

*motherhood,
and infertility in
islam.*

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[This is] a blessed Book which we have revealed to you, [O Muhammad], that they might reflect upon its verses and that those of understanding would be reminded.

Q38: V41

INTRODUCTION.

This book is the third part in the ongoing Classical Arabic series geared towards a deeper understanding of Allah's words, and that of the prophet pbuh. In this installation, the hadith 'paradise lies beneath the feet of mothers' was looked into, and hopefully, you have a deeper and more meaningful understanding of the hadith after reading it.

In the bits about infertility, the journey started with Zakariyya and his wife; it is interesting to note that the word that was used to qualify his wife's infertility is a'qira, and the word that was used to qualify the healing she got is Aslahna, which is one of the ways to write Solih. And this is interesting because Prophet Solih was sent to a people that did - wait for it - A'qira on a camel. Solih, was the cure to the A'qira. More jewels like this are uncovered the deeper one digs into the Quran using Classical Arabic as a tool unlike Modern Arabic that continues to lack depth.

The case of IbraHeem and his wife was also looked into; there, we were able to recreate the scene of him and his wife being informed and being cured in a chronological order. We also touched on the possibility that the choice of barbecue to the Angels might be a clue to their diet, and how that may have affected their infertility; or that the choice was just one that was meant to retell ancient assassin customs.

In the concluding part of the book, some of the other words in the Quran that were translated to being barren in the Quran were looked into through our Classical Arabic lens to see how they may fit into the human biology of barrenness, and to further see if some cures could be deduced from the verses they were mentioned in.

We truly hope you enjoy reading it more than we enjoyed writing it, and we thoroughly enjoyed writing it.

A CLASSICAL ARABIC UNDERSTANDING OF 'PARADISE LIES BENEATH THE FEET OF MOTHERS'.

Have you, like me, ever wondered what the meaning of the hadith of the prophet pbuh that says ‘paradise lies beneath the feet of mothers’ mean? Does it mean that for one to enter paradise, one has to go into one’s mother’s feet? Does one have to place them over one’s head? Every day? Once a week, a month, a year? Or is it an idiomatic or allegorical expression?

What does it really mean?

The answers to these questions is what I set out to unravel in this piece. I should state right off the bat that I do not think the hadith is an idiomatic expression. Understanding the hadith requires that one understands Classical Arabic. And the same sentiment is true of understanding the Quran, because it is only when we understand how the words were understood in classical times that we would be able to make sense of it today.

I mean, the sentence was made over 1400 years ago; no doubt, true meaning of words have been lost to what is now called Modern Arabic. To bring it closer to home, Shakespeare’s words are only recently being converted to modern English for ease in reading, and grasping, and Shakespeare lived less than five centuries ago, and here is an hadith that was said over fourteen centuries ago.

You see, even then, the nomadic Arab bedouins were said to possess the proper Arabic understanding, and so, in understanding a lot of words in the Quran, scholars would go and live with the bedouins in the desert for years and years, and would only return when they've mastered the tongue. Some parents go a step further, an example is Imam Shafi's mom, who sent Imam Shafi to live with the bedouins as a boy, to return years later; this is also a practice that is being done till date, albeit minuscule.

Now that we've understood that, let's take a look at the hadith – Al jannatu tahta aqdamil ummaHati; which is popularly translated as 'paradise lies beneath the feet of mothers'. The hadith is narrated by Mu'awiyah bin Jahima al-Sulami and reported by Imam ibn Hanbal. The hadith contains an exchange between the prophet pbuh and one of his companions by the name of As-Sulami. Wherein Sulami asked to join a military expedition, and for reasons unknown, the prophet pbuh enquired if he has a mother. To which he replied in the affirmative, and then the prophet pbuh said, "stay with her, because paradise lies beneath her feet."

That's the most context I could unearth; so we don't know if he pbuh asked every companion this question, and why he pbuh asked this question this time, because obviously, some of his battle companions definitely still had their parents. Perhaps, he pbuh knows of the mother beforehand, and knows of her special needs et al. Either way, notwithstanding all of the unknowns, we can still make sense of what seems like an idiomatic expression at first glance but which isn't one if one tries to understand it with Classical Arabic norms and not modern Arabic nuances.

transliterates to Al jannatu tahta aqdamil ummaHati. It's safe to assume that we all know that Al jannat is paradise, so we don't have to look deeper into what it means classically.

The word which we must start this exercise with is 'tahta'. You see, tahta occurs a total of 51 times in the Quran, and without even looking at the imagery that the Bedouins used in understanding this word, the Quran's usage is extensive enough to offer an encompassing definition.

In Q20 V6, it was used to mean things 'beneath' the earth. In Q66 V10, it was used to mean being 'wedded' or 'married'. In Q48 V18, it was used to mean being 'under the shade'. And in Q3 V15, it was used to mean 'within'. In fact, in Q43 V51, and other places in the Quran, it has been translated as 'feet'. So when the prophet pbuh said what he pbuh is said to have said, any of the above meanings could have been what he pbuh meant.

And when we look into what 'aqdam' means, we will be able to have a clearer picture of what the hadith means. The root alphabets of aqdam are qaf, dal and mim, and in this hadith, it was translated as 'feet', but is aqdam feet? As we've seen above, tahta is translated as feet, and so is the word arjul in the Quran.

Tahta is sometimes translated as feet because it also means for something to be beneath, even if it is not under. For example, if one stands under a tree, that doesn't mean one stands beneath its root, one standing in between the tree's branches and root is enough to be referred to as tahta; perhaps, standing under a tree is

best expressed as standing ‘within’ a tree, even though one is not standing within its trunk per se, but you get the point.

Now, let’s look into aqdam. As I have written above, it has its root letters as qaf, dal and mim, and the word and its variations occur a total of 48 times in the Quran. And in its classical sense, it means to move forward, to lead, to advance, to be in front, and from it the idea of bravery, courage and other virtues that requires being seen ahead follows.

But how did it come to mean ‘feet’? It did come to mean that because to walk, we need to put our legs forward, and so it came to be used for ‘feet’, but its actual meaning is beyond that. In Q46 V11, it was used to mean ‘ancient’, and why is that? Because those were the people that lived first; they lived ahead of our existence, in a way, led us. You know how in English, ‘FORE-fathers’ is used to represent those that came before us. And this is qadam, to be ahead, to send something forth and the likes.

Arjul however, one is probably used to seeing it mean ‘man’ as in Q5 V23 et al, and in the likes of Q29 V55, it is used to mean feet. How did it come to mean that? Rajul, in fact, is the word that means ‘feet’, and it only came to be used for ‘man’, because as we say in English, ‘a man has to be able to stand on his two feet’. So it is only someone who is independent of other’s help, someone who is independent, that is called a man; man here can refer to woman too by the way. So, anyone that can stand on their feet is a man. And that is how Modern Arabic has come to derive man from rajul.

What then happens when we revisit the hadith that started all

these with these new found understanding of the words? The way I have come to make sense of the hadith, away from thinking that I have to place my mother's feet on my head, or find a way to enter her feet is that paradise lies within what one's mother sends forth on one's behalf, either in prayers, good deeds and the likes.

And so what that must have meant for As-Sulami must have been to make sure to go and get in his mother's good books before joining the military expedition, that way, she sends 'afore', she sends 'forth', she sends 'ahead' of him prayers on his behalf, and because of these prayers or whatever goods she sends forth on his behalf, if he dies in battle, he is granted paradise.

So, paradise lying beneath one's mother's feet is a poetic rendition that is better understood when one looks into its classical meaning.

Now, if you are a mother, and unwilling to share this newly discovered power you have on your children with anyone, you can stop reading here, and not proceed further as we look into the word ummuHati. 😊 Its root alphabets are alif, mim and mim, and 10 forms of it occur 119 times in the Quran, and as you could have guessed, it was used to mean a host of things.

We will try to stick with the ones that matter to the understanding of this hadith. Umm started to be used to mean mother because that's supposedly what the baby says first in trying to reach its mother for milk and care. And of course, 'mother' here can include father or both parents if they both had a hand in caring for and nurturing the child.

And in line with the baby's utterance bit, Ummi was born; Ummi is translated as illiterate because anyone that doesn't learn or know how to read or write is like a baby who can only talk and can't read or write. And so the prophet pbuh was referred to as Ummi because he pbuh couldn't read or write.

Another word that is derived is Umma, in Q35 V24, in which it is translated as Nation or a people. It started to be used for that because Mothers populate a nation, and a nation dies off if mothers die off. In Q75 V5 it was used to mean in front or future, and in Q2 V124, it was used to mean an Imam, a leader.

So, ummuHati, though in Sulami's context meant his mother, and that definitely applies to all of the prophet's pbuh ummah; perhaps, part of the meanings that can be derived from the hadith is also that paradise lies within what the Ummu (mother, parent, parents or caregiver), the Imam (leader), the Ummah (nation), and the Ummi (Innocent) sends forth on one's behalf; which in turn carries the responsibility of being good to everyone especially the category of people highlighted above.

I hope this helps clarify the meaning of the hadith, and its purport. Alhamdullillah.

INFERTILITY IN THE QURAN, A CLASSICAL ARABIC LOOK AT THE CASE OF ZAKARIYYA AND HIS WIFE. PT. 1.

In this piece, we will be looking at the instances of Infertility in the Quran. As those that know about barrenness are aware of, not all infertility are the same. Though the result, which is not being able to have kids may be the same, the symptoms are different. And reading through the Quran, I have come to realize that though the translators have it as ‘barren’, the Arabic words are different. Which invariably means that Allah was referring to different forms of barrenness.

In the case of Zakariyya’s wife, the word translated to barren is a’qira, while in the case of IbraHeem’s wife, the word translated to barren is a’qeema. There are other words that were translated to ‘barren’ in the Quran other than the 2 above, but they weren’t attributed to humans. We will look into them also, InshaAllah, to see how they may apply.

So, my aim here, and in subsequent posts, is to look into these words, and perhaps, as we will see; they can help us understand the symptoms better, and in so doing, be able to provide a remedy. As you will also see; Allah may have pointed us to the direction one has to take to remedy the symptoms.

Anyway, the first type of barrenness in the Quran that we will be looking into is the one called A’qira. The root alphabets of the word are ain, qaf and ra, and 2 forms of the word occurred a total of 8 times in the Quran; a’qara 5 times, and a’qir 3 times.

The word is said to mean the main part of one's dwelling, real estate, landed property, residence; furniture; to slay by stabbing, to wound, to be savaged by an animal; to be barren, sterile; to be alcoholic; medicine. At first glance, all these meanings may seem unrelated, but hopefully, when we are done going through all the imageries that conjures up a'qira, you'll see how they are related.

Our conversation starts in the Quran. In Q7 V77, Q11 V65, Q26 V157, Q54 V29 and Q91 V14, the first form, a'qar, was used. In those verses, Allah tells us about the people of Thamud. The prophet that was sent to them is Solih. The proud Thamudians didn't believe in him, and at some point, they asked him to prove his prophethood by causing a pregnant she-camel to come out of a rock. It did. But what they didn't envisage was that the camel will give birth to her calf, and that both camel and calf will have to drink from their well, eat from their fields and all. And so it came to pass that they hamstrung the camel. Which means that they cut her hamstrings, and since the hamstrings are needed to be able to move around, the camel wasn't able to move, and so it bled to death. The disbelieving Thamudians were destroyed because of this, while Solih and the believers were saved. That's the bit from the story that we need in explaining what a'qir means.

With respect to Zakariyya's wife, the word translated to 'barren' in Q3 V40, Q19 V5 and Q19 V8 is a'qir, the same word translated to 'hamstrung' in the case of the she-camel of Thamud. So, in trying to understand the nature of Zakariyya's wife's barrenness, we will have to understand a'qira as it relates to being 'hamstrung'.

Above, I mentioned the classical arabic definitions of a'qir, and now that we've seen how it was used in the case of the camel, it's time to put them all together to form a cohesive meaning:

First of all, what we see is that for a'qir to occur, there must have been a stabbing, or cutting of some kind which then results in a fatal wound. So, any wound that may result in death can be called a'qir. Also, any wild animal that can cause such fatal injury can also be called a'qir. So that animals like lion, leopard and wolf are classically referred to as a'qir animals.

Second imagery that we should have in mind is the fact that blood slowly flows from the said animal. Irregularly too, for a seemingly long period of time; the blood drain is not instant. It's a means of torture. A slow death. And the animal is helpless, because of its immobility, it stays in the same spot, and the blood slowly drains out of it depending on the areas of pressure.

Now, the reason the said animal is unable to move is because of the part of the animal that was stabbed or torn, the hamstrings. It will be equivalent to making a deep horizontal cut behind a human's thigh. Despite the wishes of the said human, he won't be able to move, not with those legs anyway. There is a reason the femur, which is the thigh bone, is the strongest bone in the body, because, simply put, it carries the entire body, the entire body rests on it. Literally. And so the tendons around it are really important for one to be able to maintain mobility.

Which takes us to the next definition. So, any thing that its existence is needed for the other to exist, is also called an a'qir. The pillar, the main part of something. And that's why the main part

of one's dwelling is called an a'qir. And because the animal is immobile, immovable; a land, house, residence, real estate, or any landed property is also called an a'qir. And some furnitures are also referred to as a'qir, of course, because they are immovable, or not easily movable.

Now that we know all that, it will be easy to understand what is meant when medicine and alcohol are referred to as a'qir.

Obviously, not all medicines are so referred, only those that will render one immobile are; and not all alcohol are, only those that will render one immobile, or bleeding, et al will be so referred.

It is this word, a'qir, that was used to qualify Zakariyya's wife's childless state.

To be able to fully grasp how this is true to infertility aka barrenness, we will have to look into how a child is made. I will try as much as possible to simplify the biological terms.

So, to start with, I want you to fold your palms to make fists, and face the fists downward, almost akimbo-like. Now that you've done or imagined that, let's get into the explanation. You see, the journey of the egg that the sperm needs to fertilize starts in either of the fists, aka the ovaries. The egg is made there, and when it is released to your arm aka fallopian tubes, ovulation is said to have occurred. The said egg moves from your wrist to your shoulder, and heads towards the chest which in this case, is called the uterus. As the egg heads to the uterus, the walls of the uterus thickens, so that the egg will have a safe and guarded place to protect the egg (the potential baby). If the egg doesn't come in contact with sperm all through its journey through the fallopian

tube, and in the uterus, it gradually starts to die, and eventually, that, and the thick walls in the uterus that was made to protect the egg, are all removed from the body when the lady is said to be menstruating.

Now that we've understood that, let's go back to a'qir. In the woman that may be referred to as barren, a plethora of anomalies can occur, so that the process I just explained doesn't happen, and as you will see, most are related to a'qir as we've come to understand it.

The first anomaly that can occur starts in the fists (ovaries). The ovaries can decide to not release eggs, thus, we have our first immobility. And since no eggs are released, the sperm will have nothing to fertilize. The uterus however, thickens itself, expecting eggs, and when it has reached its term, it self destructs, and the woman has her menstruation. So, despite not having eggs in the uterus, one can continue having their menstrual cycle. This can disrupt the cycle though, because the uterus isn't getting what it should be getting, thereby having irregular periods.

Did you notice the 'self destruction'? The uterus wall linings tears itself up, sheds itself, and flushes itself out, and everything within it, slowly, over a number of days; seeing the parallels, already?

Another anomaly that can happen is when an egg is released, sperm meets it in the fallopian tube, but because of a wound at the end of the tube, 'the shoulder' in our 'exercise', the fertilized egg is unable to drop into the chest (the uterus). And so the egg continues to grow, and a surgery will be needed to save the woman, it's a fatal anomaly. The egg becomes stagnated in the

tube, due to the injury, and is unable to get to its destination in the uterus. The woman bleeds regardless.

Another anomaly occurs when the fertilized egg gets to the uterus, but it is unable to plant itself in the walls of the uterus because the walls have for some reason become so hard that the egg is then stagnated in the uterus until it dies, and the uterus walls sheds itself, and menses occurs. The hardening of the uterus wall that doesn't let the egg plant itself on it is called fibroid. So, again, the egg's movement is restricted due to an impediment, and blood still flows regardless. After each blood flow that discards the contents of the uterus, the process starts all over again.

With each blood flow, life, or potential life, is lost. With each blood flow, immobility occurs, one that deprives the egg its mission to plant itself and grow. With each blood flow, the main part of an entity dies. With each blood flow, the uterus linings, one strong enough to protect the egg if it had planted, tears itself down – with blood, endometrial tissue, cervical mucus, vagina secretion – and flushes itself out of the body. Is the parallel getting clearer now?

The above scenarios are just some of the incidents that can happen in a woman that can cause and continue to cause a woman to be unable to birth a child.

To bring it all together, we can say the egg is the main part in this process. And as we've seen, sometimes, the ovaries doesn't produce one due to an imbalance or the other, and when it releases, its path can be perilous that by the time it gets to the

uterus, it is dead, and sometimes, even if it gets fertilized, and gets to the uterus, its journey can end there, and not be able to plant itself in the uterus wall. And whilst all of these are going on, hormones and chemicals are being released, they are being communicated, and being delivered. If there is an imbalance of a particular hormone, whether being too high or too low, it can abort the process, so that the egg is then flushed out during menstruation.

An example of how important it is for the hormones and chemicals to communicate right is when stress hormones are released during menstruation. In an effort to get rid of the shedding uterus walls and all that it has in it, the stress hormones tells the uterus to squeeze, but sometimes, it squeezes too tightly, and the woman is said to be having cramps also known as dysmenorrhea. I promise, henceforth, that will be the last big biological word I will use in this piece; because big pain deserves its big word accompanying it. Okay, give me one more big biological word, just one, I will make sure I make it ‘count’. By the way, the stress hormones that tells the uterus to squeeze is the same that tells the womb to contract aka squeeze, when a child is being born. In a way, humans are born the same way periods are flushed. Let that sink in. Humble your ego. I digress.

Now, one has to go to the doctor for them to be able to know exactly which ‘immobility’ is happening in one. And when they know exactly what’s happening, they then prescribe the particular hormone balancing medication that will rectify the imbalance. For some of those medications to work, the doctor may ask one to lose some weight, or in very rare cases, gain some weight, for someone that’s extremely underweight. They may also

recommend the intake of some food, or an overall diet change that can help one maintain not just the egg, but one's body through the pregnancy, and beyond.

The regulation of these hormones are so important that even in fibroid, as we've seen above, a very unfortunate situation since the egg and sperm are already growing, only to be flushed out because the walls that were meant to protect it won't let it cling onto it. It is said that changes or an imbalance in hormones can affect the growth of fibroids, and that too much estrogen can increase the risk of fibroids, and make them worse.

Understanding this, the imbalance, is important, because, the Most Merciful mentioned it in the Quran with respect to Zakariyya's wife. She would later give birth to Yahya aka John the Baptist, but before she does, Allah says in Q21 V90 that, 'So We responded to him, and we gave to him John, and amended for him his wife. Indeed, they used to hasten to good deeds and supplicate Us in hope and fear, and they were to us humbly submissive.'. The Quran is a miracle, there should be no doubt about that, it could only be the words of the One that created us. This excerpt is right on 2 fronts; the first being that Allah said 'We gave him John', hopefully, we'll get into that in this piece, but so as not to digress too much at this time, it is noteworthy that he is said to be given John, thereby confirming what modern science knows that it is the man, his sperm, that is, that dictates the gender of the child.

Anyway, the word translated to 'amended' above, where Allah said 'and amended for him his wife', is Aslahna. From Solih. Are you seeing what I'm seeing? Sod, lam and ha! The same alphabets

that makes up the name of the prophet Solih, the same prophet that was sent to the people that did a'qira on the camel. Talk about literary perfection. In the realm of all of the Sciences we've been talking about, Allah slips in Art. But I don't want to digress now.

So, aslahna, what does it mean? Its root alphabets like I wrote above are sod, lam and ha. 10 forms of the word were used 240 times in the Quran. Solih is said to mean a thing which removed or removes the ills of the other; a thing which creates a good balance; and so it has come to mean to be good, to become good, to be virtuous, righteous, right, just, honest and all, because it is only when one imbibes these virtues that one is able to create balance in the society, or remove the ills that exists in a society. And so you find the Quran in a plethora of places saying 'those who believe, and do solihat (righteous good deeds)', thereby emphasizing that Belief is not enough, it must be accompanied with solihat for one not to be khusrin (lost), as seen in suratul a'sr Q103, and for one to attain paradise and abide therein forever as seen in Q2 V82.

And what we realize from this is that Solih has layers. So far, we've been able to explore its behavioral nature and biological nature. It is this biological nature; to balance, to remove the ills, that was being communicated. Some other translators translated Solih as adjusted, restored, cured, right, sound, fit, fruitful, and of course, amended, as the translator above did; all of which, though communicated that she was healed, didn't emphasize what exactly was done, the medication that was administered. In a way, Allah is saying here that the a'qira she went through, the one we now know has to do with hormonal imbalance, was healed by Gém

'balancing' her from within. So that whatever chemicals or hormones was releasing too much or too little, was balanced to release just the right amount that's needed for John the Baptist to grow in her, and be delivered. AllaHu Akbar!

So that the cure to A'qira is Solih, and the prophet sent to the people that did A'qira on a camel is also called Solih. Cool.



But, wait, there is more.

In Q21 V90, Allah said, 'So We responded to him, and we gave to him John, and amended for him his wife...'. The word translated to 'gave' is waHabna, you know, waHab – Waw, Ha, and ba. 2 forms of the word – waHab and waHaba – occurred a total of 25 times in the Quran. And it's translated to mean to give, to bestow, to grant and the likes. But what distinguishes it from the 'atina' in rabbana atina fiddunya hasanatan wa fil akhirati hasanatan wa qina adhabannar in Q2 V201 which is also translated to give and grant; the 'afrig' in rabbana afrig a'layna sobran wa thabbit aqdamana wansurna a'lal qawmil kafirin in Q2 V250 which is also translated to give and grant; the 'awzi'ni' in rabbi awzi'ni an ashkura ni'mataka llati ana'mta alayya wa a'la walidayya wa an a'mala solihan tardoHu wa aslihli fi dhurriyyati, inni tubtu ilayka wa inni minal muslimin in Q46 V15 which is also translated to give and grant; just to mention a few of the words translated to give, grant, bestow and the likes in the Quran?

What distinguishes waHab is that it is a gift which is not given as a compensation nor involves any interest of the giver; rain, is said to be waHab, because God sends it down regardless of whether

one asks for it, needs it or wants it desperately. The rain is sent down to impregnate the earth to birth herbs, flowers, trees and the likes.

Now that we know what we know of waHab, I couldn't help but wonder if AllaH using waHab here wasn't just meant to be a spiritual gift, but one informing us of a biological gift too that Zakariyya was granted; one that's also informing us that the cure to such sperm that has been affected by old age can be found in enriching the sperm, just as the cure to a'qira can be found in balancing the imbalance.

Because, as Zakariyya admitted to in Q19 V4 that 'indeed my bones have weakened, and my head has filled with white', and in V8 that 'and I have reached extreme old age'; it may very well be that he also needed healing. And so, just like Allah grants the cloud rain (waHab) to fall on the earth for it to birth plants; Zakariyya was also granted (waHab) the sperm he needed to be able to fertilize the egg in his wife that Allah has 'amended', as we've seen above. AllaHu Akbar!

When one thinks of the rain, one thinks of the tiny drops, and how uncountable they are, right? Did you know that each normal ejaculation should have at least 39 million sperms for it to be considered normal, and that anything lower than 39 million will be regarded as – wait for it – oligospermia; there, that's my second big biological word I promised above, I told you I was going to make it 'count', get it? Low sperm count? Too much? Help, I can't stop! These puns just write themselves sometimes, hehe, because a big number deserves its big word accompanying it.

Anyway, like the rain, it may be that his old age sperm needed its count to be multiplied by the millions, though only one will fertilize the egg, the millions are needed to basically sacrifice themselves along the way so that the promised sperm gets to its destination; and so waHab was used to communicate that. It may also be that the sperm needed to be virile, just as the rain is virile enough to cause the dead earth to birth new life by its mere touch. Talking of rain, did you know that there are five sextillion atoms in a teeny-tiny drop of water? Sextillion, that's 21 or 36 zeros, depending on which continent you are mathematically on.

And that concludes this piece, AlhamdulliLlah. The next piece should be about the infertility in the case of IbraHeem and his first wife. Hopefully, we make discoveries there too.

INFERTILITY IN THE QURAN, A CLASSICAL ARABIC LOOK AT THE CASE OF IBRAHEEM, HIS WIFE, AND ISHAQ. PT. 2.

Now that we've looked into what the infertility of Zakariyya and his wife was, and how they were healed, let's take a look at that of Abraham and his first wife, Sarah. To do this, I have collected the ayah (verses) about the incident below. But, as we will see, they are not in a chronological order; that, I will remedy, and when that is done, we will be able to decipher, deeply, what the infertility was, and how it was healed.

For this exercise, the verses we will be looking into are; Q51 V24 to 32, Q11 V69 to 74, Q15 V51 to 59, and Q29 V31.

Q51 V24 to 32:

24. Has there reached you the story of the honored guests of Abraham? – 25. When they entered upon him and said, “[We greet you with peace.” He answered, “[And upon you] peace, [you are] a people unknown. 26. Then he went to his family and came with a fat [roasted] calf. 27. And placed it near them; he said, “Will you not eat?” 28. And he felt from them apprehension. They said, ‘Fear not’, and gave him good tidings of a learned boy. 29. And his wife approached with a cry [of alarm] and struck her face and said, “[I am] a barren old woman!” 30. They said, “Thus has said your Lord; indeed, He is the Wise, the Knowing.” 31. [Abraham] said, “Then what is your business [here], O messengers?” 32. They said, “Indeed, we have been sent to a people of criminals.

Q11 V69 to 74:

69. And certainly did Our messengers come to Abraham with good tidings; they said, “Peace.” He said, “Peace,” and did not delay in bringing [them] a roasted calf. 70. But when he saw their hands not reaching for it, he distrusted them and felt from them apprehension. They said, “Fear not. We have been sent to the people of Lot.” 71. And his wife was standing [nearby], and she smiled. Then we gave her good tidings of Isaac, and after Isaac, Jacob. 72. She said, “Woe to me! Shall I birth while I am an old woman and this, my husband, is an old man? Indeed, this is an amazing thing!” 73. They said, “Are you amazed at the decree of Allah? May the mercy of Allah and His blessings be upon you, people of the house. Indeed, He is Praiseworthy and Honorable.” 74. And when the fright had left Abraham and the good tidings had reached him, he began to argue with Us concerning the people of Lot.

Q15 V51 to 59:

51. And inform them about the guests of Abraham, 52. When they entered upon him and said, “Peace.” [Abraham] said, “Indeed, we are fearful of you.” 53. [The angels] said, “Fear not. Indeed, we give you good tidings of a learned boy.” 54. He said, “Have you given me good tidings although old age had come upon me? Then of what [wonder] do you inform?” 55. They said, “We have given you good tidings in truth, so do not be of the despairing.” 56. He said, “And who despairs of the mercy of his Lord except for those astray?” 57. [Abraham] said, “Then what is

your business [here], O messengers?" 58. They said, "Indeed, we have been sent to a people of criminals, 59. Except the family of Lot; indeed, we will save them all.

Q29 V31:

31. And when Our messengers came to Abraham with the good tidings, they said, "Indeed, we will destroy the people of that Lot's city. Indeed, its people have been wrongdoers."

DIVE:

With the help of these verses, we are going to recreate the event of that day in a chronological order, from the first scene to the last scene. As an aside, before we go into that, one might ask why Allah doesn't just put the story together in one piece, in one chronological order. In retelling a story of this kind, you can decide to follow the format it was told in, or you can sequence them in the order that they occurred in.

One idea is that; we see this style in movies today, how a movie literally starts from the end, and the entire movie then takes us through what led to that last scene. Or sometimes, it starts from the middle, and then we are made aware of what had happened, and when we are caught up, it continues. And sometimes, the movie keeps going back and forth, into the future, and back to the past, intimating us with different vantage points; all these done not because the writers intend to confuse us, but instead, because they want to give us the best experience possible, because they believe that the best way for us to fully grasp each scene in this story is if related in a particular context of circumstances and

time.

Of course, other than the spiritual significance of doing that, one of the many reasons why Allah does that is to keep in line with the theme of each surah (chapter) of the Quran. If in mentioning the stories of the prophets in this chapter, God is talking about how the people disobeyed their prophets, that won't be a good time to divert into something else they must have done that's not related to disobedience, get it?

There's also the argument of beauty; that Allah, doesn't arrange things of the same kind in one place, without mixing them. For instance, when one looks at the horizon, one sees the skies, the clouds, the setting sun, the sea, and it's just a mix of different things that makes for that beauty to become. Same is true of the mountain when one looks at it; perhaps there's some snow here and there, some greens, some rocks, sands and the likes. It is also true of the human self; the blood travels through the veins and arteries, which courses by the bones, the flesh, and it's just a bouquet, a balanced bouquet; every one placed at their right place, and yet able to work harmoniously, to work effectively and beautifully.

Now, back to the verses, when arranged chronologically, we see that the scene starts from their entry, where Abraham accosted them upon their entry. And then it switches to the kitchen, where he went to get the barbecue, and then to the dining table, and the dialogue that ensued, after which his wife approached them, and the dialogue she also had, and then the last dialogue we were made to know that happened between them was that of them being sent to destroy the people of Lot.

THE ENTRY:

Q51 V24 to 25

24. Has there reached you the story of the honored guests of Abraham? – 25. When they dakhlu a'layHi (entered upon him) and said, “[We greet you with peace.” He answered, “[And upon you] peace, [you are] a people unknown.

Q11 V69

69. And certainly did Our messengers come to Abraham with good tidings; they said, “Peace.” He said, ‘Peace,’

Q15 V51 to 53

51. And inform them about the guests of Abraham, 52. When they dakhlu a'layHi (entered upon him) and said, “Peace.” [Abraham] said, “Indeed, we are fearful of you.” 53. [The angels] said, “Fear not...

The first phase we notice in this first encounter is ‘dakhlu a'layhi’. The root alphabets of dakhlu are dal, kha and lam, and 8 forms of the word were used a total of 126 times in the Quran. Classically, a handful of expressions are derived from it, which ranges from entrance, door, doorway, to enter, to penetrate; to obscurity, secret, confidant; ill feeling, cheating; defects, loneliness: emaciation; to infiltrate, to come in between; guest, outsider, and the likes; but for the sake of this piece, we'll look at

that of ‘entering’.

We see in the prayer revealed to the prophet pbuh in Q17 V80 the use of dakhala, where it was used to mean ‘entry’, which says, ‘My Lord, cause me to enter a sound entrance and to exit a sound exit and grant me from Yourself a supporting authority.’, shows that IbraHeem just happened to meet up with them in his house, they had already entered. It wasn’t a knock on the door-answering the door affair.

The second part of this encounter is the exchange of ‘peace’ greetings. They greeted him with peace, and he replied with peace. And in V25 of Q51, he added, ‘[you are] a people unknown’, and the word translated to ‘unknown’ is ‘munkar’. Munkar’s root word is nakara, nun, kef, ra; the mim before it is a conjunctive pronoun. Munkar here, is reminiscent of Q27 V41 where Sulaimon pbuh told the Jinns to ‘disguise (nakir) for her her throne...’, and the verse continues by saying, ‘we will see whether she will be guided [to truth] or will be of those who is not guided.’. So if she was someone of guidance, no matter how ‘disguised’ her throne was disguised, her guidance should lead her to recognize her throne.

Another verse that readily comes to mind is Q12 V58, wherein, when Prophet Yusuf’s pbuh, siblings showed up to get supplies for the impending famine, unbeknownst to them that he is Yusuf, the one they threw down a well years ago; Allah said, ‘and the brothers of Joseph came [seeking food], and they entered upon him; and he recognized (a’rafa) them, but he was to them unknown (nkir)’. Again, we see nakara being translated to ‘unknown’, used as an opposite of ‘recognizing’, and ‘knowing’

something.

Now, back to IbraHeem, here he is, in his own house, and he just happened to encounter some ‘unknown’ faces in his own house – okay, I am definitely screaming, and running out of that house right away – but no, they exchange greetings, and states the obvious, that their faces aren’t familiar faces. And understanding it this way, makes us contextualize what he said next, ‘Indeed, we are fearful of you.’, in Q15 V52. And in V53, the angels calmed him down by saying, ‘fear not’.

Another thing that he did that showed his apprehension of them was him going to get them barbecue, and that’s the next phase of this encounter, where we will see how that came to be.

KITCHEN/DINING:

Q51 V26 – 28

26. Then he faraga (went) to his family and came with a fat [roasted] calf. 27. And placed it near them; he said, “Will you not eat?” 28. And he felt from them apprehension. They said, ‘Fear not’...

Q11 V69 – 70

69. ...and did not delay in bringing [them] a roasted calf. 70. But when he saw their hands not reaching for it, he distrusted them and felt from them apprehension. They said, “Fear not.

The bit about going to his family to get the barbecue is

important, because now we know that the other folks in the house, including his wife, were aware that some strange folks are in the house. It is also important because it tells us that they weren't in the presence of IbraHeem and the angels. They were away, in the yard, kitchen, or from wherever else such ready to eat barbecue came from.

We will get into why he went to offer them food in a bit, but before we do, I thought to make concrete the idea that his wife wasn't present at this time, and so he had to leave the angels to get them food.

Allah said in Q51 V26 that 'he went', and the word translated to mean that is 'faraga'. Faf, ra and gain are its root alphabets, and 3 forms of the word appeared 6 times in the Quran. And it means wasteland, space, emptiness; width; to be empty, to be unoccupied, to be free; to finish, to be devoted.

Firaagh is said of the opening of the well's bucket out of which water is poured, so that afrag then means to pour, to spill, and we find it being used in this way in Q7 V126, wherein Allah said of the Magicians that accepted Islam after they were impressed by Musa' miracles to which the pharaoh promised to cut their hands and legs on opposite sides and crucify them, they prayed to Allah that, 'rabbanaa afrig a'laina sabran' which is translated to mean 'Our Lord, pour upon us patience'. And in Q18 V96, it was used to express Dhul Qarnain's act of pouring molten copper over Gog and Magog.

And that's where the idea of 'leaving' came from; thus, when something is being poured, it is leaving the place that it was. So,

he went to his family, and came with a fat roasted calf for them to eat, but he did it in a jiffy, as though he was water pouring out of a cup, quickly. Q11 V69 stressed that point when it said "...and did not delay in bringing [them] a roasted calf".

V27 of Q51 says that IbraHeem then placed the – what I like to call 'barbecue' before them; V70 of Q11 then says that he saw that their hands weren't reaching for it; and that takes us back to V27 of Q51 where it is recorded that he then said 'will you not eat?' And then both V28 of Q51 and V70 of Q11 expressed that he felt apprehension, fear and distrust from them.

And why is that? You might be asking:

You see, back in the time of IbraHeem, even assassins had a code; they do not eat in the house of someone they wanted to kill. So, the easy way to know if some strangers that showed up in your house unannounced do not have nefarious intent is to offer them food. If they ate from it, you knew they weren't there to kill you, if they didn't; then, that would be a call for concern. And that's what IbraHeem tried to find out with this whole escapade, and these guys so far are doing a good job at not abating his fears. By the way, you find the remains of this idea in a lot of oriental cultures, where they take offense in one not eating or finishing food served to them. In fact, a clean plate plus a burp is a sign of utmost respect in some of such cultures.

Anyway, at this stage, perhaps, IbraHeem had told them that if he doesn't return to get the cups of water for them to drink in the next 5 minutes, the strong ones should show up, and those unable to fight should take cover. Who knows, right?

V28 of Q51 then says that he ‘felt’ or ‘apprehended’ (awjasa) from them ‘fear’ (khifat), and they said ‘fear not’ (la takhafa). V70 of Q11 added to the list of his reactions of feelings by saying that he ‘distrusted’ (nakira) them; hitherto, we’ve had ‘apprehension’ awjasa; and ‘fear’ khifat. To which they allayed his fears by saying ‘fear not’. Since khifat and takhafa are from the same root, we’ll say that’s one feeling, the second is nakira, which we briefly discussed above when he first encountered them upon their entry; and the third feeling he felt was awjasa.

It’s sufficient that we know that those three feelings must have made him really uneasy, so I won’t be delving into their classical meanings. Now to the next bit in this story.

MESSAGE AND AFTERMATH:

Q51 V28:

...They said, ‘Fear not’, and gave him bashar (good tidings) of a learned boy.

Q15 V53 to 56:

53. [The angels] said, “Fear not. Indeed, we give you bashir (good tidings) of a learned boy.” 54. He said, “Have you given me bashar (good tidings) although old age had come upon me? Then of what [wonder] do you inform?” 55. They said, “We have given you bashar (good tidings) in truth, so do not be of the despairing!” 56. He said, “And who despairs of the mercy of his Lord except for those astray?”

Q29 V31:

31. And when Our messengers came to Abraham with the bushra (good tidings)...

So, we see that in Q51 V28, Q15 V53, and Q29 V31 that IbraHeem was given ‘bashar’, ‘bashir’, ‘bushra’ respectively. So, what does bashir mean? The root alphabets are ba, shin and ra, and 13 variations of the word were used 122 times in the Quran. Bashir is classically said of when blood is visible from one’s skin, so that one complexion changes, and overtime, any news that causes blood to be visible on one’s skin, be it the skin on the face or anywhere else, came to be called bashir.

The idea that bashir is exclusively ‘glad tidings’ is not always so, as we see in Q9 V34 wherein Allah said ‘...And those who hoard gold and silver and spend it not in the way of Allah – give them bashir [bad tidings] of a painful punishment.’ But ‘bashir’ still, because, it’s a complexion changing information, one that being aware of will change one’s bodily state.

Why is all of these introspections important? You might be wondering. It is, because I believe that ‘bashir’ was used in these verses for multiple reasons, especially if one takes into consideration events that happened afterwards. The first reason I believe bashir was used here was in the form of news, glad tidings, if you will. And from its use here, we see that it was a piece of news that would have made IbraHeem red in the face. In contrast with Zakariyya’s situation who was ‘given’ (waHab) John as in Q21 V90, whereas IbraHeem was given the ‘good news’ (bashir)

of a learned boy as in Q51 V28 and Q15 V53.

What I want us to take from this is that there was a sudden flow of blood in IbraHeem, one that must have been visible on his skin, and changed his complexion. I think ‘bashir’ here signifies a ‘cure’, or a ‘recharge’ if you will. Considering his old age, which as we know, and will be discussed later; a renewed, reignited, rejuvenated, and recharged ‘bust of blood flow’ in him would have been a good thing, and a ‘good thing’, if you know what I mean.

We know today that one of the reasons old men are unable to have or keep an erection is because age induced conditions restrict the flow of blood to the penis, atherosclerosis is one of such conditions. I don’t know which one IbraHeem may have had, or if he had any at all, but with the use of bashir, we know that he got his proper blood flow back, and now, they are coursing through his arteries and veins with youthful velocity and vigor.

The accidental discovery that viagra, a medication which was invented to help with blood flow strains in old people also helped make blood flow to the penis and stay there for a while is telling of just how much blood activity is needed when it comes to old age induced erectile dysfunction of many kinds. We will be seeing more of these talks of wetness, hormones and enzymes induced, as we read along in this book, so, feel free to insert them when and where needed, even when I don’t mention them.

Talking of viagra, and its use to ameliorate or eradicate erectile dysfunction, it is important to note that one is expected to stay away from fatty meals on days when one plans to use viagra

because it may slow the efficacy of the medication. One is expected to stay away from heavy meals with red meat, fried food and other high fat foods the day before one plans to use viagra; why am I going into all these details? Because the choice meal IbraHeem offered the angels was what? Barbecue! Meat, in all its glory.

Was one of the reasons that Allah mentioned that bit in the Quran is so as to tell us that despite their diet, Ge still made sure they were able to make a baby? Or is it that now that they got the double whammy news about the baby that they are going to have, and also that the angels are headed to destroy the people of Lut, they'd be too flustered to feast on barbecues for a day or two? And thus enable the newly gotten blood flow that can even be visible on their skin (bashir), enhance their chances of making a baby; which, of course, they will now be trying for, now that they've gotten the news.

This talk of 'blood flow' takes us to the next phase of what happened:

Q11 V71 says that 'and his wife was standing, and she fadohikat', and fadohikat here was translated to 'smiled', but is that all that it means? The root alphabets of fadohikat are dod, ha and kef. 4 variations of the word were used 10 times in the Quran. We find that in Q43 V47, Q53 V43, and the likes, it was translated to mean 'laugh'. And some translators have translated the word to mean 'menstruate', to 'menstruate'. So, smile, laugh, menstruate; which is it? All of it? One of them? And what do they have in common?

To get to the bottom of dohik, we will have to refer to Classical Arabic, to see how the word came to mean these things.

Dohik is said of the palm tree, when its spathe bursts open, and reveals its spadix. So that if you look at the palm tree now, you'd see that its trunk is bare, and the branches with the leaves are at its topmost area, and when one zooms out to look at it, it is like the 'bunch of greens' emerged from within the trunk. Same is said of the flowers that its spathe opens up, from wrapping up the spadix. Dohik is generally said of when the earth or land put forth its plants, herbage, flowers et al.

Thus, when one shows their teeth; thereby parting their lips, dohik is said to have happened. Flowing from that is when a woman's private part splits open during her monthly period of blood flow; and that's how both expressions of smiling, laughing and menstruating come to flow from dohik.

Perhaps, the image that makes sure one doesn't forget is this; dohik is also said of the hyena when she 'laughs' on seeing 'blood'. We tend to refer to the sound hyenas make as 'laugh', and that's true in Classical Arabic too. They make the sounds to communicate, especially when they see a predator devouring a prey, and they'd rather be the ones devouring the prey. They try to scare off the predator, by making the 'laughing' sounds which happens to work most times especially when a lot of them converge over a single predator.

Now that we've seen dohik in this light, we can conclude that she may have smiled, laughed, basically shown her teeth out of surprise at the sight of blood flowing from her; which started

based on the ‘bashir’ that was being given to IbraHeem. And that is because to birth a child, the woman is needed, and in this case, that’s Sarah.

And from what we know about periods, that it contains blood, endometrial tissue, cervical mucus, vagina secretion; flushing those out cleanses the uterus thereby the womb, and readies it for a new egg that will be released.

And in this case, that new egg would be Ishaq.

In fact, in the biblical version of events, verse 19 of Genesis 17 says that God named the child ‘Isaac’ based on the surprised ‘laughter’ that Abraham engaged in in verse 17 of the same Genesis on being informed that he would be having a child. Verse 17 thus says “Abraham fell facedown; he laughed and said to himself, ‘Will a son be born to a man a hundred years old? Will Sarah bear a child at the age of ninety?’” Despite the fact that the Bible says it was Abraham that ‘laughed’, one thing is uniform, that Isaac/Ishaq means ‘to laugh’. And that’s what the name means in Hebrew today, to laugh, rejoice and the likes. The name is even written as Itzhaq which sounds very similar to dohik if one adds the letter I before D, and have the dod change to sod based on Hebrew alphabet structure, and add a sukun instead of a fatiha that will be on the sod, and also add a fatiha on the ha instead of the kesrah.

So that in a way, dohik is not only pointing to surprised laughter, menstruation, it also points to why the menstruation was happening; Ishaq, the bashir of the learned boy being given.

Before we go into what actions Sarah took after seeing the blood drip down her legs, as she stood where she stood. Let's first see how IbraHeem reacted to the news.

Q15 V54 to 56 says:

54. He said, "Have you given me good tidings although 'kibar' (old age) has come upon me? Then of what [wonder] do you inform?" 55. They said, "We have given you good tidings in truth, so do not be of the despairing!" 56. He said, "And who despairs of the mercy of his Lord except for those astray?"

And this is where V29 of Q51 cuts in:

And his wife 'faaqbalati' (approached) with 'sorratin' (a cry [of alarm]) and struck her face and said, "[I am] a 'a'qeemun' (barren) 'a'juzun' (old woman)!".

Now, now is when the wife then approaches them. She's been away until now, half-worrying perhaps, at what's going on with these strangers that they plan to see if they will eat their food. Her surprised laugh, stand, menstruation had happened away from them. As the Quran says, faaqbalat, she goes before them whilst doing sorratin, and would eventually say what she said.

Though 'sorrat' has been translated here to mean 'a cry [of alarm]', some other translators have it as wail, moan, shout, clamor, lament, scream, vociferate, loud voice, cry, cry [with joy], exclaim, grief and one even said 'laugh aloud'. But what does it really mean? How did it come to communicate these expressions?

The root alphabets of sorrat are sod, ra and ra, and 3 variations of the word occurred a total of 6 times in the Quran. Asora 4 times, sirr 1 time, and sorratin 1 time.

So, we find that in 4 out of the 6 verses that mentions sorrat, translated it to mean ‘persist’ – Q56 V46, Q45 V8, Q71 V7, Q3 V135. Whether to “persist in extreme sinfulness”, “persists in his disbelief”, “persisted in their iniquity”, and “do not ‘persist’ knowingly in what they have done”.

And what this conjures up is the fact that the members of the household that were with her – as we’ve seen in Q51 V26 with the use of aHliH, that she wasn’t alone at the grill making the barbecue – were probably trying to hold her back from crashing the meeting IbraHeem was having with the Angels, especially with the whole blood situation that’s dripping down her legs. But, she ‘sorratin’ (persisted).

In Q3 V117 however, it is also said to mean ‘cold’; Allah says, “The example of what they spend in this worldly life is like that of a wind containing ‘sirrun’ (frost) which strikes the harvest of a people who have wronged themselves and destroys it. And Allah has not wronged them, but they wrong themselves.” Some translators have it as biting iciness, cold, hot or cold, freezing, freezing cold, freezing blast, intense cold, extreme cold, biting frosty blast, and nipping frost.

This also makes sense in light of the fact that of the many symptoms of one being on one’s period – cold, feeling cold, or a fluctuation between warm and chilly is one of them. You see, during one’s period, prostaglandins triggers the uterus to contract

so that it can shed the blood, endometrial tissue, cervical mucus and vagina secretion, to make way for the new egg that needs to come. The more it releases, the more cramp one gets. And it releases more sometimes if there are more byproducts to get out; as perhaps, in the case of Sarah, who as we know has been Post Menopausal for a while due to her age, which we will get to in a bit.

Anyway, since the chemicals it releases also impact body temperature; cold, a feeling of cold or warmth is reported in some women when they are on their period.

Sirr evolved to mean ‘cold’ because just as in when it is used to mean ‘persist’, cold doesn’t let go of water until it contracts it into solid. It ‘persists’ at this endeavor, this endeavor of binding, contracting, making things whole. Which, if seen in light of the contraction induced cramps that she may have been having due to her blood flow, gives the use of this word in this ayah another layer of depth.

Sorr came to be used for sounds one makes that won’t stop, as we see in the case of Sarah in Q51 V29. So much so that she started striking her face. You know, wailing, as people still do when bereaved. There’s an even intense version of sor; sorsor. Sor is reduplicated because of the continuous reiteration of the said sound, as we see in Q54 V19 where Allah used it to describe the wind that was used to destroy the people of A’d. A continuously screaming wind.

But with Sarah, because sorsor wasn’t used, we know that despite the persistent scream she let out, it’s not one that continued

endlessly. As we saw that she'd then struck her face, made observations, and then started asking questions. By the way, noticed the similarity between Sorrat and Sarah?

After what seems to be a 3 in 1 aftermath experience of menstruation – persistence, cold and a loud cry – she exclaims, ‘a barren old woman’. Like, how is a barren old woman having her period again?

What differentiates her barrenness with that of the wife of Zakariyya is that the word she uses to refer to her barrenness is a’qeem, as opposed to a’qir that was used to qualify Zakariyya’s wife’s barrenness. And as we will see, the word a’qeema confirms what we’ve been building up to so far.

The root alphabets of A’qeem are ain, qaf and ra; and 1 form of the word occurred 4 times in the Quran. This one time when she uses it to describe her infertility in Q51 V29. Allah uses it to describe the wind used to destroy the people of A’d, as we see in Q51 V41. The same wind that if we recall above in Q54 V19 was said to be Sorsor also. Just as in the infertility of Zakariyya’s wife, the one that was referred to as a’qir; we find that the other time it was used was while describing what the people of Thamud did to the miraculous camel.

Back to a’qeem, thirdly, in Q22 V55, it was used to describe the day of judgment. And lastly, we find that in Q42 V50, Allah used it to describe general infertility when Gę said that Gę “renders whom Gę wills a’qeem ‘barren’”. (Gę is my gender neutral pronoun for God.) And in so doing, we come out with this understanding that either gender, infertility-wise, can be a’qeema.

So, what is a'qeema? A'qeem is classically said of something that is dry, or becomes dry. And that is true of a postmenopausal woman, since she doesn't menstruate again, she is said to be dry (a'qeema), and hers is due to her old age, exactly as she asserts. If there's anything we've learned so far, we know there's layers to words in the Quran, right?

And because a piece of land that's dry is unproductive, it is said to be a'qeema. You see, the reason why a woman's Menstruation Pauses ie MenoPause, get it? is because she is not releasing eggs anymore; the ovaries have become dry, and as a result, the uterus becomes dry too. Since the uterus walls only thickens so as to create a strong castle for the precious incoming egg; if the egg stops coming, it stops thickening, and if it stops thickening, it has less and less things to shed, thereby triggering a Pause, irregularity, and eventually one reaches a post menopausal phase.

This dryness is also true in the case of a man that is infertile either due to Erectile Dysfunction, low sperm count, or in any other form it expresses itself. With erectile dysfunction, it's the blood that's being blocked from going to where it is supposed to be going, and so the male organ is deprived of being engorged, thereby becoming 'dry'. And with the low sperm count, we know that it doesn't mean one's sperm is incapable of fertilizing an egg, it just means that the odds of one's sperm fertilizing the egg are low. Lower than 15 million sperm per millimeter of semen is considered to be low. Despite the fact that a hundred million sperm is released per ejaculation, only one is needed to fertilize the egg, and so the lower the count, the dryer one gets, and so the lower the chances of the woman getting pregnant.

So, it is when she lets out this exclamation of surprise at a postmenopausal woman being on her period, bringing it to the notice of IbraHeem and the Angels, that the second part of V71 of Q11 comes into play where it says ‘...then we gave her bashar (good tidings) of Isaac, and after Isaac, Jacob’; now is the time she gets intimated with what the angels and IbraHeem have been talking about, because as we see, so far, she hasn’t said anything about pregnancy, it has been the changes in her body that she’s reacting to.

Having looked into the word Bashar above, we see here that she is flustered anew with this news, and perhaps, she experiences even more blood flow, not only out of her, but now, coursing through her; this is not just so as to ‘restart’ the body, but to also get it ready to hold a baby for months.

One might ask why she was being informed of not just Isaac, but Isaac’s child too; and there are various reasons why that can be: perhaps, due to her old age and that of her husband, it is to allay her fears of continuity, so she knows that she will also be having a grandchild, and we know that the grandchild will be the one that becomes the patriarch of the 12 tribes of Israel; perhaps, she won’t be alive when Isaac gives birth to Jacob. Or, it can be that they are informing her of the fact that he won’t just be your usual joe, but that from her will be a prophet, and from that prophet will be another prophet, and as we know, from that prophet came another prophet, even though he won’t be the only child.

So if she may have been thinking that infertility is in her genes, and it will affect her progeny, with the news of her own child

birthing another child; she's even more taken aback. Or, it may be that now, even now, Jacob has already been 'installed' into Isaac.

It is with this in mind that V72 of Q11 provides that "She said, "Woe to me! Shall I birth while I am an a'juz (old woman) and this, my husband, is an shaykh (old man)? Indeed, this is an a'jib (amazing) thing!"

Since we are on the issue of Age, we shouldn't forget IbraHeem's position on that too, where he said in Q15 V54 that, "Have you given me good tidings although kibar (old age) has come upon me?"

So, we see that Sarah referred to herself as a'juz ('old woman'), but as for IbraHeem, she says shaykh (old man); whilst IbraHeem didn't say anything about her age, or how that will affect her ability to get pregnant, but referred to his own age as kibar (old age).

Contrasting that with Zakariyya who also didn't say anything about his wife's age even though he mentions her infertility diagnoses, but he referred to his own age in Q19 V4, and in V8 says he is of kibari i'tiya (extreme old age).

The only other women that referred to age were the daughters of Musa's father-in-law to be, at the time, where in Q28 V23 they referred to their father's age as 'shaykhun kabir', I don't think extreme old age comes close to describing how old that really is, because that's a mix of shaykh and kabir.

The only other time shaykhun kabir was used in the Quran was

when Yusuf's siblings were trying see to it that he doesn't detain their sibling, so they told him to take one of them instead because their father is a shaykhun kabir, as seen in Q12 V78.

So, we find that the old men, IbraHeem and Zakariyya in this case, used kabir to qualify their age, even though Zakariyya decided to qualify his with i'tiya; while one of them's wife referred to one of them as shaykh; only for the kids to go even further by mixing both words together to give shaykhun kabir.

The only other time that shaykh was used in the Quran was when Allah used it to describe a stage in life, for those Ge allows to get to that age. Q40 V67 states that, "It is He who created you from dust, then from a sperm-drop, then from a clinging clot; then He brings you out as a child; then [He develops you] that you reach your [time of] maturity, then [further] that you become shuyukh (elders). And among you is he who is taken in death before [that], so that you reach a specified term; and perhaps you will use reason."

But does a'juz really mean old woman? Is that all there is to a'juz? Is there more to a'juz? Especially as we've seen that the Bible in Genesis 17 verse 17 was specific about their age, and places Sarah at 90, and IbraHeem at 100.

You see, if she meant to communicate 'old', she could have just used 'shaykha', the female version of shaykh, but with a'juz, despite her age – taking into consideration how long she's been with IbraHeem – she meant to communicate something else.

A'juz doesn't necessarily mean old, but to be weak; so, one can be

old and weak, but one need not be old to be weak, especially with pregnancy; being such a burden that it is for even younger females. Sarah saying a'juz may have been referring to both her age and the state of her strength for the task ahead, or may just have been referring to the state of her strength for the task of carrying pregnancy.

So that when she said 'a'juzun a'qeema' in Q51 V29 that we are looking into, she may have been saying 'weak and postmenopausal woman!'. Weak there referring to her ability to carry pregnancy, not that she's unable to carry out her daily tasks.

To make this distinction is important because as we see in Q37 V135; wherein Lut's wife remained behind and was one of those that was destroyed. The V134 of Q37 starts by saying, "[So mention] when We saved him and his family, all, ", and V135 continues with 'Except his a'juz (wife)', she was 'among those who remained [with the evildoers]'. Now that we know what a'juz means, we know that she wasn't of those destroyed based on her old age, but if we take into consideration what Q66 V10 says about the state of her faith; "Allah presents an example of those who kafaru (disbelieved): the wife of Noah and the wife of Lot. They were under two of Our righteous servants but fakhanat (betrayed) them, so those prophets did not avail them from Allah at all, and it was said, 'Enter the Fire with those who enter.'"

So, now, we can deduce from this that Lut's wife wasn't just destroyed because she may have been 'old', but because she was 'weak', weak in spirituality, faith and belief. So much so that Allah referred to her as a kafir, as we see in Q66 V10; and only Allah can refer to someone as Kafir, and the kafir too, for they

know the state of their heart.

Another expression that was used to describe these wives of the prophets is fakhanat, and its root alphabets are kha, waw and nun. 6 variations occurred a total of 16 times in the Quran. And khanat is said of the rope that breaks, and so the bucket of water falls into the well. And so khanat is said to mean disloyalty, betrayal, treachery and the likes. I'm reminded of Q22 V38 wherein Allah says 'Verily, Allah does not love the khawwanin kafur'; and so far we've seen those two words were used to describe Lut's wife in Q66 V10; khanat and kafir.

Only a weak rope breaks, right? Comes back full circle; a'juz, to be weak.

Furthermore, to conclude on a'juz, Q6 V134, Q16 V46, Q34 V38, Q22 V51, Q8 V59 and plethora of other verses that has one form or the other of a'juz, it was used to mean 'frustrate'. That no one can not 'frustrate' the plans of Allah, make them weak, we won't necessarily say make them 'old', or make them 'spouse', or make them 'old spouse' now, would we? My point being that the essence of a'juz is to be weak, and that Sarah may not have been communicating her age at all, but just her seeming physical weakness for the task at hand, pregnancy that is.

As for the 'kabir' that IbraHeem and Zakariyya used to describe themselves, it suffices to know that it's 'old'. In Q19 V4, Zakariyya said of himself that his head is filled with white hair, and his bones are feeble. So, as for Shaykh, yeah, right up there in the old spectrum.

AN AMAZING THING:

Sarah then ends her exclamatory rhetorical questioning by acknowledging what an amazing thing that is; as we see in Q11 V72 that says, “She said, ‘Woe to me! Shall I birth while I am an a’juz and this, my husband, is a shaykh? Indeed, this is an a’jib (amazing) thing!’” And the angels acknowledged this chain of thought of hers by saying, “Are you ta’jabeen (amazed) at the decree of Allah? May the mercy of Allah and His blessings be upon you, people of the house. Indeed, He is Praiseworthy and Honorable.” And followed their acknowledgment of her joyous state by praying for her. Prayers of the angels. 

Whereas in the case of IbraHeem, before Sarah showed up, Q15 Vs53 to 56 tells us about their dialogue on ‘despair’, and how only those who are ‘astray’ despair of the mercies of Allah. Verse 53 says “[The angels] said, “Fear not. Indeed, we give you good tidings of a learned boy.” 54. He said, “Have you given me good tidings although old age had come upon me? Then of what [wonder] do you inform?” 55. They said, “We have given you good tidings in truth, so do not be of the despairing!” 56. He said, “And who despairs of the mercy of his Lord except for those astray?”

It is important to put their reactions side by side because of an article I read that somehow was able extract from the same V72 of Q11 that Sarah wasn’t thrilled about the news; that instead of the exclamatory rhetorical questioning that she expressed out of joy, the writer claimed they were plain questions. Which of course doesn’t flow since the angels acknowledged her joy, and even prayed for her and the people of her household as we’ve seen

above.

And so as to drive home the point, let's take a look at what a'jib really means. Ain, jim and ba are the root alphabets of the word, and 6 variations of the word were used a total of 27 times in the Quran. A'jib is said of the joy one feels when something totally new happens, something one wasn't expecting to happen; the sense of wonderment one feels at that is what a'jib is made of.

We find that V25 of Q9 uses it in this way when it says, 'Allah has already given you victory in many regions and [even] on the day of Hunan, when your great number a'jab (pleased) you...'. And Q72 V1 in telling the prophet pbuh about the encounter of some unseen spirits with the Quran said, "Say, [O Muhammad], 'It has been revealed to me that a group of the jinn listened and said, 'Indeed, we have heard an a'jaba (amazing) Qur'an'"

Q57 V20 went as far as saying that a'jib is the natural reaction when one births a child where it says 'Know that the life of this world is but amusement and diversion and adornment and boasting to one another and competition in increase of wealth and children – like the example of a rain whose [resulting] plant growth a'jaba (pleases) the tillers...'

Truly, what an amazing thing a child is. An awesome wholesome thing. The idea is this, that a muslim should always have absolute tawakul in Allah. And his or her intention for having kids or wealth should be one that is entrenched in serving Allah. So that if one isn't given money, he doesn't feel sad, for one wasn't wanting it for one's sake in the first place. It just means that one needs to use another of the rizq Allah has bestowed on one to

serve Allah, today, it won't be through one's money. Same for children too, if Allah gives one, fine, and if He doesn't, fine also; I feel like this is the vibe one gets from studying the two prophets so far.

We find that Zakariyya's intention for requesting to have a child was so as to have a heir that will continue upholding the flag of the religion after he is gone as we see in Q19 Vs 5 and 6. And despite the fact that he must have been asking for a very long time, in Q19 V4, he asserts that none of his supplications to Allah has been rejected, because the way he sees it is that for the seemingly 'unanswered' prayer, it was actually answered prayer; because its unanswered-ness is an answer in itself. 

And as we see in the case of Ibraheem, despite not having kids, they were dedicated slaves of Allah nonetheless. The woman will be pleasingly amazed on being told, and the man would go ahead to prove his undying hopefulness by stating that only the one that's astray despairs of Allah's mercies whilst casually going ahead to change the topic as seen in V57 of Q15 to where else they were headed, and even started arguing with the angels on behalf of the people of Lut as we see in Q11 V74.

And this concludes this journey. May Allah ease all of our affairs. Amin.

OTHER WORDS THAT WERE TRANSLATED TO 'BARREN' IN THE QURAN, AND HOW THEY MAY FIT INTO THE HUMAN CONDITION.

Here, I intend to go through some words that were translated to 'barren' in the Quran, but which weren't used to describe someone's barrenness in the Quran. What this does is help us understand other types of barrenness that may afflict the human condition, and perhaps help us in finding a way to heal them either through the insights we find in the Quran, or the light it has shed on the symptoms.

Juruz, is the first word I want us to look at. The root alphabets of the word are jim, ra and zain, 1 form of the word occurred twice in the Quran, juruz. It is said to mean barren land as seen in Q18 V8; land afflicted by drought, famine; to eat up, to devour, to cut off, to kill and the likes are also part of its meaning.

So what do all these words have in common? You see, classically, juruz is said when a piece of land is without herbage, and this can be either because they've all been cut off, or the said barren land requires something that it doesn't have yet, in terms of resources, like water, fertilizers, and the likes, and so it is barren.

We see in Q32 V27 where Allah said, "Have they not seen that We drive the water [rain] to juruz (barren) land and bring forth thereby crops from which their livestock eat and [they] themselves? Then do they not see?"

So, we see that the cure to this kind of juruz 'barrenness' has to do

with getting whatever it is wet, extremely wet, like the wetness of the earth after it has rained. Though the non-sterile sperm can seek the egg on its own once it has been let loose, the vagina being wet can also help to speed up the process. We will go into more details about ‘vagina wetness’ in a later book in this series, titled ‘Cliteracy in Islam’. 

Another way to look at this is that the sperm may be getting delivered regularly, but it may not be virile enough, it may be sterile, talk of low sperm count, think - low rainfall, or even no rain fall at all - thereby depriving a land of herbage despite its capability to grow a forest if the right amount of rain falls on it.

Talking of drought and famine, how sunny it gets, and the dryness continues with no end in sight. I’m thinking the woman has to continue to keep hydrated. Reduced estrogen levels can cause dryness, and with men, drinking more water can help increase blood volume, thereby helping with erectile dysfunction amidst others.

So, we see with juruz that increased estrogen levels, and increased sperm count are some of the ways that juruz can be healed vis-à-vis knowing that the mention of juruz in Q32 V27 was cured by rain, and the wetness of the earth.

Sofsof is our next word; in Q20 V105 to 107 wherein Allah in describing the state the mountains will be on the day of judgment, said, “And they ask you about the mountains, so say, ‘My Lord will blow them away with a blast. And He will leave the earth a level sofsofan (plain); You will not see therein a i’wajan (depression) or an amtan (elevation).’”

The root alphabets of sofsof are sod, fab, sod, and fab, and it only occurred this once in the entire Quran, despite its appearance under sod, fab and fab in some classical dictionaries, and even sod and fab.

As we've seen in the 3 verses above, we were left with a couple of words that can help us understand the sofsof on a deeper level. Sofsof is said to mean being empty, deserted or vacant; a smooth, level, even tract of land with no herbage or water, thus, barren.

So, the future of the mountains we see its ups and downs will be that they will be blasted into smithereens, and will become a smooth and leveled plain. In further describing that fate, Allah said in V107 that there won't be i'wajan (depression) or amtan (elevation). In fact, one can argue that the noun that sofsof was qualifying is also a pointer to the barrenness issue at hand; Qa-an.

Qa-an here was translated to 'level', but in Q24 V39, it was translated to 'desert'; "But those who disbelieved - their deeds are like a mirage in a desert (qi-a'tin) which a thirsty one thinks is water until, when he comes to it, he finds it is nothing...". With the use of qa-an which draws our attention to the desert, and its dry and barenness, what sofsof adds to it is how 'smooth' it will look, since not all deserts are without herbage. And it is in further describing this smoothness that i'wajan and amtan were mentioned in the verse that followed it.

I'wajan's root alphabets are ain, waw and jim, and it occurred a total of 9 times in the Quran. It is said to mean ivory, to be crooked, to be curved/twisted around, to bend up, contorted,

distorted, to twist, to lean to; to divert.

Amtan's root alphabets are alif, mim and ta, and it only appeared this one time in the Quran. It is said to mean elevated places; hillocks, crookedness, weakness; measurement; to guess; doubt; to bend.

I feel that understanding amtan will help us in seeing the difference between it and i'wajan. You see, with amtan, its classical meaning is conjecture, or guessing the measurement or state of a thing or distance. So that, when you throw figures at a thing, you'll be said to be doing amtan. It is in its capacity to guess the quantity or quality of a thing that it is used here; so that when Allah said "You will not see therein a depression or an amtan (elevation)." What the amtan bit means is that if someone for instance could not see that day, and had to guess the state of the mountain based on whatever observational skill they would have that day, they'd still guess that it is a smooth desert (qa-a'n sofsofan), with no crookedness (i'wajan).

Thus, i'waja is the real word for crookedness, being bent, twisted and likes, and amtan just came to be interpreted to mean those too because of the uncertainty and the unknowns that is inherent in it. So, whether the crookedness is vertical or horizontal in nature, it is i'waja; and amtan is used after i'waj when its lack of crookedness is so certain that even anyone that tries to guess its state submits to its smoothness.

As to how all of these relates to the biology of the human barrenness, I'm thinking the uterus, the fallopian tube, the ovaries, all of which are lined with roughness, and continuous life

and rebirth; perhaps, there's a time in its cycle where all of that pauses - menopause? - they or some of them become so smooth without crookedness, and this would be a symptom of being barren, and obviously, the solution to this would be to get whatever organ is affected back to life, to unpause it, however possible that is, more estrogen related wetness?

Hamd is our next word, and it's one of those words that only appeared once in the Quran; Q22 V5, wherein Allah, in talking about the womb, and creation, states that, "O People, if you should be in doubt about the Resurrection, then [consider that] indeed, We created you from dust, then from a sperm-drop, then from a clinging clot, and then from a lump of flesh, formed and unformed - that We may show you. And We settle in the wombs whom We will for a specified term, then We bring you out as a child, and then [We develop you] that you may reach your [time of] maturity. And among you is he who is taken in [early] death, and among you is he who is returned to the most decrepit [old] age so that he knows, after [once having] knowledge, nothing. And you see the earth barren (Hamidatan), but when We send down upon it rain, it quivers and swells and grows [something] of every beautiful kind."

The root alphabets of Hamd are Hao, mim and dal, and it is said to mean silence, death, to die away, to die down, to abate; (of land) to be barren, to be lifeless, (of a garment) to fall to shreds. A garment, or piece of cloth, is said to be Hamd if it is worn-out by being long folded, so that when touched, it falls to pieces. Think, when fire is extinguished, and the ashes are still holding form, but falls apart on contact.

Thus, Hamd is said when death, lifelessness or barrenness occurs when fiery toil has happened. And it is interesting that Allah started the conversation in Q22 V5 above with ‘dust’, how lifelessly looking that is. Something that basically scatters if one’s breath reaches it with one not even trying to disturb it, and yet, here stands a human, from that perceived lifelessness. Fragility, due to being worn out, and burnt out, this is Hamd.

Perhaps, biologically, this means that some barrenness are caused by over use of some kind, of something, that makes the said thing fragile enough to be considered dead, and incapable of being able to bring forth life. As to what can heal this fragile state of one’s organ, Allah says we send down rain, and this fragile thing quivers (iHtazat) and swells (robah) which then makes it grow something of every beautiful kind. We will be looking at these words while discussing Khashia’t, our next word.

Khashia’t is next word that was translated to barren in the Quran, as seen in Q41 V39 wherein Allah said, “And of His signs is that you see the earth stilled (khashia’t), but when We send down upon it rain, it quivers (iHtazat) and grows (robah). Indeed, He who has given it life is the Giver of Life to the dead. Indeed, He is over all things competent.”

I feel that to understand khashia’t deeply, one must understand iHtazat and robah since they are both what happens when rain falls on the khashia’t land.

First, let’s see how much of khashia’t we can understand before doing that; its root alphabets are kha, shin and ain, and 7 forms of the word appeared a total of 17 times in the Quran. And it is said

to mean barren dead land, low land with dry vegetation, a low hillock; to be eclipsed; to be humble, to humble oneself, to show respect, to be quiet, to be submissive.

As for iHtazat, its root alphabets are Hao, zain and zain, and 2 forms of the word occurred a total of 5 times in the Quran. And it is said to mean shaking, vibrating, to swing; to walk briskly, (of God) to bring forth plants, (of barren land) to become alive; rumbling, quivering, trembling, commotion, movement etc.

Q19 V25 reinforces the idea that iHtazat means to ‘shake’ wherein Mary, mother of Jesus was told to “shake (Huzzi) the trunk of the palm tree towards you, it will drop ripe dates upon you.” So, we can tell from this that khashia’t means for something to be still, since being still is the opposite of shaking. Huzzi, thus means to move something either by pulling, by pushing, or by moving to the right or left.

With respect to robat, its root alphabets are ra, ba and waw, and 8 forms of the word were used 20 times in the Quran. Robat is said to mean hill, elevated part of the land, to go on the top of a hill; growth, to increase, to swell, to exceed, to be more; usury; to be out of breath, to have asthma; to raise, to grow under someone’s care, to educate, to cultivate; a group of ten thousand people.

Let’s start with the imagery of asthma, to help us understand robat. You see, during an asthma attack, the sides of the airways in one’s lungs swells, and the airways shrink. And because of that, less air is able to go in and out of one’s lungs, and sometimes, mucus can add to the ordeal by clogging up the airways even more. So, we see how robat came to be used for asthma due to the

act of swelling that happens during an asthma episode. Other examples can be the size of pasta before and after cooking it; robat has happened at its cooked state, since it has now increased in size, not necessarily 'multiplied'.

And what I mean by that is the fine line between robat, which is also the word for riba (usury), and doi'f (multiplied, doubled, increased etc). Both words tend to be used interchangeably in Arabic and in translations, and Q3 V130 made sure to mention them separately to emphasize that they aren't the same word. The simple way to differentiate them is to know that riba is for something to swell, it's still one thing, a grain of rice; but doi'f is for something to double in count, and with the addition of mim as prefix to it, it accentuates that it is one that continues to double, so that it is now multiplied over and over. But I don't want us to digress too much right now into it, InshaAllah, at a later piece, we'll look into riba squarely. How a capital can increase without doubling; how a capital can increase by it doubling, and continues to double ad infinitum.

So, now, we know that with Hamd and Khashia't, rain pouring on it, will make it shake and swell, and then growth will happen. So that we know that the state of both Hamd and Khashia't involves being still. Again, the specifics of which organ of either the male or the female is going through this stillness can vary, but it seems that a form of hormonal-induced lubrication can bring them back to life, and Allah knows best.

All of these talks about barrenness bring forth the thought of why we should want kids in the first place, right? In the religious realm, we know we've been created to worship God as we see in

Q51 V56; so that the only reason we should really want kids or more kids is so that more people can be brought to the world to worship God. So that as one keeps trying to have kids, the daily struggles, one should have it at the back of one's mind that it is for worship. If the God that one wants to serve by bringing the child to the world is refusing to give one the said child, it shouldn't be too heartbreaking.

I'm reminded of Q34 V37 where Allah said, "And it is not your wealth or your children that bring you nearer to Us in position, but it is [by being] one who has believed and done righteousness. For them there will be the double reward for what they did, and they will be in the upper chambers [of Paradise], safe [and secure]."

I'm enthused to look into modern issues like whether or not a wife can use the sperm of her husband, whether he is deceased or they are divorced; but to address such an issue, one will need to look into dowry in islam, divorce in islam, the waiting period, and the treatment of a spouse one is married or not married to; all of these and more, are the subjects I'll be looking into in the next book titled dowry, divorce, child sustenance, and the case for alimony in islam.

May Allah ease our struggles, and grant our heart desires. Ameen.



MARYAM, MAKE A MOVE.

After having read all of the above, if the question of whether or not one need make a move other than prayers still linger in one's mind, then, this bit is for you.

And the story that addresses this issue is the story of Maryam when she was pregnant of I'ysa. Despite the miraculous conception of the pregnancy, when she was in so much pain, Q19 V25 states that she was told to basically 'make a move' of her own to remedy the situation.

And what this idea brings forth is one of spirituality and its place in practical reality. Shouldn't one just let things come to be without doing anything? Shouldn't prayer be enough? The reality is that prayer is enough, and it is in its being enough that action is needed to witness its manifestation.

Take the case of Maryam:

"And Huzzi (shake) toward you the trunk of the palm tree; it will drop upon you ripe, fresh dates." Q19 v25.

We've discussed the highlighted word above when we were trying to define Khashia't, but for reinforcement, we'll take a quick look again.

Its root alphabets are Hao, zain and zain, and 2 forms of the word occurred a total of 5 times in the Quran. And it is said to mean shaking, vibrating, to swing; to walk briskly, (of God) to bring

forth plants, (of barren land) to become alive; rumbling, quivering, trembling, commotion, movement etc.

Huzzi, thus means to move something either by pulling, by pushing, or by moving to the right or left. So, Verse 25 is apt on the issue of faith and child seeking, and all of life endeavors, in fact, because of the intrinsic conversations about spirituality and the concept of practical reality in Islam that it looks into.

Verse 23 states that the pains of childbirth drove Mary to the trunk of a palm tree, and while she was wondering how she would get the dates, a voice comforted her by saying that a stream has been provided beneath her, but as for the date she also yearns for, she will need to shake the trunk of the palm tree towards herself.

Islamic Scholars have used this anecdote to speak on the even nature of Islam and its principle on Actions vis-à-vis Spirituality. That however spiritual one is, one must exert efforts as at when due.

God could have made the dates fall on the ground just before she got there, or right before her very eyes, I mean, she's carrying a baby that doesn't have a father, hello! But to drive home the point that spirituality shouldn't be blind, God made her, despite the state she was in, shake the palm tree.

With the deliberate placement of 'janiyya', which is translated to 'ripe' in this V25, it even seems that the said date must have been unripe, but her shaking of the tree is not only going to make them fall, but ripen them as they fall. Allahu Akbar! Thereby

intertwining the issue of Spirituality and Actions.

Shake the tree, folks, shake it. Ya Maryam, don't let anyone tell you not to, and pray earnestly for the best. Effort alone is not enough, you can have the best result and make the best preparations for an interview, but refuse to pray, and voilà, a traffic from hell shows up, and it delays you from attending the interview.

You can be the best driver on the road with the parallel parking technique for miles, but the worst driver on the road slams into you just because, prayer is key, spirituality is key, it goes hand in hand with efforts.

Ya Maryam, in life, there are things one can control, and there are things one can't; we do our best with the things we can control, we must, and then we pray to God to handle those we can't. That's Islam's position on this matter.

A more popular saying by Muslims on this subject is inspired by the saying of the Prophet to 'tie your camel, and pray for the best', when asked if it's necessary to tie one's camel to a post or just leave it and hope that God will take care of it; tie your camel, shake the tree, Maryam, and pray, pray like you didn't tie the camel; shake, shake the tree like you aren't going to pray.

Islam is evenhanded on this matter, hope that settles the question. And whilst on that journey of seeking the fruit of the womb, know that you not having a child is not a function of how less 'religious' you are, in fact, of the 13 Mothers of the Believers, other than Khadijah, only Maria al Qibtiyya bore the prophet

pbuh a child, and as you know, the child later died before he turned 2; that's the story of the Prophet we follow, and his wives that we regard as our Mothers. So, Maryam, make a move, seek, in trust, patience and hard work; I pray Allah grants you your heart desires. Ameen.

O you who have believed, remember Allah with much remembrance. And exalt Him morning and afternoon. It is He who confers blessings upon you, and so do the angels, that He may bring you out from darknesses into light. And ever is He, to the believers, Merciful.

Q33: V41-43

