

וַיִּזְכְּרוּם הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה לַחֲמֵשׁ עָשָׂר בַּחֹדֶשׁ הַשְּׁלִישִׁי לַיְהוָה וְעָשְׂתֶם אֵת הַחַג הַזֶּה לְיְהוָה לְדוֹרוֹתַיִךְמִן הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה וְעָשְׂתֶם אֵת הַחַג הַזֶּה לְיְהוָה לְדוֹרוֹתַיִךְ

wa-haya ha-yōm haza lakhem li-zikrōn wa-Khagōtem otō Khag li-Yehōwa li-dorotaychem khuqat `olam taKhaguhū

oeAnd this day shall be unto you for a memorial; and ye shall keep it a feast to the LORD throughout your generations; ye shall keep it a feast by an ordinance for ever.” (Exodus 12:14)

In this verse the King James translators rendered the uninflected noun *Khag* (חַג) as oefeast”. This word *Khag* is wholly cognate to the Arabic *Hajj* .(حَجَّ) Elsewhere in the verse the word *Khag* is inflected as *Khagotem* and *taKhaguhū*. One must pay attention to the fact that the Hebrew phonetic oekh” (ח) is the pharyngeal fricative oeh” (ח) in Arabic. Also, one must note that the phonetic oeg” (ח) is cognate to the Arabic oej” .(ح) So for analytical purposes in this context the verse would be rendered:

oeAnd this day shall be unto you for a memorial; and ye shall keep it a *Hajj* to the LORD throughout your generations; ye shall keep it a *Hajj* by an ordinance forever.”

Another verse using this root is the following:

וַיִּזְכְּרוּם הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה לַחֲמֵשׁ עָשָׂר בַּחֹדֶשׁ הַשְּׁלִישִׁי לַיְהוָה וְעָשְׂתֶם אֵת הַחַג הַזֶּה לְיְהוָה לְדוֹרוֹתַיִךְמִן הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה וְעָשְׂתֶם אֵת הַחַג הַזֶּה לְיְהוָה לְדוֹרוֹתַיִךְ

wa-ākhar bā'u Mōshe wa-Aharōn wa-yomru el-Par`o koh-amar Yahweh Elohay Yishrael shalach et-`ami wa-yakhugū li ba-midbār

oeAnd afterward Moses and Aaron went in, and told Pharaoh, Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, Let my people go , that they may hold a feast unto me in the wilderness.” (Exodus 5:1)

The inflected word that the King James translators rendered oefeast” is *yakhuggū* (יַחַגּוּ) which is cognate to the Arabic *oeyuhajjū*” (يُحَاجُّونِي) so for analytical purposes the verse would be rendered in this context as:

oeAnd afterward Moses and Aaron went in, and told Pharaoh, Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, Let my people go, that they may hold a *Hajj* unto me in the wilderness.”

This is not to suggest that Moses and Aaron went to Mecca and performed *Hajj* as Muslims know it today. It is merely to exemplify that a consecrated journey and pilgrimage unto God at His Temple did, indeed, precede the rise of Islam in the 7th Century CE.

An additional and astonishing dimension to this that makes the concept of lexical borrowing between the Old Testament and the Quran improbable, if not outright impossible, is found in an alternate form of the root in Hebrew, *Khug* .(חָג) Friedrich Wilhelm Gesenius (1846) defines this word:

oeחָג To describe a circle, to draw a circle, as with compasses. Job 26:10...m. a circle, sphere, used of the arch or vault of the sky, Pro. 8:27; Job 22:14; of the world, Isa. 40:22.”[2]

Let us look at the verses he has cited above:

oeWhen he prepared the heavens, I was there: when he set a compass (⦶⦶⦶) upon the face of the depth.” (Proverbs 8:27)

oeThick clouds are a covering to him, that he seeth not; and he walketh in the *circuit* of heaven)⦶⦶⦶⦶ ⦶⦶⦶⦶).” (Job 22:14)

oeIt is he that sitteth upon the *circle of the earth* ,(⦶⦶⦶⦶ ⦶⦶⦶) and the inhabitants thereof are as grasshoppers; that stretcheth out the heavens as a curtain, and spreadeth them out as a tent to dwell in.” (Isaiah 40:22)

Thus, this word not only means sacred pilgrimage and feast unto God in the Bible, it also means to *encircle*. To any Muslim this will be a striking discovery.

Semitic languages have been, since time immemorial, broad and deep systems of expression where one word’s many variant, but supplementary, meanings all coalesce to a greater understanding of that lexeme. So in this case we have a root which has a form meaning a feast, also meaning a pilgrimage, and in one form meaning to *encircle*! The *Hajj* pilgrimage, which is at its core an *encircling* of the Ka`bah called *Tawāf*, is concluded with none other than the Feast of the Sacrifice, *Eid al-Adha*, to commemorate Abraham’s willingness to sacrifice his son at God’s command. Borrowing all these meanings buried in lexica that did not even exist until hundreds of years after the life of the Prophet Muhammad would require no short of a Semitic linguist and Biblical scholar. It should be noted that the Bible itself would not be available until 200-300 years after the passing of the Prophet Muhammad[3]. Such lexical depth and lucidity is consistently found throughout the Quran as God has stated therein:

oeAnd this Quran is not such as could ever be produced by other than Allah (Lord of the heavens and the earth), but it is a confirmation of (the revelation) which was before it [i.e. the Torah, and the Gospel, etc.], and a full explanation of the Book (i.e. laws and orders, etc, decreed for humankind) - wherein there is no doubt from the the Lord of the Worlds” (Quran 10:37)

Endnotes:

[1] *Lisan al-`Arab*, Ibn al-Mandhur

[2] *The Hebrew and Chaldee Lexicon*, Friedrich Wilhelm Gesenius, p. 263

[3] *The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*, vol. 4, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, p. 982

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