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See also: ABILITY; ACQUISITION; AL-ANŠĀR; ABRIGATION; ALLIANCE AND TREATY; ANGELS; ANONYMOUS MENTIONS; BARZAKH; BOOTY; CHILDREN; CLIENTS; CONQUEST; CONSULTATION; CRITERION; DISBELIEF AND DOUBT; DISBELIEVERS; HĪJRA; INHERITANCE AND PATRIMONY; MĀDYAN; MARTYRDOM AND MARTYRS; MUḤĀJIRŪN; POLYTHEISM AND POLYTHEISTS; THAMŪD; TRIALS AND STRIFE; WAR; WEALTH.

GIBRIL FOUAD HADDAD

Baḥīra

See CONSECRATION OF ANIMALS

Bakka

See MAKKA

BA'Ļ

Ba'Ļ is used in the Qur'an once (Q 37:125) to denote a pagan deity, known as Baal in English, and six times as a common noun, in all instances meaning "husband" (see FAMILY AND HOUSEHOLD; MARRIAGE AND DIVORCE).

Ba'Ļ is derived from the root *b-Ļ-l*. Of this root, two forms occur seven times in the Qur'an: *Ba'Ļ* three times (Q 4:128; 11:72; 37:125) and the plural *bu'ūlatun* four times (2:228; 24:31 thrice). The root has two different basic meanings, the first denoting a husband; a lord, master, owner or a possessor of a thing; a head, chief-tain, ruler, or a person of authority; someone overbearing. Its second meaning denotes a tract of land elevated above other land; any tract of land upon which flows neither torrential nor even running water, and which does not receive rain except once a year; a male date-palm, especially one whose roots reach groundwater and hence does not need to be irrigated (Farāhīdī; Ibn Fāris; Fayrūzābādī; Zabīdī). The word appears in many hadiths, especially those referring to cultivated yet unirrigated land (Mālik, Zakāt, zakat al-ḥubūb wal-zaytūn; Abū Dāwūd, Zakāt, ṣadaqa al-zar'a).

According to al-Rāghib al-Aṣfahānī (d. 502/ca.1108), the meanings of *Ba'Ļ* include husband, as in Q 11:72 (and this my husband is old), the plural being *bu'ūla*, as in Q 2:228, and more generally anyone who towers over others or puts himself above others. He adds: "the Arabs thus named their idol (by whom they sought nearness to Allah) *Ba'Ļ*, because of their belief in its superiority; hence the saying of the Most High *Do you invoke Ba'Ļ and forsake the Best of the Creators? (Q 37:125)*" (*Mufradāt*).

Ba'Ļ in Q 37:125 is variously understood by commentators to be (i) the name of a specific idol worshiped by the people of Prophet Ilyās (q.v.), upon him peace; (ii) a woman whom they worshipped; and (iii) a common name used to denote a deity or lord (*rabb*) (Ṭabarī, *sub* Q 37:125), with the predominant view being the first (Qurṭubī, *sub* Q 37:125). Al-Kalbī (d. 204/819) did not list *Ba'Ļ* in his *Kitāb al-Aṣnām* ("Book of Idols"); it was listed by Yāqūt al-Ḥamawī (d. 626/1229) in his *Mu'jam al-buldān* as an idol which "was worshipped by the people of Ba'labakk in an ancient town in *al-Shām* (see SYRO-PALESTINE), where great old castles and ruins are to be found" (Yāqūt, *Buldān*, *sub* *Ba'Ļ* and *Ba'labakk*). *Ba'labakk*, or Baalbek, is a town in Lebanon, some 85 km

northeast of Beirut.

The Qurʾān mentions *Baʿl* as a deity in the Makkan Sūrat al-Ṣāffāt (Q 37:125) in a pericope situated in the flow of verses succinctly narrating what happened to the ancient multitudes to whom Allah, Most High, had sent Messengers but who had afterwards gone astray (*q.v.*). Beginning with the prelude, *And, indeed, most of the people of old went astray before them, although verily We had sent warners unto them* (37:71-72), the stories of five Prophets are narrated in rapid succession. These include Nūḥ (*q.v.*), Ibrāhīm (*q.v.*), Ishāq (*q.v.*), Mūsā (*q.v.*), and Hārūn (*q.v.*)—may peace be upon all of them. Then comes the mention of Ilyās, upon him peace, and his people, worshippers of *Baʿl*: *Indeed, Ilyās too was among the Messengers. When he said to his people: “Will you not be conscious of Allah? Do you call upon Baʿl and forsake the Best of Creators? Allah is your Lord and the Lord of your ancestors of yore.” But they denounced him as a liar, so they will surely be arraigned, except Allah’s chosen servants* (Q 37:123-128). According to Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī (d. 606/1209), *Baʿl* was a golden idol twenty cubits high, with four faces and 400 attendants (*sadana*); Satan (*q.v.*) entered into its mouth and preached a religion of misguidance (*bi-sharīʿat al-ḍalāla*) (Rāzī, *sub* Q 37:125).

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Yāqūt. *Buldān*.

Zabīdī. *Tāj*.

See also: FAMILY AND HOUSEHOLD; IDOLS AND IDOLATRY; ILYĀS, UPON HIM PEACE; MARRIAGE AND DIVORCE; SATAN; SYRO-PALESTINE.

MUZAFFAR IQBAL

Balance

See HARMONY AND BALANCE

Banū Isrāʾīl

See CHILDREN OF ISRĀʾĪL

Baqara

See ANIMALS

Barrier

See BARZAKH; HIJAB

BARZAKH

This article comprises the following sections: i. Definition, Usage, Etymology; ii. The Estuarine *Barzakh*; iii. Figurative *Barzakhs*; iv. The Pre-Resurrection Afterlife; v. The Bliss or Punishment of the Grave; vi. The Life of Martyrs and Prophets in *Barzakh*; vii. The Hearing of the Dead; viii. Bibliography.

Definition, Usage, Etymology

The Arabic noun *barzakh* is a quadriliteral *faʿlal* form used three times in the Qurʾān to denote a barrier (*ḥājiz*, *maḥbas*), twice in the sense of the space where seas and rivers meet—*And it is He Who has let loose the two seas: this, sweet and thirst-quenching; that, saltish and bitter; and has placed between the two a barrier (barzakh) and a great partition complete (ḥijran maḥjūran)* (Q 25:53, cf. Q 55:20), including the senses of dry land (*yabas*) and natural boundary (*tukhūm*)—and once in the sense of the other-worldly barrier between the living and the dead: *and behind them* (i.e., the dead) *is a barrier until the day when they are raised* (Q 23:100): “Everything that is between two things is a *barzakh*, and what lies between this world and the next is a *barzakh*” (Abū ʿUbayda, *Majāz*, *sub* Q 25:53; Ibn Qutayba, *Gharīb*, *sub* Q 23:100; Ibn Abī Ḥātim, *sub* Q 25:53).

The Qurʾān also uses the term *ḥājiz* in the first sense of estuary above: *Or, Who has made the earth a fixed abode, and placed rivers in the folds thereof, and placed firm hills therein, and has set a barrier (ḥājizan) between the two seas? Is there any deity beside Allah? Nay, but most of them know not!* (Q 27:61). In the second sense *barzakh* has also been defined metonymically as “the grave” (al-Sijistānī, *Gharīb*; Abū Ḥayyān, *Tuhfa*, both *sub b-r-z-kh*) and translated as “life of/in the grave,” “isthmus-life,” and “interlife.” Accordingly, it is said that the *barzakh* is “an invisible barrier” (*ḥājiz khafīy*) (al-Farrāʾ, *Maʿānī*, *sub* Q 23:100; cf. Azharī, *Tahdhīb* and Ibn Manzūr). *Barzakh* therefore is a major theme