Extraordinary Vocabulary of the Qur'an and Related Translation Problems

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Abstract

This paper examines ten English translations of the so-called 'Gharib Al-Qur'an' (extraordinary vocabulary of the Qur'an) with the aim of pinpointing how this vocabulary is rendered into English by different translators of the Qur'an, and identifying the main problems involved in translating it. The selections include the translations of Sale (1734), Rodwell (1861), Palmer (1880), Pickthall (1930), Y. Ali (1934), Arberry (1957), Shakir (1983), Al-Hilali and Khan (1985), Ghali (1996), and Khalifa (2003). The study confirms that words belonging to the class of Gharib Al-Qur'an do constitute a problem in translation for those who fail to get the precise meaning of these words as identified in Qur'anic exegeses and, consequently, mistranslate them. Hopefully, this would unveil the brilliant subtleties of the vocabulary of the Glorious Qur'an, and thereby guide future translators through the right procedures so that they can avoid errors in their attempts to translate this divine text.

Keywords: Gharib Al-Qur'an, Translation problems, Qur'anic exegeses

1. Introduction

Generally speaking, in recent approaches to translation, it is asserted that doing translation is not a mere replacement of lexical and grammatical items, and that there are other cultural and situational aspects which should be taken into consideration when translating--- as cultures and situations are not always the same in different languages. Accordingly, it has been established that equivalence at the word or sentence level is insufficient and inadequate for dealing with all the problems that translators face. It is noted that translation problems may arise as a result of negligence on the part of translators of such pragmatic notions as utterance meaning, speech act, indirectness, etc.

Rose (1981) points out that one of the variables or dimensions of variation which determines the effectiveness of a translation has to do with whether the translation exhibits adequate understanding of the cultures of both the author of the original and the intended audience of the translation. Baker (1992) argues that translation equivalence could be discussed in relation to different levels which include: (1) Equivalence that can appear at word level and above word level, (2) Grammatical equivalence which could be discussed when referring to the diversity of grammatical categories across languages, (3) Textual equivalence which could be discussed when referring to the equivalence between a SL text and a TL text in terms of information and cohesion, and (4) Pragmatic equivalence which could be discussed when referring to implicature (i.e. what is implied during the translation process).

Indeed, translation is much more than transferring the meaning of words from the ST to the TT. Yet, finding the best lexical equivalent is still a major aspect of translation. Moreover, many translation problems might arise as a result of inappropriate renderings of lexical items. This is established by many translation theorists. For example, Baker (1992) points outs that equivalence at word level is the first element to be taken into consideration by the translator, and that when the translator starts analyzing the ST s/he looks at the words as single units in order to find a direct 'equivalent' term in the TL.

Anderman & Rogers (1996) point out that though the debate relating to the word-for-word versus sense-for-sense principles of translation may have raged since antiquity, yet, "the fact remains that words occupy a position of unique importance as the basic building material of the text, the content words forming the 'bricks' and the function words the 'mortar' (p.p. 106-9), ready for use by the bridge-builder/translator" (Anderman & Rogers, 1996: 4). They proceed to assert that translators cannot begin to translate a text without reference to the word. It is even the case that translation has been described as 'something people do with words'. Also, as the normal custom for charging for translating services is by word count, "the translator's livelihood is, literally, dependent on the 'word'". (Anderman & Rogers, 1996: 4-5)

Similarly, though Rogers (1996) agrees with translation theorists that translation is much more than transferring the meaning of words from the ST to the TT, yet he argues that translation problems with vocabulary are not uncommon. He adds that since the majority of texts translated today are special-language (LSP) texts dealing with specialized subject fields, for translators, vocabulary problems are usually terminological.

Another translation problem at the lexical level has to do with the fact that "Different languages package meaning components differently" (Larson, 1994, p. 4709). This entails that a translator often needs to use several words to carry the meaning of one word in the source text. For example, many languages have one word for *see*, another for *hear* and still another for *smell*. Nevertheless, some languages have only a word meaning 'perceive': it must be modified by *with eyes*, *with ears*, and *with nose* to make a finer distinction (Nida 1964, p. 51). As Larson asserts, "The translator must constantly be alert to the fact that there is no one-to-one match between the morphemes and words of one language and those of another" (Larson, 1994, p. 4710).

Newmark (1996) tackles the translation problems associated with the four open word classes. He argues that nouns are most likely to have perfect translation equivalents; verbs are less likely than nouns to find perfect equivalents; whereas adjectives or adverbs have the least accurate correspondences. Likewise, Larson (1994) points out that though recent interest is in semantics and discourse structures, yet, finding the best lexical equivalent is still a major aspect of translation. In this regard, the challenge for translators is threefold. First, they must recognize when words in the source language are being used in a secondary sense in order not to fall into the trap of translating them literally. Second, when a word in the receptor language is being used in its secondary meaning, care must be taken to build in sufficient context to assure the correct meaning, since secondary meanings are dependent on context. Third, in the translation process some part of the original context is inevitably lost, but loss should be minimized to the extent possible by making this information explicit when appropriate.

Guided by this perspective, i.e. finding the best lexical equivalent is not the only aspect of translation, but is still a major one, I would like to scrutinize the translations of Gharib Al-Qur'an in ten English translations of the Glorious Qur'an, and identify the main translation problems involved.

2. Methodology

Ten English translations of the Qur'an are selected here. The rationale for selection is that they represent translations made by Muslims (Y. Ali, Pickthall, Al-Hilali & Khan, Shakir, Khalifa, and Ghali) and Non-Muslims (Rodwell, Sale, Arberry, Palmer), native speakers of Arabic (Al-Hilali & Khan, Shakir, and Ghali) and non-native speakers of Arabic (Palmer, Pickthall, Y. Ali, and Arberry). Moreover, they represent old translations (Palmer, 1880; Pickthall, 1930; Y. Ali, 1934; Arberry, 1957), and quite recent translations (Shakir, 1983; Al-Hilali & Khan, 1985; Ghali, 1996, and Khalifa, 2003).

In conducting the analysis, the following steps are followed: (1) Building a corpus that includes randomly selected words belonging to the class of Gharib Al-Qur'an, (2) Identifying their English equivalents in the selected translations, and (3) Evaluating the translations.

The computer is used here as a tool for (1) obtaining the ten translations of the verses in which words belonging to the class of Gharib Al-Qur'an are found using the "FREE Noble Quran Search Software" available at http://www.quransearch.com; and (2) consulting the various exegeses of the Glorious Qur'an that are available on websites.

Many scholars have written on the topic of Gharib Al-Qur'an. A detailed list of the books written on Gharib Al-Qur'an is presented by Nassar (1421 AH). The one consulted here is Al-Suyoutiyy's *alitqan fi Alom alqrAAn* (n.d.) because it comprises a list of Gharib Al-Qur'an arranged according to the sura (chapter) and aya (verse) of the Qur'an in which a word belonging to Gharib Al-Qur'an occurs. Nevertheless, it should be noted, the meanings of the words belonging to Gharib Al-Qur'an that are mentioned by Al-Suyoutiyy might be different from the meanings mentioned by other scholars. Secondly, in studying the translations, it is not a task of error-hunting or fault-finding, and any comment against these translations is not an underestimation of them. The translators' efforts are certainly appreciated as long as instances of mistranslation have not been deliberately made to distort the meanings of the Qur'an. Inevitably, translations have their peculiarities as they reflect decisions made on the part of the translators that can always be questioned and debated. Moreover, shortcomings are to be found in any human work. Thirdly, only the sentence in which a given word belonging to Gharib Al-Qur'an is analyzed, not the whole verse. But, of course, a given sentence is not analyzed in isolation from the context. Its relevance to what goes before and after it is referred to where necessary. Words belonging to the class of Gharib Al-Qur'an are written in bold type.

3. Discussion

The Arabic word غريب means "غير المعروف والمألوف" (unfamiliar), and the term Gharib Al-Qur'an is used to refer to "ما احتاج إلى البيان أو إلى مزيد منه من ألفاظ القرآن الكريم أو غيره" (the category of Qur'anic words (or expressions) whose meaning is to be carefully illuminated) (Khalifa, n.d., para.1). It is also defined as referring to "those words whose usage has become uncommon over time (*ghareeb al-Qur'ân*)." (Al-Qadhi, n.d., para. 4).

A review of the ten selected translations reveals that words belonging to the so-called Gharib Al-Qur'an are sometimes mistranslated. Consider the following examples which highlight the problem at hand.

Example 1: إلاَّ عَلَى الْخَاشِعِينَ (2:45)

According to 'Omar (2003), خَاشِعِينَ derives from the verb خَشِع which means 'To be submissive, humble, lowly, low, cast down (eyes), faint (voice), dry, barren and desolate, exercise restraint, confined to God only, throw oneself completely at His mercy' (p. 154). Al-Suyoutiyy (n.d.) says that in the given verse it means those who believe in what Allah has revealed.

Shakir, Sale, Palmer, Arberry, and Rodwell translated خَاشِعِينَ as 'the humble' and Ghali translated it as 'the submissive'. These two translation equivalents are only consistent with the dictionary meaning of the word. Khalifa translated it as 'reverent' which is fairly appropriate seeing that it means, among other things, "Expressing reverence, veneration, devotion, or submission"("Reverent," n.d., para. 1). Y. Ali translated it as 'those who bring a lowly spirit' which is a little bit odd due to using the verb *bring*: it is not clear how a lowly spirit is brought. Pickthall translated it as 'the humble- minded' which is not an accurate translation

even of the dictionary meaning of الخَاشِعِينَ. *Minded* means "Having a specified kind of mind. Often it is used in combinations such as: fair-minded; evil-minded', or "directed or oriented toward something specified or civic-minded; career-minded", etc. (*The Free Dictionary*, n.d.). Accordingly, Pickthall's *humble-minded* does not convey the meaning of الخَاشِعِينَ here. Al-Hilali & Khan translated it as 'the true believers in Allah' which is totally consistent with the meaning specified by Al-Suyoutiyy (n.d.).

Example 2: قُلْ بَلْ مِلَّة إِبْرَاهِيمَ حَنِيفًا (2:135)

According to 'Omar (2003), حَنِيفًا means "One inclining towards a right state or tendency; inclining to the right religion; upright man; straightforward; one who turned away from all that is false. In pre-Islamic times this term had a definitely monotheistic connotation and had been used to describe a person who turned away from sin and worldliness and from all dubious beliefs, especially idol worship" (p.139). Al-Suyoutiyy (n.d.) mentions a different meaning, namely, حاجًا (a pilgrim).

Yusuf Ali translated حَنِيفًا as 'the True' which is fairly consistent with the above mentioned dictionary meanings of حَنِيفًا on the ground that, among other things, *true* means "unswervingly faithful and loyal to friends, a cause, etc: a true follower (as collective noun; preceded by the): the loyal and the true faithful to a particular concept of truth, esp of religious truth: a true believer" (*The Free Dictionary*, n.d)

Shakir, Al-Hilali & Khan, and Palmer translated حَنِيفًا as 'Hanif'. This is not justifiable on the ground that there is an English equivalent of the Arabic word. Besides, the target language reader will not understand what is meant here unless the meaning of the word is made clear as is the case in Al-Hilali & Khan's translation. Pickthall, and Ghali translated حَنِيفًا as 'the upright' and 'the unswervingly (upright)' respectively. Their translations are fairly appropriate as they are consistent with the dictionary meanings of حَنِيفًا listed above. Sale translated حَنِيفًا as 'the orthodox' which is not appropriate seeing that there is no orthodoxy in Islam. It is a word used in Christian cultures only as is clear in the following definition of the word *orthodox* as "1. conforming with established or accepted standards, as in religion, behaviour, or attitudes, 2. conforming to the Christian faith as established by the early Church" (*The Free Dictionary*, n.d.).

Arberry translated it as 'a man of pure faith' which seems to be an appropriate rendering of the dictionary meaning of حَنِيفًا as far as it describes a man who has a true faith and who turned away from worldliness. Khalifa translated it as 'monotheism', thus treating it as if it were a noun. This is not an accurate translation on the ground that حَنِيفًا is, according to Al-Mahalliyy & Al-Suyoutiyy (911 AH), "a circumstantial qualifier referring to Ibrāhīma, that is to say, one that inclines away from all other religions to the upright religion". Rodwell's translation is 'the sound in faith' which is fairly appropriate as *sound* means, among other things, "free from moral defect or weakness; upright, honest, or good; honorable; loyal" (*The Free Dictionary*, n.d.)

In none of the above translations is حَنِيفًا translated as meaning حاجاً (a pilgrim)- the meaning mentioned by Al-Suyoutiyy (n.d.),

Example 3: فِتْنَة وَقَاتِلُوهُمْ حَتَّى لَا تَكُونَ (2:193)

According to Al-Suyoutiyy (n.d.), فِتْنَةٌ in the above verse means شرك (polytheism). A review of the translations reveals that the translations of the word فِتْنَةٌ ('Tumult or oppression' in Y. Ali's; 'persecution' in Shakir's; Pickthall's, and Arberry's; 'temptation to idolatry' in Sale's; 'sedition' in Palmer's; 'oppression' in Khalifa's; 'civil discord' in Rodwell's; and 'temptation' in Ghali's) do not express the meaning of the original word as specified by Al-Suyoutiyy (n.d.). Instead, these translations are consistent with the dictionary meaning of the word as "Persecution; Trial; Probation; Burning; Assaying; Seduction from faith by any means; Mischief; Reply; Confusion; Excuse; War; Means whereby the condition of a person is evinced in respect of good or evil; Temptation; Burning with fire; Hardship; Punishment; Answer."" ('Omar, 2003, pp. 415-6).

It is only Al-Hilali & Khan's translation of the word فِتْنَة as 'Fitnah' (disbelief and worshipping of others along with Allah)' which expresses the meaning of the word as specified by Al-Suyoutiyy (n.d.). Yet, their addition of the word **'**Fitnah' is not justifiable on the ground that the Arabic word does have an English equivalent.

Example 4: ذَلِكَ لِمَنْ خَشِيَ الْعَنَتَ مِنْكُمْ (4:25)

The word عَنَتَ originally means "Sin; Crime; Mistake; Difficulty" ('Omar, 2003, p. 390). But, as Al-Suyoutiyy (n.d.) points out, in this verse الْعَنَتَ means الزنا (adultery or fornication). As Al-Mahalliyy & Al-Suyoutiyy (864 AH) have noted, it is used to mean fornication because of the distress that it (i.e. fornication) causes in this world and in the Hereafter.

The word is translated as 'sin' in Yusuf Ali's; 'falling into evil' in Shakir's; 'to commit sin' in Pickthall's. None of these translations expresses the meaning of عَنَتَ here. Sale translated it as 'to sin by marrying free women' which gives the impression that marrying free women is a sin or might lead one to sin - a meaning which is not meant here. Likewise, Al-Hilali & Khan's translation of it as 'being harmed in his religion or in his body', Palmer's 'wrong', and Rodwell's 'doing wrong' are not accurate translation equivalents. Indeed, the noun عَنَتَ, in one of its senses, means "distress". However, in this verse, it is used in the sense of fornication or adultery as said above. Therefore, Ghali's translation of it as 'distress' is not a full accurate translation equivalent. Khalifa translated it as 'for those unable to wait' which is completely inappropriate. It is not inability to wait that is meant here. Moreover, what is it that they are unable to wait for! Arberry translated it as 'Fornication' which is an appropriate rendering seeing that it completely expresses the meaning that the original word is meant to express in this context.

Example 5: يُؤْمِنُونَ بالْجِبْتِ (4:51)

According to 'Omar (2003), جِبْت means "Nonsense thing devoid of good. Something which is worthless in itself; enchantment; idol; false deity; All manner of superstitious divination and soothsaying; fanciful surmises; evil objects; devils" (p. 90). As for the meaning of جِبْت in this verse, Al-Suyoutiyy (n.d.) is in the view that it means الشرك (idols).

Accordingly, translating the word جِبْت here as 'sorcery' and as 'demons' in Yusuf Ali's and Arberry's translations respectively is erroneous. Also, the loan words 'Jibt' (in Al-Hilali & Khan's), 'Gibt' (in Palmer's), 'Djibt' (in Rodwell's), and 'Jibt' (in Ghali's) are not sufficient for expressing the meaning of its Arabic counterpart as mentioned by Al-Suyoutiyy (n.d.). Target readers might not be able to grasp the meaning of the verse unless they know the word *Jibt* and know what it exactly means. Sale translated it as 'false gods' which is not an appropriate translation equivalent. Indeed, the term *false god* is "in Abrahamic doctrines, a deity or object of worship that is either illegitimate or non-functioning in its professed authority or capability". Yet, since it is "often used throughout the Bible to compare YHWH, interpreted as the one true God, infinite, body-less and transcendent as compared to anthropomorphic deities of competing religions." ("False god", n.d., para. 2), it is to be avoided in the Qur'an in order that it would not be taken in the same sense in which it is used in the Bible. Shakir's, and Pickthall's 'idols' and Khalifa's 'idolatry' are successful renderings of the meaning of the word الجِبْت as specified by Al-Suyoutiyy (n.d.).

Example 6: وَطَعَامُ الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْكِتَابَ (5:5)

According to 'Omar (2003), طَعَامُ means "Food; the act of eating or feeding" (p. 337). Yet, as mentioned in Al-Suyoutiyy (n.d.), طَعَامُ here does not mean all types of food. Instead, it specifically means ذبائحهم i.e. animals slaughtered by them (i.e. Jews and Christians)

Accordingly, translating the word طَعَامُ as food in Yusuf Ali's, Shakir's, Pickthall's, Sale's, Palmer's, Arberry's, Khalifa's and Ghali's translations accords with its dictionary meaning as specified above. Al-Hilali & Khan translated it as 'the food (slaughtered cattle, eatable animals, etc.). Thus, they used the general word *food* which refers to all types of food, and added the phrase between parentheses to specify what is exactly meant by the word in this specific verse. Likewise, Rodwell translated طَعَامُ as 'the meats which means all types of animals' flesh used for food' which is a successful rendering of the meaning of طَعَامُ as specified by Al-Suyoutiyy (n.d.).

Example 7: حَتَّى عَفوأ (7:95)

According to 'Omar (2003), عَفَوا means "grew in affluence" (p. 380). Also, according to Al-Suyoutiyy (n.d.), it is said to mean كثروا (multiplied). Commentators of the Qur'an (e.g. Ibn Adel., 880 AH) have the view that it means 'increased in wealth and number'.

Translators adopted different attitudes: 'grew and multiplied' in Yusuf Ali's, 'grew affluent' in Pickthall's, 'abounded' in Sale's, 'multiplied' in Arberry's, 'procreated' in Ghali's, and 'increased (meaning 'to multiply by the production of young')' in Palmer's express the meaning of growing in number; 'waxed wealthy' in Rodwell's expresses the meaning of increasing in wealth; whereas 'increased in number and in wealth' in Al-Hilali & Khan's encompasses both meanings, i.e. increasing in number and increasing in wealth. As for Khalifa, he mistranslated it as 'turned heedless' which expresses a totally different meaning.

Example 8: وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَلَمْ يُهَاجِرُوا مَا لَكُم مِّن **وَلَايَتِهِم** مِّن شَيْءٍ حَتَّى يُهَاجِرُوا (8:72)

According to 'Omar (2003), ولاية means "Protection" or "Inheritance" (p. 622). According to Al-Suyoutiyy (n.d.), in this particular verse, it is used in the sense of ميراث (inheritance).

Some translations succeeded in rendering only the dictionary meaning of ولاية while others did not. Yusuf Ali's and Al-Hilali & Khan's 'duty of protection', Shakir's 'guardianship', and Pickthall's 'duty to protect them' are appropriate translation equivalents of ولاية if the later is taken to express "Protection" – one of its two dictionary meanings, while Sale's 'right of kindred', Palmer's 'claims of kindred', Arberry's 'duty of friendship', Rodwell's 'rights of kindred', and Khalifa's 'support' do not seem to be appropriate translation equivalents. *Claim*, *right*, and *duty* are too general to be understood as meaning protection in this context. Likewise, *support* does not seem to be a perfect equivalent of ولاية if the later is taken to express "Protection"- as supporting and protecting are different things. Also, Ghali's 'patronage in anything' does not seem to be a perfect equivalent of ولاية as *patronage*, in one of its senses, means, "Support or encouragement . . ." (*The Free Dictionary*, n.d.). As already argued, supporting and protecting are different things. Besides, in Christianity, *patronage* means "the right to grant an ecclesiastical benefice to a member of the clergy" (*The Free Dictionary*, n.d.). Hence, it is to be avoided in the Qur'an in order that it would not be taken in the same sense in which it is used in Christianity. None of the translations stands for the meaning of 'inheritance' specified by Al-Suyoutiyy (n.d.).

Example 9: وَأَعْتَدَتْ لَهُنَّ **مُتَّكَأً** (12:31)

According to Al-Suyoutiyy (n.d.), the word مُتَّكَأً means مجلساً (a comfortable place to lie on, e.g. a couch). Also, some Qur'anic commentators (e.g. Al-Sha'rawiy) are in the view that مُتَّكَأً means something that one leans on in order to be sitting comfortably. In some Qur'anic exegeses, مُتَّكَأً is said to mean a repast: "(muttaka' is food that requires cutting with a knife, since one leans upon it (ittikā'): this [repast] was utruj, 'citron')" (Al-Mahalliyy & Al-Suyoutiyy, 864 AH, para. 1).

It is translated as 'banquet' in Yusuf Ali's, Sale's, Al-Hilali & Khan's, Palmer's, and Rodwell's translations, and as 'repast' in Shakir's, and Arberry's translations. 'Banquet' and 'repast' seem to be appropriate translation equivalents of مُتَّكَأً in the sense referred to in *Tafsir al-Jalalayn* (864 AH). But they are not appropriate translation equivalents if مُتَّكَأً is believed to mean a

comfortable place to lie on mentioned in Al-Suyoutiyy (n.d.). This latter meaning is fairly appropriately expressed by Pickthall's 'a cushioned couch (to lie on at the feast)', Khalifa's 'a comfortable place', and Ghali's 'a reclining (couch)'.

Example 10: وَقَضَيْنَا إِلَى بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ فِي الْكِتَابِ (17:4)

According to 'Omar (2003), قَضَىْ means "To decree, create, accomplish, bring to an end, complete, fulfill, determine, pass a sentence, decide, satisfy, execute, settle, judge, discharge. Qadza 'alaihi: To make an end of him, make known, reveal" (p. 458). According to Al-Suyoutiyy (n.d.), in verse (17:4), it means أعلمنا (make known). Similarly, Ibn Adel (880 AH) points out that the verb قَضَىْ has different meanings including *command*, *judge*, and *create* adding that in verse (17:4) it means " أَعْلَمْنَاهُم، وأَخْبرنَاهُم" (We made it known to them that/ We informed them that), or "قَضَيْنَا عليهم" (We decreed to them).

Accordingly, Y. Ali's translation of قَضَيْنَا as 'We gave (Clear) Warning' is not an appropriate translation equivalent because it expresses a warning and it is not meant here. Also, Khalifa's 'We addressed' is not an appropriate translation equivalent on the ground that *address* means:

1. To speak to: addressed me in low tones.
2. To make a formal speech to.
3. To direct (a spoken or written message) to the attention of: address a protest to the faculty senate.
4. To mark with a destination: address a letter.
5. a. To direct the efforts or attention of (oneself): address oneself to a task.
   b. To deal with: addressed the issue of absenteeism.
6. To dispatch or consign (a ship, for example) to an agent or factor. (*The Free Dictionary*, n.d.).

None of these meanings of address is an exact equivalent of قَضَيْنَا in the original text.

Shakir's 'We had made known' is appropriate as far as it is consistent with the point of view stating that قَضَيْنَا means أعلمنا (make known). 'We decreed' used in Pickthall's, Al-Hilali & Khan's, Palmer's, Arberry's and Ghali's translations is appropriate as far as it is consistent with the point of view stating that قَضَيْنَا means " قَضَيْنَا عليهم" (We decreed to them). 'We expressly declared' in Sale's translation, and 'we solemnly declared' in Rodwell's translation are fairly appropriate on the ground that, among other things, *declare* means:

1. To make known formally or officially.
2. To state emphatically or authoritatively; affirm.
3. To reveal or make manifest; show.
4. To make a full statement of (dutiable goods, for example). (*The Free Dictionary*, n.d.).

Nevertheless, I think the adverbs 'expressly' in Sale's translation and 'solemnly' in Rodwell's translation are unnecessary additions by the translators. They have no explicit equivalent in the original text.

Example 11: وَلَا تَقْفُ مَا لَيْسَ لَكَ بِهِ عِلْمٌ (17:36)

According to Al-Suyoutiyy (n.d.) لَا تَقْفُ in verse (17:36) means do not say. However, a review of a number of Qur'anic exegeses reveals that it could also mean: do not follow that of which you have no knowledge, do not censure, or do not follow intuition or surmises.

Hence, 'pursue' in Y. Ali's, Palmer's, Arberry's and Ghali's translations, and 'follow' in Shakir's, Pickthall's, Sale's, and Rodwell's translations are appropriate translation equivalents of تَقْفُ as long as the latter is taken to mean do not follow that of which you have no knowledge. Al-Hilali & Khan have not adopted a specific point of view as regarding the meaning of تَقْفُ. They translated it as 'follow' and between brackets they added the meanings of 'say', and 'witness'. Khalifa translated it as 'do not accept any information, unless you verify it for yourself' which, I think, is a weak rendering of the original text. It does not express any of the meanings the original is said to express.

Example 12: وَآتَيْنَاهُ مِن كُلِّ شَيْءٍ سَبَبًا (18:84)

According to 'Omar (2003) سَبَبَ means "Rope; Cause; Occasion; Way, Means; Road; Account; Love; Relationship" (p. 244). Nearly, these meanings accord with those mentioned by Qur'anic commentators. For example, Ibn Adel (880 AH) points out that, the word سَبَبَ is originally used to refer to the rope and, then, it came to be used metaphorically for the means (including, for example, knowledge, power, instrument, etc.) which leads someone to what he seeks. According to Al-Suyoutiyy (n.d.), in this verse, سَبَبَ is used in the sense of knowledge.

The translations use the more general meaning of سَبَبَ i.e. means or way to something: 'the ways and the means' (Yusuf Ali), 'means of access' (Shakir), 'a road' (Pickthall), 'means' (Sale, and Ghali), 'the means' (Al-Hilali & Khan), 'a way' (Palmer), 'a way' (Arberry), 'all kinds of means' (Khalifa), and 'a way' (Rodwell). None of them used a translation equivalent that stands for the more specific meaning of the word سَبَبَ in this verse i.e. knowledge.

Example 13: هُمْ أَحْسَنُ أَثَاثًا وَرِئْيًا (19:74)

According to 'Omar (2003), أَثَاثًا means "Goods; Utensils; Household furniture; Moveable goods; All property consisting of camels, sheep, goats; Abandoned property" (p.10). According to Al-Suyoutiyy (n.d.), أَثَاثًا in this verse means مالًا (possessions). Also, in *Tafsir al-Jalalayn* (864 AH), it is shown to mean gear, wealth and chattel.

Bearing in mind that the word مال, according to *Al-Mu'jam Al-Wasit*, refers to "كلُّ ما يملكه الفرد أو تملكه الجماعة من متاع، أو عُروض تجارة، أو عقار أو نقود، أو حيوان" (all that is owned by an

individual or a group of individuals, whether Household furniture, goods, real estates, money, or animals), it seems that 'wealth' in Sale's, and Al-Hilali & Khan's translations, 'property' in Palmer's translation, 'riches' in Rodwell's translation are appropriate translation equivalents of أَثَاثًا. They all, with minor differences in meaning, refer to one's possessions. Shakir translated it as 'goods', Arberry; as 'furnishing', and Ghali; as 'furniture' which are only partially appropriate translation equivalents of أَثَاثًا on the ground that each one of them does not in its own encompass all the meanings contained in the Arabic word. It is translated by Yusuf Ali as 'equipment', and by Pickthall as 'gear' both of which are not good translation equivalents of أَثَاثًا on the ground that both are used in English to "denote the materials needed for a purpose such as a task or a journey: hiking equipment; . . . skiing gear" (*The Free Dictionary*, n.d.). Khalifa translated أَحْسَنُ أَثَاثًا as 'more powerful' which is a mistranslation given that أَثَاثًا does not mean power.

Example 14: وَخَشَعَت الْأَصْوَاتُ لِلرَّحْمَن فَلَا تَسْمَعُ إِلَّا هَمْسًا (20:108)

This verse portrays one of the events of the Day of Judgment when all voices shall be hushed out of humbleness before the Beneficent---when nothing shall be heard but a faint murmur, or, as some Qur'anic commentators suggest, a shuffle, i.e. the light sound of their feet as they walk.

According to Al-Suyoutiyy (n.d.), خَشَعَت in the above verse means سكتت (hushed), and هَمْسًا means الصوت الخفي (low voice). Also, according to 'Omar (2003), the meanings of خَشَعَ include "To be submissive, humble, lowly, low, cast down (eyes), faint (voice)" (P. 154), and هَمْسًا means "Faint murmur" (p. 593).

The translations seem to have encountered no difficulty in rendering خَشَعَت: 'shall humble' in Yusuf Ali's translation, 'shall be low' in Shakir's translation, 'are hushed' in Pickthall's translation, 'shall be low' in Sale's translation, 'will be humbled' in Al-Hilali & Khan's translation, 'shall be hushed' in Palmer's translation, 'will be hushed' in Arberry's, and Khalifa's translations, and 'shall be low' in Rodwell's translation correspond to the potential meanings of the Arabic word as identified by Qur'anic commentators. As for Ghali, he translated وَخَشَعَت الْأَصْوَاتُ لِلرَّحْمَن as 'voices will submit to The All-Merciful' which does not seem to be an appropriate translation equivalent. Indeed, *submit* means To yield or surrender (oneself) to the will or authority of another ' (*The Free Dictionary*, n.d.). Yet, this submission is not necessarily out of humbleness, it might be attained by force which is not meant here.

As for هَمْسًا, it is translated as ' the tramp of their feet (as they march)' (Yusuf Ali), 'the hollow sound of their feet' (Sale), 'a shuffling' (Palmer), and 'the light footfall' (Rodwell). These are appropriate translation equivalents as far as they correspond to one of its potential meanings, namely that of a shuffle. This meaning is also the one chosen by Al-Hilali & Khan: they translated it as 'the low voice of their footsteps'. Their use of the word 'voice' with 'footsteps sounds' is a little bit odd: footsteps have a sound not a voice which is used to refer to a human utterance. Also, 'a soft sound' (in Shakir's), a faint murmur (in Pickthall's), 'a murmuring' (in

Arberry's), 'whispers' (in Khalifa's), and 'a (faint) muttering' (in Ghali's) are appropriate translation equivalents on the ground that they express the meaning of low voice, murmur, etc. which Al-Suyoutiyy (n.d.), and Ibn Adel (880 AH.) say the Arabic word expresses.

Example 15: وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَا مِن قَبْلِكَ مِن رَّسُولٍ وَلَا نَبِيٍّ إِلَّا إِذَا **تَمَنَّى** أَلْقَى الشَّيْطَانُ فِي **أُمْنِيَّتِهِ** (22:52)

According to 'Omar (2003), تَمَنَّى means "Wished; Read" (p. 544), and أُمْنِيَّة means "Recited Wish; Longing; Wishing" (p. 544). According to Al-Suyoutiyy (n.d.), تَمَنَّى is said here to mean حدثّ (spoke) and أُمْنِيّتِهِ to mean حديثه (his speech). Ibn Adel (880 AH) points out that this verse has given rise to controversy amongst Qur'anic commentators: some are in the view that during an assembly of the men of Quraysh while Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) was reciting the following verses, "أَفَرَأَيْتُمُ ٱللَّاتَ وَٱلْعُزَّىٰ وَمَنَاةَ ٱلثَّالِثَةَ ٱلْأُخْرَىٰ" [53:19-20], he added the following words: تلك الغَرَانيق العُلَى منها الشفاعة ترتجى (those are the high-flying cranes whose intercession is to be hoped for) as a result of Satan casting them onto his tongue without his (the Prophet's) being aware of it. The men of Quraysh were thereby so delighted. Later, however, Gabriel informed the Prophet of this and told him that Satan had cast that onto his tongue and he was grieved by it; but was subsequently comforted with verses (22:52-53) that he might be reassured of God's pleasure.

Others refused to accept this story arguing that it contradicts Qur'anic verses and prophetic tradition: many narrators assert that this story is not true and is a mere fantasy. They also argue that it deviates from common sense and reason in some ways including the following: firstly, prophet Muhammad (PBUH) was sent to demolish idols. How, then, can he praise them as such? Secondly, the disbelievers, at the time when this verse was revealed, would not just allow the prophet to sit by the ka'ba and just recite the Qur'an. Thirdly, if this had been true, his doctrine would have not been trustable. Fourthly, the Prophet would not alter what was being revealed to him whether by deletion or addition.

Ibn Adel (880 AH) proceeds to add that التمني could mean two things: either تمني القلب (wishing) or القراءة (reading/reciting). He, then, argues that which one is meant here has a serious bearing on the way the verse is interpreted, and that even when one is accepted rather than the other, there could be various interpretations of the verse. After reviewing all possible interpretations of the verse, Ibn Adel concludes that this verse is meant to show that though Allah's apostles are protected against committing errors intentionally, they are not, like all human beings, protected against absent-mindedness or Satan's evil whisper.

Thus, 'desire' (in Yusuf Ali's, Shakir's, and Rodwell's translations); 'wish' (in Palmer's, and Khalifa's translation) are appropriate translation equivalents of أُمْنِيّتِهِ if the latter is taken to mean wishing. On the other hand, 'that which he recited thereof' in Pickthall's translation; 'reading' in Sale's translation; 'it' which refers to reciting the revelation or narrating or speaking in Al-Hilali & Khan's translation are appropriate translation equivalents of أُمْنِيّهِ if the latter is taken to mean reading/reciting/etc. Arberry, and Ghali translated it as 'fancy' which is a mistranslation of the Arabic word. *fancy* means:

1. The mental faculty through which whims, visions, and fantasies are summoned up; imagination, especially of a whimsical or fantastic nature.

2. An image or a fantastic invention created by the mind.

3. A capricious notion; a whim.

4. A capricious liking or inclination.

5. Critical sensibility; taste.

6. Amorous or romantic attachment; love.

7. a. The enthusiasts or fans of a sport or pursuit considered as a group.

   b. The sport or pursuit, such as boxing, engaging the interest of such a group. (*The Free Dictionary*, n.d.).

Clearly, *fancy* does not express any of the two meanings the word تَمَنَّى in the Qur'anic text is said to be potentially expressing.

Example 16: وَالَّذِينَ يَرْمُونَ الْمُحْصَنَاتِ (4:24)

According to 'Omar (2003), الْمُحْصَنَاتِ means "Those women who are in protection from sinful sexual intercourse; Wedded women" (p.126). Al-Sha'rawiy (1418 AH) points out that الْمُحْصَنَاتِ could be used to refer to: (1) married women on the ground that they have, by getting married, protected themselves against sinful sexual intercourse, and (2) free women (i.e. those who are not slaves) on the ground that in the past adultery used to be committed only by slave women.

Accordingly, 'free women' in Shakir's translation is an appropriate translation equivalent of الْمُحْصَنَاتِ in one of its senses, namely free women (i.e. those who are not slaves). Also, 'chaste women' in Yusuf Ali's, Al-Hilali & Khan's, and Palmer's translations is a good translation equivalent of الْمُحْصَنَاتِ on the ground that *chaste*, in one of its senses, means "Abstaining from unlawful sexual intercourse" (*The Free Dictionary*, n.d.). Also, 'virtuous' in Rodwell's seems to be a fairly appropriate translation equivalent of الْمُحْصَنَاتِ on the ground that it means "possessing or characterized by chastity" (*The Free Dictionary*, n.d.). Pickthall translated it as 'honourable women' which is a weak translation equivalent. Indeed, *honourable*, among other things, means "possessing or characterized by high principles" (*The Free Dictionary*, n.d.), yet it does not encompass the meaning of being in protection from sinful sexual intercourse which the Arabic word expresses. I think Sale's 'women of reputation' is also a mistranslation of the Arabic word الْمُحْصَنَاتِ: being of reputation (i.e. "the estimation in which a person or thing is generally held; opinion, (*The Free Dictionary*, n.d.)) does not entail being chaste or in protection from adultery. As for 'women in wedlock' in Arberry's, and Ghali's translations, and 'married women' in Khalifa's translation, they are appropriate translation equivalents of الْمُحْصَنَاتِ in one of its senses, namely wedded women.

Example 17: أَلَمْ تَرَ أَنَّهُمْ فِي كُلِّ وَادٍ يَهِيمُونَ (26:225)

According to Ibn Adel (880 A. H), فِي كُلِّ وَادٍ يَهِيمُونَ means that they engage in every realm of talk overstepping the bounds of decency in their eulogies and diatribes: one time they praise someone/something and another time they criticize him/it .

Therefore, I think 'valley' used in the translations of Yusuf Ali, Shakir, Pickthall, Sale, Arberry, Rodwell, and Ghali and 'vale' used in Palmer's translation are a literal translation of the Arabic word. They do not convey the meaning that the Arabic word expresses in this verse. *Valley* is used in English to refer to "A long, narrow region of low land between ranges of mountains, hills, or other high areas, often having a river or stream running along the bottom" (*The Free Dictionary*, n.d.). Likewise, *vale* is literally used to refer to "a long depression in the surface of the land that usually contains a river" and is also used in poetry to "express leave-taking or farewell." (*The Free Dictionary*, n.d.).Unlike the Arabic word, neither of them is used to refer to an area of human activity or interest, and are not, therefore, good translation equivalents of the Arabic word وَادٍ in this verse. As for Khalifa, he translated فِي كُلِّ وَادٍ يَهِيمُون as 'their loyalty shifts according to the situation' which is a total violation of the meaning of the Arabic text that does not refer at all to their loyalty towards someone/something. Al-Hilali & Khan translated it as 'they speak about every subject (praising others right or wrong) in their poetry'. Though they have not fallen into the error of rendering the word وَادٍ literally, their translation does not highlight the meaning of their being jumbled and unsteady.

Example 18: كَأَنَّهُنَّ بَيْضٌ مَّكْنُونٌ (37:49)

According to Ibn Adel (880 AH), in this verse paradise maidens are likened to eggs of ostriches in having the colour of whiteness with a hint of pallor, which is the best of female complexions, and in being sheltered since ostriches use their feathers to shelter their eggs from dust. Also, according to 'Omar (2003), this is "an ancient Arabian figure of speech derived from the habitat of the female ostrich which buries its eggs in the sand for protection (p. 498). According to this interpretation, بَيْضٌ means eggs and مَّكْنُونٌ means "Well preserved; Embedded in shell; Carefully guarded; Hidden; Kept close" ('Omar, 2003, p. 498). Al-Suyoutiyy (n.d.) mentions another meaning of بَيْضٌ here, namely that of اللؤلؤ (pearls).

The sentence is translated differently in the selected translations: whereas Yusuf Ali, Shakir, Al-Hilali & Khan, and Khalifa translated بَيْضٌ as 'eggs' (in the plural form), Palmer, and Rodwell translated it as 'egg' (in the singular form) with the former using the indefinite article 'a' and the latter the definite article 'the'. Pickthall's 'eggs (of the ostrich)' and Palmer's 'the eggs of an ostrich' specify which kind of eggs is meant (i.e. that of the ostrich). Only in Arberry's translation بَيْضٌ is translated as 'pearls'. Ghali translated it as 'white jewels' which does not seem to be a perfect translation equivalent of بَيْضٌ in this context. Indeed, pearls belong to the class of jewels. But, they are distinguished from other members of the class in having the shining white colour --- the characteristic which constitutes the pivot of the similarity between pearls and paradise maidens. By using the general word *jewels*, the point of similarity is missed. Describing jewels as being white is not sufficient for highlighting the point of similarity: white jewels differ from pearls in shape and the degree of whiteness. Moreover, the word *pearls* is a better choice on the ground that pearls are somehow similar in shape to eggs.

The adjective مَّكْنُونٌ is also translated differently: '(delicate) . . . closely guarded' (Yusuf Ali), 'carefully protected' (Shakir), 'hidden' (Pickthall), 'covered with feathers from the dust' (Sale),

'(hidden) . . . (well) preserved' (Al-Hilali & Khan), 'sheltered' (Palmer, and Rodwell), 'hidden' (Arberry), fragile (Khalifa), and 'nestled' (Ghali). The adjectives *delicate* and *fragile* are not appropriate translation equivalents of مَّكْنُونٌ. They miss the meaning of being protected and well preserved which adjectives such as *guarded*, *sheltered*, *protected*, *nestled*, etc., convey.

Example 19: وَلَقَدْ فَتَنَّا سُلَيْمَانَ وَأَلْقَيْنَا عَلَى كُرْسِيِّهِ جَسَدًا (38:34)

Literally speaking, the word جَسَدًا means "frame; Body; Red; Intensely yellow; Effigy ('Omar, 2003, p. 98). In this verse, it is said to have different referents. In Al-Suyoutiyy (n.d.), جَسَدًا is said to mean شيطانًا (a devil).

In Qur'anic exegeses (e.g. Al-Qurtubiyy, 671 AH. Ibn Adel, 880 AH.; and Abu Al-Su'd, 951 AH.), it is argued that this verse tells how Prophet Solomon was tried by the loss of his kingdom, and how a devil (referred to in the verse as a mere body) was set upon his throne. In one narration, it is said that Solomon had married a woman who used to worship idols in his house without his knowledge. Therefore, he was tried by the loss of his kingdom for 40 days, the number of days in which the idols were worshipped in his house. Moreover, it is said that he used to control his kingdom via his ring. On one occasion, he took it off and left it with his woman, whose name was Al-Amina, as was his habit. Then, a jinn, disguised in the form of Solomon, came to her and seized it from her. And, a lifeless body of that very jinn known as Sakhr — or of some other jinn — was cast upon his throne; he sat upon Solomon's throne and so, as was the case with Solomon, the birds and other creatures devoted themselves to him in service. When Solomon came out of his palace and saw the jinn upon his throne, he said to the people, 'I am Solomon, not him!''. But they did not recognize him. Then, he repented — Solomon returned to his kingdom, many days later, after he had managed to acquire the ring. He wore it and sat upon his throne again. According to this narration, the word جَسَدًا refers to the jinn cast upon Solomon's throne.

In another narration, it is said that Solomon's ring by which he was controlling his kingdom fell of his hand twice. Then, he realized that he was being tried. His penman, whose name was Asef, advised him to repent, and told him that he was ready to replace him till Allah accepts his repentance. According to this narration, the word جَسَدًا refers to Solomon's penman who sat upon Solomon's throne till Solomon is back.

Still, in another narration, it is said that, Solomon said, one night, that he would have a sexual intercourse with ninety of his women and that they would give birth to ninety knights all fighting in the cause of Allah. One of his friends advised him to say *God willing*, but he did not. After that, only one of the ninety women gave birth to a male child who was deformed (he was half human). According to this narration, the word جَسَدًا refers to Solomon's deformed son.

It is also suggested in Qur'anic exegeses that Solomon himself become so sick to the extent that he appeared as if he was a mere body. According to this interpretation, the word جَسَدًا refers to Solomon in his severe illness.

I think the situation here is a little bit difficult: the one and the same Arabic word which is literally used to refer to *body, frame, etc*. has various possible denotational meanings within

this context. Translators have two alternatives: either to retain the literal meaning of the word, and thus retaining the vagueness or indeterminacy associated with the original word with all its possible referents, or to specify what is exactly being referred to by this word. Even in this latter case, they have the problem of deciding upon which one of the possible referents mentioned in the exegeses they have to choose.

Most of the translators cited here adopted the first alternative: the word 'body' in the translations of Yusuf Ali, Shakir, Pickthall, Sale, and Arberry is, apart from being qualified by different adjectives, a literal equivalent of the word جَسَدًا. Also, 'form'; in Palmer's, and Ghali's translations is a literal equivalent of the word جَسَدًا. Al-Hilali & Khan added a transliteration of the Arabic word جَسَدًا and, selecting from the available interpretations, specified between brackets what is being meant or referred to by it (i.e. a devil). Similarly, Rodwell has, selecting from the available interpretations, specified what is exactly being referred to by this word (i.e. a phantom). Khalifa mistranslated it altogether- 'we blessed him with vast material wealth' which is completely a bad translation of وَأَلْقَيْنَا عَلَى كُرْسِيِّهِ جَسَدًا. It completely misses the meaning intended in the original text.

Example 20: لَا تُقَدِّمُوا بَيْنَ يَدَيِ اللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ (49:1)

According to 'Omar (2003), تُقَدِّمُوا means "You send forth, anticipate (putting yourself forward), offer" (p. 447). According to Al-Suyoutiyy (n.d.), لَا تُقَدِّمُوا بَيْنَ يَدَيِ اللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ means لا تقولوا خلاف الكتاب والسنة (Do not say what contradicts the Qur'an and the Prophet's Tradition). According to Ibn Adel, تُقَدِّمُوا could have various pronunciations: it could be تُقَدِّمُوا /tuqaddimu:/ in such case it is a transitive verb (with the object omitted) meaning تقدموا ما لا يصلح (put forward what is not fit), or it could be pronounced as تَقَدَّمُوا /taqaddamu:/ in such case it is an intransitive verb meaning تَتَقَدَّموا إلى أمر من الأمور (embark on something). According to *Tanwîr al-Miqbâs min Tafsîr Ibn 'Abbâs* (n.d.), this verse was revealed about three prophetic Companions who killed two men from Banu Salim when the Muslims had a peace treaty with them without being commanded to do so by Allah or by His Messenger. Allah (be He Glorified and Exalted) forbids them from engaging in any matter without a command from Allah or His Messenger. Ibn 'Abbas said that لَا تُقَدِّمُوا بَيْنَ يَدَيِ اللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ has various meanings: it means: do not start with any word or action until the Messenger of Allah (PBUH) commands you first; do not start immolating your sacrifices on the day of immolation until you receive the command of Allah and His Messenger; do not oppose the Messenger; or do not contravene the Book of Allah or the practice of His Messenger.

A review of the translations shows that لَا تُقَدِّمُوا بَيْنَ يَدَيِ اللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ is translated literally. 'Put not yourselves forward before God and His Apostle' (Yusuf Ali), 'be not forward in the presence of Allah and His Apostle' (Shakir), 'Be not forward in the presence of Allah and His messenger' (Pickthall), 'Do not put (yourselves) forward before Allah and His Messenger' (Al-Hilali & Khan), 'advance not before God and His Messenger' (Arberry), and 'be not forward before Allah; and His messenger' (Ghali) do not convey the meaning(s) the Qur'anic commentators say the sentence is potentially expressing here. Moreover, *put oneself forward*, *be forward before*, *advance before* give the impression that Allah and his Apostle are in a certain position and the addressees are ahead of them--- something which is totally

inconvenient. Rodwell's translation has come closer to the meaning expressed by the original text, namely that the believers are prohibited to embark on any affair until the Messenger of Allah (PBUH) commands or permits them to do. Yet, his choice of the phrasal verb *enter upon* does not sound good: *enter upon* means "take possession of; "She entered upon the estate of her rich relatives" (*The Free Dictionary*, n.d.). As for Khalifa's translation 'do not place your opinion above that of God and His messenger' sounds a little bit weird since opinions are not placed above each others. Moreover, it is not a matter of opinions here: Allah and His Messenger do not express opinions. They issue commands to be followed by the believers and the latter are not to commence any actions on their own without being permitted to do so by Allah and His Messenger. I think Sale's and Palmer's choice of 'anticipate' is a fairly good one: *anticipate* means 'To act before (someone), especially to prevent an action' (e.g. *To anticipate and prevent the duke's purpose*, *'to take up or introduce (something) prematurely'* (e.g. *The advocate plans to anticipate a part of her argument*), 'to know of (something) before it manifests' (e.g. *to anticipate the evils of life*), and 'to eagerly wait for (something)' (e.g. *Little Johnny started to anticipate the arrival of Santa Claus a week before Christmas*) ("Anticipate", n.d., para. 4).

It should be noted, however, that *anticipate* would be understood to mean different things in each translation: in Sale's translation the object of 'anticipate' is 'any matter' in which case, it would be taken to mean 'take up*'* or 'introduce (something) prematurely'. In Palmer's translation, 'God and his Apostle' is the object in which case it would be normally understood to mean 'act before'.

In none of the above translations is لَا تُقَدِّمُوا translated as meaning 'do not start with any word or action unless the Messenger of Allah permits; do not start immolating your sacrifices on the day of immolation until you receive the command of Allah and His Messenger; do not oppose the Messenger; or do not contravene the Book of Allah or the practice of His Messenger'.

Example 21: فَإِنَّ لِلَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا **ذَنُوبًا** مِّثْلَ ذَنُوبِ أَصْحَابِهِمْ(51:59)

According to Al-Suyoutiyy (n.d.), ذَنُوبًا means دلوا (a bucket). Also, Ibn Adel (880 AH) points out that الذنوب is originally used to refer to the large bucket which is filled with water, and, then, it came to be used to refer to a portion, a share, etc. Al-Zamakhshariyy, as Ibn Adel (880 AH) points out, is in the view that الذنوب refers to water buckets, and since water butlers divide water buckets amongst them, the word ذنوب comes to be used to refer to one's portion or share of something. Ibn Adel (880 AH) adds that الذنوب is used to refer as well to the horse with a long tail, and to the back flesh. Ibn Adel proceeds to note that the word ذنوب is used here by way of simile to refer to the wrong-doers' share of chastisement. Chastisement is portrayed as if it is poured down above them as buckets of water are poured down. Ibn Adel adds that there is another point of view—which is held by some Qur'anic commentators to be more convenient— namely that الذنوب does not mean chastisement nor destruction but means luxury on the ground that Arabs in the past used to frequently fill buckets with water from the wells at good luxurious times. According to this latter interpretation, the verse means that in the Hereafter wrong-doers (like their counterparts who perished before them) will not have

the luxuries (portrayed as water buckets) they had during their first life.

In Yusuf Ali's, Shakir's, Sale's, Palmer's, and Arberry's translations, the word ذَنُوبًا is translated as 'portion' which, among other things, means "A section or quantity within a larger thing; a part of a whole", and "A person's lot or fate" (*The Free Dictionary*, n.d.). In Khalifa's, and Rodwell's translations, it is translated as 'fate'. *Portion* and *fate* are only fairly appropriate translation equivalents of ذَنُوبًا in one of the meanings specified by Qur'anic commentators (i.e. a portion of chastisement). Indeed, *Portion* and *fate* reveal that they (i.e. the wrong-doers) have the same fate as their fellows of earlier generations. Nevertheless, they do not specify that their portion or fate is torment or chastisement. Also Ghali's translation of ذَنُوبًا as 'allotment' is not a perfect translation equivalent on the ground that it only reveals that it is an allotment similar to that of their companions without specifying that theirs and their companions is an allotment of chastisement. Therefore, I think Al-Hilali & Khan's translation of ذَنُوبًا as 'a portion of torment' is a better choice because it specifies what is exactly meant here. As for 'an evil day' used by Pickthall, it is a mistranslation of the Arabic word.

Indeed, the contextual meaning of ذَنُوبًا (i.e. the meaning of fate or portion of torment) is fairly appropriately rendered in most of the translations. Nevertheless, none of them succeeded in preserving the beauty of the original text that stems from using the word (i.e. ذَنُوبًا) which is originally used to refer to buckets of water for referring to torment: their torment is portrayed as if it is poured down above them as water is poured from buckets.

Example 22: رَيْبَ الْمَنُون أَمْ يَقُولُونَ شَاعِرٌ نَّتَرَبَّصُ بِهِ (52:30)

According to 'Omar (2003), المنون means "Death; Destiny" (p. 543). According to Al-Suyoutiyy (n.d.), المنون means الموت (death). Also, Ibn Adel (880 AH) points out that الْمَنُون means time and death adding that the word رَيْبُ is originally used for doubt or uncertainty, but is used here to refer to accidents or calamities (of time) since both are changeable and unstable.

Here, most translators have no problem in rendering the meaning of رَيْبُ الْمَنُون: 'some calamity (hatched) by Time!' (Yusuf Ali), 'the evil accidents of time' (Shakir), he accident of time' (Pickthall), 'some adverse turn of fortune' (Sale), 'some calamity by time' (Al-Hilali & Khan), 'the sad accidents of fate' (Palmer), and 'some adverse turn of his fortune' (Rodwell) are good renderings of the meaning of accidents or calamities of time mentioned by Qur'anic commentators. Also, though 'until he is dead' (Khalifa) violets the structure of the original text, yet, it expresses the meaning of death which الْمَنُون is said to have here. As for 'fate's uncertainty' (Arberry), and 'the uncertainty of fortune' (Ghali), *fate* and *fortune* seem to be fairly appropriate translation equivalents of المنون. But, *uncertainty* is not a good translation equivalent of رَيْبُ. Indeed, رَيْبُ literally means uncertainty or doubt, but it is used here for accidents or calamities (of time).

Example 23: إِنَّ رَبَّكَ لَبِالْمِرْصَادِ (89:14)

According to 'Omar (2003), مِرْصَادَ means "Watch; Look out", and the word مرصد (as a noun of place) means "Ambush; Place from which it is possible to perceive the enemy and watch their movements.", and مِرْصَادَ (as a noun of place) means "Ambush (from where one watches

the doing of the wicked) (p. 212). According to Al-Suyoutiyy (n.d.),بِالْمِرْصَادِ means يسمع ويرى (hears and sees everything). Qur'anic commentators have different interpretations for this verse. In *Tafsir al-Jalalayn* (864 AH), it is said to mean that Allah is watching over the deeds of worshippers, nothing of which escapes Him, that He may then requite them for these deeds. In *Tafsir al-Tustari* (283 A H), and *Tanwîr al-Miqbâs min Tafsîr Ibn 'Abbâs* (n.d.), it is said that this means: O Muhammad, your God is ever watchful, and all created beings will have to go through Him, and He will then reward them for their deeds. It is also said that this means: Allah will position His angels with hooks and pikes on the Traverse over Hell stopping people at seven different stopping positions at which they will ask them about the religious obligations. Ibn Adel (880 AH) is in the view that it means He observes the deeds of all human beings so that He will requite them for these deeds. Ibn Adel points out that this is allegorical: all created beings will have to go through Him, and no one will escape punishment adding that some Muslim scholars have mentioned other meanings: everyone will return to him at the end; observes the deeds of the disbelievers; or observes the deeds of the unjust and the sinful.

Reviewing the translations, it becomes clear that some translators adhered so closely to the Arabic allegory rendering thereby a misleading translation. 'For thy Lord is (as a Guardian) on a watch-tower' (Yusuf Ali); 'Verily, thy Lord is on a watch tower!' (Palmer); 'For thy Lord standeth on a watch tower' (Rodwell); 'For thy Lord is surely in a watch-tower, whence He observeth the actions of men' (Sale) give a wrong picture of Allah (Be He Glorified) standing on a watch tower observing the deeds of human beings. This is totally unacceptable. *A watch tower* is "an observation tower on which a guard or lookout is stationed to keep watch, as for enemies, for forest fires, or over prisoners", and it is also "(Military) a tower on which a sentry keeps watch" (*The Free Dictionary*, n.d). Of course, a watch tower in this sense is a place suitable for soldiers, not for Allah Who can never be described as standing in a position in the same manner as humans. As for Arberry's 'ever on the watch', it does not seem to be a perfect translation equivalent of لَبِالْمِرْصَادِ . *On the watch* (for someone or something) means "alert and watching for someone or something" as, for example, in *Please stay on the watch for trouble, I'm always on the watch for Ann. I want to know when she's around* (*The Free Dictionary*, n.d.). Accordingly, 'on the watch' does not encompass all the shades of meaning included in لَبِالْمِرْصَادِ. It only expresses the meaning of being alert of someone or something in particular, or being prepared for someone or something expected. It does not encompass the meaning of letting no human act pass unnoticed and unrewarded. This is also the case with 'ever watchful' (Pickthall's, and Khalifa translations), and 'Ever Watchful (over them)' (Al-Hilali & Khan's translation). *Watchful* is an adjective meaning: "1. vigilant or alert, 2. Archaic not sleeping" (*'watchful'*, 2003, para. 1). It is close in meaning to بِالْمِرْصَادِ , but it does not seem to be a perfect translation equivalent of it. It doesn't encompass all the shades of meaning included in لَبِالْمِرْصَادِ . Shakir translated إِنَّ رَبَّكَ لَبِالْمِرْصَادِ as 'Most surely your Lord is watching'. Two remarks are to be made here. Firstly, his addition of the modifier 'most' is totally inappropriate. His translation is not faithful to the power of the original: it presents a highly assured fact as if it is prone to suspicion and doubt. Secondly, he used the verb 'watch' as an intransitive verb: a question that might arise here is What is He watching? As for Ghali's Ever-Observing, *observe* in the sense of 'to watch (something) carefully; pay attention

to (something)', seems to be fairly appropriate. Yet, again, it does not encompass all the shades of meaning included in لَبِالْمِرْصَادِ. It only expresses the meaning of being observant of someone or something. It does not encompass the meaning of letting no act pass unrewarded. It is to be noted that the word 'ever' (e.g. in Al-Hilali & Khan's, and Ghali's translations) is a necessary addition here on the ground that it indicates that Allah's watchfulness is eternal and incomparable to that of humans.

4. Conclusion

A number of concluding remarks can follow from this study and they can be summarized as follows:

1) This study confirms the conclusion arrived at in the past and the present --- the untranslatability of the Qur'an. The examples studied herein bring out some of the difficulties encountered when translating Gharib Al-Qur'an. The study is, therefore, another proof that there can never be a perfect translation of the Qur'an, no matter how great are the skills of the translators, and that the sacredness of the Qur'an is lost when it is translated.

2) The Qur'an can not be literally translated because Arabic words and sentences often have more than one literal meaning, and are, more often, used figuratively. Moreover, many Arabic constructions contain subtle shades of meanings which can not be expressed in another language. Therefore, any translation of the holy Qur'an is essentially a mere explanation, paraphrase, or interpretation of the meaning of the source text.

3) This study also confirms the inadequacy of studying lexical items out of their context. In order to fully understand the meaning of the text being translated, each and every lexical item must be contextualized. In other words, for a translation to work, we have to go beyond mere words. It is much more important to work out what the words mean in a particular situation and cultural context.

4) The analysis sample shows clearly that some SL lexical items have received a different treatment by different translators. Difference is therefore well documented here. Yet, it should be noted that there are many instances in which translations are closely similar.

5) No difficulty is encountered in rendering some of them (e.g. examples 14 and 15). Nevertheless, in the majority of examples, translators fail to get the precise meaning of a given word belonging to Gharib Al-Qur'an with the result that the general meaning of the verse becomes distorted due to faulty translations.

Secondly, problems found to be associated with translating Gharib Al-Qur'an can be attributed to the following reasons:

a) Some translators stick to the dictionary meaning of a given word, whereas others are keen to check the meanings specified in Qur'anic exegeses (e.g. examples 1 and 2).

b) Meaning components are packaged differently in the SL and TL. A translator often needs to use several words to carry the meaning of one word in the SLT (e.g. example 16)

c) Translators may use a loan word (an Arabic word used in a transliterated form) which might have more than one meaning without clarifying which one is intended in a given verse (e.g. examples 2, 3, and 5).

d) Some translators use words used in the Bible. These words might have meanings in Islam different from theirs in Christianity (e.g. examples 5, and 8). The result is that such words could be taken in the same sense in which they are used in Christianity.

e) There are many words and expressions in the SL which have religious and cultural sensitivities that make them translation resistant and which, therefore, cause translation problems. As the examples analyzed herein illustrate, many words in the Qur'an are simply not translatable into English because they have much more meanings in their Arabic form than their English approximations are ever capable of carrying. To give an English translation of them is to reduce, and often to ruin, their meanings. For example, the word بِالْمِرْصَادِ (example 23) encompasses amalgam of meanings their translation equivalents cannot wholly express.

f) Many words are not assigned a precise meaning by Qur'anic commentators. The same word in the same context might be shown to have various literal and figurative meanings (e.g. examples 10, 11, and 12). As a result, translators find themselves faced with a number of interpretations of the same Arabic word. Some translators adopt one meaning, whereas others list a number of translation equivalents standing for the potential meanings of a given word.

g) Words might have a general meaning and a more specific one. A problem might emerge as a result of the translators' use of a translation equivalent that stands only for the general meaning of the word, whereas a specific one is meant in the SL text (e.g. examples 6, 13, and 15)

h) Some English words do not have the same expressive power as their Arabic counterparts (e.g. example 16).

i) The one and the same word in the SL might have various potential referents. The translator has two alternatives: either to retain the literal meaning of the word, and thus retaining the vagueness or indeterminacy associated with the original word with all its possible referents, or to specify what is exactly being referred to by this word. Even in the latter case, he has the problem of deciding upon which one of the possible referents mentioned by Qur'anic commentators he will choose (e.g. example 19).

j) A word in a given *verse* might be used to express a figurative meaning which might be lost if the word is translated literally. A case in point is in example 21 in which the contextual meaning of ذَنُوبًا (i.e. the meaning of fate or portion of torment) is fairly appropriately rendered in most of the translations. Nevertheless, none of them succeeded in preserving the beauty of the original text that stems from using the word (i.e. ذَنُوبًا) which is originally used to refer to buckets of water for referring to torment: their torment is portrayed as if it is poured down above them as water is poured from buckets.

Thirdly, some of the problems found to be associated with translating Gharib Al-Qur'an into English refute Newmark's claim that "while translation out of English may present a number of problems, English has greater resources for representing the meaning of other languages" (Newmark, 1996:10). Through numerous examples from European languages, Newmark claims that English has a much larger vocabulary than many other languages, and is particularly rich in alternative available forms of items in most word classes, and thereby allows for greater flexibility in the expression of register, and occupies, therefore, a special place as regards translation equivalence.

So, from the discussion above, it can be modestly concluded that English language is not rich enough in its vocabulary to hold or transfer the meanings of the Holy Qur'an. Clearly, sometimes it is difficult to find appropriate equivalents for translating from Arabic into English. I support Newmark's suggestion that the adoption of loan-words into English has increased the capacity of the language, but, in fact, it does not add to its strength or natural growth. It reveals that the language in itself is not rich enough to express the meanings contained in it's Arabic counterpart.

Fourthly, a number of translation strategies are found to be applied by translators in their attempts to render the meanings of Gharib Al-Qur'an into English. These strategies include the following:

a)   adding explanatory remarks in the form of a footnote as is the case in Ghali's translation.

b)   opting for the ultimate resort in translation, namely using an Arabic word (transcribed) as a loanword. Examples 2 and 5 are cases in point.

c)   using an Arabic word as a loanword and adding an explanatory note in the body of the text to explain it. This strategy, referred to as "double presentation" (Pym as quoted in Chesterman, 1997, p. 95), is a variant of the previous strategy and it means including both SL and TL versions in the target text, and these act as a gloss for each other. Chesterman (1997) points out that it has "interesting ideological implications" adding that for Pym "the SL form tends to be attributed a higher value, inherent in the SL words themselves" (p. 95). Examples 2, 3 and 19 correspond with this view.

On the basis of the above concluding remarks, the study confirms that words belonging to the class of Gharib Al-Qur'an do constitute a problem in translation for those who fail to get the precise meaning of these words as identified in Qur'anic exegeses and, consequently, mistranslate them. It has also painstakingly unveiled the brilliant subtleties of the vocabulary of the Glorious Qur'an, thereby guiding future translators through appropriate procedures to translate this divine text.

Acknowledgements

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