The passages in which it occurs are relatively late, and it is clearly a technical religious term for the nothingness, vanity, and falseness of that which is opposed to God's حَقّ. In particular it is used of idols, as in xvi, 74; xxix, 52, 67, etc., where it forcibly reminds us of the Hebrew use of אֱלִילִים and the τὰ μάταια of Acts xiv, 15.

Now as a matter of fact the Peshitta translates τὰ μάταια by ܣܪܝܩܘܬܐ, and, as Ahrens, *Christliches*, 38, points out, we seem to have here the origin of the Qur'ānic بَاطِل, whence probably the other forms were derived. Cf. the Eth. ከንቱ, *vanum, inanem, irritum*.

بَعْل (Ba'l).

xxxvii, 125.

Baal.

The word occurs in the Elijah story and as a proper name undoubtedly came to Muḥammad from the same source as his إلياس.

As this would seem to be from the Syr. we may conclude that بعل is from the Syr. ܒܥܠܐ.[1] On the question of the word in general the authorities differ. Robertson Smith[2] argued that the word was a loan-word in Arabia, but Nöldeke (*ZDMG*, xl, 174), and Wellhausen (*Reste*, 146), claim that it is indigenous. It is worthy of note that as-Suyūṭī, *Itq*, 310, states that بعل meant رَبّ in the dialects of Yemen and of Azd, and as such we find it in the S. Arabian inscriptions, e.g. Glaser, 1076, 2, 𐩨𐩲𐩡 𐩩� "Lord of Teri'at" (see further Rossini, *Glossarium*, 116; *RES*, i, Nos. 184, 185). In any case from the Nabataean and N. Arabian inscriptions[3] we learn that the word was known in this sense in Arabia long before Muḥammad's time.[4] Horovitz, *KU*, 101, thinks it came from Eth. (cf. Ahrens, *Christliches*, 38).

---

[1] So Horovitz, *KU*, 101, and see Rudolph, *Abhängigkeit*, 47 n.
[2] *Religion of the Semites* (2 ed.), 100 ff.; *Kinship*, 210.
[3] See Cook, *Glossary*, 32; Lidzbarski, *Handbuch*, 240, 241; Ryckmans, *Noms propres*, i, 8, 54; Nielsen in *HAA*, i, 241.
[4] In the Qur'ān itself (xi, 75) it occurs in the sense of *husband*.