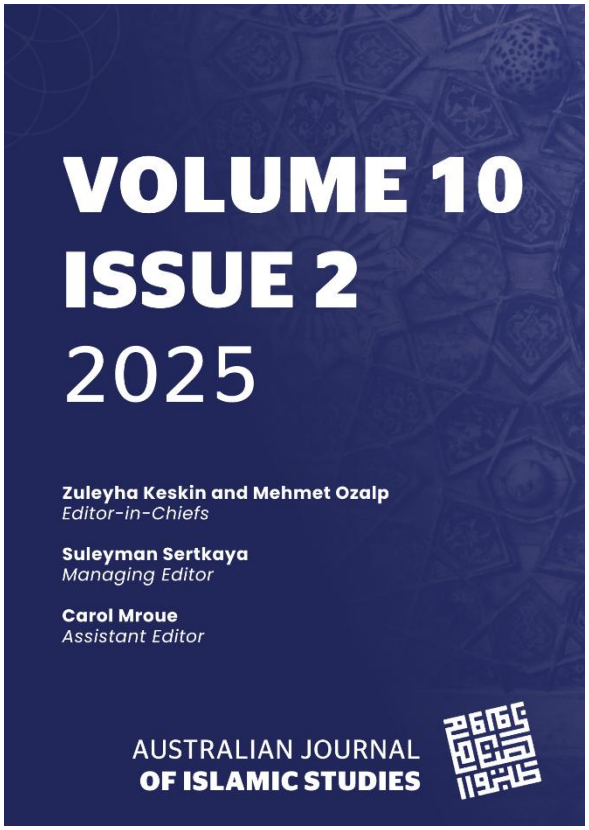

Published online: 5 September 2025

Rewriting Women's History In Islam: Hajar/Hagar as an Example

Hatoon Ajwad AL-FASSI

To cite this article:
AL-FASSI, Hatoon Ajwad. "Rewriting Women's History in Islam: Hajar/Hagar as an Example." *Australian Journal of Islamic Studies* 10, no. 2 (2025): 1–27. https://doi.org/10.55831/ajis.v10i2.769.

REWRITING WOMEN'S HISTORY IN ISLAM: HAJAR/HAGAR AS AN EXAMPLE

Hatoon Ajwad AL-FASSI*

Abstract: This article reflects on the story of Hagar/Hajar, the Egyptian housemaid/slave of Sarah/Sarai, wife/concubine of Abraham/Ibrahim (the father of prophets), who became the mother of a nation and faith. It is aimed at understanding what is beyond the narrative given by the Jewish and Islamic accounts of her life. Then the article re-reads the significance of her representation and symbolism. The questions this article raises are: From where do we get Hajar's voice? What does she mean to women and Islamic culture at large? How did she participate in building Islam's theology and practice as we know them today? How did she affect the way we imagine women's power or submissiveness in Islam? Also, her strengths and weaknesses, leadership and obedience?

The answers vary from one person to another, and one generation to the next, but this article gives Hajar a voice she has been denied. It explores significant aspects of her personality, life, heritage and *Herstory* from as many angles as possible: imagined, symbolic and historical. The rest is left to the reader to add what they find most touching to their heart and soul.

Keywords: *Makkah/Mecca*, *Muslim women*, *Islamic feminism*, *Hajar*, *Sarah/Sarai*, *Abraham/Ibrahim*

INTRODUCTION

Rewriting the history of women in Islam is as important as rewriting women's history in general. It reads and tells the story of humanity through women's lenses, perspectives, experiences and languages alongside that of men's, and digs for the untold stories and unravels the silenced histories. The process of rewriting follows the action of reading text, then rereading from different angles and perspectives, which provides alternative understanding to allow the case for gender equality and justice within an Islamic framework.[1]

* Hatoon Ajwad ALFASSI is an Associate Professor in history, women's history and Middle Eastern studies, and an Honorary Fellow of Arabic and Middle Eastern studies, at the University of Manchester. This article was first presented as a paper at Iqbal Center for Critical Muslim Studies, Leeds University on 28 May 2021 in English, then at the Moroccan Jusour, al-Qarawiyyin University, on 2 July 2022 in Arabic. I would like to thank Dr. Mustapha Sheikh, Leeds Univ., Dr. Nadia al Sharqawi and Youssef Abulkalam for hosting me. My gratitude goes also to Dr. Ziba Mir-Hosseini SOAS, Omaima Abu-Bakr, Cairo University, and Mulki Al Sharmani, Helsinki University, for reading the manuscript and giving me valuable feedback. Finally, my thanks go to the journal's patient reviewers and editors.

1 Mulki Al-Sharmani, *Islamic Feminism: Hermeneutics and Activism* (Bloomsbury Academic, 2024), 10.

Although an outcast figure in Biblical history and marginalised in Islam, Hajar is contradictorily considered by many as "one of the pillars of Islam's consciousness."[2] She rises high in women's and men's imaginations of faith, strength and active submission. Hajar's story will be a good example for this exercise.

Several researchers have approached Hajar's story from the Islamic framework to apply it on different contexts related to gender justice and power relations. Barbara Stowasser, in her book *Women of the Qur'ān*, dedicates a section to the *Women of Abraham* – Sarah and Hagar – who she considers to be the founding matriarchs of different tribes/religions, united by their affiliation to Abraham as wife or concubine, and separated by jealousy and legal and economic barriers.[3] Hibba Abugideiri, draws from Hajar's example on empowering Muslim women today She wrote: "Hagar's significance…is in terms of how her struggles as a woman seeking reform in a patriarchal society constitute a historically potent model of reform for modern Muslim women."[4] Hibba calls on Hajar's qualities of maternal strength, courage, active *taqwa* or God-consciousness, and self-initiation. Asra Nomani uses Hajar/Hagar as a symbol in her autobiography that represents her struggle in America against patriarchy in the Muslim community, naming it *Standing Alone in Mecca*.[5] She invokes the figure of Hajar and identifies with it.[6] In 2006 Amina Wadud, recovers her story and gives it modern applications in the context of slavery, modern black Americans and the struggle of motherhood in her book *Gender Jihad*, dedicating a chapter to Hajar – titled: "A New Hajar Paradigm: Motherhood and Family."[7] In doing so, she encompasses the expectations of the modern nurturing mother, who is simultaneously housekeeper, cook, launderer, educator, valet, driver, ad-hoc medical assistant, provider of protection and a means for living and dignity.[8] Another approach was carried out by Aysha Hidayatullah, in her discussion on relationships of feminist theologians and Muslim feminists, shows how Jewish and Christian feminists were interested in recovering the stories of female figures in early religious history such as Hagar/Hajar, who is looked at as an empowering figure of female struggle and liberation.[9]

Mohja Kahf, on the other hand, presents Hajar in a different format: imagined in comparison with Sarah through her creative *Hagar Poems* that are a form of correspondence between the two women reflecting on their shared life, disagreements, falling out, conciliation and looking forward.[10]

---

2 Barbara F. Stowasser, *Women in the Quran, Traditions, and Interpretation* (Oxford University Press, 1994), 147.
3 Ibid., 43.
4 Hibba Abugideiri, "Hagar: A Historical Model of 'Gender Jihad,'" in *Daughters of Abraham: Feminist Thought in Judaism, Christianity, and Islam*, eds. Yvonne Yazbeck Haddad and John L. Esposito (University Press of Florida, 2001), 84, 86.
5 Asra Q. Nomani, *Standing Alone in Mecca: An American Woman's Struggle for the Soul of Islam* (HarperSanFrancisco, 2005).
6 Aysha A. Hidayatullah, *Feminist Edges of the Qur'an* (Oxford University Press, 2014), 209–79.
7 Amina Wadud, *Inside the Gender Jihad, Women's Reform in Islam* (One World, 2006).
8 Ibid., 150.
9 Hidayatullah, *Feminist Edges of the Qur'an*, 55.
10 Mohja Kahf, *Hagar Poems* (University of Arkansas Press, 2016).

Within Islamic tradition, the figure of Hajar bridges traditionalism and modernity in ways that have not often been discussed in Muslim circles or traditional literature to draw from her story what would empower modern Muslim women and give them the role model that has been lacking for a long time. What is worth noting is that Hajar's story is only vaguely addressed in Islamic sources because of a shortage of information or dispute surrounding her significance in Islam.[11] However, there is no question of her religious legitimacy.[12]

It is important to clarify that this article does not engage with historical figures through conventional historiographical methods. Instead, it focuses on a distinct category of figures whose quasi-historical authenticity and compelling presence drive from the symbolism embedded in sacred texts and oral traditions. These narratives occupy the realm of faith: a domain that resists empirical verification or measurement. Thus, the author does not assert the literal historicity or authenticity of these figures, as was controversially debated by Taha Hussein in the previous century.[13] Rather, the article treats these principal stories and legends at face and moral value, engaging with them as influential elements within Islamic religious tradition. This approach allows for critical examination of their contexts without dismissing spiritual or popular significance. While primarily adopting a literal interpretive stance, the analysis incorporates selective literary enquiry where relevant. By doing so, the article contributes to Islamic feminist scholarship by reclaiming and critically interrogating the symbolic and narrative frameworks through which women's roles and authority have been constructed, challenging dominant patriarchal readings within historical and theological discourse.

On the level of comparison, this article is not comparing religions; the main concern is how Hajar's story, voice and significance are constructed in Islamic tradition. However, consulting Jewish sources is inevitable since a large part of her story reaches us from the Jewish side. The Islamic sources rely heavily on the Biblical sources in recounting the story of Hajar until the Islamic side of the story was constructed around her residence in Makkah. Therefore, comparisons are drawn but not without interrogations of class and privilege that need to be explored in this regard.[14] In addition to the religious texts of the Tanakh (Old Testament), specifically the Torah (the first of the books of the Tanakh), Qur'ān, Midrash, *ḥadīth* collections and Islamic exegeses books, the article refers to the earliest Islamic accounts on the story of Hajar as well as modern studies in many disciplines.

Not far from the application of Islamic feminism, this article is situated within the call of Islamic feminists who are redefining women's subjectivity and position in Islam through producing knowledge, revising text and rereading the inner subtext, resisting patriarchal

11 Reuven Firestone, "Comparative Studies in Bible and Qur'ān: A Fresh Look at Genesis 22 in Light of Sura 37," in *Judaism and Islam: Boundaries, Communication, and Interaction*, eds. Benjamin H. Hary, John L. Hayes and Fred Astren (Brill, 2000), 156–57.

12 Abugideiri, "Hagar," 81.

13 Taha Hussein, *fi al-shiʿr al-jahili* [In the Jahili Poetry] (Matbaʿat dar al-kutub al-masriyyah, 1926), 29, 26.

14 See Wadud's critique of the privileged historical reading of Christianity, Judaism and Islam: Wadud, *Inside the Gender Jihad*, 122.

authoritarianism and gender injustice,[15] in retrieving gender justice and Islamic ethics and norms in the areas of women's history, religious contribution, literature, politics, economy, endowments etc. Therefore, approaching certain subjects within Islamic heritage, history, literature or law is a conscious selection and process of weight and effect in the Islamic imagination and reality of women and men alike. Under these frames of reference this article is advancing the topic of Hajar, the mother of Ismael, and great mother of Prophet Muhammad, "Arabs" and Islam.

Below, a brief comparison between the Biblical and Islamic stories will be given as a pretext for analysing Hajar's symbolism, mainly in Islam.

WHO IS HAJAR?[16]

Hagar, Ajar,[17] Agar[18] or just 'Umm Ismael'/mother of Ismael[19] was believed to have come from Farma/Pelusium,[20] modern Port Said, an important fortress on the west of Sinai at the entrance of Egypt from the east. She has been claimed by many traditions, beliefs, including Egyptian, Arab, Nubian/African, Jewish, polytheism, monotheism and Islam, and ethnicities, Black and Brown.

Her story comes in part from the Jewish tradition of the Tanakh, the later Midrash[21] (Jewish ancient exegeses)[22] and others. In the Islamic part, Hajar's story comes from the Islamic traditions including the *sira* or Prophet's history/Israelite traditions, *ḥadīth*/Prophet's sayings and exegeses.[23] A good deal of the latter is based on writings through Jews who converted to Islam in the seventh century or direct contact with Biblical accounts including the Tanakh and its late exegeses. However, the story of Hajar in Makkah of Arabia is unique to Islamic accounts, which made some conclude that it was developed in the early Islamic centuries to

15 Ziba Mir-Hosseini, "Why do we need 'Islamic Feminism'?" *Al Raida Journal* 44, no. 2 (2020), 88-90; Omaima Abou-Bakr, "Islamic Feminism and the Equivocation of Political Engagement 'Fair is Foul, and Foul is Fair,'" *Multitudes* 60, no. 3 (2015), https://www.multitudes.net/islamic-feminism-and-the-equivocation-of-political-engagement-fair-is-foul-and-foul-is-fair/

16 I will use the Arabic spelling of "Hajar" when I am dealing with her in the Arabic or Islamic context or sources, and "Hagar" when in the Biblical context.

17 Muhammad Ibn Saad, *al-Tabaqat al-Kubra* [The Great Biographies], ed. Ali M. Omar (Maktabbat al-Khanji, 2001), vol. 1, 32; Muhammad Al-Bukhari, *Sahih Al-Bukhari*, tr. Muhammad Muhsin Khan (Darussalam: 1997), tradition no. 2217, vol. 3, 233.

18 Following the Egyptian pronunciation of the g.

19 "Mother of Ismael" in most of the Islamic references to her story.

20 AbdulMalik al-Maafri Ibn Hisham, *Al-Sirah al-Nabawiyyah* [The Prophet's Biography], ed. Mustafa al-Saqqa, Ibrahim al-Abiyari and Abdulhafiz Shalabi (Maktabat Mustafa al-Babi al-Halabi wa'awladuhu, 1955), vol. 1, 6.

21 David Navarro, "Anti-Muslim Portrayal of the Hagar-Ishmael Cycle in Alfonso X's General Estoria," *eHumanista* 51 (2022), 524.

22 Such as the Pirkê de Rabbi Eliezer of the 8th century.

23 The earliest account was found in the Prophet's history or *sira* books by Muhammad ibn Ishaq (d. 151 AH/760 CE) then the tafseer of Muhammad Al-Kisa'i (d. 188 AH/804 CE), and the *ḥadīth* collection of Abdulrazzaq al-Sanʿani (d. 211 AH/826 CE). Muhammad ibn Ishaq, *sirat ibn Ishaq, kitab al-siyar walmaghazi* [Ibn Ishaq's Prophet's Biography], ed. Muhammad Hameedullah (Ma'had al-dirasat wal-'abhath lilta'reeb, matba'at Muhammad al-khames, 1976), 5; Muhammad Al-Kisa'i, *qisas al-'anbiya'* [Stories of the Prophets], ed. Ishaq bin Sa'oul Eizenberg (Brill, 1922), 132–35; Abdulrazzaq al-Sanʿani, *Al-Musannaf* (Markaz al-buhuth wa taqniyat al-ma'lumat, Dar al-Ta'seel, 2015), no. 9324, vol. 4, 349–53.

meet the new Islamic image and to answer the exegesis' questions of the Quranic verses that recount some similar stories to the Tanakh in what is described as harmonisation.[24] The dating of these accounts is also a matter of many studies that agree on dating them to the end of the first century of Islamic *hijra*, i.e. eighth century CE.[25]

Hagar is known to be the Egyptian handmaiden/slave/wife of Abram/Abraham/Ibrahim,[26] the prophet, father of prophets and founder of monotheism who was born in Ur of Mesopotamia then migrated to Palestine. Hagar bore his first son Ismail/Ishmael at the request of Sarai/Sarah, the official wife and cousin of Abraham. Following the tradition of ancient Mesopotamia, Sarah gave Hagar to Abraham to be a wife for procreation after the couple aged without conceiving.[27] Hagar gave birth, but Sarah's jealousy and abuse following that forced Hagar to run away, then return following the advice/order from an angel/God who had prophesied of her giving birth to a son called Ishmael who would become a leader of his people. Ishmael was the firstborn son of Abraham. As a miracle, Sarah, at an old age, gave birth to Isaac, but her jealousy continued. She feared that Hagar's son would become the heir. She asked Abraham to cast them out,[28] breaching the ancient Near Eastern law, which grants the first son property rights,[29] called the rule of "primogeniture." According to the Code of Hammurabi and Nuzi texts, the son of a surrogate wife must not be disinherited and expelled.[30]

After reflection on the whole story, to stress Robert Crotty's finding that "the Abraham tradition in Genesis 12-25 is a complex foundational story justifying the acquisition of the land by 'Abraham's family, an immigrant group that had arrived in the land [of Canaan] and inserted itself into its sacred narrative,"[31] is noteworthy. The fact Abraham and his family were immigrants from Ur/Mesopotamia was kept concealed by the Tanakh narrators. "The original usage of this story was to establish the claim of a migrant population to land and its antecedent history."[32] Such coverup is significant when recounting the narrative, historically, politically and economically. However, the personhood of Abraham/Ibrahim is core to the debate and is related to the concept of the prophet patriarchic or Abrahamic lineage of prophets in relation to Judaism, Christianity or Islam. Ibrahim's relationship to Islam has been a field of long

---

24 Marcel Poorthuis, "Hagar's Wanderings: Between Judaism and Islam," *Der Islam* 90, no. 2 (2013), 230.

25 Harald Motzki, "Abraham, Hagar, and Ishmael at Mecca: A Contribution to the Problem of Dating Muslim Traditions," in *Books and Written Culture of the Islamic World. Studies Presented to Claude Gilliot on the Occasion of his 75th Birthday*, ed. A. Rippin and R. Tottoli (Brill, 2015), 378-79.

26 I will use the spelling "Ibrahim" in the Arabic context and "Abraham" in the Biblical.

27 "Sarah gave her to Abraham, not to another, and to be a wife, not a concubine…He no longer relates to her as a handmaiden but as a lady, and he supports his stance on the laws of the Torah. Sarah, in contrast, is determined to put Hagar in her place and therefore mistreats her." Tamar Kadari, "Hagar: Midrash and Aggadah," *The Shalvi/Hyman Encyclopedia of Jewish Women*, March 20, 2009, https://jwa.org/encyclopedia/article/hagar-midrash-and-aggadah; Gen. Rabbah 45:1, https://www.sefaria.org/Bereshit_Rabbah.45.3?lang=bi.

28 Gen. 16:3–4, 6, 7, 10, 11, 12, 15, 16 AV, https://www.kingjamesbibleonline.org/.

29 John W. Waters, "Who Was Hagar?" in *Stony the Road We Trod: African American Biblical Interpretation*, ed. Cain Hope Felder (Fortress Press, 1991), 199, 201, 205.

30 Firestone, "Comparative Studies in Bible and Qur'an," 180.

31 Robert Crotty, "Hagar/Hajar, Muslim Women, and Islam: Reflections on the Historical and Theological Ramifications of the Story of Ishmael's Mother," in *Women in Islam Reflections on Historical and Contemporary Research*, ed. Terence Lovat (Springer, 2012), 171.

32 Ibid., 181.

discussion as Islam adopted and linked itself to the Ismaili-Abrahamic/Ibrahimic lineage as it became an independent religion.[33]

Returning to the story, Abraham fulfilled Sarah's demand, wrote Hagar a bill of divorce,[34] and sent her away with a sack of water and her son on her back to the wilderness of Beerseb[35] or Paran.[36] The latter has been identified by Islamic sources as the Naqab/Negev or land of Makkah.[37] A late account of the ninth century relates that the expulsion was to Yathrib or Yemen.[38] However, it is not well understood how that fits with the story of building God's shrine, the Kaʿba, or the initiation of pilgrimage or the ritual of *saʿi*, by marching seven times between the hills of Safa and Marwa, which are both in Makkah.

At this point, the Biblical and Islamic accounts differ. In the Torah, Hagar went alone with her son, but Ibrahim accompanies them in the Islamic accounts. Ishmael was 13 at this time in the Biblical sources, but an infant in the Islamic. They arrive in the valley of Makkah together. The Islamic accounts of the history of the Prophet Muhammad's life (*sira*),[39] the Prophet's tradition (*ḥadīth*)[40] and exegeses[41] (*tafseer*) give many narratives as to what happened in correlation with the revelation of the Qur'ānic verses that Ibrahim is said to have read while he was leaving his family in the desert.[42] Placing Hajar and the infant under the sole tree he found, Ibrahim starts on his way back. Hajar runs after him, clinging to his robes and asks to whom they were left in this desert. He tells her it was the order of God.[43] Then he states the famous

---

33 See the debate of Faouzi Bedoui, "Inna hatha lafi al-suhuf al-'ula, Mulahazat hawl al-thakira al-tawheediyyah" ["This is in the Earliest Scriptures," Notes on the Monotheistic Memory], *Revue Ibla, Tunis* 2, no. 206 (2010), 64ff, accessed May 20, 2025, https://www.academia.edu/84022314/.

34 This was the account of the Midrash.

35 Gen. 21:13–14.

36 Gen. 16:3.

37 Yaqut al-Hamawi*, Mu'jam al-Buldan* [Countries Encyclopedia] (Dar Sadir, 1995), vol. 4, 225. The valley of Makkah/Mecca is about 1,222km from al-Khalil/Hebron in Canaan where Ibrahim, Sarah and Hajar lived.

38 J. Kratchkowsky and A. Vasiliev, trans., "Histoire de Yahya-ibn-Sa'id d'Antioche Continuateur de Sa'id -ibn-Bitriq: Part 1" [History of Yahya ibn Sa'id Ibn Bitriq of Antioch, Continuator of Sa'id Ibn Bitriq] in *Patrologia Orientalis* 18 (1924), https://archive.org/details/patrologiaorient18pariuoft/ – The annals cover from the end of 937 to August 1013 CE, providing Arabic text with French translation; J. Kratchkovsky and A. Vasiliev, trans., "Histoire de Yahya-ibn- Sa'id d'Antioche Continuateur de Sa'id -ibn-Bitriq: Part 2" [History of Yahya-ibn-Sa'id of Antioch, Continuator of Sa'id -ibn-Bitriq], in *Patrologia Orientalis* 23 (1932), 22, https://archive.org/details/patrologiaorient23pariuoft.

39 Ibn Ishaq, *kitab al-siyar*, 5; Ibn Hisham, *Al-Sirah*, 5–7; Muhammad bin Abdullah Al-Azraqi, *'akhbar Makkah wa maa jaa'a fiha min al-'aathar* [Makkah's History], ed. Rushdi al-Salhi Melhis (Dar al-Andalus, 1983), vol. 2, 66.

40 Al-San'ani, *Al-Musannaf*, no. 9324, vol. 4, 349–53; al-Bukhari, *Sahih*, nos. 3364, 3365.

41 Al-Kisa'i, *qisas al-'anbiya'*, vol. 1, 143; Muhammad bin Jarir al-Tabari, *jami' al-bayan fi ta'weel al-qur'an* [The Full Collection of Eloquence in the Interpretation of the Qur'ān), ed. Ahmad M. Shaker (Mu'assasat al-Risalah, 2000); Qur'ān 14:35, Tabari's account of Ibn Abbas; al-Qadi Abduljabbar al-Mu'tazili, *Al-Tafseer al-Kabeer aw al-Muheet* (The Great Exegeses or the Ocean), ed. Khidr Nabha (Dar al-Kutub al-'ilmiyyah,, 2009), 250–51; Muhammad bin Omar al-Razi, *Mafateeh al-Ghayb, al-Tafseer al-Kabeer* [Keys of the Unseen, The Grand Exegeses] (Dar 'Ihya' al-Turath al-'Arabi, 1420/2000), 4:135, 19:104; Muhammad bin Ahmad al-Qurtubi, *Al-Jame' li'ahkam al-Qur'an* [The Compilation of Quranic Rulings] (Dar al-Kutub al-Masriyyah, 1964), vol. 9, 368–69; Abu al-Fidaa Islma'il bin Omar Ibn Kathir, *Tafseer al-Qur'an al-'azeem* [The Exegesis of the Great Qur'an], ed. Sami M. al-Salamah (Dar Taibah lilnashr wal-tawzee', 1999), vol. 1, 427–34. Ibn Kathir narrated many versions of Hajar's story.

42 Qur'ān 14:35, 37–41.

43 Al-Kisa'i, *qisas al-'nbiya'*, vol. 1, 143.

prayer for their safety: "My Lord! Make this town secure and keep me and my children away from the worship of idols."[44] Not hearing his prayers, Hajar understands that he left them at the order of/behest of God. At this realisation, she stops following him and says "then He will not abandon us"[45] and returns to her son and destiny. As Ibrahim reaches the Kidaa crease, he reads another prayer before continuing on his way:

> Our Lord! I have settled some of my offspring in a barren valley, near your sacred house, our lord, so that they may establish prayer. So, make the hearts of believing people incline towards them and provide them with fruits, so perhaps they will be thankful.[46]

The Qur'ān gives a vague image of Hajar and refers to her indirectly, but Ibrahim's prayers clearly refer to her and his offspring as he left them in that deserted place.

In the middle of nowhere, Hajar has only a bag of water and some dates or bread. Her responses to the abandonment in the wilderness took different shapes. She is passive and submissive, crying and waiting for death in the Biblical source.[47] However, in the Islamic accounts, she goes up and down the hills looking frantically for water or a sign of life, seven times between what has become known as the Safa and Marwa hills.[48] This practice later became a part of the Islamic rituals of *umra* (the small pilgrimage) and *hajj* (the full pilgrimage) called *saʿi*.[49] Lastly, she hears laughter instead of her son crying, and someone speaks to her and guides her back to Ismael. It is believed the angel/Jibril/Gabriel showed her the water coming from under his and her son's feet.[50] "The angel told Hajar that neither she nor the people of the land (to come later) will fear thirst. It is a spring for watering the guests of God."[51] This account is also recounted in the Torah except for *where* it took place. Hagar had many encounters with the angel/God in the Biblical account. The theophoric experience in the Tanakh was mentioned twice: when she ran while pregnant and when she was cast out with her son. In both instances, she was promised a child who would be a leader of his people and a nation as a progeny. "And the angel of the LORD said unto her, I will multiply thy seed exceedingly, that it shall not be numbered for multitude,"[52] but even more significant in the Biblical story was seeing God and naming Him while still alive.[53] In both stories, water gushed out from under Ismael/Ishmael's feet and life started until the present.[54]

---

44 Qur'ān 14:35.

45 Al-Sanʿani, *Al-Musannaf*, no. 9324, vol. 4, 349–53; al-Tabari, *Jami' al-Bayan*, verse 14:35, 17:21ff.

46 Qur'ān 14:37–41.

47 Gen. 16:1 15–19.

48 The distance between al-Safa and al-Marwa is 450m, and the seven times ritual of *saʿi* is about 3.6km. The number seven has a long tradition of sanctity in ancient West Asia and North Africa life and literature.

49 Ibn Ishaq, *Kitab al-siyar*, 143–44; Al-Sanʿani, *al-Musannaf*, no. 9324; Al-Bukhari, *Sahih*, no. 3364, 3365. See the discussion on different stories narrated in Islamic sources, Motzki, "Abraham," 7–11.

50 Al-Tabari, *jami' al-bayan*, verse 14:35.

51 Ibn Ishaq, *kitab al-siyar*, 5. For more details, see al-Tabari, *jami' al-bayan*, 19:17–27.

52 Gen. 16:10.

53 Gen. 16:13b.

54 Nyasha Junior, *Reimagining Hagar: Blackness and Bible* (Oxford Academic, 2019), 35–36, https://doi.org/10.1093/oso/9780198745327.003.0006; Charlotte Gordon, *The Woman who Named God, Abraham's Dilemma and the Birth of Three Faiths* (Little, Brown and Company, 2009).

According to the Biblical narrative, Hagar settled in Paran then found Ishmael a bride from Egypt.[55] Whereas in the Islamic accounts, the story holds that after she settled in Makkah, which was not named yet, a migrant Arab tribe called Jurhum, passed by while immigrating from Yemen to the north of Arabia. When they saw birds flying in that valley, they were surprised. They had known this part as deserted from their annual south-north caravan trips. When they found a well and humans next to it were living there, they stopped and went to ask permission to use the water. The Islamic history recounts that the tribe settled nearby after they were granted permission from Hajar, the mistress of the place and water;[56] therefore, Ismail also found company and later was assimilated into this tribe by marriage.[57] Hajar's leadership qualities were to answer part of how Jurhum submitted to her conditions. According to some Midrash stories, Abraham is believed to have visited Hagar twice,[58] but three times in the Islamic sources. In the latter, the first two visits were regarding assessing the marriage of Ismael, from the Amaliq then from Jurhum in the Islamic account,[59] and Moab and Egypt in the Biblical. Ibrahim's intervention in his son's choice of wives even from afar signifies the importance of consolidating choosing a fitting wife that ensures the descendant's line, which will encompass Prophet Muhammad in the centuries or millennia to come.[60] The third visit was dedicated to the building of the Kaʿba, the house of God on the foundations established by Adam,[61] and in some accounts, to the sacrifice of his son Ismael, both of which explain the start of the pilgrimage rituals.[62] Hajar died in Makkah and was buried in *hijr Ismael*, which is officially part of the Kaʿba but not in the walled part.[63] *Hijr Ismael* is also where Ismael, as well as his ancestors, was later buried, next to his mother.[64] It is believed this was the home of Hajar.[65] She was buried where she died as was the custom in Arabia until the time of Prophet Muhammad, who was buried in his home where he died. Hajar's tomb place shows that she was alive when Ibrahim and Ismael built/rebuilt the Kaʿba, but it is not clear why the Islamic sources ignored that or created an early death for her whereas she was a young woman who procreated for the aged Ibrahim and Sarah, but the stories indicate they both outlived her.

Sarah's character in the Biblical and Western traditions was impacted by the politicised position of some ancient and modern writers,[66] who used her symbolism as the matriarch of

---

55 Gen. 21:20–21.

56 Al-Tabari, *jami' al-bayan*, 17:21; al-Bukhari, *Sahih*, verse 14:35, no. 3364.

57 Elizabeth Urban, "Hagar and Mariya: Early Islamic Models of Slave Motherhood," in *Concubines and Courtesans: Women and Slavery in Islamic History*, ed. Matthew S. Gordon and Kathryn A. Hain (Oxford University Press, 2017), 228.

58 Carol Bakhos, "Abraham Visits Ishmael: A Revisit," *Journal for the Study of Judaism: In the Persian Hellenistic & Roman Period* 38, 4/5 (2007): 556–61.

59 Ibn Saad, *al-Tabaqat*, vol. 1, 34.

60 Stowasser, *Women in the Quran*, 144.

61 Qur'ān 2: 127. Al-Tabari, *jami' al-bayan*, https://tafsir.app/tabari/2/127.

62 Qur'ān 14:127.

63 Ibn Hisham, *Al-Sirah*, vol. 1, 5.

64 Al-Azraqi, *'Akhbar Makkah*, vol. 2, 66.

65 Abdulrahman Al-Suhaili*, al-Rawdh al-`anif fi sharh al-sirah al-nabawiyyah* [al-rawdh al-'anif in the Prophet's Biography], ed. Majdi al-Shura (Dar al-kutub al-'ilmiyyah, 2023) vol. 2, 7.

66 See, for example, Patricia Crone and Michael Cook, *Hagarism, The Making of the Islamic World* (Cambridge University Press, 1977); Gal. 4:25–26, 30; Charles M. Rix, "Trauma and Narrative Wreckage in the Biblical Story of Hagar," *Cultural and Religious Studies* 3, no. 3 (2015), 171.

freedom and legitimate matriarch in contrast to Hagar's representation of slavery and subordination. She is also used to represent the image of the ancestors of the promised land as opposed to the ancestry of an expelled firstborn from his rights and inheritance in submitting to Sarah's request to cast Hagar and Ishmael out.[67]

Although Hajar's legacy is shrouded/overwhelmed by legend and history, it continues to inspire gender and theology studies from Jews and Muslims, let alone inspiring modern Muslim women of her example and what she represents. "She is considered the Matriarch of Arabs and Islam as the great-grandmother of Prophet Muhammad, but also a Tanakh's Matriarch."[68] "Her expulsion with her son was used as the 'cornerstone' event in the discovery and subsequent establishment of Mecca and the *hajj*."[69] Her descendants are called after her by some, the Hagareans or Hagarenes (in Greek: Agarenoi, and in classical Syriac: Hagráyé or Mhaggráyé).[70] Arabs are named after her son Ismael, the Ismailites/Ishmailites; however, the label was given roughly to any nomads or people coming from the Arabian Peninsula. Although she is ambiguous in the historical record, she is vividly present in the memories or extra-history of both nations,[71] Hebrews and Arabs, from different and opposite angles, the degrading and venerating.

ENVISIONING HAJAR'S LIFE

One can imagine that Hajar would have had peace of mind, now as she was assured by God and His messenger, that she and her son will be protected spiritually. However, the real work started then. Hajar had to build a shelter, home and life. She needed to defend herself and her child from the wildernesses with what it brings of unknown dangers, wild animals or extreme weather. The valley of Makkah is one of the hottest regions in Arabia most of the year. When it rains, the earth sinks under floods running down from the surrounding mountains. For shelter, she most likely searched the mountains for a cave that could be safe. The accounts say she built an *areeshah*, or a shed structure made of tree leaves,[72] by the Zamzam, as the well came to be known. She also needed to find a sustainable provision of food. She must have gone to primitive ways of looking for food. She probably collected what she found on trees, if there were any. Hunting was another option as it is mentioned in the Biblical and Islamic accounts that Ismael was a hunter and "becomes an expert with the bow."[73] While the Biblical sources say Hagar taught Ishmael the use of bows and arrows, the Islamic accounts relate it was Jurhum who taught Ismael. This account tries to strip Hajar from mastering this skill. One would expect Hajar to have known hunting of some kind that their life in the wilderness necessitated. It is also expected that she taught Ismael the art of hunting as he grew up and he helped her out in

67 As will be discussed below.
68 Susan M. Pigott, "Hagar: The M/Other Patriarch," *Review & Expositor* 115, no. 4 (2018), 527.
69 Poorthuis, "Hagar's Wanderings," 221–22.
70 Robert G. Hoyland, *Seeing Islam as Others saw it: A Survey and Evaluation of Christian, Jewish, and Zoroastrian Writings on Early Islam* (Darwin Press, 1997), 123.
71 Abugideiri, "Hagar," 83.
72 Al-Azraqi, *'akhbar Makkah*, vol. 1, 54–56.
73 Junior, *Reimagining Hagar*, 25.

their livelihood. The Nubian accounts claim her hunting by the bow as a signifier of affiliation to their culture and people, such that Hajar must have learned this skill before she was given to Abraham. Moreover, she must have used the art of building fires and cooking whatever she could hunt or collect. "Hagar is not only responsible for their survival but also credited for molding Ishmael into the prophethood and as a leader of a new civilization."[74]

Hajar's relationship with the tribe of Jurhum in the story does not add up unless it took place after she was settled and already had a proper shelter and perhaps an orchard, using the well of Zamzam and the dam that some accounts say she built on it, connecting it through waterways to her cultivated space. It must have been in this context that Jurhum communicated with Hajar and asked her to let them use her water and settle nearby.

She gave them her approval to reside by her, but with no right to the water.[75] What is remarkable about this encounter story is the peaceful settling of Jurhum by her side. They asked for Hajar's permission and accepted her condition with no exercise of power. It is noteworthy to picture a whole tribe of hundreds of strong men with their families asking for the water permission from a single mother with a child living on their own by a well, without forcing themselves on the place or seizing the well for themselves, taking advantage of Hajar's vulnerability. The tribe in this act was following the Arab traditions that forbid the violation of a woman. They also followed the tradition of respecting the ownership of wells even if there was discrepancy in the size and power of the two parties. The respect for Hajar's conditions continued until the marriage of Ismael to one of their daughters, which united the two groups. However, ownership of the well and land continued in the lineage of Ismael until it reached Banu Hashim bin Abdmanaf, Prophet Muhammad's clan of Quraysh.[76]

ANALYSIS

This analysis will follow Hajar's story and different aspects of her life and death. The aim is to bring to the forefront facets that have been normalised, marginalised or left behind.

In Exile

Although Hajar's name must have been Egyptian, some scholars far-fetching associate it with the idea of exile through the Semitic etymology of her name, *hjr* and *hijra*, migrating or "going into exile for the sake of God."[77] Nevertheless, the idea of being in exile exists but not necessarily via her name. Hajar appears in the Islamic heritage as a young woman who suffered from multiple exiles. First, exiled from her home country Egypt as a handmaiden in an abusive house of a prophet in Palestine. Second, she is exiled from Palestine to the deserted land of Makkah, because of a wife's jealousy,[78] alone with a child. Finally, she is in exile

74 Navarro, "Anti-Muslim Portrayal," 525.
75 Al Bukhari, *Sahih*, no. 3364.
76 Al-Azraqi, *'akhbar Makkah*, vol. 2, 109.
77 Riffat Hassan, "Islamic Hagar and her Family," in *Hagar, Sarah, and their Children: Jewish, Christian, and Muslim Perspectives*, ed. Phyllis Trible and Letty M. Russell (John Knox Press, 2006), 155.
78 Stowasser, *Women in the Quran*, 44.

psychologically from the human community and contact, living in the solitude of Makkah for a long time with only the company of her son. One wonders: what did she feel throughout? How self-conscious was she of her status in the past and present? What were her thoughts, memories and awareness of the world surrounding her as she was left in solitude? How much pain did she tolerate, how much oppression and abuse did she witness, and how did she learn to survive and carry the burden of seeing her child on the verge of dying before her eyes, not once, but twice? No one knows. We only try to step in her shoes and follow her steps in the holy ritual of *saʿi* during *umra* and *hajj*. Although it is believed that her profound faith in God rewarded her through Divine intervention and the burst of the Zamzam well in that arid place, she was still left to build her life alone for years until her son was able to help her in her daily quests for living, surviving and providing. The advent of the Jurhum tribe and their settling by them was reassuring and challenging at the same time. It helped her to build a social life for her son, but she was on alert of losing her ownership of the water and land as her son lost his inheritance to his half-younger brother Isaac in Palestine. Luckily, the Jurhum tribe respected the water covenant among the Arabs, kept their distance and honoured Hajar's condition that stipulated the water was hers.

Survivor/Abused

The symbolism of Hajar's hagiography in Islamic tradition and memory is multi-faceted. In one of these images, she represents the female survivor in her highest manifestation. However, she was also abused, oppressed, apprehended, dehumanised and abandoned in silence. Moreover, she encompasses "the story of an abused foreign woman cast out into an inhospitable wilderness along with her son."[79] Her house was even called by Phyllis Trible the House of Terror.[80] Phyllis gives inner feeling as to how this house might have been for Hagar:

> kept in her place, the slave woman is the innocent victim of use, abuse and rejection…As a symbol of the oppressed, Hagar becomes many things to many people…She is the faithful maid exploited, the black woman used by the male and abused by the female of the ruling class, the surrogate mother…the other woman, the runaway youth, the religious fleeing from affliction, the pregnant young woman alone, the expelled wife, the divorced mother with child…the homeless woman…and the self-effacing female whose own identity shrinks in service to others.[81]

This is in addition to exposing her to the superiority, biased and discriminatory treatment that Biblical narrators and critics treated her legacy throughout history.[82]

> Hagar's story depicts oppression in three familiar forms: nationality, class, and sex…more disturbing still is the collision between the reported divine direction for Abraham to side

79 See the study of Rix, "Trauma," 167.
80 Phyllis Trible, *Texts of Terror (40th Anniversary Edition): Literary-Feminist Readings of Biblical Narratives* (Fortress Press, 2022), 35; Philip Y. Yoo, "Hagar the Egyptian: Wife, Handmaid, and Concubine," *The Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 78 (2016), 216; Rix, "Trauma," 168.
81 Trible, *Texts of Terror*, 28.
82 Waters, "Who was Hagar," 203.

with Sarah's abusive treatment and the laws of benevolence towards the stranger, the widow, and the orphan recorded in multiple places in the legal sections of the Torah.[83]

Such portrayal does not correspond to nor suit the image of a prophet or prophet's household. In an inquisitive approach, one asks: if this was happening in the household of a prophet, what was the situation in other houses and families of that time, let alone the many negative references given to Abraham that need further evaluation? These questions echo throughout history, ethics, social justice and religious discourse. It is important to mention that some Muslim scholars have frowned on some of this behavior and claim it should not be followed. Their interpretation is that, for example, Ibrahim's decision to leave Hajar in the desert alone was ordered by God and should not be the norm.[84] One way Muslims solve this moral issue is by considering Biblical Abraham to be different from the Qur'ānic Ibrahim.[85]

Hajar's survival was tremendous and miraculous. By that, we mean the survival of her memory with whatever fragments reached us.

The Irony of Fate and Faith

Hajar symbolises pure faith and strength when submitting to the Divine will and believing fully in a fair outcome: "a mother and wife who trusts in Allah."[86] This faith interweaves with patience, strong will and the motivation to build a life and support her child out of nothing. "She is a victor who, with the help of God and her own initiative, can transform a wilderness into the cradle of a new world dedicated to the fulfillment of God's purpose on earth,"[87] which is the human agency, *khilafah*. This was the faith that she taught Ismael. Monotheism was her adherence, according to the Islamic narrative, as opposed to the Biblical accounts that denigrated her faith and accused her of falling into pagan worship.[88] Did she revert to her old deities or truly adopt Abraham's belief in one God? We can only speculate. She was the participant in Abraham's mission to re-establish true monotheism on earth as well as the ancestress of Abraham's heir, Prophet Muhammad, who restored Abraham's religion.[89]

There has been heavy debate among scholars regarding Abraham or Ibrahim's monotheism and to what extent Muslims have benefitted from the *hanifiyah* or religion of monotheism known in the Arabian memory before Islam.[90]

By reflecting on how she was rewarded, saved and founded a city and nation, the revenge of history on her behalf came strangely. According to Biblical accounts, the offspring of Abraham and Sarah, the children of Isaac and Jacob, were enslaved by the Egyptians for 215

---

83 Rix, "Trauma," 174.
84 Al-Qadi, *al-Tafseer al-Kabeer*, 250–51. Al-Razi quotes and agrees with al-Qadi on this issue: Al-Razi, *Mafateeh al-Ghayb*, 19:104. Also see al-Qurtubi, *Al-Jame' li'ahkam al-Qur'an*, vol. 9, 368.
85 Bedoui, "Inna hatha lafi al-suhuf al-'ula," 67.
86 Junior, *Reimagining Hagar*, 34.
87 Hassan, "Islamic Hagar," 155.
88 Gerald Friedlander, ed., *Pirkê de Rabbi Eliezer: The Chapters of Rabbi Eleizer the Great* (The Bloch Publishing Company, 1916), 217–18.
89 Stowasser, *Women of the Quran*, 47.
90 Bedoui, "Inna hatha lafi al-suhuf al-'ula," 65–69.

years at least. After being rescued by God and sent Moses as their prophet and saviour, they wandered, similarly to Hagar and Ishmael, in the wilderness of Sinai for 40 years until they were allowed into Palestine/Canaan.[91]

Here, God promises Abram innumerable descendants, countless as the stars. Ironically, what Sarah attempted to do for herself through Hagar (ensure her progeny) materialises for Hagar. "Hagar is the only woman in the Hebrew Bible to receive such a promise of descendants."[92]

Fighter, Sa'i

Hajar also represents the woman who does not give up or despair. This section follows the idea of the woman fighter whose steps were unexpected and unplanned but were the result of narrative that probably surprised the patriarchal stand and forced it to face it by negligence and redirection of interpretation.

Her example was sought in Biblical and Islamic theologies. In the Bible, "she is the only person who named and saw God."[93] In Islam, she is the one who walked the walk and ran the run. A ritual was built on the act of movement between two points (the Safa and Marwa),[94] which represents the motherhood experience of her running towards her child vis-à-vis the circumambulation of the Kaʿba, which represents the patriarchal experience.[95] Both symbolisms are emulated by the male and female pilgrims who perform *hajj* every year. Hajar was honoured by making her experience part of the sacred rituals of *umra* and *hajj*. Hajar's active response in the face of losing life and hope became part of Muslim rituals of one of the main five pillars of Islam.[96] Her response to abandonment became the amble of how people, believers, should follow her footsteps and pursue their lives, works and dreams. Maintaining active *taqwa* (faith excellence) through activism and self-initiation not simply by passive faith in God.[97]

The tradition of Hajar's *sa'i* became all Muslims' steps, walk and run since the first *umra* by Prophet Muhammad,[98] until today. Hajar was honoured through time by making her steps eternally sacred. Billions of believing Muslims, billions of times and yet more until Doomsday have performed and will perform *sa'i*.[99] In the imagination of Muslims, her marching act carries symbols of determination, patience, strength, faith, persistence and active motherhood. In addition, Muslim scholars have pointed out the idea of test and prayer and the reward of

---

91 Flavius Josephus, *Jewish Antiquities*, trans. R. Marcus (Harvard University Press, 1943), vol. II 15:2, vol. III 15:1–3, https://penelope.uchicago.edu/josephus/ant-3.html.

92 Philip R. Drey, "The Role of Hagar in Genesis 16," *Andrews University Seminary Studies* 40, no. 2 (2002), 193.

93 Gordon, *The Woman who Named God*, 14.

94 Distance of 450m.

95 Husn Abboud, *al-Sayyidah Mariam fi al-Quran: Qiraʾa ʾAdabiyyah* [Holy Mariam in the Qur'ān: A Literary Reading] (Dar al-Saqi, 2012), 191.

96 Al-Bukhari, *Sahih*, no. 3364.

97 Abugideiri, "Hagar," 86.

98 The following year of the Hudaibiyah truce in 7 AH/629 CE.

99 Wadud, *Inside the Gender Jihad*, 143; Hassan, "Islamic Hagar," 154–55.

patience by God on earth and heaven. This is how they preached Hajar's story.[100] All in all, she became a role model, particularly to Muslim women, throughout time and generations.[101]

In brief, her history is intertwined with God's shrine, the *Kaʿba*, raised, purified, prayed into[102] and buried under.[103] The discussion of faith and belief brings the story of women and religion to the forefront of leadership and equality before the Divine. The significance of following the steps of Hajar in *saʾi*, though clear, was not so in the eyes of male historians or jurists who were uncomfortable with this act that overtook the leadership of Ibrahim or even Ismael. Following the steps of a woman was not common practice for the army of male historians and jurists to imagine the event theoretically, let alone physically. The attempt to minimise the importance of this act was found across the board.

The reluctance comes in frowning upon the action of running or trotting, which is considered an act for men only. For some reason, jurists have inserted restrictions on women when performing the act of Hajar's steps. The concept of women running, for them, is related to a lack of modesty and decency. This concept is linked to the idea of sexualising women and their bodies in action, running, what it will reveal and how it will be exposed to the male gaze. The justification is found in jurist books and fatwas of many sects. One example is found on the site of the house of Egyptian *iftaa*,[104] where they answer the question of why women should not run in *saʾi*. The answer is enveloped in sexual justification of protecting women's modesty or *sitr*. However, running was suggested in 7 AH/629 CE during the Prophet's first *umra* in Makkah after the truce of Hudaibiyah, called also the *umra* of *qada'*, when the Prophet ordered his men to show strength by uncovering their shoulders and run lightly of what is called *raml* where they can, around the Kaʿba and between the Safa and Marwa.[105] The story about running at Makkah's *umra* sounds doubtful. Why would light running show strength? For men but not women? Limiting the act to men only does not sound like the Prophet. Had there been women among the worshippers, would he have minded them running? Nobody knows, but the restriction comes from later sources that disconnect the space of *saʿi* from its original story and purpose, which emerged from the running/marching of Hajar, the mother, grandmother and woman, in search of water and life.

---

100 Al-Razi, *Mafateeh al-Ghayb*, vol. 2, 158, vol. 4, 136.

101 Anne Hege Grung, "Hagar as a Bad Mother, Hagar as an Icon of Faith: The Hagar Narratives from the Islamic and the Christian Traditions Discussed Among Muslim and Christian Women in Norway," in *Volume in the Arms of Biblical Women*, ed. John T. Greene, Mishael M. Caspi et al. (Gorgias Press, 2013), 75.

102 Stowasser, *Women in the Quran*, 44.

103 *Hijr Ismael.*

104 Shawqi Allam, ""al-hikmah min 'adam mashruʿiyyat 'israʿ al-mar'ah fi al-mashi 'athnaa al-tawaf" [The Wisdom behind the Impermissibility of a Woman Walking Quickly during Tawaf], *Fatawa dar al-'iftaa'*, fatwa no. 7656, April 16, 2023, https://www.dar-alifta.org/ar/fatwa/details/18754/%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AD%D9%83%D9%85%D8%A9-%D9%85%D9%86-%D8%B9%D8%AF%D9%85-%D9%85%D8%B4%D8%B1%D9%88%D8%B9%D9%8A%D8%A9-%D8%A5%D8%B3%D8%B1%D8%A7%D8%B9-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D8%B1%D8%A3%D8%A9-%D9%81%D9%8A-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D8%B4%D9%8A-%D8%A3%D8%AB%D9%86%D8%A7%D8%A1-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B7%D9%88%D8%A7%D9%81.

105 Bukhari, *Sahih*, *ḥadīth* no. 4257, 4256.

In another fatwa, the tradition of the running/*al-raml* is given its ruling. For men, it is *sunna*, i.e. allowed, but for women, it is not or *ghayr jaa'iz.* Although the *ḥadīth* recites the story of Hajar running/*ramling* between Safa and Marwa hills, which explains that she was running while looking for water for her son Ismael and that is why people perform the *saʿi* today.[106] The account is neutral.[107] There is nothing allowed or not allowed. As expected, the prohibitions belong to the later jurists who interfered in the story and tried to 'correct' the practice by denying women to follow the steps of another womathe great mother.

Prophetess

This section of the analysis addresses one of Hajar's spiritual manifestations. There is debate in Islamic jurisprudence about whether she was a prophetess. For Hajar's status to reach this level of discussion, it deserves understanding of its position and justification.

In her endurance of hardship, passing hard trials, abuse and abandonment, let alone nearly losing her son twice, as a child and adult, Hajar falls into the same roles and trials as prophets fall into, suffer from and withstand. This hardship is one of the markers that incites debate among some scholars in Judaism about whether she was a matriarch in the same way as the patriarchs of Israel are observed.[108] Her association with a theophany is one of the unusual signs. She was spoken to by angels many times and received the promise of land and descendants.[109] This makes her a recipient of a theophany that was exclusive to male patriarch prophets. What's more, she was the first non-Israelite, woman or maidservant, to receive a Divine promise.[110]

It is believed the original tradition of theophany encounters the Divine directly, mainly in the earlier source of the Tanakh, E(lohim).[111] However, a verse, Gen. 16:13b, states: "Have I really seen God and remained alive after seeing Him?" She calls God "El Roi," "the God who sees me."[112] "Hagar is the only person who named and saw God. He spoke to her and provided life-sustaining food and water for her and her son."[113] In an intertextual study of the OT, Scott Nikaido finds that "Hagar is portrayed in a manner that compels us to see her as a matriarchal figure…like Abraham, she receives God's promise of a son but must undergo the terrifying

---

106 Ali bin Khlaf ibn Battal, *Sharh Sahih al-Bukhari*, ed. Yaser bin Ibrahim (Maktabt al-Rushd, 2003), vol. 4, 327, https://shamela.ws/book/10486/1940#p1.

107 Lajnat al-fatwa bi al-shabakah al-'Islamiyyah. "titleal-hikmah min 'adam mashruʿiyyat al-raml lilmar'ah fi al-saʿi" [The Wisdom behind the Impermissibility of *Raml*/Light Running for Women in the Saʿi], *Fatawa al-Shabakah al-'Islamiyyah*, Islam Web, November 18, 2009, fatwa no. 113835, https://shamela.ws/book/27107/49149.

108 Waters, "Who was Hagar," 199; Scott Nikaido, "Hagar and Ishmael as Literary Figures: An Intertextual Study," *Vetus Testamentum* 51, no. 2 (2001), 240.

109 Gen. 16:7–11, 21:17–18.

110 Waters, "Who was Hagar," 199.

111 These terms are used by Biblical studies to mark the hypothetical four writers of the Bible that date to the ninth century BCE. They were divided to J (Yahwist), E (Elohist), D (Deuteronomist) and P (the Priestly source). Jody Ondich, "Sources for the Torah," in *Reading the Bible as Literature: A Journey* (PressBooks, 2022), https://minnstate.pressbooks.pub/bible/chapter/j-e-p-and-d/.

112 Waters, "Who was Hagar,", 198–99.

113 Pigott, "Hagar," 517–20, 522–24.

ordeal of almost losing the child."[114] Susan Piggot draws a similar comparison and discovers that Hagar mirrors Abraham, which elevates her to the rank of matriarch.[115] This comparison equates Hagar to Abraham's prophethood. A startling comparison, but logical in its context.

In Islam, Hajar is also the centre of a similar debate that suggests she was a prophetess similar to a few women in Islam and the Qur'ān, including Eve, Sarah, the mother of Moses, Assia wife of the Pharaoh of Moses and the Virgin Mary,[116] with whom she is most compared.[117] Scholars such as Ibn Hajar al-Asqalani, Ibn Hazm and al-Ashari lead this debate in the 15th century.[118] According to the markers of prophets, she meets many.[119] First, she was spoken to by the angel Gabriel near the well. Second, she had a miracle, together with her son Ismael, with the well Zamzam that burst out from the ground. Third, she received the oracle, *al-wahi*, that this place will never dry and no one will be thirsty there.[120] Fourth, she withstood a prophethood level of hardship: "Hagar had to endure the distress and danger that have typically marked the careers of God's chosen historical agents. Like God's prophets."[121] That includes her abuse in the house of Abraham, her fleeing, expulsion to the desert, abandonment in the middle of nowhere, then the attempt to sacrifice her son under God's order. Last, she was a woman of great faith. She was the carrier of Ibrahim's monotheistic faith in Arabia. She transmitted the message of one God to Makkah and raised her son to follow it. It was no wonder that when Ibrahim came to meet his son many years later, he found him obedient to God. As a true believer, he succumbed to the order of being sacrificed.[122]

Muslim believers followed the steps of Ibrahim and Ismail in their trials to obey God's commands against the whispering of Satan until Ismail was redeemed, and the ram was offered in his place. The sacrifice story became the core of the rituals of pilgrimage afterward in Islam and even before Islam. That was practiced hand in hand with the *saʿi* ritual of Hajar.

Although all Muslim scholars view Hajar as a great saint, some place her in the position of prophethood, which contrasts with the mainstream theological view that there were no female prophets. She could righteously be a prophet who was denied her status based on racial, gender or ethnic concerns by the Biblical scholars who were reluctant to admit her uniqueness. Similarly, Islamic scholars did not see in her prophetic markers as a sign to bring her story to the forefront, rather than keeping her behind Ibrahim and Ismael all the time. The Genesis verse of her speaking to the Divine and seeing Him does not reflect in the Islamic accounts. In addition, they neglected that Ibrahim was absent most of her life and his son's life in Makkah,

114 Nikaido, "Hagar and Ishmael," 240.
115 Pigott, "Hagar," 524–27.
116 Ahmad ibn Hajar al-Asqalani, *Fath al-bari fi sharh sahih al-Bukhari* [Fath al-Bari in the Explanation of Sahih al-Bukhari], ed. Muhammad Fuad AbdelBaqi, Muhibbaddin al-Khatib and AbdulAziz Bin Baz (Dar al-Ma'rifah, 1959), vol. 6, 447–48, 473; Muhammad bin Ahmad al-Safarini al-Hanbali, *Lawami' al-'Anwar al-Bahiyyah* [The Sparkles of the Beautiful Lights] (Mu'assasat al-khafeqayn, 1982), vol. 2, 266.
117 Similarities like the trials of hardship they had to surpass, the food and water that were provided by God to them, being spoken to by the *wahi*, and most of all, their (single) motherhood.
118 Ibn Hajar, *Fath al-bari*, vol. 6, 171.
119 Abboud, *al-Sayyidah Mariam*, 240–41.
120 Al-Bukhari, *Sahih*, *ḥadīth* no. 3364.
121 Stowasser, *Women in the Quran*, 144.
122 The Biblical story narrates the sacrifice to be Isaac as well as some Islamic ones.

which received limited discussion in Islamic sources. The fear of admitting to her peerage of Abraham among Biblical scholars or the possibility of her prophethood according to the markers of prophets in the Islamic understanding reflects many concerns for both groups. Among the first, knowledge of the significance if they were to admit Hagar's real status in the Bible and the significance of her theophany, then they would have had to admit to a series of historical corrections that were far beyond and became complex to confront or acknowledge. As for the second group, such an admission would take them into the arena of raising women to the rank of prophets, which conflicts with the patriarchal psyche that governs most Islamic jurist discourse. A lot was at stake in both camps in terms of superiority over Arabs and Muslims on the one hand and of patriarchal dominance over femaleness on the other.

Slavery

The other issue that Hajar's story brings to the forefront is the question of slavery. Amina Wadud and Kecia Ali explore this matter from the Islamic tradition.[123] Similarly, it is discussed in Biblical sources.[124] The debate of slavery was on whether Hagar/Hajar was an African princess[125]/concubine/spouse given to Abram or just a handmaiden/slave given to his wife. Each of these categories takes the debate by both groups in a different direction. There are two main problems about slavery: who owns the slave and what is the status of conjugal progeny concerning inheritance and freedom. For Jews and Christians, Hagar is the representation of slavery and subordination, which extends to her offspring. Some narratives consider her an African princess or a different level of concubine who has more rights than an ordinary slave. While the J/Y/Jahwist source[126] describes her as an Egyptian maid (שִׁפְחָה shiphchah),[127] E/lohist source describes her as a slave woman (אָמָה *`amah*)[128] (Noteworthy is that Israel knew slavery as an institution from the time of Moses, but the most common term used to refer to slaves is '*ebed*. The term is often translated to slave or servant. This term occurs some 799 times in the Tanakh, but was never used for Hagar in either source.[129] Another observation related to slavery comes from looking at the historical context of the estimated period of Abraham (2000–1720 BCE), which correlates with the Middle Kingdom (circa 2030–1650 BCE). Egypt at that time was ruling Canaan and Syria. According to its protocol, it was not appropriate to give an Egyptian slave to Asians. At the time, most slaves in Egypt were Asiatic.[130] Philip Drey concludes: "Just as she is not simply a slave, Hagar should not be understood as simply a concubine."[131]

---

123 Wadud, *Inside the Gender Jihad*, 124, 145–51; Kecia Ali, *Marriage and Slavery in Early Islam* (Harvard University Press, 2010). Ali discusses the relationship of slavery to marriage in Islam, but she does not use the example of Hajar.

124 Junior, *Reimagining Hagar*, 20ff.

125 Kadari, "Hagar."

126 See footnote 118.

127 Gen. 16:1, 3, 6, 8.

128 Gen. 21:10, 12, 13; Yoo, "Hagar the Egyptian," 216.

129 Waters, "Who was Hagar?" 201, 202.

130 Ibid., 189.

131 Drey, "The Role of Hagar," 184.

The Islamic accounts, on the other hand, borrow a lot from the Biblical stories of the Israelite narrators of early Islam and keep her identity vague between a slave and an African princess, but mostly they consider her a freed slave.

The Christian adaptation of the story is even more critical as St Paul in Galatia considers Sarah as the mother of freedom and Hagar the mother of slavery.[132] This clear racist binary establishes the foundation for continuation of this culture in history, literature and real life.

So, if this is the case with her identity, what is her child's status? For the position of offspring, we encounter two cultural practices. The Jewish tradition follows the ancient Mesopotamian tradition, mainly the Code of Hammurabi, which states that "when a seignior's first wife bore him children and his female slave also, bore him children…after the father has gone to his fate, the children of the first wife and the children of the slave shall share equally in the goods of the parental estate."[133] In another words, "any offspring resulting from the liaison of the master with the slave woman Hagar becomes heir of a household ruled by Abraham and Sarah."[134] This tradition is not understood in modern times and neglected from the discussion. The Christian tradition takes Sarah's comment from Genesis 21:10, "Get rid of that slave woman and her son, for that woman's son will never share in the inheritance with my son Isaac," as if it is a rule by the Torah for the son of any slave woman not to inherit, whereas this was Sarah's wish not a Divine ruling. Then Paul in Galatia 4:30 reaffirms the notion as if it was again a Divine ruling.[135] Some Christian critics found this is not the case and Hagar was a wife since Sarah gave her to Abraham.[136] In answer to the question about will, it is said the children of free wives or slaves are equal in inheritance; the oldest takes the portion of the oldest and the rest divide the remaining.[137] The Islamic tradition considers "marriage and slavery intersected at the institution of concubinage *mulk al-yameen*, which legitimized sex between a man and his female slave and made any resultant progeny free and legitimate."[138] A female slave who gave birth to a son would be called "mother of a son," *um walad*. She would be freed after the death of her owner, whereas the son or daughter born to the master becomes free[139] and inherits as any other free son/daughter would since birth.[140] Therefore, according to

132 Gal. 4:25–26, 30; Rix, "Trauma," 171.

133 James B. Pritchard, ed., *The Ancient Near East: Vol. 1 An Anthology of Texts and Pictures*, 6th ed. (Princeton University Press, 1973), art. 170, p. 157; Firestone, "Comparative Studies in Bible and Qur'an," 180.

134 Wadud, *Inside the Gender Jihad*, 123.

135 Ghali, ""Hal abna' al-jariyah la yarithu? Takween 21 wa Galatia 4" [Do the Sons of Concubines not Inherit Genesis 21 and Galatians 4?], accessed September ,6 2025, https://www.drghaly.com/articles/display/12780.

136 Ibid.; Gen 3: 16.

137 As was the case with the children of Jacob from his slave wives. Gen. 12; Ghali, ""Hal abna' al-jariyah la yarithu?"

138 Ali, *Marriage and Slavery in Early Islam,* 8.

139 Seham al-Fureih, *al-jawari walshi'r fī al-'aṣr al-'abbasi* [Concubines and Poetry in the Abbasid Period], 2nd ed. (Dar Qirtas lilnashr, 2000), 32. "Muslim scholars have agreed that the child of a free man from his concubine is his dependent, not his mother and that he is free like him." Youssef bin Abdullah Ibn 'Abdelbarr, *al-'Istiḏkar* [Remembrance], ed. Salem Ata and Muhammad Muawwad (Dar al-Kutub al-'ilmiyyah, 2000), vol. 7, 439, 230, https://shamela.ws/book/1722/3403.

140 Ibn 'Abdelbarr, *al-'Istiḏkar*, vol. 5, 324.

Jewish, Christian and Islami tradition, Ishmael was entitled inheritance of his father's land and heritage, which he was denied.

Race and Kinship

Hajar's story triggers a discussion of race, colour and ethnicity. For example, her heritage plays a strong role among Egyptians in the past and present, as she was always considered an important link between the two shores of the Red Sea, the Egyptian and Arabian. However, in Egyptian modern nationalism, the argument for her qualities grew large and proud, which collapsed a contemporary concept of race with the ancient category that unified or simplified the Egyptians as a single unit throughout history. Yet, Egyptians of today consider her a representation of the true Egyptian woman's qualities and essence of faith determination, strength and obedience to God. Also, she represents the symbol of life,[141] compared to the mother goddess who disseminates prosperity and life on anything she touches, even a barren land, hence Arabia. She is also African and that category plays an important role, especially among modern Afro-Americans and 20th century Biblical studies that read the text through the Black-African lens. Why was Hagar/Hajar not a Black woman? The possibilities are wide and strong in imagining her as part of the land from where she came.[142]

It is also worth mentioning that Islamic history adds another Egyptian African figure to the equation of race and ethnicity. That is Mariyah the Copt, concubine of Prophet Muhammad, who was given to him by the Patriarch of Egypt in 629 CE by way of a present in response to the latter's letter of invitation to Islam sent to him. Mariyah gave birth to a son, named Ibrahim after the grandfather of the Prophet, who only lived for one and a half years. That birth granted her freedom. Her son was the only other child born to the Prophet other than Khadijah bint Khuwaylid, his first wife.[143] The similarities between the two women in status and destiny were remarkable.[144] One researcher reflects on the resemblance that made Egypt a land and a people of *nasab* genealogical link to Arabia.[145] The *ḥadīth* in which the Prophet recommends the Egyptians as a people of covenant and kinship with Arabs, naming the kinship through Hajar and Mariyah.[146] Another researcher looks at the story from the angle of qualifying the children/sons of concubines/slaves for kingship or the Caliphate.[147] On the other hand, reflecting on the nation/people who descended from Ismael, the question of race and kinship became largely exposed and complex. The Arabs denoted by Prophet Muhammad trace their ascendance to Ismael. Ismael's descendants were the outcome of the intermarriage of the four main ancient civilisations of the time, the Mesopotamian represented by Ibrahim, the Egyptian, represented by Hajar, the Yemeni Arabs represented by the Jurhumi wife of Ismael, and the

141 May Azzam, "Hajar al-masriyyah, Umm al-'eed" [Hajar the Egyptian…Mother of Eid], *Almasry Alyoum*, September 23, 2015, https://www.almasryalyoum.com/news/details/816012.
142 See the discussion of her Blackness and African heritage in Junior, *Reimagining Hagar*, 101ff.
143 Aisha bint Abdulrahman bint al-Shate, *Nisa' al-nabi* [The Prophet's Wives], 5th ed. (Dar al-Hilal, 1971), 191–203.
144 Ibid., 198.
145 Ibid., 204.
146 Ibn Saad, *al-Tabaqat*, vol. 1, 33.
147 Urban, "Hagar and Mariya," 227, 228.

Canaanite/Syrians represented as a host land of the Abrahamic family. The Arab historians of the 7th and 8th centuries were concerned with the origins of Arabs and Arabism through an extensive study of genealogies.[148] The genealogists were, however, confused as to how to justify or explain that Ismael was not an Arab,[149] though he is of a Semitic origin related to the Chaldeans. Moreover, he even learned Arabic later in life. The question of who was an Arab, or what Arabism was, was at the core of later discussions as the Arabs expanded their empire to other nations such as the Persians, Indians or Turks. Their way to solve the problem of Arab identity was to term the descendant tribes from Ismael as the "Arabised Arabs" or *musta'ribah.* In contrast, the authentic Arabs or *al-'aaribah* were those Arab tribes that originated from Yemen/Southern Arabia.[150] However, this equation did not solve the problem of granting pure Arabism to the Prophet. These complicated relations confused the idea of purity of race that Arabs, similarly to most nations, believed they own. The question was always revolving but without answering. Therefore, the subject of race purity found its challenge in this triad of races that formed or unified what is understood to be the Arab race in Arabia (Arabian/Egyptian/ Mesopotamian) or in continent terms Asia and Africa. Thus, is there a pure Arab race? Does Prophet Muhammad have a pure vein that could be called Arab? Does that lessen the value of his message or prophethood?

Similarly problematic was the language spoken in Makkah. Ismael must have grown up speaking his mother's mother tongue, ancient Egyptian. Ismael learned Arabic or Sabaic Arabic from Jurhum much later in life. This is according to the popular story in early history books of Arab tradition. It is unclear whether he knew Akkadian or Chaldean, his father's mother tongue. There was no one to speak it with, but perhaps Hajar taught him a few words that helped with communication when his father visited Makkah. The dissection of these relations, beliefs and concepts takes us with Hajar and Ismael to another level of historicisation that unearths and questions everything known about race, blood or tongue. Perhaps that was Makkah's destiny: to become a melting pot where race, ethnicity, colour and language intersect to produce a plural city and people.

The Single Mother

On the front of the family structure, the story of Hajar suggests reflecting on the format of what is the ideal family construction in the Islamic imagination and laws. Paramount in this construction is the procreation, protection and care of offspring.[151] According to Amina Wadud, the Islamic family law tradition dismisses the example of Hajar's life and experience on many levels. One of them is the fact "she was abandoned in the desert with her child as a

148 Firestone, "Comparative Studies in Bible and Qur'an," 72ff.; see ibn al-Kalbi for example, Hisham bin Muhammad Ibn al-Kalbi, *Jamharat 'Ansab Al-'Arab* [Arab Genealogy], ed. Naji Hassan ('Alam al-Kutub, 1986).

149 There are many ways to explain the miracle of him speaking Arabic. See Ibn Saad, *Al-Tabaqat*, vol. 1, 34.

150 Robert G. Hoyland, *Arabia and the Arabs, from the Bronze Age to the Coming of Islam* (Routledge, 2001), 229–36.

151 Wadud, *Inside the Gender Jihad*, 143.

homeless single parent."[152] This status was absent in the structure of the Islamic society, which considers the ideal family to be composed of a man, woman and children. Never had they addressed single parenthood as a possible form of a 'normal' family. Wadud continues: "Islamic personal law is built upon a notion of family that does not include a woman thrown into the desert, forced to construct a healthy happy life for her child and to fend for herself."[153] The other cornerstone of a family structure in Islamic law is the provision for the family, which is usually bragged on and fought for in family power relations, where the man is considered the *qawwam*.[154] As the protector and provider, the man is given and becomes entitled to power and authority over his wife and family. In the case of Hajar, she was the head of her household. Ibrahim was disavowed of his responsibilities as a provider to his family under the justification that he was ordered by God, according to Islamic accounts. The man's responsibility to provide was the common practice in most cultures of the past including the Jewish. So, what does that mean for the family structure in Islam? A religion is founded on those accounts, whether they occurred literally or legendarily. In any case, it becomes part of the debate on the ideal family structure in Islam.

What Wadud noticed was that Hajar's unique case did not raise adequate debate, questions or reflection among the legislators of Islamic family law, nor was anyone held accountable for its resolution.[155] In the building of the Islamic society, Islamic *fuqaha'*/scholars did not consider it as an example set up by God to reflect on and consider a solution for support. They do not even have a name for this family form. The consequence was that the single mother in an Islamic context and probably in other pre-modern societies too, was outcast, neglected and left on her own, missing out on the ideal Islamic structure of *takaful*/social solidarity and compassion among its members.[156]

Ironically, the absence of Ibrahim for most of Hajar's life and his son's life in Makkah was not a matter of discussion in the Islamic sources. How that was possible or acceptable is not clear. The gaps are immense, the apologetic tone is widespread and reliance on "the will of God"[157] is the usual haven for any attempt to start questioning the story norms and how they fit with Divine values and ethics.

Hajar's story raises a beacon to the need for Islamic jurisprudence that could re-reflect on such relations and apply Islamic justice to them. "There is a moral imperative of family well-being…and we should neither depend upon nor carelessly disregard the reality of Hajar's abandonment."[158]

---

152 Ibid., 143–45.
153 Ibid., 144
154 Qur'ān 4:34.
155 Wadud, *Inside the Gender Jihad*, 144.
156 Ibid., 152.
157 Except for some shy voices, such as Al-Qadi, *al-Tafseer al-Kabeer*, 250–51. Al-Razi quotes on this issue in agreement: al-Qadi, *Mafateeh al-Ghayb*, 19:104; al-Qurtubi, *Al-Jame' li'ahkam al-Qur'an*, vol. 9, 368. Their interpretation was that, for example, Ibrahim's decision to leave Hajar in the desert alone was ordered by God and should not be the norm.
158 Wadud, *Inside the Gender Jihad*, 152.

CONCLUSION

This article looked into the past tale of the historic/legendary Hagar/Hajar to understand her manifestations, symbolisms and interpretations across religions, ethnicities and geographies, concepts of freedom and enslavement, purity and abuse, ethics and apologies. Or as Omaima Abu Bakr puts it, this study encompassed "the representational (historical), the mythical across religious traditions (imagined), and the newly employed feminist lens in addressing the significance of her life in a novel way other than the traditional or mainstream perspectives (symbolic)."

What was interesting in this journey was to see how Hajar's voice was still alive and how much she has touched a multitude of nations and people. One also realises how much she inspired and was still inspiring generations of women of different backgrounds to resist and rebuild their lives with strength, resilience and dignity.

How we understand these multiple representations of Hajar/Hagar is an open question. We have found throughout this paper that her story intertwined with conscious readings on how her narrative was employed and used in the Jewish-Christian and Islamic imagination. Could we say that she is a new voice of contemporary women too? This is another possibility.

This article was a rereading of an extensive timeline of millennia, through texts, interpretations and images that were revisited and shaped with new questions on gender justice, on women's relationship to power and authority, and on women's spirituality to, hopefully, reconstruct the image of Hagar/Hajar.

After an abusive life and controversial prophetic relationship, real or mythical, at last, Hajar is in Makkah where she could be considered an independent being, a free woman, head of her household, leader of her town, and matriarch of a people, of a faith and THE founder of the holy city of Makkah/Mecca. The legacy of Hajar/Hagar will continue.

*A post note: (postcards from Hajar to Sara),

"p.s. *I have decided to found a nation*."[159]

[159] Kahf, *Hagar Poems*, 44.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Abboud, Husn. *Al-Sayyidah Mariam fi al-Quran: Qiraʾa ʾAdabiyyah* [Holy Mariam in the Qur'ān: A Literary Reading]. Dar al-Saqi, 2012.

Abou-Bakr, Omaima. "Islamic Feminism and the Equivocation of Political Engagement 'Fair is Foul, and Foul is Fair.'" *Multitudes* 60, no. 3 (2015): 198-208. https://www.multitudes.net/islamic-feminism-and-the-equivocation-of-political-engagement-fair-is-foul-and-foul-is-fair/.

Abugideiri, Hibba. "Hagar: A Historical Model of 'Gender Jihad.'" In *Daughters of Abraham: Feminist Thought in Judaism, Christianity, and Islam*, edited by Yvonne Yazbeck Haddad and John L. Esposito, 81–107. University Press of Florida, 2001.

Ali, Kecia. *Marriage and Slavery in Early Islam*. Harvard University Press, 2010.

Allam, Shawqi. "al-hikmah min 'adam mashruʿiyyat 'israʿ al-mar'ah fi al-mashi 'athnaa al-tawaf" [The Wisdom behind the Impermissibility of a Woman Walking Quickly during Tawaf]. *Fatawa dar al-'iftaa'*. Fatwa no. 7656. April 16, 2023. https://www.dar-alifta.org/ar/fatwa/details/18754.

Al-Asqalani, Ahmad bin Hajar. *Fath al-bari fi sharh sahih al-Bukhari* [Fath al-Bari in the Explanation of Sahih al-Bukhari]. Edited by Muhammad Fuad AbdelBaqi, Muhibbaddin al-Khatib and AbdulAziz Bin Baz. Dar al-Ma'rifah, 1959.

Al-Azraqi, Muhammad bin Abdullah. *'akhbar Makkah wa maa jaa'a fiha min al-'aathar* [Makkah's History]. Edited by Melhis, Rushdi al-Salhi. Dar al-Andalus, 1983.

Azzam, May "Hajar al-masriyyah, Umm al-'eed" [Hajar the Egyptian…Mother of Eid]. *Almasry Alyoum*. September 23, 2015. https://www.almasryalyoum.com/news/details/816012.

Bakhos, Carol. "Abraham Visits Ishmael: A Revisit." *Journal for the Study of Judaism: In the Persian Hellenistic & Roman Period* 38, 4/5 (2007): 553–80.

Bedoui, Faouzi. "Inna hatha lafi al-suhuf al-'ula, Mulahazat hawl al-thakira al-tawheediyyah" ["This is in the Earliest Scriptures" [Qur'an 87:18], Notes on the Monotheistic Memory]. *Revue Ibla, Tunis* 2, no. 206 (2010): 59–82. Accessed May 20, 2025. https://www.academia.edu/84022314/.

Bint al-Shate, Aisha bint Abdulrahman. *Nisa' al-nabi* [Women of the Prophet]. 5th ed. Dar al-Hilal, 1971.

Al-Bukhari, Muhammad. *Sahih Al-Bukhari.* Translated by Muhammad Muhsin Khan. Darussalam, 1997.

Crone, Patricia, and Michael Cook. *Hagarism, The Making of the Islamic World*. Cambridge University Press, 1977.

Crotty, Robert. "Hagar/Hajar, Muslim Women, and Islam: Reflections on the Historical and Theological Ramifications of the Story of Ishmael's Mother". In *Women in Islam*

Reflections on Historical and Contemporary Research, edited by Terence Lovat, 165–84. Springer, 2012.

Drey, Philip R. "The Role of Hagar in Genesis 16." *Andrews University Seminary Studies* 40, no. 2 (2002): 179–95.

Firestone, Reuven. "Comparative Studies in Bible and Qur'ān: A Fresh Look at Genesis 22 in Light of Sura 37." In *Judaism and Islam: Boundaries, Communication, and Interaction*, edited by Benjamin H. Hary, John L. Hayes and Fred Astren, 169–184. Brill, 2000.

Friedlander, Gerald, ed. *Pirkê de Rabbi Eliezer: The Chapters of Rabbi Eleizer the Great.* The Bloch Publishing Company, 1916.

Al-Fureih. Seham. *al-jawari walshi'r fī al-'aṣr al-'abbasi* [Concubines and Poetry in the Abbasid Period]. 2nd ed. Dar Qirtas lilnashr, 2000.

Ghali. "Hal abna' al-jariyah la yarithu? Takween 21 wa Galatia 4" [Do the Sons of Concubines not Inherit Genesis 21 and Galatians 4?]. Accessed September 6, 2025. https://www.drghaly.com/articles/display/12780.

Gordon, Charlotte. *The Woman who Named God*, *Abraham's Dilemma and the Birth of Three Faiths*. Little, Brown and Company, 2009.

Grung, Anne Hege. "Hagar as a Bad Mother, Hagar as an Icon of Faith: The Hagar Narratives from the Islamic and the Christian Traditions Discussed Among Muslim and Christian Women in Norway." In *Volume in the Arms of Biblical Women*, edited by John T. Greene, Mishael M. Caspi et al., 65–78. Gorgias Press, 2013.

Al-Hamawi, Yaqut. *Mu'jam al-Buldan* [Countries Encyclopedia]. 7 vols. Dar Sadir, 1995.

Hassan, Riffat. "Islamic Hagar and her Family." In *Hagar, Sarah, and their Children: Jewish, Christian, and Muslim Perspectives*, edited by Phyllis Trible and Letty M. Russell, 149–67. Westminster John Knox Press, 2006.

Hidayatullah, Aysha A. *Feminist Edges of the Qur'an.* Oxford University Press, 2014.

Hoyland, Robert G. *Arabia and the Arabs, from the Bronze Age to the Coming of Islam*. Routledge, 2001.

Hoyland, Robert G. *Seeing Islam as Others saw it: A Survey and Evaluation of Christian, Jewish, and Zoroastrian Writings on Early Islam*. Darwin Press, 1997.

Hussein, Taha. *fi al-shiʿr al-jahili* [In the Jahili Poetry]. Matbaʿat dar al-kutub al-masriyyah, 1926.

Ibn 'Abdelbarr, Youssef bin Abdullah. *Al-'Istiḏkar* [Remembrance]. Edited by Salem Ata and Muhammad Muawwad. 9 vols. Dar al-Kutub al-'ilmiyyah, 2000. https://shamela.ws/book/1722/3403.

Ibn Battal, Ali bin Khlaf. *Sharh Sahih al-Bukhari* [The Explanation of Sahih al-Bukhari]. Edited by Yaser bin Ibrahim. Maktabt al-Rushd, 2003. 10 vols. https://shamela.ws/book/10486/1940#p1.

Ibn Hisham, AbdulMalik al-Maafri. *Al-Sirah al-Nabawiyyah* [The Prophet's Biography]. Edited by Mustafa al-Saqqa, Ibrahim al-Abiyari and Abdulhafiz Shalabi. 2 vols. Maktabat Mustafa al-Babi al-Halabi wa'awladuhu, 1955.

Ibn Ishaq, Muhammad. *Sirat ibn Ishaq, kitab al-siyar walmaghazi* [Ibn Ishaq's Prophet's Biography and Wars]. Edited by Muhammad Hameedullah. Ma'had al-dirasat wal-'abhath lilta'reeb, matba'at Muhammad al-khames, 1976.

Ibn al-Kalbi, Hisham bin Muhammad. *Jamharat 'Ansab Al-'Arab* [Arab Genealogy]. Edited by Naji Hassan. 'Alam al-Kutub, 1986.

Ibn Kathir, Abu al-Fidaa Islma'il bin Omar. *Tafseer al-Qur'an al-'azeem* [The Exegesis of the Great Qur'an]. Edited by Sami M. al-Salamah. Dar Taibah lilnashr wal-tawzee', 1999.

Ibn Saad, Muhammad. *al-Tabaqat al-Kubra* [The Grand Biographies]. Edited by Ali M. Omar. 11 vols. Maktabbat al-Khanji, 2001.

Josephus, Flavius. *Jewish Antiquities*. Translated by R. Marcus. Harvard University Press, 1943. 9 vols. https://penelope.uchicago.edu/josephus/ant-3.html.

Junior, Nyasha. *Reimagining Hagar: Blackness and Bible*. Oxford Academic, 2019. https://doi.org/10.1093/oso/9780198745327.003.0006.

Kadari, Tamar. "Hagar: Midrash and Aggadah". *The Shalvi/Hyman Encyclopedia of Jewish Women*. March 20, 2009. https://jwa.org/encyclopedia/article/hagar-midrash-and-aggadah.

Kahf, Mohja. *Hagar Poems*. University of Arkansas Press, 2016.

Al-Kisa'i, Muhammad. *qisas al-'anbiya'* [Stories of the Prophets]. Edited by Ishaq bin Sa'oul Eizenberg. Brill, 1922.

Kratchkovsky, J., and A. Vasiliev, Trans. "Histoire de Yahya-ibn-Saʿid d'Antioche Continuateur de Saiʿd-ibn-Bitriq: Part 1" [The History of Yahya-ibn-Saʿid of Antioch, a continuer of Saiʿd-ibn-Bitriq]. *Patrologia Orientalis* 18 (1924): 700–846. https://archive.org/details/patrologiaorient18pariuoft/.

Kratchkovsky, J., and A. Vasiliev, Trans. "Histoire de Yahya-ibn-Sa'id d'Antioche Continuateur de Saiʿd -ibn-Bitriq: Part 2" [The History of Yahya-ibn-Saʿid of Antioch, a continuator of Saiʿd-ibn-Bitriq: Part 2]. *Patrologia Orientalis* 23 (1932): 346–520. https://archive.org/details/patrologiaorient23pariuoft.

Lajnat al-fatwa bi al-shabakah al-ʾIslamiyyah. "al-hikmah min 'adam mashruʿiyyat al-raml lilmar'ah fi al-saʿi" [The Wisdom behind the Impermissibility of Raml/Light Running for Women in the Saʿi]. *Fatawa al-Shabakah al-'Islamiyyah* (Archive of Arab Religious Edicts/*Fatawas*). Islam Web, November 18, 2009. https://shamela.ws/book/27107/49149.

Mir-Hosseini, Ziba. “Why do we need ‘Islamic Feminism’?” *Al Raida Journal* 44, no. 2 (2020): 85-91.

Motzki, Harald. “Abraham, Hagar, and Ishmael at Mecca: A Contribution to the Problem of Dating Muslim Traditions.” In *Books and Written Culture of the Islamic World. Studies Presented to Claude Gilliot on the Occasion of his 75th Birthday*, edited by A. Rippin and R. Tottoli, 361–84. Brill, 2015.

Al-Mu‘tazili, al-Qadi Abduljabbar. *Al-Tafseer al-Kabeer aw al-Muheet* [The Great Exegeses or the Ocean]. Edited by Khidr Nabha. Dar al-Kutub al-‘ilmiyyah, 2009.

Navarro, David. “Anti-Muslim Portrayal of the Hagar-Ishmael Cycle in Alfonso X’s General Estoria.” *eHumanista* 51 (2022): 515–541.

Nikaido, Scott. “Hagar and Ishmael as Literary Figures: An Intertextual Study.” *Vetus Testamentum* 51, no. 2 (2001): 219–42.

Nomani, Asra Q. *Standing Alone in Mecca: An American Woman’s Struggle for the Soul of Islam*. HarperSanFrancisco, 2005.

Ondich, Jody. “Sources for the Torah.” In *Reading the Bible as Literature: A Journey*. PressBooks, 2022. https://minnstate.pressbooks.pub/bible/chapter/j-e-p-and-d/.

Pigott, Susan M. “Hagar: The M/Other Patriarch.” *Review & Expositor* 115, no. 4 (2018): 513–28.

Poorthuis, Marcel. “Hagar’s Wanderings: Between Judaism and Islam.” *Der Islam* 90, no. 2 (2013): 220–44.

Pritchard, James B., ed. *The Ancient Near East, Vol 1, An Anthology of Texts and Pictures*. 6th ed. Princeton University Press, 1973.

Al-Qurtubi, Muhammad bin Ahmad. *Al-Jame‘ li’ahkam al-Qur’an* [The Compilation of Quranic Rulings]. 20 vols. Dar al-Kutub al-Masriyyah, 1964.

Al-Razi, Muhammad bin Omar. *Mafateeh al-Ghayb, al-Tafseer al-Kabeer* [The Keys to the Unseen, The Grand Exegeses]. Dar ’Ihya’ al-Turath al-‘Arabi, 1420/2000.

Rix, Charles M. “Trauma and Narrative Wreckage in the Biblical Story of Hagar.” *Cultural and Religious Studies* 3, no. 3 (2015): 167–76.

Al-Safarini al-Hanbali, Muhammad bin Ahmad. *Lawami’ al-‘Anwar al-Bahiyyah* [The Sparkles of the Beautiful Lights]. 2 vols. Mu’assasat al-khafeqayn, 1982.

Al-Sanʿani, Abdulrazzaq. *Al-Musannaf.* 10 vols. Markaz al-buhuth wa taqniyat al-ma‘lumat, Dar al-Ta’seel, 2015.

Al-Sharmani, Mulki. *Islamic Feminism: Hermeneutics and Activism.* Bloomsbury Academic, 2024.

Stowasser, Barbara F. *Women in the Quran, Traditions, and Interpretation*. Oxford University Press, 1994.

Al-Suhaili, Abdulrahman. *al-Rawdh al-`anif fi sharh al-sirah al-nabawiyyah* [al-rawdh al-'anif in the Prophet's Biography]. Edited by Majdi al-Shura. 4 vols. Dar al-kutub al-'ilmiyyah, 2023.

Al-Tabari, Muhammad bin Jarir. *jami' al-bayan fi ta'weel al-qur'an* [The Full Collection of Eloquence in the Interpretation of the Qur'ān]. Edited by Ahmad M. Shaker. Mu'assasat al-Risalah, 2000.

Trible, Phyllis. *Texts of Terror (40th Anniversary Edition): Literary-Feminist Readings of Biblical Narratives*. Fortress Press, 2022.

Urban, Elizabeth. "Hagar and Mariya: Early Islamic Models of Slave Motherhood." In *Concubines and Courtesans: Women and Slavery in Islamic History*, edited by Matthew S. Gordon and Kathryn A. Hain, 225–43. Oxford University Press, 2017.

Wadud, Amina. *Inside the Gender Jihad, Women's Reform in Islam*. One World, 2006.

Waters, John W. "Who was Hagar?" In *Stony the Road We Trod: African American Biblical Interpretation*, edited by Cain Hope Felder, 187–205. Fortress Press, 1991.

Yoo, Philip Y. "Hagar the Egyptian: Wife, Handmaid, and Concubine." *The Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 78 (2016): 215–35.