

to help us out, and perhaps the simplest solution is to consider it as a formation from *قسر*, though the great variety of opinions on the word given by the early authorities makes its Arabic origin very doubtful. Very similar is *مهل*,¹ which is said to mean either *fused brass* or *the dregs of oil*.² as-Suyūṭī quotes early authorities for its being a Berber word,³ which of course is absurd. Hebrew *מִהַל*⁴ and Aram. *מִהַל*, meaning to spoil wine by mixing water with it, may have some connection with the meaning *دردی الزيت* or *عكر الزيت*

given by the Lexicons,⁵ but it is difficult to derive the Qur'ānic *مهل* from this, and equally difficult to explain it as an Arabic word.⁶

Yet a third group consists of those few words where a little linguistic learning has led the Muslim philologists into sad error.

For instance, the word *أل* which occurs only in ix, 8, apparently means *consanguinity, relationship*, and is a good Arabic word, yet we find as-Suyūṭī⁷ telling us that Ibn Jinnī⁸ said that many of the early authorities held that this *أل* was the name of God in Nabataean, the reference of course being to the common Semitic divine name *El*.

Similarly *منفطر* of lxxiii, 18, which there is no reason for taking as other than a regular formation from *فطر* to *rend* or *cleave* (cf. Heb. *פטר*; Syr. *ܦܬܪ*), is said by some authorities to be Abyssinian,⁹ on the ground, apparently, of some hazy connection in their minds between it and *لمل*. So also *دری* of xxiv, 35, which Shaidhala and

¹ Sūra, xviii, 28; xlv, 45; lxx, 8.

² Jawharī, *Ṣiḥāh*, ii, 241; Rāghib, *Mufradāt*, 494.

³ *Itq*, 325; *Mutaw*, 65.

⁴ Used only in Is. i, 22.

⁵ *LA*, xiv, 155.

⁶ *عساق* of xxxviii, 57; lxxviii, 25 (cf. as-Suyūṭī, *Itq*, 323; *Mutaw*, 64), and *طوى* of xx, 12; lxxix, 16 (cf. as-Suyūṭī, *Itq*, 322; *Mutaw*, 57), are perhaps to be included along with these.

⁷ *Itq*, 319; *Mutaw*, 61.

⁸ The *Mutaw* tells us that the reference is to his grammatical work *Al-Muhtasib*.

⁹ *Itq*, 325; *Mutaw*, 43.