence) is a sign that leads to knowledge. It falls between *dalāla* (indication) and *dilāla* (guidance). (ii) A secondary meaning is disturbance or movement (Al-Razi, 2000 AD).

2.2. Technical Definition Of “Indication”

Indication is a state in which knowledge of one thing necessitates knowledge of another. The way a word conveys meaning, in the terminology of scholars of *uṣūl al-fiqh*, is limited to the following four types: Explicit wording (*‘ibārat al-naṣṣ*), implicit indication (*ishārat al-naṣṣ*), contextual indication (*dalālat al-naṣṣ*), and required implication (*iqṭidā’ al-naṣṣ*). If the ruling is understood from the wording by language, then this is *dalāla*. For example, the prohibition of harming one’s parents is understood from the verse: “Do not say to them *uff*” [Al-Isrā’: 23]. From this wording, one infers the prohibition of hitting them or causing them harm—without the need for further juristic reasoning (Al-Jurjani, 1983).

Meaning of “Context” (siyāq) Linguistically: The word *siyāq* comes from *sawq*, meaning “to drive or lead.” It appears in forms such as: “He led him (*sāqa-hu*),” “He drives (*yasūqu*) him.” The term *sūq* (market) is derived from this, because things are driven or moved to and from it. They say: “She gave birth to three sons on **one sawq**”—meaning, consecutively, one after another. *Al-munsāq* means “the follower, the one that comes close” (Ibn ‘Abbad, 1994).

Technical Definition of Context (siyāq): Context is: The subject matter addressed by the Qur’anic passages, or the general theme presented by a Qur’anic section or verse.—It is indispensable when determining the cause of revelation or when interpreting a verse (Abbas, 2005)

Accordingly, Qur’anic contextual indication refers to: The way some verses clarify others due to their sequence and shared meaning—such that the beginning of the passage points to its end, and its end to its beginning—revealing consistency and harmony in meaning. Thus, a verse cannot be interpreted in isolation, detached from what precedes or follows it.

Consider the hadith reported from ‘Abd al-Raḥmān ibn Sa’īd ibn Wahb al-Hamdānī, who said:

‘Ā’ishah (may Allah be pleased with her) asked the Prophet about the verse: { وَالَّذِينَ يُؤْتُونَ مَا آتَوْا } [Al-Mu’minūn: 60]. (Al-Tirmidhi, 1975).

She said: “Are they the ones who drink wine and steal?”

The Prophet replied: “No, O daughter of al-Ṣiddīq; rather, they are those who fast, pray, and

give charity, yet fear that their deeds may not be accepted."

Then he recited the following verse: {وَأَنَّكَ
إِيسَارُ عُونَ فِي الْخَيْرَاتِ وَهُمْ لَهَا سَابِقُونَ} [Al-Mu'minūn: 61]
(Al-Tirmidhi, 1975: 3175)

The Prophet explained the verse by referring to what follows it, showing that the phrase "those who give what they give" could be interpreted broadly, but the context restricts it clearly to the believers.

One of the most prominent points made by scholars regarding the importance of contextual indication in interpreting the Book of Allah is that of Al-Zarkashi,

who said:

"The guidance provided by contextual indication helps to clarify what is ambiguous, to decisively exclude unintended meanings, to specify general statements, to limit absolute expressions, and to diversify indications. This is among the greatest evidences indicating the speaker's intended meaning. Whoever neglects it errs in judgment and in debate. Consider the words of Allah: {Taste, indeed you are the mighty, the generous} – how does its context indicate that it refers to the lowly, contemptible one?" (Al-Zarkashi, 1957).

Section Two: The Occurrence of Foreign Words in the Qur'an and Weighing Their Meanings

This section addresses scholars' views on foreign words appearing in the Book of Allah: whether they retained their foreign nature or were altered in some way. Then, it examines the meanings of five foreign prophets' names mentioned in the Qur'an, based on the works of exegetes, linguists, and biblical scholars, and weighs their meanings according to Qur'anic contextual indication.

First Requirement: Scholars' Views on Foreign Words in the Qur'an:

Allah revealed the Qur'an to our unlettered Arab Prophet, describing it: "[This is] an Arabic Qur'an, free of crookedness, so that they may fear Allah" [Az-Zumar: 28].

God made it a perpetual miracle for all time:

{Say, 'Even if all mankind and jinn were to gather to produce the like of this Qur'an, they could not produce the like of it, even if some of them were helpers to others.'} [Al-Isra': 88]

Indeed, Quraysh and others failed to produce even a single verse comparable in eloquence, clarity, and wisdom. However, the disbelievers' objections did not cease; they claimed that the Qur'an contains many foreign words, borrowed from Hebrew, Aramaic, Syriac, and other languages.

God asserted that the Prophet did not learn the words (of Quran) from a foreigner:

{And We certainly know that they say, 'He is taught by a human being.' The tongue of him they point to is foreign, while this [Qur'an] is in clear Arabic.} [An-Nahl: 103]

The Prophet cannot learn from a foreigner, Allah said:

{And if We had made it a foreign [non-Arabic] Qur'an, they would have said, 'Why are its verses not explained? A foreign and Arabic [Qur'an]?' Say, 'It is a guidance and a healing for those who believe, and for those who do not believe there is a heaviness in their ears and it is blindness upon them. They are called from a distant place.'} [Fussilat: 44]

Ibn Jarir commented that the word "foreign" (a *'jami*) here is in the form of rhetorical interrogation, which he considers most likely. That is, how could the Qur'an be foreign when the Prophet is Arab? Another view, reported from Sa'id ibn Jubayr, is that "foreign" (a *'jami*) here is indicative rather than interrogative, as the disbelievers sought a foreign source to understand the Qur'an. After this verse, every language was brought forth, as in "stone of baked clay" (*hijarah min sijil*), which was Arabized from Persian (Al-Tabari, n.d.).

Scholars differ regarding the presence of foreign words in the Qur'an. Some scholars deny the existence of foreign words altogether, citing {an Arabic Qur'an}. This was the view of Al-Shafi'i, Ibn Jarir, and others. Others acknowledge their presence, but with explanation and clarification.

A major counterpoint to the first view is the consensus on the foreign origin of prophets' names such as Ibrahim, Isma'il, Ishaq, Musa, and others. Indeed, all prophets' names mentioned in the Qur'an are foreign, except for four: Muhammad, Hud, Salih, and Shu'ayb. Also, the names of angels—like Jibril and Mikail—are foreign. This is documented in Qur'anic sciences references, such as *Al-Itqan* and *Al-Burhan*, or in works on the languages used in the Qur'an, such as *Al-Muḥadḥab fi mā waqa'a fi al-Qur'an min al-mu'arab* by Al-Suyūṭī.

Those who argued that the Qur'an cannot contain foreign words claimed that its Arabic nature would be violated. The counterargument is that the Qur'an's Arabic character is not diminished by some foreign words that appear in it. The majority remains Arabic. Foreign words entered Arabic through contact with other peoples, particularly during travel. Arabs—especially Quraysh—would adopt elegant, meaningful words from other languages if no equivalent existed in Arabic or if multiple words were needed to convey the same meaning. They would incorporate such words into speech and poetry because a single concise word could express a broad meaning, demonstrating eloquence and literary refinement.

Al-Suyūṭī commented on this in *Ma'tarak al-Aqrān*: "Simple words in the Qur'an that are not originally Arabic do not detract from its Arabicness."

The Prophet was sent to all people, and Allah says:

{And We did not send any messenger except in the language of his people} [Ibrahim: 4].

It should be noted that there were non-Arabic tongues among various peoples, and from each language, the most melodious and easiest-to-pronounce words were chosen. An example of this is the word *istabraq* (brocade), which is foreign in origin.

If one argues that non-Arabic words lack eloquence and should therefore not appear in the Book of Allah, the response is that even if the world's most eloquent speakers gathered to replace this word with an Arabic equivalent of equal eloquence, they would fail. This is because Allah, when urging His servants to obedience, encourages them with beauty in food, drink, and clothing. There is no enjoyment in food or drink if the setting or clothing is poor or unpleasant. Among garments, the finest known in the world is silk, whereas garments not made of silk are not considered for their weight or value. Sometimes, a light fabric is considered superior to a heavier one. With silk, the heavier the garment, the more esteemed it is. Therefore, a skilled and eloquent speaker must mention the heavier and more valuable item and not omit it in promises, exhortations, or encouragements.

Similarly, the word *istabraq* could not be replaced without losing its intended meaning. Anything equivalent would require either a single word or multiple words, and no single Arabic word exists for it. Arabs knew silk garments only through contact with Persians, and there was no pre-existing Arabic term for heavy brocade. They Arabized what they heard from non-Arabs and relied on it in place of coining a new term. Using two or more words would disrupt eloquence, as expressing a meaning with one word is more concise and rhetorically powerful than using several. Thus, *istabraq* is considered the most eloquent term in its context, as there is no true substitute. Its eloquence lies in the fact that nothing else exactly conveys the same meaning (Al-Suyuti, 1988)

This process, performed by the Arabs, is called **Arabization**, and the word introduced into Arabic is termed **mu'arab**. Arabization involves adapting a foreign name to Arabic morphological patterns (Al-Hamawi, n.d.), and articulating it according to Arabic phonetic norms (Al-Farabi, 1987), modifying letters and patterns to fit Arabic forms, so it is no longer pronounced exactly as in its original language

(Al-Jawaliqi, 1966). Consequently, these words, when pronounced according to Arabic phonetics, become Arabic in usage despite their foreign origin. When the Qur'an was revealed, such words had already been incorporated into the Arabic tongue (Al-Zarkashi, 1957).

Therefore, foreign names entered the Arabic lexicon and were adapted according to Arabic linguistic logic, particularly proper names. This reconciles the two scholarly views, with their differences being largely lexical rather than substantial.

Second Requirement: Weighing the Meanings of Foreign Prophets' Names

Allah sent messengers as guides—bringing glad tidings and warnings to all people—from the earliest of creation. The first prophet was Adam, in his early progeny, and the last of the prophets is Muhammad.

Allah says:

{Indeed, we have sent you with the truth as a bringer of good tidings and a warner. And there was no community but that a warner had passed among them.} [Fatir: 24]

Several prophets and messengers existed, but the Qur'an explicitly mentions only twenty-five by name. Eighteen prophets are mentioned in Surah Al-An'am:

{And that was Our argument which We gave Abraham against his people. We raise by degrees whom We will. Indeed, your Lord is Wise and Knowing. And We gave him Isaac and Jacob; each [of them] We guided. And Noah We guided before; and among his descendants, David, Solomon, Job, Joseph, Moses, and Aaron. Thus, do We reward the doers of good. And Zechariah, John, Jesus, and Elias; each among the righteous. And Ishmael, Elisha, Jonah, and Lot; and all We preferred over the worlds.} [Al-An'am: 83-86]

All these names are of foreign origin. The remaining seven prophets are mentioned in various places in the Qur'an: Adam, Idris, Hud, Salih, Dhul-Kifl, Shu 'ayb, and Muhammad, peace be upon them all. Among these, Adam, Idris, and Dhul-Kifl have foreign names, while Hud, Salih, Shu 'ayb, and Muhammad have Arabic names.

A study of the scriptures reveals either differences or relative agreements among the prophets' names across the three Abrahamic religions. These differences are mainly linguistic, as most names are foreign—Hebrew, Syriac, or Aramaic. When the Qur'an mentions these names, they were adapted to the Arabic tongue and Arabic morphological patterns, as explained in the previous section. Some modifications occurred during Arabization, but these

changes still relate to the original form of the word, and the Qur'anic context indicates this. This point is demonstrated in underneath:

1. Adam (Peace Be Upon Him)

Adam is the first human created by Allah, into whom He breathed His spirit. He is mentioned in all three Abrahamic scriptures. Exegeses (Tafsir) explain that the name Adam is of Hebrew origin, derived from *adamah*, meaning "from the earth," as he was created from its soil (Al-Zamakhshari, n.d.). In Hebrew, 'التراب' earth is Adam (אָדָם) (Al-Tha'labi, 2015). Al-Qurtubi preferred this interpretation, stating that Adam is derived from *al-adim* and *al-adam*, not from *al-udmah*, which refers to redness or the color red (Al-Qurtubi, n.d.). Al-Zajaj also noted that the name Adam is indeclinable because it conforms to the *a'al* pattern, which is a proper noun (Al-Zajaj, 1988).

In the 'Bible Dictionary', it mentions that "Adam: A Hebrew name meaning human or humankind; linguistically, it can also mean red, from the Hebrew *Adam*. Alternatively, it may have originated in Akkadian or Assyrian (*adamu*), meaning to act or produce" (Post, 1981).

In the 'Dictionary of Biblical Figures', Adam is described as the first creation and the father of humanity. In Hebrew, it is written (אָדָם) and pronounced *Adam*, meaning "man" or "red soil" (Mashriqi, 2000).

In Christianity and Judaism, scholars connected Adam being the first human with the color red. However, the Hebrew word for red is (דָּוֶדָּה) (Koujman, 2003), pronounced *Adom*, not *Adam*, as mentioned in the 'Bible Dictionary'. The roots are different: (אָדָם) for "man" and (דָּוֶדָּה) for "red," so they cannot be combined to define the meaning of Adam's name. The most correct understanding, as mentioned by Islamic exegetes and linguists, is that *Adam* comes from *adim* and *adam*, referring to the earth and the soil from which Adam was created, making him the first human from whom all humanity descended.

The Qur'anic context supports this meaning. The connection between his creation and being made from soil, and the stages of this soil – mud, molded clay, and dry clay – indicate the origin of his name. Allah says:

{And Allah created you from dust, then from a sperm-drop, then made you mates.} [Fatir: 11]

Here, the origin is dust, which then transforms from wet clay (*hamā'*) into molded clay (*salsāl*), as mentioned in:

{And We did certainly create man from clay of altered

black mud.} [Al-Hijr: 26]

And also:

{Indeed, the example of Jesus to Allah is like that of Adam. He created him from dust; then He said to him, "Be," and he was.} [Al- 'Imran: 59]

Thus, the Qur'anic context confirms the original meaning of the name in Hebrew: Adam was made from soil. Upon Arabization, the name *Adam* replaced the Hebrew *Adam* by dropping the final *-a* for ease of pronunciation, without rearranging or altering the letters. Additionally, in Arabic, it reflects *al-admah* (the thin layer covering everything) and carries meanings of blending or mixture (Ibn Manzur, n.d.), consistent with Adam's creation from the thin layer of earth mixed with water to form clay.

Some Biblical scholars suggest that Adam derives from "red," close in meaning to soil. They do not mean the color red per se but rather to describe the red soil from which he was created.

This is supported by a narration of Abu Musa Al-Ash 'ari, who said that the Prophet Muhammad said:

"Allah created Adam from a handful of soil from all over the earth; thus, the children of Adam came in proportion to the earth: some red, some white, some black, and in between; some good, some evil, some plain, some impure (Al-Tirmidhi, 1975: 2955).

This illustrates the miraculous nature of the Qur'an, as it conveys knowledge about the meaning of Adam's name that had been understood differently in previous scriptures, unifying the linguistic variations into the Arabized form presented in the Qur'an.

2- Idris (Peace Be Upon Him)

Prophet Idris is mentioned twice in the Qur'an. The first mention is in Allah's words:

{And mention in the Book, Idris. Indeed, he was a man of truth and a prophet. And We raised him to a high station.} [Maryam: 56-57]

The second mention is: {And Ishmael and Idris and Dhul-Kifl; all were of the patient.} [Al-Anbiya: 85]

Idris is identified with Enoch in the Bible. He is described as the son of Yared, son of Mehalel, son of Kenan, son of Enosh, son of Seth, son of Adam, according to Islamic exegetes (Ibn Kathir, 1998).

In the 'Bible Dictionary', Enoch is a Hebrew name meaning "dedicated" or "initiated." The original Hebrew name is *Hanokh*, transliterated as *Enoch* in Arabic. The Bible states that Enoch "walked with God," meaning he lived in obedience to God. He did not experience death because God took him. The author of the Epistle to the Hebrews interprets this as God transporting him so that he would not see death, as also recorded in the Book of Enoch (Post, 1981).

This story led Islamic exegetes to identify Idris with Enoch, saying that Allah raised him to the heavens so that he would not see death. In Hebrew, the name is written (עֲנוֹךְ) (Eylon, n.d.), and pronounced *Khanuh*, with the final *kaf* pronounced as a “kh” sound.

The ‘Dictionary of Biblical Figures’ notes that Enoch in Hebrew (עֲנוֹךְ) means “dedicated” or “consecrated” and he is counted among the early patriarchs (Mashriqi, 2000). We observe a difference between the Arabic name *Idris* and the biblical names. Ibn Ashur explained that Enoch is Idris according to Arab genealogists, and the Qur’an names him *Idris*, derived from the Arabic root *d-r-s* (to study or learn). His name was *Hermes* among the Greeks, and *Thoth* or *Tehuti* (Maqar, 2007) among the Egyptians. The ancient Greeks also called him *Trismegistus* (“thrice-great”), because he described God with three inherent attributes: existence, wisdom, and life. The Arabs likely shortened the name due to its length, keeping only the beginning with some modification.

Idris was a prophet and the first to build cities, establish foundations of knowledge and education, invent writing, teach arithmetic through astronomy, and is attributed with the origins of alchemy, sciences, and civilization. The Qur’an gives him the name *Idris*, following a Persian pattern suitable for foreign proper names. Therefore, like Iblis and Talut, his name is “restricted from declension,” despite being composed of Arabic letters (Ibn ‘Ashur, 1984), as briefly noted by Al-Zamakhshari (Al-Zamakhshari, n.d.).

The Arabization of *Idris* did not involve a minor alteration of the original Hebrew name *Enoch*; the difference in pronunciation and spelling is clear, as most exegetes and linguists have confirmed (Al-Zabidi, 2001). The Arabization preserved the shared meaning of the name across Arabic, Hebrew, and Greek: study, understanding, and wisdom. It reflects the high status of Idris, said to be the first prophet after Adam, the first to write with the pen, upon whom thirty scrolls were revealed (Ibn al-Athir, 1972).

This clearly indicates his high status, which is further supported by the root (*d-r-s*) from which the name *Idris* is derived in Arabic. That is, the name was Arabized through a complete change in pronunciation while preserving the original meaning found in the Hebrew and Greek forms. This represents another aspect of how Qur’anic context signifies the meanings of the prophets’ names, peace be upon them, and it clarifies the true status of the noble Prophet Idris, peace be upon him.

Thus, the Arabized name conveys his wisdom and knowledge without diminishing the original meaning in Hebrew or Greek. This exemplifies one aspect of the Qur’an’s miraculous nature, revealing information about Idris that aligns with accepted stories in previous scriptures (Genesis 5:18/22), without distortion, fully consistent with the Qur’an and the Sunnah.

3- Nuh (Peace Be Upon Him)

Prophet Nuh is regarded as the second father of humanity after the Great Flood. His name is of non-Arabic origin, though it is declinable because it is a trilateral name with a middle consonant that is silent for ease, balancing its weight (Sibawayh, 1988). It has also been said that in Syriac it means “the silent one.” He was named for his frequent lamentation over himself. Some have said his name was *Abd al-Ghaffar* (Servant of the Forgiving), as he lived among his people for a thousand years except fifty, and lived sixty years after the Flood (Al-Kafawi, n.d.).

In the ‘Bible Dictionary’ and the story of the Flood, Nuh is noted as a Semitic name meaning “rest” or “comfort.” His father named him Nuh, saying: “*This shall bring us relief from our work and toil of our hands, from the cursed ground which the Lord has cursed.*” [Genesis 5:29] (Post, 1981).

In the ‘Dictionary of Biblical Figures’, Nuh in Hebrew (נוח) means “rest” and he is one of the early patriarchs. In Arabic, it is pronounced *Nuh* (Mashriqi, n.d.). Written in Hebrew as (נוח) and pronounced *Nuwah*, the root (נח) comes from the verb “to rest” or “to dwell” (pronounced *Nah*), which also conveys the meaning of Nuh (Koujman, n.d.). Thus, the Hebrew root indicates derivation from “rest” (נח), as supported by Genesis.

In Arabic lexicons, scholars like Al-Zamakhshari, Ibn Manzur, and Al-Zabidi noted that the root *Nuh* also conveys the idea of opposition or meeting, as in wind blowing from opposing directions, implying intensity and strength. By metaphor, it also relates to lamentation or crying, as mourners face one another while weeping (Al-Zamakhshari, 1998).

Exegetes state that Nuh was the second father of humanity after Adam, as Allah says: {And We made his descendants the survivors.} [As-Saffat: 77]. He was the first warner to idolaters and the first whose people were punished for persistent disbelief. Allah destroyed the people of the earth in the Flood following his supplication. Nuh was the longest-living prophet, and his miracles were apparent in himself: he lived a thousand years without losing a tooth, a hair, or strength, and no prophet endured the harm of his people like Nuh did (Al-Baghawi, 1999).

Nuh is thus a non-Arabic name that was Arabized. Its original meaning relates to dwelling or residing, and he was named Nuh due to his frequent lamentation.

Scholars offer five reasons for his lamentation:

- He lamented over himself.
- He lamented the sins of his family and people.
- He lamented while seeking his Lord regarding his children.
- He lamented as he prayed for his people's destruction.
- An incident with a leprous dog prompted him to lament, and Allah guided him.

The name *Nuh* literally refers to "residing" or "dwelling," as people settled under him after Adam, making him their second father (Ibn al-Jawzi, 2001).

Regarding the preferred meaning of the name, the Hebrew interpretation of "rest" is less appropriate because Nuh faced immense trials with his people; the earth itself was filled with their punishment, and he found no true rest, as the Qur'anic narrative confirms. The notion that his name was *Abd al-Ghaffar* lacks supporting evidence. Being a non-Arabic name that was Arabized, the most probable origin is Syriac meaning "dwelling" or "resident," or Hebrew meaning "dwelling," not "rest." Some note a semantic overlap between the two meanings.

This is supported by Allah's words:

{And recite to them the story of Noah, when he said to his people: O my people! If my presence and reminder of Allah's signs is too burdensome for you, then upon Allah I rely.} [Yunus: 71].

{And We sent Noah to his people, and he remained among them a thousand years less fifty. And the Flood took them while they were wrongdoers.} [Al-Ankabut: 14]

His long tenure, dwelling, and mission among his people for nearly a thousand years confirm that the Arabized name preserved the original Syriac and Hebrew meaning of Nuh: dwelling, residing, or enduring, reflecting the extended period he spent calling his people to monotheism, with only minor adjustments in pronunciation during Arabization.

The Arabization of the name *Nuh* (Noah) closely follows the original Hebrew pronunciation (*Nuwah*), thus becoming *Nuh* in Arabic. However, it is not derived from the word *nawh* (lamentation or crying) as some have thought. That interpretation has no basis in Islamic sources or the Qur'anic text. Instead, the notion of "crying" is metaphorical, related to confrontation or facing opposing forces, as noted by linguists. From the name, we derive meanings of strength, confrontation, and endurance, which are clearly reflected in the story of Nuh.

Regarding strength, his patience with his people

lasted nearly a thousand years, as evidenced by the Qur'anic verse:

{And it was revealed to Noah that none of your people will believe except those who have already believed, so do not grieve over what they do.} [Hud: 36]

This demonstrates the extraordinary patience and resilience of Nuh, who did not despair despite their persistent disobedience. His physical strength is also noted: he did not lose a hair, a tooth, nor did his body weaken.

Regarding confrontation, it is reflected in his dealings with the disbelievers of his people: their rejection of monotheism, mockery, and accusations of misguidance, and their impatience for the promised punishment:

{And he constructed the Ark. And whenever an assembly of his people passed by him, they ridiculed him. He said: If you mock us, then indeed we mock you as you mock.} [Hud: 38]

Finally, Allah commanded the Flood, saving Nuh and the believers:

{[It was said:] O Noah, descend in peace from Us and blessings upon you and upon nations among those with you; and [some] nations We will let enjoy [life] for a time, then will touch them with painful punishment.} [Hud: 48]

Thus, only his descendants survived:

{And We made his descendants the remaining ones.} [As-Saffat: 77]

The Qur'anic terms *maqāmi* (my position), *tadhkirī* (my reminder), *falabith* (he remained), *uhbit* (descend), and *al-bāqīn* (the remaining ones) all reflect the meanings of residence, endurance, and strength in confrontation, showing that Nuh's progeny were the only survivors after his long mission among his people.

4- Ibrahim (Peace Be Upon Him)

Allah says: {And mention in the Book, Abraham. Indeed, he was a truthful prophet.} [Maryam: 41]

Ibrahim is the truthful prophet, Khalil Allah (Friend of God), and father of the prophets. His foreign origin is agreed upon. His name appears in the Qur'an as *Ibrahim* (إِبْرَاهِيمَ) with the final *alif* dropped in some instances in the Mushaf (Al-Barakati, 2021). It is mentioned fifteen times in Sūrat al-Baqarah [124] without a *yā'* (إِبْرَاهِيمَ) and elsewhere in the Qur'an with a *yā'* (إِبْرَاهِيمَ). Ibn 'Āmir read it as *Abrāhām* (Ibn Mujahid, 1980), while others read *Abram* or *Ibrahim*. It is recognized as a foreign (non-Arabic) name (Al-Samarqandi, n.d.)

The 'Bible Dictionary' notes two names: *Abram* and *Ibrahim*. *Abram* means "high father" or "honored father," while *Ibrahim* means "father of many" or "father of the multitude." The name change reflects

the covenant with God: initially *Abram*, then *Ibrahim* after the covenant (circumcision), with the promise that his descendants would endure and inherit prophethood (Post, n.d.).

In the 'Dictionary of Biblical Figures', *Abram* is written (אַבְרָם) pronounced *Avram* (with the *v* sound as in English), meaning "high father," and *Ibrahim* is (אַבְרָהִים) pronounced *Avraham*, meaning "father of the great multitude." He is among the early patriarchs, and *Aram* (אַרַם) means "high." (Mashriqi, n.d.).

Linguists note that *Ibrahim* is a Syriac name meaning "merciful father," confirming its non-Arabic origin. Some scholars emphasize that the prohibition of grammatical declension (*naṣb* or *ṣarf*) in *Ibrahim* and similar names demonstrates that Arabization occurred in the Qur'an (Al-Kafawi, n.d.).

An-Nawawi explains:

"*Ibrahim, Ibrahim, and Abrāham, with variations of vowel markings, occur in five linguistic forms. The plural forms are Abārah, Barāhum, Barāhima.*" (Al-Nawawi, 1988)

Al-Zabidi agrees but rejects diminutive or plural forms because the name is foreign and does not conform to Arabic naming conventions. He traces the root to *Barham*, signifying sustained contemplation and steadfastness (Al-Zabidi, n.d.).

Looking at the breakdown of the name *Ibrahim*, we find that "Ab" is written in Hebrew as (אַב) and pronounced *Av*, meaning also "leader," "head of the family," "teacher," "master," "elder," or "chieftain." (Koujman, n.d.) "Rahim" in Hebrew is (רַחֵם), pronounced *Gahim*. Together, these two form the two syllables of the name *Ibrahim* (אַבְרָהִים). From a linguistic perspective, the meaning "merciful father" (*Ab Rahim*) is consistent with both the Hebrew pronunciation and meaning in the name of the Prophet *Ibrahim*.

In Islam, God sent prophets as a mercy to His servants, as reflected in the hadith reported by Abu Huraira: "The children of the believers are in a mountain in Paradise, under the care of Abraham and Sarah, until they are returned to their parents on the Day of Judgment." (Al-Albani, 1988:1023)

It can also be said that *Ibrahim* (אַבְרָהִים) carries the meaning of "head of the household," "leader," or "master" (*ha-adon*)—a meaning clearly reflected in the Qur'an:

{And [mention] when Abraham was tried by his Lord with commands, and he fulfilled them. [Allah] said: Indeed, I will make you an imam for the people.} [Al-Baqarah: 124]

Here, the Qur'an explicitly describes him as an imam—a leader whom people follow, whose

guidance is emulated, and whose practice is observed according to God's command and revelation (Al-Tabari, n.d.).

The verse confirms that he was a community or nation in himself:

{Indeed, Abraham was a leader, devoutly obedient to Allah, inclining toward truth, and he was not of the polytheists.} [An-Nahl: 120]

In linguistic terms, "ummah" refers to blessing, goodness, or guidance, and can be used to describe someone with enduring strength and influence (Al-Tha'labi, n.d.). Abraham's status as an *ummah* (Al-Farahidi, n.d.) signifies that he was a leader and exemplar, whose guidance was distinct from other people. He embraced Islam (submission to God) before anyone else in his community except for his wife Sarah and his nephew Lot (peace be upon them).

Thus, the Qur'anic verses reinforce the Hebrew meaning of *Ibrahim* as leader, head of the household, and guide, making him an *ummah* and an imam. Being described as an *ummah* also indicates that he was a central figure to whom people gathered, emphasizing his role as head of the prophetic family chosen by God through his descendants Ishmael and Isaac (peace be upon them). Allah says: {And indeed, we sent Noah and Abraham and placed in their descendants Prophethood and the Scripture.} [Al-Hadid: 26]

Thus, after Noah—the second father of humanity after Adam—comes the blessed lineage of Abraham, through whom prophecy continued to the final Prophet. This union of the two "fathers" (Noah and Abraham) corresponds with the meaning of the name *Ibrahim* (or *Abram*): "father" or "head of the household," signifying the most honored family in which God established prophecy, giving rise to nations that received and recorded the Torah, Psalms, Gospel, and Qur'an.

Furthermore (Al-Qurtubi, n.d.), in the Qur'an:

{And when Abraham said: My Lord, show me how You give life to the dead. He said: Do you not believe? He said: Yes, but that my heart may be satisfied.} [Al-Baqarah: 260]
Abraham sought certainty through direct understanding, transitioning from faith to the certainty of witnessing (Rida, 1990). God responded:

{Thus, we show Abraham the realm of the heavens and the earth, that he may be among the certain.} [Al-An'am: 75]

Hence, the outcome confirms the Qur'anic description: {Indeed, Abraham was forbearing, deeply devoted, and turning in repentance to Allah.} [Hud: 75]

The context of these verses highlights Abraham's continuous reflection and contemplation of God's signs, aligning with the Arabic root *Barham*, which

connotes sustained observation and deliberation.

After reviewing the Qur'anic verses, we find that the Qur'anic context has preserved the meanings of the Syriac and Hebrew names mentioned earlier—whether from the Bible, including Abram or Abraham, or from Syriac, as interpreters stated, meaning “merciful father,” or from the Arabic root (*barham*). Thus, the Arabization of the name Ibrahim came in the sound of the letters: the letter (V) in *Avram* or *Avraham* (pronounced with a “v” sound) was converted to the letter B (*Ibram*), and the letter H was added. The Arabization did not involve substituting, reordering, or omitting letters.

5. Lūt (Lot) Peace Upon Him

He was Lot, son of Haran, son of Terah (Azar), the nephew of Abraham, the friend of God. At that time, he and Abraham's wife Sarah were the only monotheists on Earth (Ibn Kathir, 1968). The name **Lūt** is written in Hebrew as (לוֹט), meaning **veil, covering, or hidden**⁶⁰ (Mashriqi, n.d.), and pronounced *Lut*.

This meaning also appears in Arabic in the root “laṭ” (لَط), as in:

- laṭṭa: to stick or attach,
- laṭṭa al-ghareem bil-haqq: to defend or uphold truth against falsehood,
- laṭṭa ḥaqqahu: to deny or reject his right,
- al-latt: concealment or cover,
- laṭṭat something: to hide or cover it,
- laṭṭ al-ḥijāb: to lower or draw the veil (Ibn Manzur, n.d.).

This was noted by the author of *Al-Manar* (Rida, n.d.).

Since many Hebrew words are derived from Arabic—and both are Semitic languages—we find this similarity in meaning, pronunciation, and essence between the two languages (Al-Jawaliqi, n.d.). Therefore, the Arabization of the name Lūt preserved both the meaning and the sound from Hebrew. The shared meaning of veil, concealment, or cover aligns with the story of Lot in the Qur'an, repeatedly emphasizing protection and concealment:

And perhaps the story of Prophet Lot (peace be upon him) in the Holy Qur'an points to this meaning repeatedly through contextual indication; among these is the notion of concealment (or protection). Protection of the guests: Lot hid the two men (angels) visiting Sodom from the eyes of his people: {*And the people of the city came rejoicing. He said, 'These are my guests, so do not shame me. And fear Allah and do not disgrace me.'*} [Al-Hijr: 67-72]. Here, the context shows Lot's intention to protect and conceal his guests, though his wife revealed them to the people (Al-

Khazin, n.d.).

- The word “tafḍāḥūn” (expose/disgrace) opposes the concept of concealment.
- Concealment for his daughters' sake: Protecting them and the men from committing immorality, preventing divine punishment.
- “Sakarāt-hum” (their intoxication/obscuration) signifies the veil that clouds reasoning, whether through drunkenness or other deviations.
- The Qur'an also states: {*And Lot said to his people, 'Do you commit the immorality while you see? Do you approach men with desire instead of women? Rather, you are a people behaving ignorantly.'*} [An-Naml: 54-55]

This emphasizes Lot's rejection of his people's immoral acts, highlighting their lack of concealment or restraint. They acted openly, ignoring the natural order, illustrating their obstinacy and deviation. This also supports the Arabic root 'laṭ', meaning denial or rejection, reflecting the people's rejection of truth and obstruction of natural guidance, confirming that they are a people who obscure the right and follow falsehood.

After what has preceded, we find that the Qur'anic context indicates the meaning of the name (Lūt). The Arabization of the name occurred simply by transferring the word as it is from Hebrew—preserving both its letters and its sound—into Arabic, while maintaining the shared meaning between the two languages: covering, concealment, and hiddenness. The story of Lūt is, in essence, a story of the struggle between modesty and natural purity on one side, and exposure, shamelessness, and desire on the other. Their corruption reached the point described by the Almighty: {*But the answer of his people was only that they said, 'Expel the family of Lūt from your city! Indeed, they are people who keep themselves pure.'*} (Al-Naml 27:56)

This means they detested purity and its people, preferred acts of filth, followed them, and called others to them.

What has been mentioned above may support the view held by some linguists (Al-Jawaliqi, n.d) that certain so-called “foreign terms” were not originally foreign before entering Arabic. Rather, they were originally Arabic words, adopted by other Semitic languages long ago, undergoing changes—minor or major—according to the tongues that borrowed them. Later, when the Arabs heard these words again with their altered pronunciations, they assumed them to be originally foreign, when in reality they were not. What remains certain is that the Speech of Allah—falsehood cannot approach it—is miraculous

in its wording, expression, and interpretation, known to those who know and hidden from those who do not.

3. CONCLUSION

The study revealed that *a'jamī* is one whose speech in Arabic is heavy or unclear; *'ajamī* is one whose *origin* is non-Arab. There is no doubt that foreign words occur in the Qur'an, especially in proper names. Contextual indication (*dalālat al-siyāq*) clarifies what is ambiguous, eliminates alternative interpretations, specifies what is general, restricts what is absolute, and reflects the diversity of meaning. It is one of the strongest evidences for determining the speaker's intent.

Arabization occurs by adapting letters and morphological patterns into those of Arabic—or those close to them—so that the words become Arabic in pronunciation even if originally foreign. This is the difference between *'ajamī* and *a'jamī*. Thus, the Qur'an was revealed with names that had already entered the Arabic linguistic system and conformed to its phonetic patterns.

Forms of Arabization include simplifying the foreign word, either by removing a letter (e.g., *Ādam*), changing a letter (e.g., *Avram* → Ibrahim, since Arabic lacks the /v/ sound), changing the entire form while preserving the original meaning (e.g., *Enoch* → *Idrīs*), and or keeping it as it is, as with *Lūṭ*.

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Arabization reveals an aspect of Qur'anic miraculousness through its accurate reference to the historical realities of the prophets, and through its alignment with what remained unaltered in earlier scriptures, without contradicting the Qur'an.

The Qur'anic context may support or outweigh certain meanings of the Arabized names of prophets, even when such meanings differ from those found among the People of the Book—such as the claim that *Nūḥ* comes from “rest”.

Some words regarded as foreign may not originally have been foreign. They may have been Arabic in ancient dialects, entered other Semitic languages through trade or contact over long periods, changed according to those languages, and later returned to Arabic sounding foreign—thus Arabs re-Arabized them.

3.1. Recommendations

The study recommends examining the remaining foreign names of prophets through contextual analysis, and other foreign names in the Qur'an, such as the names of angels, places, and others. The study also recommends strengthening research on relationships among Semitic languages, especially because they are the languages of the sacred scriptures, and clarify how their interconnection contributes to Qur'anic interpretation.

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