A Comparison of Jewish and Islamic Views on the Banishment of Hagar

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Abstract

Hagar is a fascinating figure in both Jewish and Islamic traditions. Her portrayal varies greatly across these two different faiths. In both Jewish and Islamic traditions, Hagar is sent away into the desert. However, this same story has different interpretations in Judaism and Islam and has diverse cultural impacts on today's Jewish and Muslim societies. In Islam, Hagar is seen as a respected figure, the mother of Arabs. This contrasts with her negative portrayal in some Jewish interpretations. This paper examines historical sources of Hagar's story in the Biblical narrative and the Islamic tradition, exploring how each scripture aligns and contrasts with the other through the pivotal event of Hagar's banishment to the wilderness. Utilizing a qualitative methodology and comparative approach, this study undertakes a textual and content analysis of relevant literature. This paper argues that how Hagar's banishment is recounted in Jewish and Islamic traditions significantly influences how her story is understood and interpreted today. These interpretations, shaped by their respective cultural and historical contexts, contribute to differing portrayals of Hagar's role and social position within the family of Abraham in Jewish and Islamic communities.

Keywords: Hagar, banishment, Sarah, Abraham, Ishmael.

Introduction

Imagine reading a book about two different families, which tell the same story, but with slightly different details. This is like comparing views with a friend who saw the same movie as you but remembered different scenes. The story of Hagar is one of these shared tales, particularly the dramatic narrative of her expulsion into the wilderness, which inspired numerous scholars seeking to uncover the truth around this event. The story of Hagar's exile is found in both Jewish and Islamic traditions, but each version has its own unique spin. While Hagar's story is explicitly narrated in Genesis 16 and 21 of the Torah, she is only alluded to in *sūrah* Baqarah (2: 158) and *sūrah* Ibrahim (14: 37) of the Qur'ān.

Despite the shared narratives, there are significant variations in the interpretations of Hagar's exile in Islamic and Jewish traditions. This brings us to the main question of this study: What are the underlying forces that contribute to the varying interpretations and consequences of Hagar's exile from the viewpoints of Jewish and Islamic traditions?

Hagar has garnered considerable attention from feminist scholars in modern times across three distinct traditions; Jewish, Christian, and Islamic. Her name resonates among global feminists who seek to restore her social status (Arguetta, 2020) and challenge the patriarchy. Many feminist scholars have re-examined Hagar's narrative through a post-colonial lens, positioning her as the ideal of 'an enslaved woman embodying the struggle for survival or colonized peoples' (Poorthuis, 2013, p. 213). She has inspired Bible readers due to her representation of universal social issues such as slavery, concubinage, surrogacy, single parenthood, female rivalry, abuse and exile (Klopper, 2009, p. 91). Her narrative is recontextualized through various lenses of gender issues in particular countries, including Africa. Thabede, an African Muslim feminist, for example, regards Hagar as a symbol of strength and courage (Thabede, 2022, p. 176). Hagar holds a significant place for African feminists as both a spiritual leader, an African and a diaspora matriarch (Maseko & Soko-de-Jong, 2024). Malhotra characterizes her as a figure engaged in the ongoing struggle (*jihād*) for liberation and empowerment among Muslim women (Malhotra, 2002, p. 102).

Her portrayals as a woman of strength, resilience, or the forsaken concubine promoted by feminists are a powerful driver for women examining the patriarchal system (Weiler, 2022, p. 204) and advocating for gender equality. Charles Kimball asserts that within religious traditions, a particularly gifted individual, such as Hagar, can indeed be acknowledged as a foundational figure in the evolution of religion (Kimball, 2008, p. 5). As a result, numerous intertextual studies by Muslims have explored Hagar's story; however, these studies often favor her or adopt a predominantly normative approach, as seen in Rifat Hassan's work 'Islamic Hagar and her Family' (Hasan, 2006). But is this post-colonial context an appropriate way of understanding the story of Hagar that transpired thousands of years ago within distinct cultural and social frameworks?

The most appropriate approach to understanding the context of Hagar's narrative is through the lens of intertextual studies. Nikaido contends that this methodology can reveal a deeper and more positive understanding of Hagar when her intellectual narrative's literary components are critically examined (Nikaido, 2001, p. 237). Gunkel is well-known for his thorough examination of Hagar's genealogy through an intertextual analysis of Genesis 16: 18-21 and 21: 8-21. He points out notable contrasts in Hagar's representation, where initial narratives depicted her as a determined woman, while latter stories portrayed her as a forlorn outcast (Gunkel, 1900, p. 340). However, scholars like Thomas B. Dozeman have criticized Nikaido's findings, redirecting the emphasis of Hagar studies from her origins to her familial strife with Sarah. Dozeman investigates the significance of the wilderness backdrop in interpreting the discord between Sarah and Hagar in Genesis 16 and 21 (Dozeman, 1998, p. 24). Meanwhile, Marcel Poorthuis seeks to illustrate the intertextual connections between Islamic and Jewish religious traditions, providing a chronological overview of their interactions concerning Hagar's story (Poorthuis, 2013, p. 216).

Poorthuis' research is among the most pertinent prior studies that highlight the intersection of the two narratives surrounding Hagar. He generally emphasizes how Hagar and her son Ishmael are depicted unfavorably in the *midrash*, particularly in the account of her expulsion.

Meanwhile, Hagar is certainly depicted in a more favorable light in Islam, as she is viewed as the matriarch of the Arab people. However, Poorthuis' study primarily focuses on *midrashic* commentaries regarding Hagar, as well as general commentaries found in Islamic traditions such as those of Bukhārī, Ṭabarī, and Tha'labī. Notably, he has yet to address non-*midrashic* commentaries, which are also considered authoritative within the Jewish faith, nor has he highlighted the varying interpretations of Hagar within the Muslim tradition, including the Shi'ite perspective. Therefore, this paper intends to investigate the array of perspectives on the story of Hagar's exile in both Jewish and Islamic contexts to bridge the existing gaps.

This paper employs a framework of comparative religious studies by conducting a parallel examination of religious texts and traditions from both Jewish and Islamic viewpoints, specifically aiming to identify parallels and contrast as well as explore the historical context that influences each tradition's interpretation of the story of Hagar's exile. Charles Kimball emphasizes that comparative religious studies take into account the historical interactions among diverse religious traditions to illuminate notable similarities and clear distinctions between them, which he refers to as "to see with a native eye" to be aware or mitigate frames (Kimball, 2008, p. 8). Nakissa further highlights that analyzing various traditions is beneficial as it helps reveal broader patterns (Nakissa, 2023, p. 11) across different religious traditions. Another scholar, Lindsay Jones, contends that no serious study of religion occurs without some form of comparative analysis (Jones, 2017, p. 177). This scholarly investigation entails a rigorous textual and content analysis of primary sources extracted from both Jewish and Islamic traditions, with a particular emphasis on the first book of the Torah/Pentateuch; Genesis 16:18-21 and 21: 8-21, alongside Midrashic interpretations and non-Midrashic perspectives, such as the commentaries of Rashi and Ibn Ezra from Jewish viewpoint, as well as the Qur'anic *sūrah* Ibrahim (14) verse 37 and *sūrah* Baqarah (2) verse 158, including Qur'anic commentaries (*Tafsīr*), relevant Ḥadīth, and *Sīrah Nabawiyya* (such as 'The History of Ṭabarī' translated from *Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī: Tārīkh al-Umām wa al-Mulūk* or 'Lives of Prophet' translated from *Arāʾis al-Majālis fī Qiṣāṣ al-Anbiyāʾ* by al-Tha`labī) from an Islamic perspective.

According to Smith, textual analysis entails scrutinizing messages as they manifest across numerous mediums, such as documents, newspapers, artwork, websites, and more. While content analysis is defined as the evaluation of materials in a given text (whether it entails merely quantifying occurrences or delving into more profound meanings) (Smith, 2017, p. 1). Ultimately, this paper contends that the narratives surrounding Hagar's exile in Islamic and Jewish traditions are shaped by their unique cultural and historical contexts, resulting in varied interpretations and emphases.

The Two Accounts of Hagar

Hagar is a woman of profound significance. She stands at the crossroads of two great faiths; Poorthuis describes her as a wanderer between Judaism and Islam (Poorthuis, 2013). Within the Jewish tradition, her existence is acknowledged as a Biblical character, frequently referenced within the narrative of Abraham in Genesis. Notably, her name is absent from the Qur'ān (Hasan, 2006, p. 152), yet she holds a distinguished status within the Islamic tradition. This illustrates the multifaceted nature of Hagar's narrative. A prominent theme in Hagar's tale, which is considered as one factor behind her expulsion, is her initial status as an Egyptian princess who subsequently became a servant of Abraham's first wife, Sarah. This narrative has persisted throughout both Jewish and Islamic traditions over the ages. Therefore, this section will outline how Jewish and Islamic perspectives narrate Hagar's background.

Feature	Jewish Perspective	Islamic Perspective
Hagar's ethnicity	Genesis 16: 1, 3, 8 Genesis 25: 12 (Hagar is an Egyptian)	*Ṣaḥīḥ Bukhārī*, Vol. 4, *Kitāb al-Aḥādīth al-Anbiyā*, Hadith 3358 *Tārīkh al-Ṭabārī* Hagar is an Egyptian (In Islam she is called Hājar)

Hagar is a slave	Genesis 16: 1-16 Genesis 21 (Sarah's Handmaid)	*Ṣaḥīḥ Bukhārī, Vol. 4,* *Kitāb al-Aḥādīth al-Anbiyā', Hadith 3358* (Hagar is Sarah's girl servant) *Tārīkh al-Ṭabārī* (Hagar is a Coptic Slave Girl) *Kitāb al-Aḥādīth al-Anbiyā'* (Hagar is a respectful slave girl)
Hagar is Keturah	Genesis 25: 12 Ibn Ezra Commentaries on Pentateuch, Genesis 25:18 (Hagar relates to Keturah)	*Qiṣāṣ al-Anbiyā'* by al-Tha`labī (Hagar relates to Keturah)

Table 1. Comparative Features of Hagar's Background

It is generally posited that the Qur'an does not explicitly refer to Hagar (*Hājar*) or her Egyptian heritage. However, the exegetical literature, along with hadīth and sīra traditionists, as well as the narratives concerning the prophets (*qiṣās al-anbiyā*), contribute significantly to outlining her narrative. In subsequent Islamic discourse, Egypt is characterized as "the holy, good and blessed land" (*al-ard al-muqaddasa al-ṭayyiba al-mubāraka*) (McAuliffe, 2002, p. 11). Shabir Ally asserts that Hagar would remain obscure to Muslims were it not for the presence of Biblical accounts (Ally, 2020). In her work 'Biblical Quotation in Muslim Tradition,' Athamina argues that classical Muslim scholars, including Ibn Kathīr, regard the Torah (*Taurāt*) as fundamental to the validation of information ('Athamina, 1998, p. 86). Progenitors of Qur'ānic commentary, such as Ibn 'Abbās, also frequently engaged with and referenced their peers among the *ahl al-kitāb*, or the People of the Book,

on complex inquiries, drawing upon the insights of Jewish and Christian scholars who had embraced in Islam (’Athamina, 1998, p. 85).

Hagar is first introduced in Biblical texts, specifically as an Egyptian handmaid in Genesis 16: 1, which states; *Now Sarai Abram’s wife bore him no children; and she had a handmaid, an Egyptian, whose name was Hagar* (*Tanakh: The Holy Scriptures According to the Masoteric Text*, 1917, p. 18). This narrative finds parallels in various Islamic texts, including hadith and *qiṣāṣ.* In *Ṣaḥīḥ Bukhārī,* the account describes Hagar as being bestowed by Pharaoh when Sarah was presented to Pharaoh’s harem due to her exceptional beauty, while Abraham remained in hiding. This is recounted in hadith 3358, Narrated Abū Huraira *Radhiallāhu ‘anhu,*

> “Abraham did not tell a lie except on three occasions. Twice for the Sake of Allah when he said, "I am sick," and he said, "(I have not done this but) the big idol has done it." The (third was) that while Abraham and Sarah (his wife) were going (on a journey) they passed by (the territory of) a tyrant. Someone said to the tyrant, "This man (i.e. Abraham) is accompanied by a very charming lady." So, he sent for Abraham and asked him about Sarah saying, "Who is this lady?" Abraham said, "She is my sister." Abraham went to Sarah and said, "O Sarah! There are no believers on the surface of the earth except you and I. This man asked me about you and I have told him that you are my sister, so don't contradict my statement." The tyrant then called Sarah and when she went to him, he tried to take hold of her with his hand, but (his hand got stiff and) he was confounded. He asked Sarah. "Pray to Allah for me, and I shall not harm you." So, Sarah asked Allah to cure him and he got cured. He tried to take hold of her for the second time, but (his hand got as stiff as or stiffer than before and) was more confounded. He again requested Sarah, "Pray to Allah for me, and I will not harm you." Sarah asked Allah again and he became alright. He then called one of his guards (who had brought her) and said, "You have not brought me a human being but have brought me a devil." The tyrant then gave Hajar

> as a girl-servant to Sarah. Sarah came back (to Abraham) while he was praying. Abraham, gesturing with his hand, asked, "What has happened?" She replied, "Allah has spoiled the evil plot of the infidel (or immoral person) and gave me Hajar for service." (Abu Huraira then addressed his listeners saying, "That (Hajar) was your mother, O Bani Ma-is-Sama (i.e. the Arabs, the descendants of Ishmael, Hajar's son).” (al-Bukharī, 1997, p. 348).

This account closely resembles the depiction of Hagar in *Pirge Abot*, the earliest rabbinic text detailing ten trials of Abraham, one of which involves Sarah being forcibly taken to Pharaoh’s harem (Kaczorowska, 2021, p. 1366), only for Pharaoh to subsequently release her and offer his own daughter Hagar (Gen. Rab. 45,1), born from a concubine, as her handmaid

> Rabbi Shimon ben Yoḥai said: Hagar was Pharaoh’s daughter. When Pharaoh saw the [miraculous] acts that were done on Sarah’s behalf in his palace, he took his daughter and gave her to him [Abraham]. He said: ‘It is preferable that my daughter be a maidservant in that household than be the mistress in another household.’ That is what is written: “And she had an Egyptian maidservant, and her name was Hagar” – here is your reward [ha agrikh]. Avimelekh, too, when he saw the miracles that were performed on Sarah’s behalf in his palace, he took his daughter and gave her to him. He said: ‘It is preferable that my daughter be a maidservant in that household than be the mistress in another household.’ That is what is written: “The daughters of kings are among those who honor you; at your right hand stands the consort, attired in gold from Ofir” (Psalms 45:10).

Additionally, the narratives of Tha’labī and Ṭabarī align with this account, indicating that Pharaoh sought to possess Sarah, and upon experiencing paralysis in his hand each time, he returned her to Abraham and

presented Hagar (*Hājar*), who was identified as a Coptic (descendant of ancient Egyptians) slave-girl (Thaʿlabī, 2002, p. 63; Ṭabarī, 1987, p. 136). Muhammad ibn Sirin notes that when Abu Hurayrah recounted the story, he would declare, *this is your mother, O Arabs!* (Ṭabarī, 1987, p. 64). However, despite their similarities, the characterization of Hagar reveals distinct differences; the rabbinic interpretation posits that she is the offspring of a concubine, a notion that is absent in the Islamic tradition. In contrast, Tha'labī emphasizes her status as a dignified slave girl (Tha'labī, 2002, p. 136). Furthermore, Irene Pabst characterizes Hagar not merely as an Egyptian but as being of noble lineage, identifying her as the daughter of Pharaoh (Pabst, 2003, p. 10).

As the tradition evolved, most contemporary Muslim scholars offered symbolic interpretations concerning the status of Hagar as a slave. Riffat Hasan, for example, recounts that Hagar is portrayed as a black slave girl who ascended from the lowest strata of society to attain the highest honor within the Islamic tradition (Hasan, 2006, p. 154). The question of whether Hagar belongs to the black race remains ambiguous; however, this discourse may be predicted on the premise that Hagar's ethnicity is Egyptian, which constitutes part of Africa.

Shi`ite scholar, Ali Shariati, also describes Hagar as a slave, but also as a divinely chosen woman, destined to be Abraham's unsung hero and maternal figure. This interpretation explains that God intentionally selected an individual who, within all societal structures, was devoid of nobility and esteem to assist Abraham in constructing the most revered sanctuary for humanity (*Kaaba*) (Shariati, 1971, p. 166). In this context, some Qur'ānic commentators, such as Qurṭubī (Qurṭubī, 2007, p. 873) and Ibn Kathīr (Kathīr, 2003, p. 547), favor the designation of 'Mother of Ishmael' over the explicit mention of 'Hagar' when interpreting the Qur'ānic chapter of *sūrah* Ibrahim (14) verse 37, specifically in the phrase *askantu* (I have dwelt) which implicitly refers to his descendant; Ishmael, but also his wife, 'the mother of Ishmael.' As mentioned in the full verse;

> O our Lord! I have made some of my offspring to dwell in an uncultivable valley by Your Sacred House (the Ka'bah at Mecca) in order, O our Lord, that they may perform as-Salat. So fill some hearts among men with love towards them, and (O Allah) provide them with fruits so that they may give thanks (Translation of The Meanings of The Noble Qur'an in The English Language, 1999, p. 285).

Ṭabaṭabā'ī, a Shi`ite exegete, relates this verse with *sūrah* Baqarah (2): 158 about the Islamic practice of Sa'i (traversing between Safa and Marwa) in performing Hajj to interpret sūrah 14:37 as well as narrate the story of Hagar,

> Verily, al-Ṣafā and al-Marwa (two mountains in Mecca) are of the Symbols of Allah. So, it is not a sin on him who performs Hajj or 'Umrah (pilgrimage) of the House (the Ka'bah at Mecca) to perform the going (Ṭawaf) between them (al-Ṣafā and al-Marwa). And whoever does good voluntarily, then verily, Allah is All-Recognizer, All-Knower (Translation of The Meanings of The Noble Qur'an in The English Language, 1999, p. 30)

Both verses originate from distinct *sūrah* (chapters) that possess differing chronological contexts of revelation, which consequently shape their interpretative frameworks. Specifically, *sūrah* al-Baqarah (2) (The Cow) is classified as a Medinan revelation, whereas *sūrah* Ibrahim (14) is characterized as a Meccan revelation. Sayyid Quṭb asserts that *sūrah* al-Baqarah decisively and swiftly strips the Israelites of their association with Abraham, the great proponent of monotheistic belief, and the source of all the honor and privileges that go with it (Quṭb, 2003a, p. 11). Conversely, the Meccan context of *sūrah* Ibrahim suggests a focus on the non-believers within the community of the Prophet Muhammad, who had been presented with a comprehensive narrative encompassing significant historical events. This *sūrah* further delineates certain

manifestations of divine benevolence within one of the most magnificent spectacles of the universe and subsequently presents Abraham as an exemplar of gratitude (Quṭb, 2003b, p. 227).

Ṭabaṭabā'ī integrated the two verses to construct a narrative centered on Hagar, particularly relevant to the account of her expulsion. He posits that the two verses encapsulate the life narrative of Ibrahim, which is intrinsically intertwined with the experiences of Hagar and his son Ishmael, forming an uninterrupted sequence that constitutes a comprehensive cycle of spiritual endeavor aimed at attaining "Divine Nearness." Hagar and Ishmael are depicted as playing a pivotal role alongside Ibrahim in the building of Ka'bah, such that when God commands Ibrahim to promulgate the practice of Hajj to Mecca in *sūrah* 22:27, *and proclaim among men the hajj; they will come to you on foot and on every lean camel, coming from every remote path..."* one of the prerequisites for undertaking Hajj involves the ritual of *Sa'i*, which entails traversing between Safa and Marwa, a practice historically exemplified by Hagar in her quest for sustenance for Ishmael (Ṭabaṭabā'ī, 1990, p. 117).

Contemporary scholars also proffer a variety of interpretations regarding the name Hagar. Philip R. Drey, for example, emphasizes that the biblical persona of Hagar has been linked to the *Hagrites*, a small Syrian and North Arabian tribe that dates to the Persian and Hellenistic eras (1 chronicles 5: 19). Notwithstanding its cognates suggesting an Arabic origin, the precise origin and meaning of Hagar's name remain elusive (Drey, 2002, p. 182). The name Hagar carries diverse meanings across different cultural perspectives. In Hebrew, Hagar translates to 'foreigner.' Conversely, in Arabic, the name Hagar is derived from the term *hajara*, which signifies 'wanderer' (Doki, 2023, p. 179). An additional possible connection arises from the Sabean and Ethiopic term, *hagar*, which denotes 'town, city,' but originally conveys meanings of 'the splendid' or 'the nourishing' (Drey, 2002, p. 182).

Certain Rabbinic interpretations regard the name Hagar as indicative of foreignness, given her status as a stranger in Israel (Tamez, 1986, p. 131). According to Mills, Hagar symbolizes a foreign territory, concurrently representing a "lost Eden," as Egypt is depicted as a site of considerable allure within the Hebrew Bible (Mills, 2008, p. 293). Some rabbinical

interpretations also equate Hagar with the name 'Keturah' in Genesis 25:1; *And Abraham took another wife, and her name was Keturah* (*Tanakh: The Holy Scriptures According to the Masoteric Text*, 1917, p. 32), in the context where, following her divorce with Abraham (through the banishment), she remarried Abraham subsequent to Sarah's demise (Kadari, 2009).

In various rabbinical interpretations found in the *Bereshit Rabbah*, Isaac is posited to have procured Hagar from *Beer-lahai-roi* (the name of a well in the Bible), after which she became recognized by her personal designation, Keturah (Yoo, 2016, p. 216). An alternative exegesis outlines that her association with the appellation Keturah denotes "to bind or seal," following the demise of Sarah, which represents her virtuous and sacred acts, as well as her loyalty to Abraham (Doki, 2023, p. 182). But the rabbis also identify Keturah's children in the midrash a being associated with violence and idolatry (GR 61:5) (Poorthuis, 2013, p. 218), which pose an everlasting danger to Israel, since they never ceased demanding their inheritance from Abraham (Kadari, 2009).

Conversely, Ibn Ezra challenges this association. He asserts that Keturah is not synonymous with Hagar, given that, historically Abraham had multiple concubines after Sarah's death. Should Keturah and Hagar be considered identical, this would undermine the assertion that Abraham had more than one concubine (Meir, 1988, p. 244). Tha'labī similarly argues that Abraham entered matrimony with more than one woman following Sarah's demise. One of those women is identified as a Canaanite named Keturah, who bore him six male offspring: Jokshan, Zimran, Madan, Madd, Ashlq, and Wrashukh. Additionally, he took another wife from the Arab lineage, known as Hajun bint Ahlb, with whom he fathered five sons: Kaysan, Farrukh, Ahim, Lutan, and Nafis. Collectively, the sons of Abraham, inclusive of Isaac and Ishmael, totaled thirteen, with Ishmael recognized as his firstborn male and the eldest among his progeny. Tha'labī too refrains from equating Hagar with Keturah after the death of Sarah, as it is recorded that Hagar passed away in Mecca prior to Sarah and was interred in the *Hijr* (Tha`labī, 2002, p. 164).

The next section is devoted to a more comprehensive examination of another pivotal subject intricately linked to the expulsion of Hagar: her marriage to Abraham.

The Marriage of Hagar and Abraham

This section focuses on how Hagar transitioned from being Sarah's handmaiden to that of a second wife or concubine to Abraham. Addressing this question requires a thorough examination of the historical and cultural backdrop during the lifetimes of Hagar and Sarah. Noorsena, an expert in comparative theology, outlines that Sarah and Hagar resided in the ancient Middle East, a region defined by the legal and cultural norms of the era that placed a significant emphasis on women's fertility and productivity as crucial social and cultural values at that time (Bambang Noorsena, 2023). An archeological analysis of Sumerian law reveals the commonly held belief that female fertility symbolized prosperity and encompassed wealth, well-being, and harmony in the land, its inhabitants, the deities, and the universe. It was common for Sumerian texts lamenting the ruin of cities and disintegration of social order to highlight that when women ceased to bear children, livestock became barren, and fields yielded no crops (Adelina Millet Albà et al., 2018, p. 8).

When Abraham received God's vision as recorded in Genesis 12: 1) *Now the Lord said unto Abram: 'Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto the land that I will show thee, 2) And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and be thou a blessing* (*Tanakh: The Holy Scriptures According to the Masoteric Text*, 1917, p. 14). Rashi interprets this chapter by emphasizing the verse, *and Abraham took Sarai ... all the property they had collected, and the dependents they had in Haran...*(Gen.12). In this passage, Rashi underscores their departure as a missionary act, asserting that Abraham and Sarah brought the "souls of Haran (now Iraq)" under the protective wings of the *Shechinah* (dwelling), guiding them to recognize the one true God (Toledano, 1980, p. 527).

Nevertheless, after enduring numerous trials and with time passing, Abraham and Sarah grew old. Abraham began to inquire once more of God regarding His promise to establish him as a great nation. In Genesis 15: 2 it is stated, *And Abram said: 'O Lord GOD, what wilt Thou give me, seeing I go hence childless, and he that shall be possessor of my house is Eliezer of Damascus?'* then he continues, 3) *And Abram said: 'Behold, to me Thou hast given no seed, and, lo, one born in my house is to be mine heir.'* Then God answer his prayer, 4) *And, behold, the word of the LORD came unto him, saying: 'This man shall not be thine heir; but he that shall come forth out of thine own bowels shall be thine heir.'* Then God asked Abraham to go outside: *5) And He brought him forth abroad, and said: 'Look now toward heaven, and count the stars, if thou be able to count them'; and He said unto him: 'So shall thy seed be'* (*Tanakh: The Holy Scriptures According to the Masoteric Text*, 1917, p. 17).

Although this vision is undoubtedly clear, Sarah still struggles with her inability to conceive. Mary Mills illustrates this predicament by stating that while God had assured Abraham of a prosperous future as a great nation, there was no explicit indication that it would be through Sarah. Consequently, as she aged, Sarah became increasingly aware of her infertility and found the journey to motherhood challenging (Mills, 2008, p. 287). Then Sarah proposed a solution to their shared dilemma (Zucker & Reiss, 2009, p. 3), as expressed in Genesis 16:

> 1) Now Sarai Abram's wife bore him no children; and she had a handmaid, an Egyptian, whose name was Hagar. 2) And Sarai said unto Abram: 'Behold now, the Lord hath restrained me from bearing; go in, I pray thee, unto my handmaid; it may be that I shall be builded up through her.' And Abram hearkened to the voice of Sarai.

In this context, Tamez notes that it was customary in the Mediterranean region for wives to offer their slaves as concubines to their husbands to ensure they could have offspring. In such scenarios, the offspring of the slaves are regarded as legitimate children of the owner (Tamez, 1986, p.

132). Feminists refer to this as the practice of surrogacy in modern times. In Ancient Middle Eastern culture, a woman who cannot have children was often seen as a source of disgrace and was routinely blamed by her family, resulting in lasting psychological turmoil. Noorsena highlights this cultural perspective through the archeological discovery of 'the Code of Lipit-Ishtar' (Bambang Noorsena, 2023).

Lipit-Ishtar has been identified as one of the earliest codifiers of law, with a structure akin to that of the Sumerian code. Lipit-Ishtar was the name of the fifth king of the Isin dynasty, reigning for a period of eleven years (Steele, 1947, p. 159). The code specifically addresses matters related to slaves, both female and male (Steele, 1947, p. 164). In a manner similar to the Sumerian code, which venerates female fertility, this law allows a barren wife to provide her female servant to her husband for the purpose of bearing children (Doki, 2023, p. 182), as detailed earlier in Genesis 16:2. Anlezark clarifies the biblical story where the barren Sarah encourages Abraham to conceive with her servant Hagar, resulting in the birth of Ishmael (Anlezark, 2000, p. 188).

According to the midrashic interpretation, Sarah took Hagar [i.e., seduced her] with words. Sarah entrusted Hagar to Abraham, not to anyone else, and intended for her to be a wife, not merely a concubine (Kadari, 2009). The midrsahic commentary elaborates on Sarah's persuasive language in Genesis Rabbah 45:3,

> Sarai, Abram's wife, took Hagar the Egyptian, her maidservant" – she took her with words [of persuasion]. She said to her: 'How fortunate you are, that you are going to cleave to this sacred body.' "At the conclusion of ten years of Abram's residence in the land of Canaan" – Rabbi Ami in the name of Reish Lakish: From where is it derived what we learned in a Mishna: If one married a woman and remained with her ten years but she did not bear any children, he is not permitted to refrain from procreation, but rather, he should divorce her and marry another woman? It is from here: "At the conclusion of ten years of Abram's residence in the land of

> Canaan." This teaches us that residence outside of the Land is not included in the tally. "And she gave her to Abram her husband" – ["to Abram"] and not to another; "as a wife" – and not as a concubine (Bereshit Rabbah 45, n.d.).

On Abraham's compliance with Sarah's invitation for him to take Hagar, Anlezark presents Augustine's interpretation, who examines this issue through the lens of Western Church standards when interpreting contentious texts. Augustine justifies Abraham's choice to engage in sexual relations with Hagar as an act of adherence to a higher moral law that calls for procreation and the maintenance of the natural order, rather than being motivated by desire (Anlezark, 2000, p. 190). Drey further clarifies that Abraham's approval of his wife's scheme and the resulting conception of an heir for Sarah highlight Sarah's authority in Genesis chapter 16. The biblical author depicts Sarah as the catalyst of the primary action—she introduces Hagar to Abraham. Consequently, Hagar, the compliant servant, follows the orders and wishes of her mistress (Drey, 2002, p. 189).

In contrast, Islamic narratives regarding Hagar's union with Abraham are not as detailed as the Biblical account. However, Ṭabarī reference a hadith narrated by Abū Ja'far, which aligns with the account of Ibn Ishāq. It states that Hagar was an attractive servant-woman, and Sarah offered her to Abraham, saying, *I consider her a clean woman, so take her. Perhaps God will grant you a son from her.... So he had intercourse with Hagar, and she bore him Ishmael*" (Ṭabarī, 1987, p. 65). Certain elements that reflect a similar narrative across these two traditions can be identified as follows:

Feature	Jewish Perspective	Islamic Perspective
Sarah's offering	Genesis 16: 2 (Offering Hagar to Abraham)	*Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī* (Offering Hagar to Abraham)
Hagar is concubine/wife	- Genesis 16:3 - Targum Onkelos, Genesis 16:3 (Take Hagar to Abraham's wife) - Non-Midrash - Ezra Commentaries on Ezekiel 23:20 (in identifying Hagar as *pilgesh*/concubine)	- *Qiṣāṣ al-Anbiyā'* by al- Tha'labī (Hagar says to Gabriel that she is Abraham's concubine) - *Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī* (Hagar is Abraham's wife)

Table 2. Comparative Features of Hagar's Marriage to Abraham

Most Muslim scholars consider Hagar to be Abraham's second wife. Certain biblical interpretations (*midrash*) depict Hagar as inferior, portraying her as simply a slave and concubine (Attia, 2021, p. 2). Others express uncertainty regarding her unclear role as a wife, concubine, or surrogate wife (Firestone, 2000, p. 180). Zucker and Reiss highlight that Genesis 16:3 identifies Hagar with the term *'isha*, which translates to 'wife,' as opposed to '*pilgesh,'* which denotes concubine (Zucker & Reiss, 2009, p. 3). Nevertheless, Philip Yoo contends that the distinctiveness of Hagar's original portrayals diminishes after the amalgamation of sources, creating the biblical figure of Hagar—a character that presents various interpretative avenues as handmaid, wife, and concubine (Yoo, 2016, p. 235).

The Story of Hagar's exile in Jewish and Islamic Perspectives

After Sarah chose Hagar to become Abraham's wife, Hagar ultimately conceived Ishmael. However, the Bible reveals that after Hagar became pregnant, her demeanor towards her mistress shifted, showing signs of disrespect, as indicated in Genesis 16:4, *And he (Abraham) went in unto Hagar, and she conceived; and when she saw that she had conceived, her mistress was despised in her eyes* (Tanakh: The Holy Scriptures According to the Masoteric Text, 1917, p. 18). Targum Onkelos (Torah's official translation by Onkelos) notes in Genesis 16: 6, *Sarai said to Avram: The insult against me is your fault [I have a judgment against you]. I gave my maid to you and when she saw that she had conceived, I became slighted in her eyes. Let Adonoy (Lord) judge between me and you* (Onkelos Genesis 16, n.d.).

Rashi's commentary, citing Genesis Rabbah, interprets this chapter as follows: *I gave my handmaid, etc. between me and you*—be read (second person feminine), for she (Sarah) cast an evil eye on Hagar's pregnancy, and she miscarried her fetus. That is why the angel said to Hagar, "Behold, you will conceive." But was she not already pregnant? Yet he announces to her that she will conceive? But this teaches that she miscarried her first pregnancy. — [from *Gen. Rabbah* 45:5] (*Bereshit - Genesis - Chapter 16 (Parshah Lech Lecha)*, n.d.).

Modern scholars suggest that Hagar's pride in her fertility at an early age compared to Sarah is the root of the insult. Momanyi explains that Sarah felt offended and diminished by Hagar's disrespectful demeanor, prompting Sarah to retaliate by mistreating her (Momanyi, 2017, p. 75). Stump characterizes this scenario as the origin of the bitter and violent conflict between Hagar and Sarah (Stump, 2008, p. 138). However, the biblical accounts indicate that Sarah's harsh treatment of Hagar was sanctioned by Abraham, as noted in Genesis 16:6,

> "But Abram said unto Sarai: 'Behold, thy maid is in thy hand; do to her that which is good in thine eyes.' And Sarai dealt harshly with her, and she fled from her face." (Tanakh: The Holy Scriptures According to the Masoteric Text, 1917, p. 18).

Muslim tradition also illustrates Sarah's severe treatment of Hagar, albeit within a different narrative framework. According to certain Muslim traditions, Sarah's jealousy and cruel treatment of Hagar surfaced after both women had given birth to their sons (Ishmael and Isaac) and when their sons engaged in conflict as they matured. As narrated by Musa ibn Harun-'Amr ibn Hammad-Asbat-al Suddi: Sarah remarked to Abraham, *You may take pleasure in Hagar, for I have permitted it.* So, he had intercourse with Hagar and she gave birth to Ishmael. Then he had intercourse with Sarah, and she gave birth to Isaac. When Isaac reached maturity, he and Ishmael quarreled. Sarah's anger and jealousy towards Ishmael's mother led her to expel Hagar. But she summoned her back and welcomed her again. However, she later became furious and sent her away once more, only to bring her back again. She vowed to mutilate her, contemplating, *I shall cut off her nose, I shall cut off her ear-but no, that would deform her. I will circumcise her instead.* So she did that, and Hagar took a piece of cloth to wipe the blood away (Ṭabarī, 1987, p. 72).

The same context and story are recounted by Tha'labī, but it pertains to Abraham's permission for Sarah to act as she wished toward Hagar, which reflects a difference in behavior than that previously described by Ṭabarī. According to al-Suddl, Ibn Yasar, and others who transmit accounts: One day while they were engaged in a competition of archery, with Abraham judging the outcome, Ishmael emerged victorious, prompting Abraham to place him on his lap and seat Isaac beside him, all under Sarah's watchful gaze. She became incensed and exclaimed: *You have turned to the son of the servant-girl and have seated him in your bosom, whereas you have turned to my son and seated him at your side, while you had vowed that you would not injure me or do any evil to me.* The jealousy that commonly afflicts women overtook her, and she swore to cut off a piece of Hagar's flesh and disfigure her. But she regained her senses, even though she was still conflicted. Abraham advised her: *Lower her status and pierce her ears.* She did that, and it became a customary practice among women (Thaʿlabī, 2002, p. 139).

Sarah's jealousy and harassment of Hagar was also highlighted in a Shi'ite Qur'ānic commentary by 'Alī Ibrāhīm ibn Qummī, but in different context.

By referring to the hadith narrated by Imam Ja'far Ṣādiq, it is said that: *Ibrahim settled down in Shaam. When Ismail was born to Hajra (Hagar), Sara was highly distraught as she was barren. Therefore, she used to harass Ibrahim in connection with Hajra (Hagar). Ibrahim was aggrieved and he complained to Almighty Allah. Allah, the Mighty and Sublime revealed: "The simile of a woman is like a curved rib; if you leave it as it is, you will benefit from it; if you straighten it, it would break," and commanded Ibrahim to take Ismail and his mother away from that country* (Qummi, 1967, p. 210).

Despite the differing narratives presented by both Jewish and Islamic traditions, both accounts of Sarah's cruel treatment of Hagar culminate in Hagar fleeing into the wilderness. Momanyi noted that Sarah's animosity towards Hagar compelled Hagar to escape into the desert (Momanyi, 2017, p. 87). The more explicit comparative story is detailed in the table below,

Feature	Jewish Perspective	Islamic Perspective
Cause of Sarah's hostility	Genesis 16: 4-6 (Hagar looking down on Sarah)	*Tafsīr Qummī* (Sarah was distraught as she was barren) *Tārīkh al-Ṭabārī* (Because Ishmael fought with Isaac) *Qiṣaṣ al-Anbiyāʾ* by al-Tha`labī (Because Abraham seated Ishmael on his lap while Isaac was at his side)
Time setting of Sarah's hostility	Genesis 16: 4-6 (When Hagar conceived Ishmael)	*Tafsīr Qummī* (When Ismail was born to Hagar) *Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī* and *Qiṣaṣ al-Anbiyāʾ* (after both Sarah and

		Hagar gave birth to Ishmael and Isaac)
Abraham's permission	Genesis 16: 6 (He said*: Do her that which is good in your eyes*)	*Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī* and *Qiṣaṣ al-Anbiyā'* (He Said: *Lower her status and pierce her ears*) *Tafsīr Qummī* (Ibrahim was aggrieved and he complained to Allah. Allah commanded him to take Ismail and his mother away)
Hagar's emotional state	Genesis 16: 7 (Hagar's flee into the desert due to her fear of Sarah when she was still pregnant) Rashi's commentary on Genesis 16:6 (Hagar fled and had a miscarriage but was informed by an angel she would conceive a son named Ishmael)	*Ṣaḥīḥ Bukhārī*, Vol. 4, *Kitāb al-Aḥādīth al-Anbiyā*, Hadith 3364 (Hagar is the first woman in history who used a girdle to hide her tracks from Sarah due to her fear), but this hadith does not relate to her escape, instead referring to her expulsion by Sarah. *Tārīkh al-Ṭabārī* (Sarah became jealous of Hagar and Ishmael, so she sent Hagar away but called her back. But she became jealous again and expelled both Hagar and Ishmael)

Table 3. Comparative Feature of Sarah's Hostility toward Hagar

The biblical narrative emphasizes that Hagar and Ishmael do not belong to God's covenant regarding the establishment of a great nation through Abraham. Nonetheless, considering that Ishmael is also a descendant of

Abraham, God conveyed to Hagar that Ishmael's descendants would indeed become a significant nation, as articulated in Genesis 17: *And as for Ishmael, I have heard thee; behold, I have blessed him, and will make him fruitful, and will multiply him exceedingly; twelve princes shall he beget, and I will make him a great nation. 21 But My covenant will I establish with Isaac, whom Sarah shall bear unto thee at this set time in the next year*. Noorsena argues that the different interpretation among two traditions regarding to this matter stem from their distinct interpretative approaches. While Jewish tradition interprets the story of Hagar through a legalistic lens (focusing on God's covenant), Islamic tradition interprets it through a spiritual lens (Bambang Noorsena, 2023). This context illustrates how Jewish and Islamic traditions portray Hagar and Ishmael in contrasting manners, as outlined in the table below:

Feature	Jewish Perspective	Islamic Perspective
Hagar's status	- Midrash: compares Hagar to the fat of a donkey, referring Ezekiel 23: 20...*concubine whose flash of asses and issue from horse* (Claassens, 2013, p. 4) - Genesis 16: Sarah's handmaid from Egypt	- *Ṣaḥīḥ Bukhārī,* 3558: Mother of Arabs - *Tafsīr Qurṭubī, sūrah* Ibrahim (14): 37: Mother of Ishmael (*Qurṭubī*, 2007, p. 875) - *Tafsīr Qummī*: mother of the son of Khalīl al-Rahmān (*Qummī*, 1967, p. 212)
Ishmael's status	- Genesis 17: 18-19: Ishmael is not part of God's covenant: Abraham, '*Oh that Ishmael might live before Thee*!' And God said: ''*Nay, but Sarah thy wife shall bear thee a son;*'' - Midrash Genesis 16: 12, Ishmael is a wild ass of a man refers to wild donkey (*pere adam*) (Krayer, 2022, p. 75), not pure Israelite.	- *Tafsīr Al-Mīzān* by Ṭabātabā'ī: Ishmael is a trueborn son of Abraham and Abraham's legacy of monotheism (Ṭabātabā'ī, 1990) - *Tafsīr Qummī*: son of Khalīl al-Rahmān (Qummi, 1967, p. 212) - *Tafsīr Qurṭubī, sūrah* Ibrahim (14): 37: Ishmael is God's prophet (Qurṭubī, 2007, p. 885)

Table 4. Comparative Features of Hagar and Ishmael's Social Status in Jewish and Islamic Perspectives

Biblical accounts recount that following Hagar's delivery of Ishmael, Sarah ultimately became pregnant with Isaac, as stated in Genesis 21: 2*) And Sarah conceived, and bore Abraham a son in his old age, at the set time of which God had spoken to him. 3) And Abraham called the name of his son that was born unto him, whom Sarah bore to him, Isaac* (*Tanakh: The Holy Scriptures According to the Masoteric Text*, 1917, p. 25). When the angels arrived to announce to Sarah that she would conceive Isaac, one interpretation suggests that Sarah laughed out of astonishment at the thought of having a child at such an advanced age for both her and her husband, as she was ninety and Abraham was one hundred and twenty Tha'labī, 2002, p. 138). At the time Ishmael was born, Abraham was eighty-six years old (Bambang Noorsena, 2023). Ibn Kathīr emphasizes that the age difference between Ishmael and Isaac was thirteen years (Ibn Kathīr, 2003, p. 547). The Qur'ān also emphasizes the birth of Isaac in the *sūrah* Ibrahim (14): 35-41: ...*All praise is due to God who has given me, in my old age, Ishmael and Isaac...* (Quṭb, 2003b, p. 189). Tha'labī presents an alternative interpretation within Islam, suggesting that both Sarah and Hagar gave birth to Ishmael and Isaac simultaneously, allowing the two boys grow up together (Thaʿlabī, 2002, p. 139). Qurṭubī describes that 'Ibrahim had a son, Ishmael, when he was 97 years old and had a son, Isaac, when he was 112 years old' (Qurṭubī, 2007, p. 887), yet, he also quotes a hadith that claimed Ishmael suckled from Hagar after she found the well of Zamzam (Qurṭubī, 2007, p. 875).

Despite the differing narratives, the biblical account describes that when Sarah weaned Isaac, she witnessed Hagar's son mocking Isaac, which incited her anger and prompted her to demand that Abraham expel Hagar and Ishmael from her home. Genesis 21 states,

> 9) And Sarah saw the son of Hagar the Egyptian, whom she had borne unto Abraham, making sport (Mishaq). 10) Wherefore she said unto Abraham: 'Cast out this bondwoman

> and her son; for the son of this bondwoman shall not be heir with my son, even with Isaac.'

Ibn Ezra commented on the phrase 'making sport' as Ishmael was acting as a boy is wont to act. Sarah was jealous because he was older than her son (Meir, 1988, p. 218). Islamic tradition also emphasizes that Hagar's exile was due to Sarah's jealousy. It was reported that Sarah became jealous of Hagar after Ishmael was born, then Ibrahim took her to Mecca. In one retelling of the story, it is said that Ibrahim rode the Buraq (a mythical creature used as a vehicle) along with Hagar and his son, traveling from Sham to the valley of Mecca and arriving on the same day. There, he left his son with Hagar and returned to Sham on the same day, leaving the two of them behind. This was all done based on revelation from Allah. And, when he left the two of them, Ibrahim offered the prayer contained in the Qur'ānic *sūrah* Ibrahim (14): 37, *O our Lord! I have made some of my offspring to dwell in an uncultivable valley by Your Sacred House (the Ka'bah at Mecca) in order, O our Lord, that they may perform as-Ṣalat...*(Qurṭubī, 2007, p. 875).

Biblical narratives stated that, initially, Abraham was reluctant but ultimately complied with God's command (Motzki, 2015, p. 2). Teke analyzes Abraham's acquiescence to send Hagar and Ishmael into the desert, arguing that his reasoning and motivations were aligned with his apostolic mission (Teke, 2023, p. 1). A Shi'ite female scholar held a similar view, asserting that Abraham's decision to send Hagar away was based on divine instruction rather than the result of a jealous wife (Dhala, 2019, p. 14), as interpreted by Qummī;... *When water appeared in Mecca (the Zamzam well) and the birds and animals rushed towards it, the tribe of Jurham noticed this and decided to investigate the incidence of water. When they reached the spot, they saw a woman and a child below a tree. "Who are you?" they asked Hagar, "and how did you come here?" "I am the mother of the son of Khalīl al-Rahmān. And this is my son," replied Hagar. "The Almighty commanded him to leave us here"* (Qummī, 1967, p. 212).

This interpretation aligns with Ibn Ezra's commentary on the exile, where he notes that many were astonished by Abraham's actions. They questioned how Abraham could expel his son from his home or send away mother and child without any support. Where was his compassion? However, Ezra contends that Abraham acted in accordance with God's commands. Had he defied Sarah's wishes and provided financial support to Hagar, he would have been violating God's directive (Meir, 1988, p. 219).

At the moment of the banishment, Genesis 21: 14: emphasizes,

> And Abraham arose up early in the morning, and took bread and a bottle of water, and gave it unto Hagar, putting it on her shoulder, and the child, and sent her away; and she departed, and strayed in the wilderness of Beer-sheba.

This depicts Hagar carrying something on her shoulder with Ishmael, who is no longer an infant, and being cast out by Abraham. In contrast, Islamic tradition places the banishment during Ishmael's infancy, as noted by Ibn Kathīr in the *tafsīr* of *sūrah* 14:37, 'Iṣma'īl's (Ishmael) mother went on suckling Iṣma'īl (Ishmael) and drinking from the water (she had). When the water in the water-skin had all been used up, she became thirsty and her child also became thirsty' (Ibn Kathīr, 2003, p. 547). This aligns with the hadith reported by Bukharī in hadith 3364, narrated Ibn 'Abbās *radhiallaahu 'anh* [on the authority of the Prophet]:

> The first lady to use a girdle was the mother of Ishmael. She used a girdle so that she might hide her tracks from Sarah. Abraham brought her and her son Ishmael while she was suckling him, to a place near the Ka`ba under a tree on the spot of Zamzam, at the highest place in the mosque. During those days there was nobody in Mecca, nor was there any water So he made them sit over there and placed near them a

> leather bag containing some dates, and a small water-skin containing some water, and set out homeward. Ishmael's mother followed him saying, "O Abraham! Where are you going, leaving us in this valley where there is no person whose company we may enjoy, nor is there anything (to enjoy)?" She repeated that to him many times, but he did not look back at her Then she asked him, "Has Allah ordered you to do so?" He said, "Yes." She said, "Then He will not neglect us (Al-Bukhari, 1997, p. 351).

According to Qummī's interpretation, after Ibrahim left Hagar and Ishmael alone in the unoccupied valley, when the sun arose and Ishmael felt thirsty, Hagar become restless. She arose, went to the valley between the mountains of Safa and Marwa and cried for help until she lost sight of Ishmael. Hagar went to Safa and from there she saw a mirage at the Marwa. Thinking it to be water, she went to Marwa. When she reached there, she saw the pilgrims of Ka'ba walking slowly and some were running too. Again, she lost sight of Ishmael and became restless. She ran back to the spot from where he was visible. She continued to run between Safa and Marwa. When she reached Safa for the seventh time, she saw a spring of water gushing out from below the feet of Ishmael (Qummī, 1967, p. 211). Another report explains that when she reached Al-Marwa (for the last time) she heard a voice and she asked herself to be quiet and listened attentively. She heard the voice again and said, 'O, (whoever you may be)! You have made me hear your voice; have you got something to help me?' And behold! She saw an angel at the place of Zamzam, digging the earth with his heel (or his wing), till water flowed from that place. Ishmael's mother then drank the water so she could breastfeed her child. The angel then said, 'Don't be afraid of losing, because here is Allah's house which will be built by the child and his father, and indeed Allah will not waste its people (Qurṭubī, 2007, p. 875).

> When she reached the Marwa (for the last time) she heard a voice and she asked herself to be quiet and listened

> attentively. She heard the voice again and said, 'O, (whoever you may be)! You have made me hear your voice; have you got something to help me?" And behold! She saw an angel at the place of Zamzam, digging the earth with his heel (or his wing), till water flowed from that place. She started to make something like a basin around it, using her hand in this way, and started filling her water-skin with water with her hands, and the water was flowing out after she had scooped some of it." The Prophet added, "May Allah bestow Mercy on Ishmael's mother! Had she let the Zamzam (flow without trying to control it) (or had she not scooped from that water) (to fill her water-skin), Zamzam would have been a stream flowing on the surface of the earth." The Prophet further added, "Then she drank (water) and suckled her child. The angel said to her, 'Don't be afraid of being neglected, for this is the House of Allah which will be built by this boy and his father, and Allah never neglects His people' (Bukharī hadith 3364)

It is narrated that the name Zamzam for the well originated from Hagar, accentuated by her Egyptian language. When the water flowed, Hagar said, "Zam... Zam..." which means stay.... stay.... (M.A, 1882, p. 185). Yet, according to Qummī, the word Zam... Zam... comes from Arabic which means stop...stop... (Qummī, 1967, p. 212)

In Genesis 21: 15-21, although Ishmael is portrayed as being older than Isaac, he is depicted as being sickly when he and his mother were expelled by Abraham. Consequently, Hagar positioned him beneath the shrubs and faced away from him to avoid witnessing his demise; then, God manifested to her and proclaimed that He would cause her offspring to become a great nation, subsequently granting her access to a well.

> *15) And the water in the bottle was spent, and she cast the child under one of the shrubs. 16) And she went, and sat her down over against him a good way off, as it were a bow-shot; for she said: 'Let me not look upon the death of the child.' And*

she sat over against him, and lifted up her voice, and wept. 17) And God heard the voice of the lad; and the angel of God called to Hagar out of heaven, and said unto her: 'What aileth thee, Hagar? fear not; for God hath heard the voice of the lad where he is. 18) Arise, lift up the lad, and hold him fast by thy hand; for I will make him a great nation.' 19) And God opened her eyes, and she saw a well of water; and she went, and filled the bottle with water, and gave the lad drink. 20) And God was with the lad, and he grew; and he dwelt in the wilderness, and became an archer. 21) And he dwelt in the wilderness of Paran; and his mother took him a wife out of the land of Egypt.

The table below outlines key events associated with Hagar's expulsion that are referenced in both Jewish and Islamic traditions:

Key Topics	Jewish Perspective	Islamic Perspective
Age gap	Ishmael was 14-17 years older than Isaac	- Both Ishmael and Isaac are the same age and still infants (Tha`labī, 2002, p. 139) - Ismail's mother drank the water of Zamzam so she could breastfeed her child (Qurṭubī, 2007, p. 875)
Packed meal	Bread and water placed on Hagar's shoulder (Genesis 21: 14)	A leather bag containing some dates, and a small water-skin containing water placed under the palm tree after Abraham brought the two to the Ka`ba (Bukharī hadith 3364)

Desert's name	Beer-sheba (Genesis 21:15), and they dwelt in the wilderness of Paran (Genesis 21:21)	Mecca (Bukharī hadith, 3364) Muslim scholars identify 'Paran' as Mecca ('Athamina, 1998, p. 97)
Hagar's movement	Genesis 21: 15: Hagar tried to avoid witnessing Ishmael's agony.	(Bukharī hadith, 3364): Hagar ran to Safa and Marwah searching for help to safe Ishmael from thirst.
God's Promise	Genesis 21: 18: *'Arise, lift up the lad, and hold him fast by thy hand; for I (God) will make him a great nation.'*	QS Baqarah (2):158 and Bukharī hadith, 3364: *The angel said to her, 'Don't be afraid of being neglected, for this is the House of Allah which will be built by this boy and his father, and Allah never neglects His people.'*
Miraculous well	Genesis 21: 19: *God opened her eyes, and she saw a well of water.* On this occasion, Hagar referred to God as el-Roi (the One Who Sees me)	QS Baqarah (2):158 and Bukharī hadith, 3364: *Hagar saw an angel at the place of Zamzam, digging the earth with his heel (or his wing), till water flowed from that place…*

Table 5. Comparative Key Topics in the story of Hagar's Expulsion

Based on both Jewish and Islamic interpretations, Ibrahim's choice to leave Hagar and Ishmael in the desert was not merely to satisfy Sarah. While Sarah was certainly jealous, her emotional response was not the primary reason for Abraham sending Hagar and Ishmael into the wilderness. As noted by Ibn Ezra and contemporary scholar Noorsena, if Abraham were to disregard God's command to send Hagar into the

desert, then God's promise of a great nation for both Isaac and Ishmael would not come to fruition if the two boys remained near one another. Today, Hagar is recognized as the matriarch of Arabs and Ishmael's mother, who is credited with the construction of the *Ka`bah* in Islamic tradition, while the rabbis highlight Sarah as the Jewish Matriarch. Sarah is symbolically associated with Jerusalem or identified with Israel (Pabst, 2003, p. 9).

From a historical standpoint, Patrick Krayer posits that Sarah's insistence on Hagar's banishment could be deemed legitimate under ancient laws that permitted a master to grant freedom to a slave woman and her offspring. Abraham, following God's guidance, acquiesced to Sarah's request, leading to Hagar and Ishmael's departure, which signified their liberation (Krayer, 2022, p. 86). From a theological perspective, God reassures Hagar about Ishmael's forthcoming greatness, proclaiming "I will multiply your descendants exceedingly, so that they shall not be counted for multitude" (Gen 16:10) (Davidson, 2002, p. 172). Shi`ite perspectives also recognize Hagar as a significant female figure and a symbol of Islamic identity, attributing to her a pioneering accomplishment that undeniably cemented her role as an essential component in one of Islam's pillars of worship (the *Sa'i* rituals on the hajj pilgrimage) (Dhala, 2019, p. 5).

Another aspect worth noting in the story of Hagar's exile is that the Islamic tradition recounts a private conversation between Hagar and Ibrahim, inquiring about the reasons for her abandonment and whether it was a divine decision.

> *Ishmael's mother followed him saying, "O Abraham! Where are you going, leaving us in this valley where there is no person whose company we may enjoy, nor is there anything (to enjoy)?" She repeated that to him many times, but he did not look back at her Then she asked him, "Has Allah ordered you to do so?" He said, "Yes." She said, "Then He will not neglect us* (Al-Bukharī, 1997, p. 351).

This dialogue is absent in Genesis. There, the description of Abraham waking early in the morning to prepare bread and water and placing it on Hagar's shoulder seems to suggest that Abraham did not accompany Hagar and left her to journey alone into the wilderness, implying that this dialogue did not occur. Nevertheless, the oldest rabbinic text of *Pirge Abot* characterizes the expulsion of Ishmael and the servant girl Hagar as part of Abraham's test (Kaczorowska, 2021, p. 1362). It highlights that the story of Hagar and Ishmael's expulsion in Genesis encompasses more than just Jewish law (*halakic*), but also serves as a cultural narrative that shapes identity. It emphasizes how Genesis reflects the cultural dynamics and the nature of familial relationships within Abraham's household (Nikolsky, 2010, p. 257).

Conclusion

The stories surrounding Hagar's exile in both Islamic and Jewish traditions are intricately woven into multifaceted intertextual frameworks. Divergences exist not only between these two traditions but also within each one individually. In Judaism, for instance, various interpretative approaches are employed to understand the Torah, leading to differing translations and commentaries, which are categorized into distinct *Targum*, *Midrashic* and non-*Midrashic* interpretations. As for the Islamic tradition, the challenge lies in exploring the convergence of reports from the Prophet, or *hadith*, with various biblical or Midrashic accounts to construct the story of Hagar, examining how her portrayal evolved in contrast to her depiction in the Bible.

Any analysis must also account for the legal and cultural contexts of Hagar's era in order to comprehend the broader historical framework that informed the depiction of Hagar in relation to her expulsion across various traditions, thereby facilitating an in-depth understanding of their significance and ramifications. The multifaceted factors contributing to the divergence in Hagar's legacy stem from her differing roles within Islamic and Jewish traditions, particularly concerning her son Ishmael's status in the context of the divine covenant. From the Jewish perspective, Hagar is characterized as originating from a foreign land, and she

continues to be regarded as an outsider, as both she and her son are seen as being excluded from Abraham's lineage within the divine covenant, lacking pure Israelite blood. Conversely, in the Islamic tradition, Hagar's narrative is articulated from a grassroots perspective; ascending from the lowest echelons of society to achieve a high station within Islam due to her significant contributions, alongside Ishmael, to the construction of the Ka`ba, which remains the direction of prayer for the Muslim community to this day.

Notwithstanding these discrepancies, Hagar is recognized as a significant Biblical figure within the Jewish tradition due to her unique ability to engage in direct communication with the Divine and her designation of God as El-Roi (God Who Sees Me), alongside the promise bestowed upon her by God to establish her progeny as a great nation. Within the Islamic tradition, Hagar is venerated as a pivotal spiritual figure, characterized by her role as a matriarch who diligently attended to Ishmael in the wilderness, exemplifying the essence of her faith. Her endeavors to traverse between Safa and Marwa and her quest for the Zamzam well have been immortalized in one of the rituals of the Hajj pilgrimage, which is performed by millions of Muslims. In contemporary discourse, although Hagar's expulsion highlights tensions between tradition and modernity, it also signifies that the interpretation of Hagar's story within religious frameworks remains dynamic, perpetually evolving and responding to emerging challenges, as evidenced by the analyses presented by feminist scholars across both Jewish and Islamic traditions.

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