

THE QUR'ANIC TERM "DĪN": A NEW ETYMOLOGICAL STUDY



Choayb Hebila¹

University of Jijel, (Algeria)

Corresponding Author: Choayb.hebila@univ-jijel.dz

Submission date: 17/10/2025 Acceptance date: 10/06/2026 Publication date: 30/06/2026



Abstract:

This study seeks to present a new perspective on the etymology of the Qur'anic term (ad-dīn), Based on ancient Arabic dictionaries and Arabic phonetic laws, particularly phonetic substitution. In the study, we explained the attempts of recent researchers regarding the term's origin. We presented our approach used in determining the origins of Arabic vocabulary through some examples in the theoretical part, and we were able to prove that this term has an Arabic verbal root rather than being borrowed from another language.

key words: Dīn; Etymology; 'ibdāal; Obedience; religion.

Introduction:

There is no denying that experts in Islamic theological studies must possess a comprehensive understanding of Quranic terminology to effectively address the scientific challenges they face in their research endeavors. The need for careful examination, however, increases when it comes to key Quranic and religious terms. At first glance, it may appear that Arab linguists and ancient commentators comprehensively understood these terms. Yet, an extensive review of later scholars' writings on these terms reveals that the issue is more complicated than it seems. The term (ad-dīn), which is often translated as (religion), is one of these key terms that we believe needs greater clarification. About a year ago, we noticed this when we tried to explain to a colleague at the university that the Arabic term (al-madīnah), which is equivalent to the English term (city), is derived from the term (ad-dīn). It was clear to me that the term (al-madīnah), which is also a Qur'anic term, denotes the notion of (order) present in the term (ad-dīn). Nevertheless, the terminological implications associated with both terms have obscured this understanding. This was one of the reasons that led me to extensively study the etymology of the term (religion) but the main reason was the confusion expressed by the Japanese researcher Toshihiko Izutsu when he studied this term in his book on Qur'anic semantics.

Therefore, the primary aim of this study is to attempt to address a problematic that can be formulated as follows: What is the precise etymology of the Qur'anic term (ad-din)? It is clear that we did not choose to study this matter without establishing hypotheses that can be confirmed or refuted. In fact, there are two hypotheses: the first suggests that this Qur'anic term originates from Arabic and is not borrowed from another language, while the second proposes that it evolved historically from an ancient verb, (ḍa'ina), meaning submission. To prove these two hypotheses, it was necessary to review recent studies, particularly those published in the last century. Additionally, without neglecting the Qur'anic texts, we extensively consulted ancient Arabic dictionaries to study the roots and entries related to the semantic field of (ad-dīn). Some methodological aspects related to etymology in the Arabic language may be unknown or unclear to many. This led us to devote a study to the phonetic laws in Arabic and to two Arabic terms related to phonetic substitution: (at-taṣāqub) and (al-'ibdāl), along with examples that illustrate the difference between them, the most important of which is the etymology of the term (zakāt) in the Qur'an. Furthermore, it is important to note that we have transliterated Arabic roots, words, and certain phrases, with some important words written in Arabic letters, to enhance clarity.

1. The etymology of the term (dīn) in the works of later scholars:

later orientalist frequently cite Arthur Jeffrey's work with exaggerated confidence in their study of qur'anic terms, despite the many critical remarks that can be directed towards his book. One notable issue is the tendency to attribute religious terminology to either Jewish or Christian traditions, or to other Eastern religions. Although the author himself was aware of the limitations of his philological equipment, as he stated in the foreword of his book (Jeffery, 1938, p viii). Jeffrey explains that the meaning of the term (dīn) in the qur'an is religion and judgment. He believes that the meaning of (dayn) (debt) is a late development of the word in Arabic. He conveys that Islamic scholars believe that the term is arabic, derived from the verb (dāna), as indicated by Al-rāḡib Al-aṣṣfahānī, meaning to do something as a habit. And it is a form taken, according to him, from the north, connected to Akkadian and Hebrew terms. In general, Jeffrey concluded that the two meanings mentioned in the Qur'an, namely religion and judgment, are both not of Arabic origin. He seemed confident that the term (dīn) in the sense of religion was of Iranian origin, and that the sense of judgment was borrowed from Aramaic. But what led him to assume this borrowing? It seems that Jeffrey's perspective, influenced by his sources, sees Islamic religion as inauthentic and a reformulation of jewish, christian and iranian concepts. Consequently, he denies Arabic origins of many Qur'anic terms due to similarities with terms from other religions, despite their common Semitic roots. However, some Islamic sources formed the basis for this approach; many Qur'anic terms were categorized as borrowed without sufficient linguistic evidence. In the example we are studying, Jeffrey cites the opinions of Al-ḥafājī and Al-ta'ālibī, assuming that the term (dīn) had no verbal root.

Despite the above; we can criticize Jeffrey and his sources in saying that Al-ta'ālibī, for example, included the term in his list of foreign words. This is an opinion that shows methodological problems with Jeffrey and his sources in terms of documentation. Al-ta'ālibī did not comment on this brief list, and there is nothing in it that Jeffrey referred to. Abū manṣūr Al-ta'ālibī, in his book (Fiqh al-luḡah), put the term (ad-dīn) together with other terms: al-ttannūr, al-ḥamīr, al-zzamān, al-kanz, al-ddīnār, and al-ddirham, in a list named: fī ḍikri asmā'in qā'imatin fī luḡatay al-'arabi wa-l-furṣ 'alā lafẓin wāḥidin (Al-ta'ālibī, 2002, p 208). Which can be translated as: words found in Arabic and Persian with one form; and one meaning. What is meant by Al-Tha'alabi's list is that these words are shared in linguistic use only, and he did not indicate that Arabic borrowed them from Persian or vice versa. Although the Arabic phrase with which Al-Tha'alabi titled his list is clear and does not need explanation, he compiled another list after this list that included words that were unique to the Persian language and which Arabic was forced to Arabize or leave as it is, and it contains words such as: al-ibrīq (the jug) and al-ddībāj (the brocade).

The same applies to Al-ḥafāʾī. Though he mentioned the term (dīn) in his book on arabized words (*Ṣifā' al-ḡalīl fī mā fī kalāmi al-ʿarabi mina al-dddaḥīl*), his discussion wasn't limited to such terms. Rather, he included words of Arabic origin to comment on their derivation, or in order to mention the new colloquial uses of arabic words. For example, in his explanation of the word (daftar; notebook), where he said that it is correct Arabic even if he did not know its derivation ((*Ṣihāb Ad-dīn Al-ḥafāʾī*, 1952, p 119). when explaining the term (dīn) (religion), he only described it as (known) (ma'rūf) (Ibid, pp 128–129) which is a technical term widely used by arab lexicographers when the lexical entry is known and does not require explanation, Just as he described the word (al-dduḥūl الدخول) (Ibid, p 130), which means (the beautiful voice) in spoken Arabic dialect, then he discussed the issue of proper names containing this term, such as (dhahir al-din ضياء الدين) without suggesting that it was borrowed from another language. What Jeffrey did not notice is that Al-ḥafāʾī mentioned the term (dīn) only to discuss proper nouns composed of it as new lexical entries classified under the category of (al-muwallad), which is a term used by Arabic scholars to refer to words and meanings that Arabs used after the second century AH. Al-ḥafāʾī himself pointed out in the introduction to his book that he did not limit himself to the Arabized words, but rather added (al-muwallad). Yet, the lexical definition of (dīn) does not reference the borrowing hypothesis, contrary to what Jeffrey thought. The previous discussion confirms that no Islamic scholar has ever questioned the arabic origin of the term (religion), or said that it was borrowed from another language, whether the borrowing was related to the phonetic form or the meaning.

In his distinguished book (God and man in the qur'ān), Toshiko Izutsu attempted to link the term (dīn) with the concept of (obedience) etymologically (Toshihiko Izutsu, 1964, pp 239–251) based on what he found in the semantic system of the holy qur'ān. He stated from the beginning that he hesitated to discuss this topic because of the philological doubts that surrounded the term (dīn), which he found hopelessly difficult to overcome. While acknowledging that this key qur'ānic term is one of the most challenging terms, Izutsu sees the possibility that it represents multiple words with different origins in the same form, and that some of its meanings might have foreign roots. At the same time, after pointing out the hypothesis of the foreign origin of the word according to Arthur Jeffrey; he expressed his feeling that it is simplifying the matter too much. Instead of the hypothesis of linguistic borrowing, Izutsu tried to search for the origin of the term in the root (D/Y/N), declaring the impossibility of reducing the meanings of (dīn) to one meaning from a linguistic standpoint.

Based on his study of pre-Islamic poetry and the uses of the root (D/Y/N) in it, Izutsu derived three root meanings: custom or habit, requital, and obedience. Izutsu focused on the meaning of obedience more than the other two meanings, whether in pre-Islamic poetry or in the Holy Qur'ān. He explained that the verb (dāna) in this sense is classified as a word of (Addād أضداد), that is, a word that has two opposite

meanings. Despite his earnest and daring attempts to understand the term within the limits of pre-Islamic poetry, Quranic texts, and Arabic laws of derivation, he remained influenced by the notion of conceptual borrowing from Persian, noting that he was successful in clarifying the difference between the term (ad-dīn) and the term (al-millah), the concept of (al-millah) is linked to the religious system of the (al-'ummah), while (ad-dīn) is related to the individual believer. As a matter of fact, Izutsu's semantic study of the Holy Qur'ān unambiguously confirms that the concept of (dīn) is essentially linked to obedience, which aligns with the same concept found in the etymology of the term (Islam). This is further affirmed in the use of the verb ('abada) in the same context with the term (dīn) in the Qur'ān. However, he did not definitively ascertain the meaning of obedience in the root (D/Y/N), in our view, because this root is not the etymological origin of the term (dīn). In this study, we will present the original root that we believe can elucidate the three meanings. The verb (ḍa'ina ذعن) has a singular basic radical meaning, and it could potentially challenge Arthur Jeffrey's hypothesis regarding the absence of a verbal root for the term.

One of the most important contemporary Arabic books written about religion is the book of Muḥammad 'Abd Allāh Darrāz, entitled (Ad-dīn: Buhūth mumahhidah li-dirāsāt tārikh al-ādīyān, Religion: Introductory Studies for the History of Religions). In this book ('Abd Allāh Darrāz, 1970, pp 28–33), the author tried to find the etymology and meaning of the term (dīn), beginning with a critique of Arabic dictionaries and their methods of defining lexical entries. He provides an example of the diverse meanings of this term in dictionaries, noting their inconsistency and sometimes contradictory nature. According to him, the term (dīn) does not stem from a single verb but rather from three verbs sharing the same morphological form. The meanings of the verb (dāna) can be traced back to three main concepts: judgment, obedience, and habit. These meanings vary depending on the preposition used: (dāna) (without a preposition), (dāna li) (for), and (dāna bi) (in). This viewpoint, in essence, aligns closely with Izutsu's perspective, as previously mentioned. However, Darrāz differs in that he consolidates the three meanings around the concept of obedience. He clarifies that among Arabs, this word signifies a relationship between two parties, where one party holds authority over the other. Consequently, the first meaning accurately conveys the notion of obligation and accountability, the second meaning denotes obedience, and the third meaning, namely (habit) or (religious system), reflects the underlying principle by which obedience is manifested, or the constitution that regulates the relationship, or that expresses it.

In response to the claim made in the Islamic Encyclopedia, which suggested that the term was borrowed or Arabized from Hebrew or Persian, Darrāz relies on a phonetic rule in the Arabic language to confirm the concept of obligation in the root (D/Y/N). This rule is associated with vowelization, where (dayn), with the letter dāl followed by a (fatha), denotes (debt), indicating a material financial obligation, while (dīn), with the letter dāl followed by a (kasra), signifies moral obligation, akin to the

concept of religion. This phonetic rule is observed in other words in Arabic, such as: al-ḥalq (Physique) and al-ḥuluq (the character). Mustafā Abd Ar-razzāq, one of the most prominent Islamic thinkers of the twentieth century, proposed the form (Dayn) as the root from which the term (Dīn) evolved (Muṣṭafā 'Abd al-Rāzīk, 2020, pp 22–23). The basis for his opinion is that the (fa'ala) form is more commonly used in Arabic. Additionally, the word (Dayn) signifies, in one of its meanings, what is absent, aligning with the concept of (al-ḡayb الغيب), which forms the basis of religion. We believe Mustafā Abd Ar-razzāq's interpretation is founded on a non-original meaning within the linguistic root, specifically a connotative meaning related to the original concept of obedience and commitment. However, this interpretation doesn't fully explain all the meanings of the root or the term (religion). In contrast, Darrāz's attempt was more successful. He used Arabic phonetic laws to explain the differences between morphological forms and meanings. But like Izutsu, he couldn't find - in our opinion - the original linguistic root behind these forms and meanings.

2. Arabic Etymology and Phonetic Laws: Methodological Aspects:

Before addressing the study's problem, we need to point out some methodological issues concerning Arabic etymology and phonetic laws. These issues can be summarized by clarifying two Arabic philological terms: al-'ibdāal and at-taṣāqub. Ancient scholars of Arabic and Qur'ānic recitations paid attention to several phonetic laws present in Arabic, such as assimilation (al-'idgām) and (al-qalb). However, the most significant phonetic law related to issues of etymology is the law of substitution. From a phonological perspective, both at-taṣāqub and al-'ibdāal represent phonetic substitution. However, the distinction lies in the fact that al-'ibdāal does not change the meaning, unlike at-taṣāqub. Phonetic substitution in Arabic relies on the similarity of sound characteristics between the letters. For example, the word (aṣ-ṣaqr, the falcon الصقر) is used and pronounced in the ancient Arabic language in two other ways: (az-zaqr الزقر) and (as-saqr السقر). The ṣād, the sīn, and the zāy are phonemes that are closely related and similar phonetically. They are termed as (whistle letters) (hurūf as-safīr), these phonetic substitutions are primarily associated with Arabic dialects and the variations in pronunciation among different tribes for certain words. The meaning of the word remains consistent, as scholars have categorized this as al-'ibdāal.

When we come across two Arabic words that are close in meaning and similar in sound characteristics like guttural letters (al-ḥurūf al-ḥalqiyyah), scholars refer to this as (at-taṣāqub). In the terminology of modern linguistics, the differing letters between the two words are considered morphemes that influence the meaning, rather than phonemes. The first scholar to use the term (at-taṣāqub) was Ibn Jinnī, who dedicated a chapter to it in his book (Al-ḥaṣā'is) (Abū al-fatḥ ibn Jinnī, 1990, 2/147). This term literally means (convergence). According to Ibn Jinnī, this topic is vast and difficult to comprehend, and a lot of Arabic relies on it, even though scholars haven't focused on it enough. There are many examples of this concept, but the famous example, mentioned by Ibn Jinnī himself, is the Qur'ānic verb (ta'uzzuhum تَوَزَّهُم) from the verse [Maryam: 83]: "Alam tara annā arsalnā aṣ-shayāṭīna 'alā al-kāfirīna tu'uzzuhum azzā", meaning: "Seest thou not that We have set the Evil Ones on against the unbelievers, to incite them with fury?" (Yūsuf 'Alī, 1990, 4/158) The meaning of the verb is to disturb and cause a kind of anxiety, similar to the meaning of the verb (hazza هَزَّ) which means to shake. However, according to Ibn Jinnī, the connotation of the hamza is stronger than the letter Hā'. Therefore, the meaning of ('azza) is stronger than the meaning of (to shake) as shaking is often associated with material things, such as the trunk of a tree, unlike a person who possesses intellect (mā lahū bāl).

The hamza and the letter (hā') in the previous example are two morphemes that phonetically belong to the same phonetic space, similar to the letters ('ayn) and (ha), and (hā') in Arabic. They are categorized as guttural letters. Yet, how can we utilize both at-taṣāqub and al-'ibdāal in studying the etymology of Arabic vocabulary? especially with regard to our study of the term (ad-dīn)? I will provide an example demonstrating how these phonetic laws influence the etymology of Arabic vocabulary. For instance, in Arabic, we have the word (al-'unfuwān العنفوان), which currently signifies vigor and authority. If we were to present this word to a linguist, they would likely assume it is derived from the root ('/n/f ع/ن/ف), particularly considering that this root primarily conveys one central connotation in Arabic: violence (in Arabic: al-'unf). However, does (al-'unfuwān) mean violence, and is this etymology correct? The real linguistic root of the word (al-'unfuwān) is (a/n/f أ/ن/ف) and not ('/n/f) (Aḥmad ibn Fāris, 1979, 4/158); Because the meaning of the word developed in Arabic from (al-'anf الأنف), which means: the first from anything, and that is why the nose in Arabic is called that (al-'anf) as well, the origin of (al-'unfuwān) is the first period of youth, which is characterized by strength and unruliness ('unfuwān al-ṣabāb). In this case, we say that the relationship between (al-'unfuwān) and (al-'unf) is described as (taṣāqub); because the meaning, even if it is close, is different depending on the meaning of the letters (hamza) and ('ayn).

Understanding phonetic laws is significant not only for tracing the origins of words but also for unraveling the meanings of other words whose definitions have evolved over time, often to the point where their original meanings are lost. Here, I will present an example of a Qur'ānic concept that I believe has been misunderstood outside the Qur'ānic semantic system. In Surat Aṣ-ṣams, the Qur'ān talks about the human soul using two terms: (at-tazkiyah) and (at-tadsiyah) "Qad 'aflaḥa man zakkāhā wa qad ḥāb man dassāhā", meaning: Truly he succeeds that purifies it (the soul), And he fails that corrupts it (Yūsuf 'Alī, op. cit, p 1961). The interpreters of the Quran and ancient Arabic scholars could not precisely determine the meaning of (at-tadsiyah) while they believed that (at-tazkiyah) in Arabic refers to growth, similar to (zakāt.) However, we do not find a clear explanation for this contradiction in their interpretation of the two verses. The verb (dassā) can be considered among the difficult words (al-ḡarīb), where scholars have proposed two meanings: concealment and seduction (As-sāhib ibn 'Abbād, 1994, 8/360). The meaning most commonly accepted among them is (concealment) as the verb (dassā) is often associated with hiding seeds underground. Yet, in this meaning, we do not find the semantic contradiction between it and the meaning of growth in the verb (zakkā).

The contradiction between the two verbs will become apparent when we explore the etymology of the verb (zakkā زَكَّى), because, in fact, it does not signify growth but rather purification. The meaning of growth has been derived from the term (zakāt زكاة) associated with wealth. However, the true essence of (الزكاة) is the purification of wealth and making it blessed. Yet, what is the connection between purification and concealment? And how can we determine the meaning of purification? Arabic

phonetic laws, specifically substitution, will help us in the etymology of (zakāt). This concept is essentially due to the religious concept of light (an-nūr), because (zakāt) is a word that evolved from the root (D/K/Y ذ/ك/ي) which denotes light, specifically the light of the sun. In Arabic, the sun itself is called (ḍukā' ذُكَاءُ), and the term (ḍakā' ذُكَاءُ) in Arabic, which means (Intelligence) is derived from this idea of light, in addition to the concept of (cutting" in the root. This meaning cannot be fully understood solely through examination of the root (Z/K/Y); instead, we must be mindful of the fact that it evolved from the root (D/K/Y) in accordance with the law of Arabic phonetic substitution, due to the similarity of phonetic characteristics between the letters (Zāy) and (Dāy), and the phonetic substitution between these two letters is recognized and common in Arabic. The meaning of (growth" is an additional connotative meaning and not inherently present in the verb (zakkā"; because the context in Surat Aš-šams talks about the duality of (desecration) and (purification), and the duality of (darknesses) and (light) that is mentioned frequently in the Qur'ān. The implication is that the meaning of the verb (dassā) is not solely concealment, but also includes an indication of darkness. This duality appears through the contrast in Surat Aš-šams, between (night) and (day) and (earth) and (heaven), as well as the mention of (the sun) itself and (the moon).

So, we have what is known as (at-taṣāqub) between the two roots (D/K/Y) and (Z/K/Y); the first root signifies light, while the second root denotes purification. Consequently, the two meanings complement each other in religious language. However, both meanings trace back to an ancient origin, which is (cutting," a central concept in ancient Arabic lexicons. Through this concept, we can comprehend several Qur'ānic concepts, such as the concept of (fitrah," which derives from this meaning. Many Qur'ānic verses contain words derived from the root (z/k/y) that attest to this meaning. The Messenger was sent to his people in order to purify and enlighten them (yuzakkīhim يَزَكِّيهِمْ). Moses asked his companion about the reason for killing the child, describing the child as a pure soul (nafs zākiyah). On the Day of Resurrection, we will encounter the duality of brightened and darkened faces ... etc. Toshihiko Izutsu considered the term (tazakkī", which we attempted to clarify its etymology, to be a very problematic term. In his aforementioned book (Toshihiko Izutsu, 1964, p 70), he refers to Montgomery's observation about the gradual disappearance of this concept from the Qur'ānic lexicon after the Prophet's migration to Medina, where, according to him, it was replaced by the concept of (Islam" meaning self-surrendering. Regardless of the validity of this opinion, we will study in the following etymology of (ad-dīn" in a way that appears to convey the same meaning as the term (al-Islam" does, but with some semantic differences.

3. The Etymology of (ad-dīn): a New Conception:

3.1 The Etymology (Ad-dīn) in Ancient Arabic Dictionaries:

One of the important methodological issues concerning the etymology of Qur'ānic vocabulary is for researchers to refer to dictionaries documenting ḥijāzī Arabic, which are based on pre-Islamic poetry and the eloquent speech (by narration) of Bedouins. It's crucial to distinguish between entries belonging to the period in which the Qur'ān was revealed and those from the period that followed it. For this reason, it's often recommended to consult the first two major dictionaries composed in the second half of the second Hijri century: Kitāb 'Al'ayn attributed to Al-ḥalīl Al-farāhīdī, and kitāb al-jīm by Abū 'Amr Aṣ-ṣaybānī. Al-farāhīdī did not define the term (ad-dīn) in the sense of (religion), and merely mentioned the plural form (al-'adyān) (Al-ḥalīl Al-farāhīdī, 1980, 8/73). This is the tradition of ancient Arab lexicographers, they commonly abstain from defining frequently used words with clear meanings, opting instead for technical terms previously discussed, like "ma'rūf" (known). However, he explained (ad-dīn) in the sense of reward (al-jazā' الجزاء), in the sense of obedience (aṭ-ṭā'ah الطاعة), and in the sense of habit (al-'ādah العادة), drawing from ancient poetic verses.

Dictionaries written after Al-farāhīdī's dictionary often repeat his explanation with some additions from books on ḡarīb al-Qur'ān and ḡarīb al-ḥadīth. In addition to pre-Islamic and Umayyad poetry, and based on the book of Abū 'Ubayd Al-kāsim ibn Sallām, entitled (Ḡarīb al-ḥadīth), Abū Bakr Al-anbārī referred to a prophetic ḥadīth to include one of the meanings of the verb (dāna) which is to subjugate and restrain the soul (Abū Bakr Al-anbārī, 1992, 1/279). In this ḥadīth, the Prophet said: "al-kayyisu man dāna nafsahu wa 'amala li mā ba'da al-mawti," meaning: The wise person restrains (dāna) his soul and works for what comes after death. In his dictionary Jamharat al-luḡah, which is considered one of the most important dictionaries after the Al-Farahidi dictionary, Abū Bakr ibn Durayd references the name of an idol worshipped in pre-Islamic times called (Al-madān المدان), from which the Arab tribe Banū 'abd al-madān derived their name. Ibn Duraid suggests that this name may be derived from the verb (dāna), meaning (to obey). What is noteworthy about this is the existence of a proper name before Islam that combines the literal meaning of obedience with religious connotation. This confirms that the term, in its religious sense, existed among the Arabs before Islam as an authentic Arabic term.

However, ancient Arabic dictionaries often tended to define the term (ad-dīn) by the Qur'ānic term (al-millah) as a synonym, and they defined the other meanings of the term, whether in the Qur'ān or in Arabic in general as a homonym. But the term was not problematic for them. Rather, it was not counted among the difficult words, whether in terms of its etymology or in terms of its meaning. We can affirm this through the work of Ibn Fāris (Maqāyīs al-luḡah) at the end of the fourth AH century. It became apparent to him that the meanings of the root (D/Y/N) could be synthesized

into one central concept, which is submission (al-'inqiyād wa ad-dul) (Aḥmad ibn Fāris, 1979, 2/319). Still, the multitude of meanings associated with the term raised doubts among later researchers regarding its linguistic origin. This necessitates an etymological approach that more effectively emphasizes the concepts of obedience and submission.

3.2 The root (Ḍ/'/N) As the origin of the term (ad-dīn):

We are inclined to accept the view famously held by Marmarjī Ad-dūminkī and Anastās Marī Al-Karmalī about the etymology of Arabic words. That is, to say that the majority of Arabic words have evolved from biliteral roots. Similar to how quadrilateral words developed from trilateral ones, these latter roots also trace back to biliteral origins. This explains the phonetic substitution whether it is ('ibdāal) or (taṣāqub). Certainly, this perspective presupposes that biliteral roots are the most ancient in Arabic and Semitic languages, facilitating our understanding of the etymology of trilateral, quadrilateral, and quintilateral words. Before presenting examples of biliteral roots indicating the meaning of obedience or similar concepts such as humility, let's start by mentioning the root (Ḍ/'/N), which we believe is the ancient origin of the root (Ḍ/Y/N) and the term (dīn). This root is unique in that it solely denotes the concept of obedience and submission, as evidenced by its sole derived verb, (ḍa'ina ذَعِنَ) or (aḍ'ana أَدْعَنَ). This indicates its antiquity, likely predating the root (Ḍ/Y/N). Another indicator is its original morphological form in Arabic, which is (ḍa'ina yuḍ'inu ذَعِنَ يَذْعِنُ) following the pattern (fa'ila فَعِلَ) with kasra as documented by Al-farāhīdī (Al-ḥalīl Al-farāhīdī, 1980, 2/100). However, this morphological structure has become obsolete or rarely used, even in the pre-Islamic era. The third factor is the congruence in both morphological form and meaning between the two verbs (aḍ'ana) and its Gerund (al-id'ān), and (aslama) and its gerund (al-islām).

This root was used in the Holy Qur'ān only once, when it used the adjective (muḍ'inin مَذْعِنِينَ) from the verse of Surah An-nur (49). "wa in yakun lahum al-ḥaqqu ya'tū 'ilayhi muḍ'inin". The verse speaks of hypocrites who pretend to seek the judgment of God and His Messenger. Yūsuf 'Alī's translation suggests that when they feel they have the right is on their side, they come with total submission (Yūsuf 'Alī, op. cit, p 1022). Abū Maṣṣūr Al-azharī cited the linguist Abū Ishāq's interpretation, affirming that the word signifies obedience and submission, while also carrying a connotation of swiftness (Abū Maṣṣūr Al-azharī, 2001, 2/192). As for the Kufic linguist Al-farrā', he chose that its meaning is obedience without unquietness (Abū Zakariyyā Al-farrā', 1980, 2/257). The meaning in general is absolute obedience, which is why the compliant camel whose joints are soft is called (miḍ'ān مِذْعَان).

We can assume that the triple root (Ḍ/'/N) could potentially originate from two biliteral roots, the first is ('/N), as one of the basic meanings of the root ('/N/Y)

revolves around obedience, especially within a religious context. In the Qur'ān, we find a verb derived from this root within the context of the afterlife. This verb is: "wa 'anat al-wujūh." The Arabic verb (عنى 'anā) signifies submission (Aḥmad ibn Fāris, 1979, 4/146-147), while the noun (العاني al-'anī) conveys this idea and is also used to denote a prisoner. The masculine form (al-'anī) is among the designations for "the slave," while (al-'aniyah العانية) serves as its feminine equivalent, akin to the pair of nouns (مدين مدين) and (مدينة مدينه), both derived from the verb (dāna), which is also the root of the term (ad-dīn). The religious sense of the root appears through what dictionaries documented about a hymn (talbiyyah) that the Yemenis used in pre-Islamic times when performing Hajj rituals, which is: "Jā'at ilayka 'āniyah... 'ibāduka al-yamāniyah kaymā tahuḥja at-tāniyah... 'alā qilāsin nājiyah", meaning: Your obedient servants have come to you on camels so that they may pilgrimage again. The term ('āniyah) represents the plural form of (ānī), signifying the obedient and submissive. Within this hymn, it is coupled with (al-'ibād), the plural form of ('ibādullāh), distinctly within a religious context. Just as the Holy Qur'ān employs the verb ('anat) to denote submission with the subject (al-wujūh, faces), the verb (aslama), from which the term (Islam) is derived, is also used with the (face) in a similar context, specifically in Surat Luqmān, verse 22: (yuslim wajhahu ila Al-lāh), meaning: The one who submits to God and obeys Him.

However, this etymology could face objections, as the evolution of roots in Arabic typically involves the addition of letters at the end or within the root, rather than at the beginning. But how can we explain the semantic and phonetic similarity between this root and the two roots (D/Y/N) and (ḍ/'/N)? In fact, these similarities unequivocally demonstrate that Arabic and Semitic letters, in general, serve as morphemes that signify meanings due to their derivational nature. Indeed, even vowels such as kasra and ḍamma can be regarded as morphemes. However, this does not imply that this biliteral root is the original source for the meaning of obedience in the term (dīn). The hypothesis we aim to prove suggests that the term (dīn), derived from the verb (dāna) and the root (D/Y/N), can be traced back to the verb (ḍa'ina) or (aḍ'ana) and the root (Ḍ/'/N), which evolved from the biliteral root (D/N). This implies that the letter that was added is the letter ('ayn) which became a vowel (Yā'). The primary and sole meaning of this root indicates what was originally low or down (Ibid, 2/261). For example, the man with a hunched back is called (al-adann الأذن), and (ad-dandana الدندنة) refers to the incomprehensible sound produced when the speaker speaks in a low and indistinct voice.

The biliteral root (D/N د/ن) meaning lowering and descending



The root (D/'/N) and the verbs (da'ina دَعِنَ) and (ad'ana أذعن) meaning obedience



The root (D/Y/N) and the verb (dāna دان) meaning obedience



The word (dīn دين) as a verbal noun meaning obedience



The term (dīn دين) meaning obedience, judgment, and habit



The term (dīn دين) meaning religion

Our hypothesis about the Origin of the Term (dīn)

The meaning of this biliteral root is fully aligned with the concept of obedience found in the verbs (dāna) and (da'ina) or (ad'ana), as well as in the concept of (ad-dīn). Our perspective is that the semantic shift began with the physical sensory connotations present in the biliteral root, evolving into the concepts of obedience in the triple root, habit, and judgment, and ultimately leading to the concept of religious beliefs. Another phonetic substitution (taṣāqub) related to this root further supports this interpretation. This substitution involves the well-known substitution between the letters (Lām) and (Nūn), as well as between the letters (Dāl) and (Ḍāl). Therefore, we can observe that the Arabic word indicating the meaning of humility and humiliation is (al-dul الذل) from the root (Ḍ/L), which signifies humility, submissiveness, and softness. If we aim to clarify this semantic field using Lakoff's and Johnson's theory of metaphors, this etymology emphasizes that the concept of (ad-dīn) is based on the orientational metaphor (up and down). As this theory suggests, the matter is not arbitrary; rather, it is rooted in human physical and cultural experiences (George Lakoff and Mark Johnson, 1981; p 14). In Islamic belief, religiosity demands complete submission to the most high lord ('Allāh Al'a'lā), as what He offers surpasses what exists in this worldly life (Al-ḥayāt ad-dūnyā). The word (ad-dūnyā الدنيا), meaning (the world) or (this worldly life), is the feminine form of the word (al-'adnā الأدنى), which is derived from the root (D/N), signifying the most lowly thing. Although

linguists and interpreters might suggest that the word's meaning implies a sense of nearness and connection, its roots can be traced back to the verb (Danā". We believe that (ad-dūnyā" refers to a life that is intimately tied to individuals, as opposed to the afterlife (al-'āhīrah". We argue that this interpretation is primarily linked to the concept of hierarchy, representing human space and his relationship with things.

Islam was named this because it is originally derived from the verb root (aslama, yuslimu) which, according to linguists, means submission. Although Ibn Faris believed it was named so because rejecting it is considered unacceptable (sālimun min al-ibā' wa li-mtinā') (Aḥmad ibn Fāris, 1979, 3/90), for us, this perspective may be mistaken or inaccurate. To apprehend the two concepts of (Islam) and (dīn), particularly in light of the verse indicating that in God's eyes, the religion (ad-dīn) is Islam, one must engage with the semantic domain of faith within the Qur'ān. Just as the root ('/N) indicates obedience, it indicates restriction. These two meanings define the semantic field of faith in the Qur'ān, where believers are urged to renounce desire (al-hawā) completely and to strictly adhere to boundaries (al-ḥudūd) set by God. These boundaries are metaphorically represented in the Qur'ān as "the straight path, aṣ-ṣirāṭ al-mustaqīm". Like the other two Qur'ānic terms (Aṣ-ṣarī'a الشريعة) and (al-minhāj المنهاج), both of them literally means the path, with some semantic differences. For this reason; the concept of obedience in the Qur'ān is expressed in the term (al-ittibāع الاتباع), which literally means to follow something, and the metaphor continues in the Qur'ān when it warns against following the various paths of Satan. The term (al-hawā) is also grounded in an orientational metaphor, as it derives from the notion of descending downward (al-huwiyy) by following desires. However, the etymology of (al-hawā) must be traced back to the sensory notion of air (al-hawā') from the perspective that it is unrestricted by constraints or boundaries.

The term Islam is derived from the root (S/L/M), which we can understand through another root, (S/L/B), meaning negation. That is, a person should renounce from himself desires or everything that contradicts the boundaries set by God, just as the divine name (As-salām) means the one from whom defect and deficiency have been banished. From this understanding emerged the concept of submission (al-istislām), where an individual acknowledges that they do not possess the strength to confront someone or something. This is expressed in the well-known Islamic supplication (lā ḥawla wa lā quwwah illā bi-allāh), meaning: There is no power or strength except by Allah. This basic meaning of the concept of Islam is also articulated through the Islamic oath: There is no deity but God. For the above reason, it can be inferred that the concept of (ad-dīn) holds a broader significance compared to (al-islam). This is because (ad-dīn) signifies absolute obedience in its entirety, whereas (al-islam) denotes obedience manifested through the renunciation of personal desires, and surrendering one's will to the divine will of God. In other words, (Islam" can be understood semantically and religiously as a specialization (Taḥṣīṣ) of the broader concept of (dīn).

Conclusion:

Apart from the methodological objections that some contemporary linguistic studies have tried to direct towards etymological studies, and aside from the argument of the uncertainty of this type of study. The Arabic language, full of reliable dictionaries and linguistic works, along with strict phonetic laws, demonstrates a specificity compared to other languages. This specificity is evident in its capacity to trace the origins of Arabic vocabulary through a respected scientific approach. Yet, in this research, our goal was to confirm the hypothesis that the term (ad-din) has its roots solely in Arabic language, with the root (D/‘/N) serving as evidence for the term's historical semantic development, and contrary to what Jeffrey thought; We have proven that this term has an Arabic verbal root. We are confident in the validity of this hypothesis, which we have supported by examining the Arabic roots connected to the term. This Quranic term undoubtedly indicates the concept of obedience, but we have clarified the historical semantic development that began from a physical sensory meaning to an explicit religious concept that is different from the concept of the term (Islam). Moreover, the meaning we have concluded is entirely consistent with the Qur’anic metaphor that expresses the concept of religion, regardless of the terms included in the field of faith.

Bibliography List:

1. Abd Allāh Darrāz , Ad-dīn: Buhūth mumahhidah li-dirāsāt tārīkh al-ādīyān, Muḥammad 'Abd, Dār al-qalam, Kuwait, (1970).
2. Abū al-faṭḥ ibn Jinnī, Al-ḥaṣā'is, alhay'a al-miṣriyyah al-āmmah li-lkitāb, Egypt, (1990).
3. Abū Bakr Al-anbārī, Az-zāhir fī ma'ānī kalimāt an-nās, Ar-risālah Foundation, Beirut, (1992).
4. Abū Maṣṣūr Al-azharī, Tahdīb al-luġah, dār Iḥyā' al-turāth al-'arabī, Beirut, (2001).
5. Abū maṣṣūr Al-ta'ālibī, Fiqh al-luġah , dār Iḥyā' al-turāth al-'arabī, Beirut, (2002).
6. Abū Zakariyyā Al-farrā', Ma'ānī Al-qur'ān, dār al-miṣriyyah li at-ta'lif wa at-tarjamah, Egypt, (1980).
7. Aḥmad ibn Fāris, Maqāyīs al-luġah, dar al-fikr, Damascus, (1979).
8. Al-ḥalīl Al-farāhīdī, Kitāb 'Al'ayn, dār wa maktabat al-hilāl, Beirut, (1980).
9. Arthur Jeffery, The foreign vocabulary of the qur'an, oriental institute baroda, (1938).
10. As-sāhib ibn 'Abbād, Al-muḥīṭ fī al-luġah , 'ālam al-kutub, Beirut, (1994).
11. George Lakoff and Mark Johnson, Metaphors we live, University of Chicago Press, Chicago and London, (1981).
12. Muṣṭafā 'Abd al-Rāzik, Ad-Din wal-Waḥy wal-Islam, Hindawi Foundation, Egypt, (2020).
13. Šihāb Ad-dīn Al-ḥafājī, Šifā' al-ġalīl fī mā fī kalāmi al-'arabi mina al-dddahīl , Maktabat al-ḥaram al-ḥusaynī al-tijārīyah al-kubrā, (1952).
14. Toshihiko Izutsu, God and man in the Qur'an: Semantics of the Koranic Weltanschauung, Tokyo, (1964).
15. Yūsuf 'Ali, The holy quran translation and commentary, king Fahd Holy Quran printing complex, Saudi Arabia, (1990).