



**University of Bahrain  
College of Arts  
Department of Foreign Languages and Literature**

**The Linguistic and Literary Aspects of  
Translating Two Surahs of the Qur'an:  
A Comparative Evaluation**

**By  
Dhiya'a Saqr Shaheen Al-Jalahma**

**Supervised by  
Dr. Mohammad Riyad Jazzar**

**A Thesis submitted in partial fulfillment  
of the  
requirements for the degree of  
Master  
in Applied English Language Studies**

**May 2002**



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## DECLARATION

I declare that this work is the result of my own investigation and that it has not already been accepted in substance for any degree, nor is it being currently submitted for any degree.

Signed:  Date: 29-5-2002

Dhiya'a Al-Jalahma (Candidate)

The Thesis defense committee considers the Thesis titled:

**The Linguistic and Literary Aspects of Translating Two  
Surahs of the Qur'an: A Comparative Evaluation**

Submitted by Dhiya'a Saqr Shaheen Al-Jalahma to the Department of Foreign Languages and Literature satisfactory and acceptable for the degree of Master in Applied English Language Studies.

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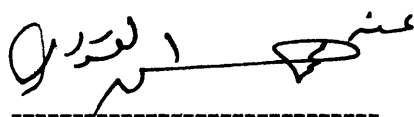
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## DEDICATION

*I dedicate this study to two dear persons, my father and my husband who have instilled in me the love for seeking knowledge.*

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

It has been a blessing and a great favor from Almighty Allah Who equipped me with the needed energy, patience and time to accomplish this research.

The title of this study has been the outcome of a long and fruitful discussion with my supervisor and lecturer, Dr. Mohammad Riyad Jazzar. I would like honestly to confess that had it not been for his constant and sincere guidance, insight, encouragement and unbelievable patience, I would certainly never have fulfilled this research. May Allah provide him with long and healthy life and duly reward him.

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## ABSTRACT

The present study aims at shedding some light on the analysis of various translations into English of two selected surahs (chapters) from the Holy Qur'an with the main focus on the comparison of related linguistic and literary aspects.

The ultimate objective of this study is to find out which translation of these two surahs is more acceptable amongst the other versions. It includes five chapters: an introduction, methodology, review of literature, findings and analysis based on the various translations of the two chosen surahs, and lastly a conclusion that sums up the work and provides some suggestions and implementations on further researching about the translations of the meanings of the Holy Qur'an.

The study discusses differences in various translations of two surahs given by five well-known translators of the Holy Qur'an; (1) Arthur J. Arberry, (2) Muhammad Asad, (3) N.J. Dawood, (4) S. Abul A'Ala Maududi and (5) The Presidency of Islamic Research (P.O.I.R). The procedure in this study is based on a profound analysis of various translations of two chosen surahs ( *Al-Takathur* and *Al-Nasr*) and a careful comparison of their linguistic and literary aspects. The outcome of my judgment is based on the famous interpretations of The Holy Qur'an by Al-Zamakhshari, Al-Qurtubi, Ibn-Kathir, Al-Razi, Al-Zuhaili and Al-Sabooni. Therefore, the best translation of the five is chosen and -in some cases- a modified translation is suggested by the researcher.

In conclusion, translating the Holy Qur'an requires not only the surface meaning of the words, but it definitely needs a more profound knowledge of both linguistic and literary aspects of the words of Allah. Based on this, the study concludes that no translation can replace the words of Allah in the Qur'an and no one can even produce a single verse that could match it.

[Say, if the whole of mankind and jinns were to gather together to produce the like of this Qur'an, they could not produce the like thereof; even if they backed up each other with help and support. Q17:88] (P.O.I.R 1985: 805).

﴿ قُلْ لِّئِنْ اجْتَمَعَتِ الْإِنْسُ وَالْجِنُّ عَلَى أَنْ يَأْتُوا بِمِثْلِ هَذَا الْقُرْآنِ لَا يَأْتُونَ بِمِثْلِهِ وَلَوْ

كَانَ بَعْضُهُمْ لِبَعْضٍ ظَهِيرًا ﴾ (الاسراء : ٨٨)

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# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION

This study is a comprehensive survey on the various translations of the Holy Quran to explore and distinguish the most appropriate translation -if possible- of the linguistic and literary expressions.

My ultimate objective is to find out which translation is the most acceptable amongst the other versions.

I have chosen five distinguished and well-known translators who used different styles in English. Also my approach is pertinent to two short surahs (chapters) selected from the Holy Qur'an, which are *Al-Takathur* No. 102 and *Al-Nasr* No.110.

The thesis includes five chapters: chapter one is an introduction, which gives a thorough idea about the study. Chapter two is the methodology, which shows the way I have chosen to perform my analysis. Chapter three is about the review of literature, which covers some previous studies related to my topic. Chapter four is about the analysis and findings based on the various translations of the two short surahs which I have chosen, and lastly chapter five is a conclusion that sums up my work and provides some suggestions and implementations for further researching on the translations of the meanings of the Holy Qur'an.

The introduction chapter includes five major issues: (1) Importance of the Qur'an, (2) The Qur'an and its Translations, (3) The Value of Arabic Language, (4) Significance of the Study, and (5) Limitations of the Study.

## 1. Importance of the Qur'an

[Read! In the Name of your Lord Who has created. Q95:1] ( Al-Hilali & Khan 1996:842)

﴿اقْرَأْ بِاسْمِ رَبِّكَ الَّذِي خَلَقَ﴾ (العلق: ١)

These were the first words of the Qur'an revealed to Prophet Muhammad, the Messenger of Allah, (peace be upon him) through the angel Jibril (Gabriel) in 610 A.D while the Prophet was sitting in seclusion in the cave of Hira, near Makkah. At that time he was already forty-years-old; an illiterate who did not have any poetic or rhetorical gifts like many of his contemporaries. The entire revelation took about 23 years to be completed, and the last passage of the Qur'an was revealed to the Prophet while he was addressing a gathering at Mount Arafat in Makkah after performing his last Hajj in A.D. 632.

Based on the completion of revelation, the Qur'an became the supreme authority in Islam. It is now the fundamental and paramount source of the creed, rituals, ethics and laws of this religion. It is definitely the sacred scripture of Islam.

As a sacred source, Khan (2000:11) explains that the greatest need nowadays is to acquaint non-Muslims with this message in a comprehensible language and style, therefore he emphasizes the responsibility of the Muslims to convey the message of the Qur'an to other nations: [O Messenger, convey to the people whatever has been sent down to you from your Lord; for, if you do not do this, you will not be doing justice to His Message. Allah will protect you from the mischievous deeds of the people. Q5: 67] (Maududi 1991:179).

﴿يَا أَيُّهَا الرَّسُولُ بَلِّغْ مَا أُنْزِلَ إِلَيْكَ مِنْ رَبِّكَ وَإِنْ لَمْ تَفْعَلْ فَمَا بَلَّغْتَ رِسَالَتَهُ وَاللَّهُ يَعْصِمُكَ مِنْ

النَّاسِ﴾ (المائدة: ٦٧)

## 2. The Qur'an and its Translations

Almighty Allah says: [(This is) a Book, the Verses whereof are perfected (in every sphere of knowledge), and then explained in detail from one (Allah) Who is All-Wise All-Acquainted (with all things). Q11: 1] (Al-Hilali & Khan 1996:286)

﴿ كِتَابٌ أُحْكِمَتْ آيَاتُهُ ثُمَّ فُصِّلَتْ مِنْ لَدُنْ حَكِيمٍ خَبِيرٍ ﴾ (هود: ١)

Islamic doctrine teaches that the Qur'an is the miracle of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) which neither its composition nor its contents can be imitated. Jones (1993:37) makes it clear that "the proof of its authenticity (the Qur'an) lies in the inimitable splendor of its Arabic. It can be explained but not translated".

Mohsin (1999:1) also confirms that even if a single word of the Qur'an is taken from its context, and the whole Arabic language is searched for an appropriate equivalence, it will not be found.

Since the vast majority of Muslims in the world do not speak Arabic, non-Arab Muslims are duly obliged to turn to the translations of the Qur'an. Yet according to Iqbal (2000: 107): "Everyone who has attempted to translate the Qur'an has arrived at the same conclusion: the text they try to translate is, in essence, untranslatable. But in spite of the enormity of the task, there exist a number of translations of the Qur'an in every living language. Each of these translations reflects the translator's understanding of the text, his or her particular intellectual and spiritual make-up as well as linguistic ideological limitations."

Abdul-Raof (2001:1) therefore, stresses the fact that the translation should not be looked at as a replacement of the original version of the Qur'an in Arabic because we cannot produce a Latin Qur'an no matter how accurate or professional the translator attempts to be.

However, Gatje (2000: 30) claims that although the existence of the Qur'an was known in the West at an early time, it was not until A.D. 1143 that "Peter the Venerable" Abbot of Cluny had an initial, complete Western translation into Latin made by the Englishman Robertus Ketenesius. This translation, he adds, which was printed exactly 400 years later, was followed by others who were motivated by missionary and apologetic considerations. According to Abdul-Raof (2001:19) the Latin translation of the Qur'an was inspired by hostile intention and contains inaccuracies and misunderstandings. Abdel-Haleem (1999:9) says that the first translation of the Qur'an into English was made by Alexander Ross and printed in 1649 and was based on a French translation.

### **3. The Value of Arabic Language**

The Qur'an was revealed to the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) in Arabic. Abdel Haleem (1999:8) mentions that all Muslims, Arab and non-Arab, usually learn and read the Qur'an, or even parts of it, in Arabic, in order to have the satisfaction and blessing of uttering the holy speech, the very same words that were uttered by the Prophet and read by his companions, and by successive generations of Muslims, in their different places throughout the Islamic period.

Abdel-Haleem (1999:7) also draws attention to the fact that the Qur'an helped the Arabic language spread outside the Arabian Peninsula and made it an international language. That it affected other important languages like Persian, Turkish, Urdu, Indonesian, Swahili, Hausa and others. He further adds that basic religious scholarship in the various countries of the Muslim world is conducted in Arabic. The first surah (verse) of the Qur'an, *Al-Fateha*, which is an essential part of the ritual prayers, is learned and should be read in Arabic by Muslims in

all parts of the world and a Muslim from any part of the world, of whatever linguistic or cultural background, can lead other Muslims in the prayers, as they are performed in Arabic.

Gatje (2000:31) talks about the significance of the Arabic language of the Qur'an in leading the Islamic literature and states:

Arabic also played a leading role in other areas of Islamic literature, which would have been unthinkable without the significance of the Arabic Qur'an.

He mentions that according to the Muslim view, the Qur'an, as God's speech, cannot be translated but, rather, must be studied in its original Arabic form. He points out that there have been isolated attempts to make the Qur'an accessible in other languages of the Islamic cultural world; yet by far the greatest extent of Muslim literature on the Qur'an is written in Arabic language, although the authors of this literature were often of non-Arab origin.

#### **4. Significance of the Study**

The significance of my study is based on the following issues:

1. It draws attention that the translation of the Qur'an is an effective tool to introduce Islam universally.
2. It gives a considerable account of the linguistic and literary aspects, particularly, surah *Al-Takathur* No.102 and *Al-Nasr* No.110.
3. It draws more attention to the language of the Holy Qur'an and to Arabic language in general and the expected possibility of translating the Qur'an from Arabic into English in particular.
4. It shows whether the available translations provide an accurate outcome of the source language.
5. It also helps non-Arabs to understand the meaning of the Holy Qur'an, for it will comment on some translations of parts of it through comparing them with some famous interpretations.

Finally, it is hoped that this study will be a valuable contribution in the field of translation since it will give us an idea about the nature of the difficulties Qur'an translators face while translating the Holy Text.

#### **5. Limitations of the Study**

1. It seems impossible to cover all of the linguistic and rhetorical aspects concerning the two surahs under investigation, therefore, a number of words and expressions are chosen from each surah and some important grammatical constructions are discussed.

2. The researcher admits that it is difficult to concentrate on the translation of each lexical item such as (حتى : till, until).
3. Qur'anic structural and syntactic features, along with its phonetic/prosodic, and ethical features, would also require another comprehensive study.

## CHAPTER 2

### METHODOLOGY

#### 1. Preview

The methodology followed in this study is mainly based on two main issues: (1) linguistic and literary analysis of two selected surahs, and (2) comparison of main vocabulary items of the two surahs with similar ones in the Qur'an.

It will also focus on the translations of five well-known translators- among many others- of the Holy Qur'an (1) Arthur J. Arberry (1998), (2) Muhammad Asad (1980), (3) N.J. Dawood (1998), (4) S. Abul A'Ala Maududi (1990) and (5) The Presidency of Islamic Researches: Al Madinah (1985) (P.O.I.R).

Due to a thorough discussion with my supervisor, we preferred to choose only two surahs (chapters) from the Holy Qur'an: (1) *Al-Takathur* No. 102 and (2) *Al-Nasr* No.110, out of a total of one hundred and fourteen surahs

The careful choice of these two surahs is based on the following factors:

- (1) Appropriate length, because they have a limited number of verses.
- (2) Their influence on Muslims at that time, because one was revealed in Makkah, and the other in Al-Madinah.

- (3) Surah *Al-Takathur* summarizes the ultimate objective of human life, and warns people against their vehement willingness to save money to the extent that they have no time to fulfill other objectives during their lifetime.
- (4) Surah *Al-Nasr* reveals the future expectations of the spread of Islam. It is an implicit promise by Allah that Islam will prevail and remain dominant and strong until the Day of Judgment.
- (5) It is fitting, however, to verify the selection of these two surahs by the opinion of Neal Robinson, a well-known specialist in Islamic studies who says: “surah *Al-Takathur* comprises two registers: polemical and eschatological. It is the simplest Makki surah in terms of structure”, while “surah *Al-Nasr*, the shortest of the Madani surahs, is the only one devoted exclusively to God’s personal communication with the Messenger”. (Robinson 1996: 129,197).

Based on the famous commentaries on the Holy Qur’an, such as those by Al-Zamakhshari, Al-Qurtubi, Al-Sabooni, Al-Razi, Al-Zuhaili and Ibn-Kathir, the researcher will analyze those translations to find out how they are treated by some translators. Once the researcher scrutinizes and compares the available translations, a duly suggestion then will be provided. Yet the study does not aim at giving a model translation.

The methodology, which depends on a profound analysis and comparison, will be conducted through two major steps: (a) the linguistic aspects and (b) the literary aspects.

**A-The linguistic aspects focus on:**

1. The general meaning of the surah, which is explained briefly.

2. The meanings of selected Arabic keywords are determined through Arabic dictionaries and by reference to exegetical sources commenting on the meaning of the Qur'an. (i.e. الهى: شغل)
3. Based on the step above, the meaning of the Arabic word is searched for in Arabic-English dictionaries. (i.e. الهى: divert/distract)
4. The different meanings of the word *alha* (الهى) chosen by the five translators (i.e. divert, obsess, take up, made heedless) are listed.
5. The next step is to look into the meanings of each English word -chosen by the translators- in monolingual dictionaries and select the most suitable meaning that goes along with its source language counterpart.
6. By reference to intuition, the best translation is chosen, and if none of the words could have the capacity to provide the underlying meaning accurately and fully, the researcher would suggest her own translation to accumulate the desired meaning in the target language.

**B- The literary aspects** where the rhetorical expressions and structures are pointed out and compared with their translations to reveal whether the translators have preserved the rhetorical aspect or not. For example in *Al-Takathur* verse (2) "حتى زرت المقابر" the word die is substituted by the metonymy phrase "have visited the graves" where "visit the graves" have been used metaphorically to strike the unbelievers minds. This rhetorical expression is kept unchanged by two translators: Arberry and (P.O.I.R) who used "visit" while the other three translators changed the metonymy into non-metonymy "go/reach the graves".

## **2. Purpose of the Study:**

The present study casts a light on the analysis of the various translations of two selected surahs from the Holy Qur'an with the main focus on the comparison of related linguistic and literary aspects. In general, it aims at pursuing the following objectives:

1. To identify and discuss the linguistic and literary aspects in the translations of the Holy Qur'an.
2. To comment on the various translations of the Holy Qur'an and give favored renditions where possible.
3. To help the reader of the Qur'an comprehend its unique language.
4. To draw attention to the necessity of rendering the verses accurately and avoid the distortion of the Qur'anic meaning.
5. To familiarize both the specialist and the beginner in the field of translation with the sophisticated nature of Qur'anic discourse.

## **3. Statement of the Problem**

Due to the linguistic and cultural differences among Muslims worldwide, translators usually face crucial difficulties while translating from Arabic into English. Therefore, the major task for the translator is to grasp the inner meaning of the text and pay attention to the minute details during the process of translation. In so doing, the translator might cope with all problems that come up throughout the process of translation. For example:

In *Al-Takathur*, the verses (5) and (6) :

(كَلَّا لَوْ تَعْلَمُونَ عِلْمَ الْيَقِينِ لَتَرَوُنَّ الْجَحِيمَ)

are considered by all commentators as two separate sentences. The first one is :  
[Nay! Had you known with certainty of knowledge (the end of this way of life,  
you would never have acted thus). Q102: 5, 6] (Maududi 1991: 1048)

In this verse the second part of the sentence, the answer of the condition,  
is ellipted (left unsaid) for rhetorical reasons.

Qutb (1979:270) comments on this matter and says that:

The conditional sentence is not completed in the text. This is  
acceptable as a refined form of Arabic. It adds to the feeling of  
awe generated by the surah.

“Ellipted items in the source language can cause misunderstanding and  
misrepresentation of the meaning of Qur’anic texture, unless a footnote is  
provided or the source language ellipted element themselves are added by the  
translator.” (Abdul-Raof 2001:128).

If we consider the five translations of this verse, we notice that only  
Maududi (cited above) and (P.O.I.R) render the grammatical structure  
accurately:

[Nay, were ye to know with certainty of mind, (ye would beware!)] (P.O.I.R  
(1985: 2000).

The other translators: Arberry, Asad, and Dawood have rendered verse (5) as a  
conditional sentence and verse (6) as the answer of the condition, unlike the  
source text, they join the two verses together; in a way that the source language  
texture has not been maintained.

The second independent sentence, considered by the commentators, verse  
(6) (لَتَرَوُنَّ الْجَحِيمَ) is not the answer of the condition, in fact, it is another ellipted  
structure implemented for a rhetorical reason.

[You shall certainly see Hell] (Maududi: ibid)

This is an answer to an implied oath, (By God or I swear by God) you shall certainly see Hell. (Sabooni الصابوني 1998, vol.3: 572).

As we have seen above, out of the five translators, only Maududi and (P.O.I.R) preserve the original Qur'anic structure accurately according to the meaning provided by exegetes, while the rest have rendered it as a complete conditional sentence, and thus fail to convey the Qur'anic rhetorical devices: the incomplete conditional sentence and the omitted oath as well.

Another example of the Qur'anic language is **the rhetorical aspect** which most translators face as in *Al-Takathur* verse (2):

(حتى زرتم المقابر)

Most of the commentators- such as (Sabooni الصابوني 1998, vol.3: 572) and (Zuhailee الزحيلي 1991, vol.29: 383)- believe that verse (2): [Until ye visit the graves] is a metonymy, where the word “die” is substituted by the metonymy phrase “visit the graves”.

The word “visit”, in this verse is used metaphorically to strike the unbelievers minds.

Due to a profound reading of the five translations of this verse, only Arberry and (P.O.I.R) select literal translation “visit”, keeping the metonymy unchanged. While Asad and Maududi translate the metonymy into non-metonymy (go, reach).

On the other hand, Dawood (1998) gives a totally different image that does not exist in the original text, by adding the expression: “from the cradle to the grave” (من المهد الى اللحد) which, I believe, is unacceptable and distorts the original image implied in the source text.

## CHAPTER 3

### REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

#### 1. Previous Studies

Different Qur'anic translations have been examined by a number of scholars. Some of the studies discuss some major problems in translating Qur'anic meanings into English, while others concentrate on a specific literary issue like Qur'anic implicature, irony, euphemism, parables or simile. Linguistic issues, such as: translating synonymy, Qur'anic colour terms and the progressive aspect in the Holy Qur'an are investigated by some researchers in addition to studies dealing with linguistic ambiguity and the referential gaps in the two cultures; the Arabic and the English.

In his thesis "Major Problems in Translating Qur'anic Meanings into English", Al-Said (1989) investigates many issues such as: (1) lexical problems that include Islamic concepts, synonymy, culture, technical terms, ambiguity, collocations and multiplicity of meaning. (2) Grammatical problems that include: morphology, conditionals, and verb tenses. (3) Problems related to the rhetoric in the Qur'anic expressions like brevity, shift (*iltifat*) and metaphor. Al-Said (1989:125) concludes that "it is impossible for the translator to render all of the Qur'anic meanings into English; therefore only one shade of meaning can be translated."

In order to facilitate the translation of the Qur'anic meanings into English accurately, Al-Said (1989) presents some vital suggestions. For example, he

urges the translator to take into consideration the connotations of the Arabic and the English words and asserts whether the English words and expressions have the capacity to convey the accurate meaning.

Whereas Al-Said (ibid) chooses different verses from the Qur'an as tangible examples, another researcher Al-Omari (1990) concentrates on the *Amma* Section (جزء عم), and selects five well-known translators to help him evaluate what the interpreters have said about the meaning.

Al-Omari (1990) presumes that the Qur'anic meaning could almost be transferred into English structures, if the interpretations of the verses have been studied thoroughly and profoundly.

He suggests adding footnotes for translators to help the reader get the correct idea about the aimed meaning.

He also reveals that the basic task for the translator is to translate the underlying meaning of the verse, which requires a deep study of the roots of the Arabic word and the "occasions of revelation" *asbab al nuzool*. To him, this will provide a better understanding of the meanings of the Qur'an and a better translation.

However, the two previous studies may be considered comprehensive because they represent the foundations for later studies that focus on a particular aspect of translation.

Al-Ananzeh (1992) deals with the translatability of implicature in the Holy Qur'an into English. He analyzes five different translations of the Qur'an, chooses samples of Qur'anic implicatures and divides them into conventional or conversational implicatures. After investigating the various categories of

implicatures and looking for ways of translating them into English, Al-Ananzeh (ibid: 77) gives some suggestions such as:

“ The implicatures aroused by ambiguity can mostly be translated by adopting one of the interpretations suggested by the commentators of the Holy Qur'an. And when there is a disagreement between commentators and subsequently between translators, such as the disagreement about the homonymous word *Al-shuhada'* (الشهداء), the translator should, hence investigate the immediate linguistic context closely and seek help from the context of situation at hand, as this is the only way to disentangle the ambiguity. By contrast, some other ambiguous utterances can be perceived by restoring to other utterances elsewhere in the Holy Qur'an that may help the translator decide on a certain interpretation”.

Another researcher, Sa'efan (1994) studies the irony as a stylistic device in some verses of the Holy Qur'an. He describes the term 'irony' in the Holy Qur'an as “ an advanced and intellectual phenomenon whose principal purpose is not mere attack, satire or belittling of others, nor is it a humorous style generating ridicule and scorn; it is intended to accomplish what is good for people's life and faith.” (ibid: iv)

Sa'efan (ibid) depends on Grice's study, entitled “Logic and Conversation”. Grice's account for verbal irony -which assumes that the implicated meaning could actually contradict the literal sense of the utterance- is applied to many sarcastic verses in the Qur'an.

He finds out that the standard approach of irony (which claims that the main point of an ironical utterance is to communicate the opposite of what is said) fails to account for ironical verses in the Qur'an. Subsequently, he confirms that the style of the Holy Qur'an is inimitable as truly the Word of God.

Another researcher also conducts his study on the bases of Grice's theory. Noghai (1995) addresses the politeness strategy of euphemism, he aims at determining the applicability of formal equivalence (المطابقة الشكلية) to translating euphemisms in surah 2 "The Cow" (البقرة) of the Holy Qur'an from Arabic into English.

The data of the study include different ten translations of three euphemism employed in six verses of the surah and analyzed on the bases of Grice's theory of conversational implicature.

The results suggest that formal equivalence (المطابقة الشكلية) is the best approach that can be adopted in translating euphemisms in surah 2.

Noghai (ibid) points out that the Qur'an has generally been translated on an individual basis despite its diversity of topics and style. Hence, any such translation, in his opinion, is expected to suffer from grave deficiencies in some or other respect however sophisticated the translator's linguistic and encyclopedic background. Therefore, Noghai suggests the collaboration of teamwork in Qur'an translation.

In a study by Affaneh (1995) entitled "Synonymy Through Equivalence with Regard to Translating the Qur'an Surah 4, *Alnisa* the Women.", the researcher selects twelve translated versions of this very surah, which -in his opinion- many of its words are mistranslated in a way that the readers of these translations get false ideas about the true concepts of Islam. His study deals with the phenomenon of synonymy according to its concept in English and Arabic, including its patterns, categories and style variations, which are supported by examples from the surah.

Affaneh's study focuses on four methods of translation: (1) Faithful translation. (2) Free translation. (3) Semantic translation. (4) Communicative translation. And emphasizes the need for a specialized committee to take over the task of

making English terms related to Islam and publishing them all over the Islamic world. He further suggests forbidding the sale of any translated version of the Holy Qur'an before such versions are reviewed and revised by specialized academies.

Muhaidat (1996) diverts the attention to another aspect related to irony and investigates the problems that translators encounter when they translate ironic expressions in the Holy Qur'an into English. With reference to three well-known translations, Muhaidat discusses two important issues: (1) How the expressions of irony have been translated, and (2) How they should (or can) be translated in accordance with the interpretations of some well-known exegeses. Muhaidat's study indicates that some renderings may convey the propositional content but fail to convey the intended shades of irony.

To deal with these problems, Muhaidat suggests certain strategies such as: using explanatory words between brackets to indicate that these words are not originally mentioned in the text.

Bisher (1996) aims at investigating how the issue of linguistic ambiguity is treated in some canonical commentaries on the Holy Qur'an and translations of its meanings into English.

The main focus of Bisher (ibid) is placed upon those lexical items and syntactic constructions in the surahs of *Al Baqara* (البقرة) No. 2 and *Al Nisa* (النساء) No. 4. The author comments on four common English translations based on the view of some famous commentaries.

Bisher concludes that the translations of the Holy Qur'an are in many cases a distortion of its message. Therefore, the Arabic commentaries on the Holy Qur'an must themselves be translated and the Arabic language, as suggested by

him, should be taught to others better than transferring the Qur'anic text to their languages.

Since colour terms and expressions are used 35 times in the Holy Qur'an, Khudair (1996) studies the problems of translating Qur'anic colour terms and expressions into English.

In order to accurately provide the linguistic and religious meanings of each colour term and expression, the study depends on three well-known commentators and six well-known renditions of the Holy Qur'an.

The study finds out that most of the Qur'anic colour terms and expressions are used figuratively, and in some cases, literal translation is the effective method in rendering colour terms and expressions, which have an identical connotation in both English and Arabic.

"The translation of the Progressive Aspect in the Holy Qur'an", a thesis done by Eilouti (1997) investigates the verb system and grammatical constructions that may convey the meaning and the use of the progressive in Qur'anic Arabic, and subsequently see how they interact with the grammatical system of Arabic.

The researcher examines the active participle and concludes that this form can be used to render one of the English progressive readings, namely the sense of continuousness.

Eilouti (ibid: 116) concludes that: "subsequent studies or investigations related to Qur'an in the 'temporal aspectual realm' should launch an all out mapping of the Qur'anic morpho-syntactic constructions."

Al-Ubaidy (1997) explores the problems translators of the Qur'an encounter when translating Qur'anic parables. He investigates the Qur'anic

parables comprehensively on the basis of six well-known renditions of the meanings of the Holy Qur'an, and consults some famous exegetes to clarify the intended meanings in the Qur'anic parables.

Among other things, the author focuses on the confusion between simile (*altashbih*), which is general, and parable (*Altamthil*), which is particular.

Parable, as defined by Al Ubaidy (ibid: 21), is “ a fictitious narrative story that illustrates a moral attitude or a religious principle.” As in:

﴿مَثَلُهُمْ كَمَثَلِ الَّذِي اسْتَوْقَدَ نَارًا فَلَمَّا أَضَاءَتْ مَا حَوْلَهُ ذَهَبَ اللَّهُ بِنُورِهِمْ وَتَرَكَهُمْ فِي ظُلُمَاتٍ لَا يُبْصِرُونَ﴾

(البقرة: ١٧) Q2:17

(1) [Their similitude is that of a man, who kindled a fire, when it lighted all around him, God took away their light and left them in utter darkness so they could not see] (A.Y.Ali: 20 in Al-Ubaidy (ibid))

Whereas ‘simile’, as put forward by him, is “ distinguished from the other figures of speech by employing an explicit comparison by a certain copula similitude such as: “like”, “is like” and “as”. Their comparison, however, shows similarity between two things of unlike nature that yet have something in common.” (Ibid: 23) As in:

﴿يَوْمَ نَطْوِي السَّمَاءَ كَطَيِّ السِّجِلِّ لِلْكُتُبِ﴾

(الأنبياء: ١٠٤) Q21:104

(2) [The Day that We roll up the Heaven *like a* scroll rolled up for books (completed)] (A.Y.Ali: 846 (ibid))

Al-Ubaidy adds that most of the translators resort to translating the source language parable into target language simile, which in his opinion, distorts the

intended meaning and rhetorical value of the Qur'anic parables. As in verse (1) above when translated by Ahmed Ali:

[They are *like* a man who kindles a fire] (A. Ali: 13 in Al-Ubaidy (ibid))

Al Ubaidy urges the translators of the Qur'an to resort to the original story behind each parable before translating the verse in order to produce an accurate translation faithful and compatible to the text.

Al-Khlouf (1998) aims at illustrating and examining the difficulties that translators may encounter when translating Qur'anic simile into English. She analyzes four translations and depends on four commentators to find out that the obstacles in translating Qur'anic simile are due to the figurative and connotative meanings of the verses, which contain simile.

As a solution to overcome literal translation, Al-Khlouf recommends that translators should have a comprehensive command of both cultures of the source language and the target language as well.

Al-Masri (1998) discusses the problem of referential gaps as a major barrier in translating unmatched cultural elements from Arabic into English. Referential gaps, according to him, are blank spaces in the field of reference. It holds when a certain concept or object exists in the source language or the source culture but is completely missing in the target language or its culture.

The study derives its evidence from certain selected translations, by some translators, of some verses of the Holy Qur'an.

He designs two types of questionnaires: (1) structured and (2) free, and divides the subjects into three groups: (1) the questionnaire subjects, (2) the test subjects, and (3) a third group whose members have to respond first to the questionnaire then to the test to see whether their responses match or not. The education variable is also exploited to find out its relevance to comprehension.

Al-Masri's study concludes that little information is truly transmitted into the target language in the presence of a referential gap due to a number of reasons: remoteness of the two cultures, adopting the wrong type of equivalence or employing the wrong translation strategy.

Al-Masri also concludes that the level of education corresponds to comprehension. This situation leads to a breakdown in communication and forming misconceptions.

Finally, due to the lack of sufficient religious and cultural background on the part of the target language audience, Al-Masri (ibid) recommends that translators secure sufficient textual and contextual clues that help make up for proper background knowledge.

Concerning the books about the Holy Qur'an and its translations, some are comprehensive and investigate the linguistic and rhetorical aspects in Qur'an translations, while others focus on the literary issues only. Some books deal with the Qur'anic exegesis and its history, others with its themes and style.

Abdul-Raof (2001) conducts a comprehensive study, dedicated to provide a linguistic and rhetorical insight into Qur'anic discourse.

In his book, he focuses on the Qur'an translational problems and "provides a thorough account of its unique syntactic, semantic, phonetic, prosodic, pragmatic, and rhetorical features"(ibid: xiii).

The purpose of his book is to present a discussion of the theory of translation and its practical contribution to Qur'anic translation.

Abdul-Raof intends to make it a reference book for applied translation studies in general, and the Qur'an translation, in particular.

In order to help the reader of the Qur'an comprehend and appreciate its unique language, Abdul-Raof provides extensive examples chosen from the Qur'an,

presents their translational problems, and discusses their linguistic features in a stimulating discussion.

He tackles three main areas: (1) applied translation, (2) linguistics, and (3) Islamic (Qur'anic) studies, and accordingly divides his book into four chapters. Chapter one mainly deals with the theories of translation, followed by chapter two which shows the reader 'the nature' of Qur'anic discourse in terms of its linguistic and rhetorical prototypical features. Chapter three deals with 'texture' of the Qur'an and its rhetorical textural elements such as: similes, metaphors, metonymy, and pun. Chapter four provides a suggestion for translating the Qur'an, Abdul-Raof (ibid: 140) states: "The only way to convey the intended message to the target language reader is to resort to explanatory translation, i.e. the use of footnotes."

The book, however, does not intend to provide a solution to the mistakes or inaccuracies in the available translations of the Qur'an.

Robinson (1996), in his book "Discovering the Qur'an", focuses on the literary issues in the Holy Qur'an. As a literary text, he points out that the Qur'an seems at first reading extremely bewildering and defies analysis. Therefore, he concentrates on a limited corpus: the forty-eight relatively brief surahs ascribed to the first Makki period. He discovers that forty-three of them comprises on one or more sections, each of which dealt with one of six principle subjects: polemic, eschatology, God's personal communication with the Messenger, the signs of God's power and beneficence, lessons from history, and the status and authenticity of the revelation. Robinson (ibid) analyzes each type of section and makes an exhaustive inventory of the small units of which it was composed. He afterward investigates how these six 'registers' are combined in whole surahs.

In order to impress the reader about how much is lost when the Qur'an is translated from Arabic into English, Robinson (ibid) investigates the interrelationship of sound, meaning and structure in some of Makki and Madani surahs.

According to him, the literary analysis of the Madinah surahs is much more problematic because of their length. Nevertheless, Robinson (ibid) discusses the evolution of the six registers in the Madani period and demonstrates that surah No. 2 *Al-Baqara*, the longest surah in the Qur'an, is coherent as a whole.

Gumpel (1998) in "Translating Literatures Translating Cultures" addresses the difference between the meaning and metaphor. He discusses how language becomes "the mediator between domains as it translates *worlds* perceived directly into the form of *words*". (ibid: 47)

What unites all extant languages in principle, in his view, is their mode of translating *worlds* into *words* through speech activity.

On the other hand, Gumpel describes culture as a broad term and demonstrates his view with the aid of two meanings "hawk" and "dove". He emphasizes that beyond their plain reference to the animals, they function as antonyms. "Hawk" implies "war monger" and "dove" the opposite, "peace lover". Gumpel affirms that "dove" most closely represents a kind of "cultural unity" where it assumes "biblical proportions going back to the alluvial days of Noah. There it became the avian messenger that announced the subsiding of the flood with a freshly plucked olive leaf in its back." (Gumpel 1998:63)

The significance of this biblical symbol, Gumpel explains, "most likely aided the dissemination of the word "dove" for denoting the peace lover."(ibid: 64)

Gatje (2000) in “ The Qur’an and its Exegesis” chooses a selection of texts on Qur’anic exegesis, and intends to provide the “ non-orientalist” reader an impression of the exegetic activity of the Muslims.

The book presents some useful information about Arabia before Islam, the history of the text of the Qur’an and Muslim exegesis.

He brings together a unique collection of commentaries, translated from the original Arabic, on some of the key passages of the Qur’an and presents the views of a broad range of commentators, both classical such as: Zamakhshari, Baidawi and Tabari, and modern such as: Muhammad Abduh and Mohammad Rashid Rida.

Gatje focuses on different topics concerning: God, Prophet Muhammad, revelation, and Muslim beliefs and duties, in addition to covering mystical, philosophical and shi’ite Qur’anic exegesis.

In his book “The Koran”, Cook (2000) gave a preliminary sketch of the history of the Qur’an and the spread of the Arabic language in the Islamic empire.

Cook, afterwards, explains the message of the Qur’an through explaining the first surah in the Holy Book *Al-Fatiha*. Then he speaks about the dissemination of the Qur’an and addresses the issue of the non-Arabic speaking Muslims. He stresses the fact that in Turkish, Persian, and many other languages, there is a mismatch between the Arabic of the Qur’an and the local language of primary education. Cook adds that one cannot achieve literacy in both languages at the same time, so -according to him- either the believers have to learn Arabic or the Qur’an has to be translated.

Cook confirms that Arabic is not just the “original” language of the Qur’an: it *is* the language of the Qur’an, therefore, the result of translating the Qur’an- in his opinion- was “ naturally imperfect and subject to human error” (ibid: 88).

He provides a Persian translation, done by Ayatullah Shirazi, of surah *Al-Feel* No.105:

The old literal translation renders our 'men of the elephant' quite literally as 'the companions of the elephant' ; this leaves entirely open the question of how exactly they relate to the animal that serves to identify them. The Ayatullah, by contrast, has decided to put them on top of it, and renders ' the elephant-riders'.

“Understanding the Qur'an Themes and Style” , a book by Abdel-Haleem (1999), focuses on the major Qur'anic themes such as: life and eternity, marriage and divorce, peace and war, and water and its symbolism which are definitely universal issues in a miraculous Qur'anic style.

Abdel-Haleem examines the development of the surahs (chapters) and the *Ayas* (verses) and the structure of the Qur'an itself. He intends to help both the ordinary reader, and also the scholar, to understand the Qur'an by combining a number of approaches: thematic, stylistic and comparative.

Abdel-Haleem discusses the Qur'anic style and states that “the current translations of the Qur'an , for all their merits, leave the reader puzzled in number of ways”.(ibid: viii) He also identifies imagery in the Qur'an as a main vehicle enhancing the power of expressions together with all the other features it contributes to the dynamic style which is an inseparable part of the power and effect of the Qur'anic message.

## **2. Theoretical Background**

As we all know, languages differ significantly worldwide, in many fields such as: syntax, semantics and pragmatics. Therefore, in order to communicate between people of different languages and cultures; the process of translation becomes vital. But, “in spite of having been a hotly debated topic over such a long period of time, translation still seems to be a mysterious phenomenon which defies understanding and still lacks a comprehensive theory which can explain what it is and how it happens.” (Bell 1998:4). As for Newmark (1998: 119) a concise definition of translation becomes “the accurate and elegant transfer of the meaning of the text of one language to the text of another for a new readership with a different culture”. Newmark’s definition, as mentioned, in fact, shows what Bell (*ibid*) describes as ‘mysterious’ and that is the broad and vague meaning of both words ‘accurate and elegant’.

Therefore, translation, as McGuire (1991: 25) points out, involves far more than replacement of lexical and grammatical items between languages. Actually it involves what Farghal (1992: 56) calls, “a mode of communication where choices are further subjected to a ‘principle of equivalence’ between a source text in one language and a target text in another”. It seems more relevant then to briefly discuss five pertinent dimensions of translation. (1) the different kinds of equivalents, (2) approximation, (3) context, (4) importance of the source language and (5) untranslatability.

Languages differ in forms, codes, rules and regulations and these forms have different meanings; therefore, “the ideal of total equivalence is a chimera”. Bell (1998: 6). Similarly, McGuire (1991: 29) emphasizes the importance of the term ‘equivalence’ and warns of approaching it as a search for sameness, “since sameness cannot even exist between two TL versions of the same text, let alone between the SL and the TL version”. Bell also (1998) admits that there is no

absolute synonymy between words in the same language, “so why should anyone be surprised to discover a lack of synonymy between languages”. (ibid: 6). Ross (1981: 11) takes a similar view and states that “no translation can attain a satisfactory equivalence for every relevant factor; discretion and selection are essential to every translation”.

In addition to the issue of equivalence, Farghal (1992: 56) defines the different kinds of equivalents as:

When translation theorists and practitioners seek to define and describe equivalence, they tend to make their task easier by focusing on specific types of equivalence: formal (Catford 1965), functional (Kachru 1984; de Waard & Nida 1986), dynamic (Nida 1964), textual (Van Dijk 1972), situational (Vinay & Darbelnet 1958), cultural (Casagrande 1954), and so on. Among these types, formal equivalence stands out against all the rest, which are essentially functional.

Newmark (1998: 135) on the other hand, provides a different view, he says: “strictly, translation is always paraphrase, since it is an approximation”. Abdul-Raof (2001: 6) as well, stresses that “the notion of ‘approximation’ has now become the dominant criterion in translation studies; it is approximation rather than equivalence which the translator should be seeking to achieve”. But for Fenner (1989: 52) “the best translations are not translations at all. But parallel renderings of the original in the target language”

Context, in fact, has always been an important factor in translation. To Dancette (1997: 82) “interpretation is never context-free. Meaning is not an invariant; it is context dependent”. Newmark (1993: 25) also supports this view and says that many words are profoundly affected by their linguistic, cultural

and situational contexts and cannot be translated in isolation. Therefore according to Bell (1998: 7) :

The translator has the option of focusing on finding “formal equivalents which ‘preserve’ the context-free semantic sense of the text at the expense of its context-sensitive communicative value or finding “functional equivalents” which ‘preserve’ the context-sensitive communicative value of the text at the expense of its context-free semantic sense.

As maintained by Newmark (1993: 1) “the more important the language of a text, the more closely it should be translated”. This notion of the ‘important language’, in fact, may refer us to the sacred and highly sensitive text, which is the Qur’an. Abdul-Raof (2001: 9,10) believes that the translation of the Qur’an cannot escape the trap of exegetical inaccuracies because of its new structural, textural and rhetorical features relevant to the target language.

Newmark (1993: 25), on the same line, points out that “all languages have many untranslatable words whose meaning, if important, has to be spread and manipulated across two or more words or a phrase of the target language”. Therefore, “untranslatability occurs when there is no lexical or syntactical substitute in the TL for an SL item”. (McGuire 1991: 33).

Straight (1981: 41) confirms another important issue pertinent to the process of translation, which is communication. He believes that “successful communication with the intended audience of the translation depends upon full and accurate knowledge of their language and culture”.

In relation with the translation of the Qur’an, Abdul-Raof ( 2001:12) admits that:

Language and culture-bound linguistic and rhetorical features are simply ‘inimitable’ and ‘unproduceable’ into other languages to a satisfactory level that can create an equivalent mystical effect on the target audience similar to that on source

language readers. These Qur'anic intricacies have no equivalents in the target language and they represent unique examples of linguistic and cultural untranslatability.

### **3. Qur'anic Style**

The Qur'an in fact is full of literary expressions to address the Arab mentality; therefore the Qur'anic style has always been the logical medium to convince the Arab understanding and mentality. The Qur'an was recited first to the Arabs whose highest gift rest in eloquence of speech and who had rich and elaborate literature, especially poetry. In most cases the Arabs converted into Islam when they heard the Qur'an, either being recited or witnessed during the ritual prayer.

Kermani (2000: 255) emphasizes the impact of beauty and perfection of the Qur'anic style on Arabs by announcing that throughout its history of reception, the Qur'an has been reported to have an eminent aesthetic effect unchallenged by any other text in world literature. To probe deeper, the Qur'anic language is defined by Boullata (2000:367) as:

“Unmatchable, unique language with a variety of relevant vocabularies, topics, themes, rhythms, rhymes, tones, moods, styles, structures, and other aesthetic, rhetorical, and psychological modalities of literary expression which, nonetheless, preserve and enhance the unitary character of its conceptualization of existence”

To illustrate the point that the Qur'an has a distinct style and noble grandeur, Abdel-Haleem (1999:8-9) states:

One of his opponents, who was in awe of the power of the Qur'an's language described it by saying, ' It ascends to the heights and nothing ascends above it, and it crushes what is beneath it'.

Mustafa Sadiq Al Rafi (cited in Kermani, 2000: 257) explains that anyone who hears it has no option but to surrender to the Qur'an, and he gives the following reasons for it:

Every single part of his mind (the listener) was touched by the pure sound of the language's music, and portion-by-portion, note-by-note, he embraced its harmony, the perfection of its pattern, its formal completion. It was not so much as if something was recited to him but rather as if something had burned itself into him.

The Qur'an preserves unique musicality (*musiqā*) and outstanding quality of composition that it causes a sweet shiver in the listener's heart even if he does not understand Arabic at all. That is because the words with their stretching, nasal sounds, rhymes, verses and pauses were arranged in a wonderful way to hold an attraction to the non-Arab although he does not understand the meaning of the words. It is the melody (*nagham*) that created a wonderful image in him. Muhammad Abu Zahra (cited in Kermani, 2000: 265).

Ahmed Ali (1994: 7) describes the Qur'anic Arabic as the following,

"Qur'anic Arabic is distinguished by sublimity and excellencies of sound and eloquence, rhetoric and metaphor, assonance and

alliteration, onomatopoeia and rhyme, ellipse and parallelism Its cadences and sprung rhythm, pauses and stops, imply eloquent speech and duration.”

According to Ahmed Ali (ibid) the remarkably rich poetic tradition of Pagan Arabs did not deal in abstractions and pure thought. Their poems had sung of love, war, hunting, camels, horses, the mountains and desert dunes. Words were used to invoke concrete, almost physical images. He adds that:

The Qur'an restructured the metaphorical mould through allegory, paralleling it as a rhythmical unit with the conceptual language of transcendence, which acquired primary authority and universal persuasive power to conform to its conceptual standards. Hence such words as *taqwa*, *sabr*, *salat*, which were connected with physical processes or particular objects, acquired entirely new and conceptual meanings'

In the introduction to his translation of the meanings of the Qur'an, Asad (1980) clarifies the uniqueness of the Qur'anic style and the means of translating the Holy Book, and urges not to take every Qur'anic passage, statement or expression in its outward, literal sense and disregard the possibility of its being an allegory, a metaphor or a parable. He considered it offending to the very spirit of the divine writ.

To illustrate this point, he (ibid: 990) mentions the Qur'anic reference to God [Established on His throne. Q20:5]

﴿الرَّحْمَنُ عَلَى الْعَرْشِ اسْتَوَى﴾ (طه: ٥)

and says that this phrase cannot possibly be taken in its literal sense, since then it would imply, however vaguely, that Allah is limited in space, and since such a

limitation would contradict the concept of an Infinite being, It is known immediately, that the ‘throne’ and God’s being ‘established’ on it are but linguistic vehicles meant to convey an idea which is outside all human experience, namely, the idea of Allah’s almightiness and absolute sway over all that exists.

In conclusion, all studies about the translations of the Qur’an show that the revealed language by the Almighty Allah is untranslatable. Al-Masri (1998:3) states that, “ the language used in religious discourse tends to be highly loaded with untranslatable connotations. The shades of meanings are usually vivid and multi-operative let alone the enormous differences in exegesis, which have all to be taken care of in translation. However, religious discourse must be relayed highly faithfully.”

#### **4. Linguistic Features of The Qur’an**

The Qur’an enjoys a number of unique characteristics such as:

1-It is the actual word of Allah. [Blessed is He Who sent down the Criterion to His servant, that it may be an admonition to all creatures. Q25: 1].

﴿تَبَارَكَ الَّذِي نَزَّلَ الْفُرْقَانَ عَلَى عَبْدِهِ لِيَكُونَ لِلْعَالَمِينَ نَذِيرًا﴾ (الفرقان: ١)

2- Allah Almighty has taken upon Himself the duty of preserving the Qur’an forever. [ We have without doubt sent down the message, and We will assuredly guard it ( from corruption). Q15:9].

﴿إِنَّا نَحْنُ نَزَّلْنَا الذِّكْرَ وَإِنَّا لَهُ لَحَافِظُونَ﴾ (الحجر: ٩)

3- It is not only a moralizing book, but also defining the permissible and the forbidden. [So take what the prophet gives you and refrain from what he prohibits you. Q59:7]

﴿وَمَا آتَاكُمُ الرَّسُولُ فَخُذُوهُ وَمَا نَهَاكُمْ عَنْهُ فَانْتَهُوا﴾ (الحشر: ٧)

4- The revelation of the Qur'an made Islam a perfect religion for all mankind. [This day have I perfected your religion for you, completed my favour upon you and have chosen for you Islam as your religion. Q5:3]

﴿الْيَوْمَ أَكْمَلْتُ لَكُمْ دِينَكُمْ وَأَتْمَمْتُ عَلَيْكُمْ نِعْمَتِي وَرَضِيتُ لَكُمُ الْإِسْلَامَ دِينًا﴾ (المائدة: ٣)

5- It has been revealed to re-establish the sincere worship of Allah alone, without association of any partners with Him. [ And they have been commanded no more than this: to worship Allah , offering Him sincere devotion, being true in faith, to establish regular prayer and to give Zakat, and that is the religion Right and Straight. Q98: 5]

﴿وَمَا أُمِرُوا إِلَّا لِيَعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ مُخْلِصِينَ لَهُ الدِّينَ حُنَفَاءَ وَيُقِيمُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَيُؤْتُوا الزَّكَاةَ وَذَلِكَ دِينُ الْقِيَمَةِ﴾ (البينة: ٥)

6- It contains a complete code for all areas of life. [Verily this Qur'an doth guide to that which is most right. Q17: 90]

﴿إِنَّ هَذَا الْقُرْآنَ يَهْدِي لِلَّتِي هِيَ أَقْوَمُ﴾ (الاسراء: ٩)

7- It is complete [Nothing have We omitted from the Book. Q6:38]

﴿مَا فَرَّطْنَا فِي الْكِتَابِ مِنْ شَيْءٍ﴾ (الانعام: ٣٨)

and comprehensive [And We have sent down to thee The Book explaining all things. Q16:89]

﴿وَنَزَّلْنَا عَلَيْكَ الْكِتَابَ تِبْيَانًا لِّكُلِّ شَيْءٍ﴾ (النحل: ٨٩)

8- It is an eternal miracle, Allah has challenged all humans to produce a whole book, ten chapters or even one specific chapter which can be remotely comparable to the Qur'an. Both followers and opponents of Islam recognized its

literary supremacy and inimitability. [Say, if the whole of mankind and jinns were to gather together to produce the like of this Qur'an, they could not produce the like thereof; even if they backed up each other with help and support. Q17:88]

﴿قُلْ لِّئِنْ اجْتَمَعَتِ الْإِنْسُ وَالْجِنُّ عَلَى أَنْ يَأْتُوا بِمِثْلِ هَذَا الْقُرْآنِ لَا يَأْتُونَ بِمِثْلِهِ وَلَوْ كَانَ بَعْضُهُمْ لِبَعْضٍ ظَهِيرًا﴾ (الاسراء : ٨٨)

The Almighty also says: [Or do they say: he forged it ? Say: Bring then a chapter like unto it and call (to your aid) anyone ye can besides Allah, if it be ye speak the truth. Q10:38]

﴿أَمْ يَقُولُونَ افْتَرَاهُ قُلْ فَأْتُوا بِسُورَةٍ مِثْلِهِ وَادْعُوا مَنِ اسْتَطَعْتُمْ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ﴾ (يونس: ٣٨)

(The Presidency of Islamic Researches: Al Madinah 1985: iii-v).

As a definite result, the Qur'anic style cannot be changed or imitated at all.

## CHAPTER 4

### ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

#### 1. *Al-Takathur* (Surah No. 102)

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

﴿ أَلْهَاكُمْ التَّكَاثُرُ (١) حَتَّى زُرْتُمُ الْمَقَابِرَ (٢) كَلَّا سَوْفَ تَعْلَمُونَ (٣) ثُمَّ كَلَّا سَوْفَ تَعْلَمُونَ (٤) كَلَّا لَوْ تَعْلَمُونَ عِلْمَ الْيَقِينِ (٥) لَتَرَوُنَّ الْجَحِيمَ (٦) ثُمَّ لَتَرَوْهَا عَيْنَ الْيَقِينِ (٧) ثُمَّ لَتَسْأَلَنَّ يَوْمَئِذٍ عَنِ النَّعِيمِ (٨) ﴾

#### Transliteration

*Bismillah Alrrahman Alrraheem*

*[Alhakum alttakathur(1) Hatta zurtum almaqabir (2) Kalla sawfa ta'lamoon (3) Thumma kalla sawfa ta'lamoon (4) Kalla law ta'lamoon ilm alyaqeen (5) Latarawunna aljaheem(6) Thumma latarawunnaha ayna alyaqeen (7) Thumma latus-alunna yawma-ithin an alna'eem(8)]*

As for the five translations of the surah, they are cited exactly as they appear in their source book. The same letter case (either capital or small) is maintained, and the translators' own organization of the whole text is preserved.

## **The Translations of *Al-Takathur* (Surah No. 102)**

(1) Arthur J. Arberry (1998)

### **Rivalry**

In the Name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate  
Gross rivalry diverts you,  
even till you visit the tombs.  
No indeed; but soon you shall know.  
Again, no indeed; but soon you shall know.  
No indeed; did you know with the knowledge of certainty,  
you shall surely see Hell. Again, you shall surely see it with the eye of certainty  
then you shall be questioned that day concerning true bliss.

(2) Muhammad Asad (1980)

### **Greed For More And More**

IN THE NAME OF GOD, THE MOST GRACIOUS, THE DISPENSER OF  
GRACE:

- (1) You are obsessed by greed for more and more (2) until you go down to your graves.  
(3) Nay, in time you will come to understand!  
(4) And once again: Nay, in time you will come to understand!  
(5) Nay, if you could but understand (it) with an understanding (born) of certainty, (6) you would indeed, most surely, behold the blazing fire (of hell)!  
(7) In the end you will indeed, most surely, behold it with the eye of certainty:  
(8) and on that Day you will most surely be called to account for (what you did with) the boon of life!

(3) N.J. Dawood (1998)

### **Worldly Gain**

In the Name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful  
Your Hearts are taken up with worldly gain from the cradle to the grave.  
But you shall learn. Then you shall surely learn.  
Indeed, if you learned the truth with certainty, you would see the fire of Hell:  
you would see it with your very eyes.  
Then, on that day, you shall be questioned about your joys.

(4) S. Abul A'Ala Maududi (1990)

### **AT-TAKATHUR**

In the name of Allah, the Compassionate, the Merciful  
Your craze for more and more and mutual rivalry for worldly gains has made  
you heedless, until (in the same craze) you reach the graves. By no means! Soon  
you shall know! Again (note it well) by no means! Soon you shall know. Nay!  
Had you known with certainty of knowledge (the end of this way of life, you  
would never have acted thus). You shall certainly see Hell. Again (note it well  
that) you shall most certainly see it. Then, on that Day you shall certainly be  
called to account for the blessings and comforts of life.

(5) The Presidency of Islamic Researches : Al Madinah 1985) (P.O.I.R).

### **Piling Up**

In the name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful

(1) The mutual rivalry

For piling up ( the good things

Of this world) diverts you

(From the more serious things),

(2) Until ye visit the graves.

- (3) But nay, ye soon shall  
Know (the reality).
- (4) Again, ye soon shall know!
- (5) Nay, were ye to know  
With certainty of mind,  
(Ye would beware!)
- (6) Ye shall certainly see  
Hell-fire!
- (7) Again, ye shall see it  
With certainty of sight!
- (8) Then, shall ye be  
Questioned that Day  
About the joy  
(Ye indulged in!)

### **Theme and Subject Matter**

This surah (chapter) was revealed in Makkah and contains 8 verses. It is a powerful and serious warning of the evil consequences of the people's greed for worldly gain, which preoccupies their hearts and souls until they reach the graves. But certainly they will know the truth on the Day of Judgment, when they will see Hell with their very own eyes. On that day, they will be questioned about the blessings and bounties that were granted to them.

## First: Linguistic Aspects

### Meaning of important words and expressions:

(البسمة، الهاكم، التكاثر، كلا- سوف، لو- لترون، النعيم )

#### 1. *Bismillah Alrrahman Alrraheem* بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

The invocation *Bismillah* “In the name of Allah” is a dedication to God. In Arabic, it is also an expression on the part of the reader when he starts doing any act, so the act always begins with, and is accompanied by His name.

Abdel-Haleem (1999: 16) points out that the preposition *bi* demonstrates one of the major problems in translating the Qur'an because of the limited possibilities of conveying the wealth of the original Arabic word. He discusses the Arabic preposition *bi*, which actually has several meanings such as: beginning, dedication, accompaniment, and instrumentality. Abdel-Haleem regrets that there is a lack of an equivalent word in English, which carries the same range of meanings. This will result in causing an inevitable loss in translation. The translator, therefore, has to opt for one word that carries only one of these meanings. In this case, all translators choose the preposition ‘in’ because it carries the following meanings:

- a- With the characteristic, attribute, or property of.
- b- By means of.
- c- Made with or through the medium of.
- d- With the aim or purpose of.

Consider the following translations of the same expression

Table (1) Translations of *Bismillah Alrrahman Alrraheem*.

| Translator                                                         | <i>Bismillah Alrrahman Alrraheem</i> بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Arberry                                                            | In the name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate.                       |
| Asad                                                               | In the name of God, the Most Gracious, the Dispenser of Grace.             |
| Dawood                                                             | In the name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful.                       |
| Maududi                                                            | In the name of Allah, the Compassionate, the Merciful.                     |
| P.O.I.R                                                            | In the name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful.                        |
| P.O.I.R. = (The Presidency of Islamic Researches: Al Madinah 1985) |                                                                            |

As we notice above, the translators did not come up to a unified translation pertinent to the meanings of the Arabic words. For example, some translations were far away from the intended meaning. Arberry, Asad, and Dawood translate the Almighty word of 'Allah' into 'God'. To me, it is inaccurate because 'God' is not a complete synonym (النظير المطابق) for the Almighty word (لفظ الجلالة). The word God, in fact, has two different meanings; a) either the concept of one God, which is included in the Arabic word 'Allah', or b) what the ancient Greek myths had mentioned of the existence of male gods and female goddesses. For example, there is a god for the sun, the sea, and for war, peace,...etc.

Al-Omari (العمرى) (1990:17) points out that the Arabic word *Rab* (God) refers to Allah in regard of His attributes and uniqueness as in [*Alhamdu lillahi Rab il aalameen*] (الحمد لله رب العالمين) (Q1:2), and may also refer to a humanly attribute, *rab albeit*, *rabbat almanzil* (رب البيت، ربة المنزل), which means the owner or possessor of the house.

He therefore suggests using the Arabic word *Allah* as “Maududi” and “P.O.I.R” did.

However, Abdel-Haleem (1999:17) believes that even the Arabic word *Rab* (رب) carries within it the root meaning of “caring” and “sustaining”, and emphasizes that there is no equivalent single word in English which has the capacity to carry all these meanings.

In Islam, *Allah* is the name of God in its absolute sense, the only “personal” name. All other graceful names attributed to Him are adjectives or attributes.

Nadawi (1986: 42) explains the word *Allah* as:

The proper name applied to the Being who exists by Himself. (واجب الوجود) comprising all the attributes of perfection. The word has neither feminine nor plural and has never been applied to anything other than the UNIMAGINABLE SUPREME BEING. The word *Allah* has no corresponding word in English or in any language of the world.

Therefore, I fully agree with Al-Omari’s point of view and duly emphasize the use of *Allah* as the only accepted word.

Since God in Islam carries a ‘Personal Name’ *Allah*, and all other names are adjectives or attributes, thus in the Quranic verse, the ‘*Basmalah*’ (البسملة), we meet the first description of God as *Al-Rahman Al-Raheem* which are the consecutive attributes of God in the Qur’an. The translators in general, provide a variety of renderings such as “the Merciful and the Compassionate”, “the Most Gracious and the Dispenser of Grace”, “the Compassionate and the Merciful”, “Most Gracious and Most Merciful”.

In his book, Cragg (1973: 121) discusses the meaning of the *Basmalah* (البسملة) as follows:

Our final study, then, must be the Qur'anic sense of *Rahmah* in God, the quality of mercy responsive to man's forgiveness seeking. The term, in all its derivatives, is fundamental. It is best studied in the setting of the *Bismillah*, or divine invocation, which prefaces each Surah of the book ( save, for no significant reason, Surah 9) : ' In the name of *Al-Rahman Al-Raheem* . These two derivatives of the R H M root can be understood in a progressive, rather than a merely repetitive, sense. *Al-Rahman* denotes the divine 'property' of mercy, the abiding 'quality' within all the divine activity, while *Al-Raheem* has to do with the operative expression manward the nature of *Al-Rahman*. There is that by which God is merciful in Himself and that by which He is proved to be merciful in our experience. There is, we might almost say, the music's musician and the musician's music: the one is a 'who', the other is a 'how'. Mercy *does* (*Al-Raheem*) as mercy is (*Al-Rahman*).

In his explanation, Cragg tried to clarify the sense of the two words *Al-Rahman Al-Raheem* philosophically. Nonetheless, It is essential to notify that exegetes of the Qur'an have given different opinions about the meanings of these words. Some exegetes take *Rahman* as (1) 'showing mercy in both this world and the next', whereas *Raheem* applies only to the next. (2) Others see that *Rahman* applies to believers and non-believers, and *Raheem* to believers only; or (3) *Rahman* as 'Provider of Mercy' in relation to large-scale things and *Raheem* to small-scale things; or (4) *Rahman* as provider of mercy which only God can provide, while *Raheem* can also be provided by humans.

Another researcher, Al-Said (1989: 46) assorted *Al-Rahman Al-Raheem* الرحمن الرحيم as 'fixed collocations', he says that these words are difficult to

translate and translators usually fail to render the comprehensive meaning of *Al-Raheem* الرحيم . He also adds that according to Al-Zamakhshari الزمخشري (vol.1: 41) there are more intensive attributes in *Al-Rahman* الرحمن than *Al-Raheem* الرحيم . Al-Said (1989: 47) explains that both words are used to modify Allah, there is no comparison between Allah and anything else when these terms are used to modify Him. He points out that some English translations suggest that there is a sense of comparison in the meaning of these two words, *Al-Rahman* and *Al-Raheem*.

Based on my analysis, I do not agree with Al-Said because I think *Al-Rahman* is more comprehensive than *Al-Raheem* and a sense of comparison in the meaning of these two words is inevitable. Al-Omari العمري (1990:18) suggests that *Al-Rahman* cannot be translated therefore it should be used in its Arabic form and should be explained in a footnote: In the Name of Allah the *Rahman* the Most Merciful. This point is also supported in Abdel-Haleem (1993:96) when he points out that some consider *Al-Rahman* as a proper noun for God, like *Allah*, and therefore is confined to God (whereas *Raheem* is not).

Abdel-Haleem (1999: 17) on the other hand, says that since *Rahman* and *Raheem* are derived from the same root, translating them into two words with different roots loses their proper connection. Yet he does not provide any valid solution pertinent to his suggestion.

Abdul-Raof (2001:41) draws the attention to the fact that “form” plays a significant role in the meaning of Qur’anic discourse. He explains that the use of a certain epithet rather than another, or placing it first indicates a semantic value. Abdul-Raof states:

Take for instance the epithets *Al-Rahman Al-Raheem* الرحمن الرحيم where *Al-Rahman* always precedes the other epithet *Al-Raheem*. In English we can simply translate them as (most gracious, most merciful) where both have taken the superlative

particle (most). In the source text the first epithet only *Al-Rahman* الرحمن expresses hyperbole but not the second and it is for this particular reason that it occurs first.

As a result to the stated discussion and analysis, I come up to a final personal conclusion, that the introductory expressions should be translated as follows:

1. First, keep the Arabic words as they are.
2. Second, write their transliteration in English letters.
3. And lastly write their meaning in English, In this case the researcher prefers the translation as: [In the name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful].

As we have seen above, all translations have misrepresented the Qur'anic text by failing to do justice to all the aspects of the original. Newmark (1998:63) comments on the difficulty of translating literary text by saying that the desirable 'accuracy' of a literary text is not the same as that of a non-literary text. He adds that the accuracy of a literary text is likely to be more complex, with connotations as well as denotations, than that of a literary text.

Therefore, it is obvious that when translating any language into another, there are inevitably a large number of words, which do not have exact equivalents in the other language no matter how close they are linguistically and culturally.

## 2. Verse (1) *Alhakum* الهاكم

Maududi (1990: 198) explains *Alhakum* in verse (1) and states:

*Alhakum* is from *lahu* which originally means heedlessness, but in Arabic this word is used for every occupation which engrosses man so completely that he becomes heedless of the more important things in life. When the word *Alhakum* is made from this root, it will mean that man has become so obsessed with some occupation that he has lost sight of everything more important than it. He is preoccupied with it, is wholly lost in pursuit of it and this obsession has rendered him heedless of everything in life.

Table (2) The Meaning of *Alhakum* الهاكم in Arabic Dictionaries.

| المعنى                                                                                                        | الكلمة |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------|
| <p>١- الفيروزآبادي (١٩٨٧: ١٧١٧) :</p> <p>شغل.</p> <p>لها لهوا: لعب.</p> <p>لهي عنه: سلا و غفل و ترك ذكره.</p> | الهي   |

Table (3) The Meaning of *Alhakum* الهاكم in Arabic-English Dictionaries.

| المعنى                                                                                                | الكلمة |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------|
| <p>البعليكي (١٩٩٠: ١٦٣) :</p> <p>أ- الهي عن : To divert from</p> <p>ب- الهي عن : To distract from</p> | الهي   |

Table (4) The Meaning of “Divert” and “Distract” in Arabic and English Dictionaries.

| The word | The meaning                                                                                                                                                                                            |
|----------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Divert   | WordNet (1997) :<br>1- Turn aside; turn away from.<br>2- Send on a course or in a direction different from the planned or intended one<br>3- Occupy in an agreeable, entertaining or pleasant fashion. |
| Divert   | البعليكي (١٩٩١: ٢٨٥) : ينحرف ، يحول ، يلهي / يسلي / يسر.                                                                                                                                               |
| Distract | WordNet (1997) :<br>1- Draw someone’s attention away from something.<br>2- Disturb in mind or make uneasy or cause to be worried or alarmed.                                                           |
| Distract | البعليكي ( ١٩٩١ : ٢٨٣) : يصرف أو يحول عن / يلهي / يصرف الانتباه، يحير / يذهل / يخبّل.                                                                                                                  |

Table (5) Translations of *Alhakum*.

| Translator                                                         | <i>Alhakum</i> الهاكم    |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| Arberry                                                            | diverts you              |
| Asad                                                               | you are obsessed         |
| Dawood                                                             | Your hearts are taken up |
| Maududi                                                            | made you heedless        |
| P.O.I.R                                                            | diverts you              |
| P.O.I.R. = (The Presidency of Islamic Researches: Al Madinah 1985) |                          |

The Arabic word *Alhakum* connotes the meaning of thoughtlessness and carelessness. Therefore, to me, the best choice from the table above is Maududi's [made you heedless]. It is true that *Alhakum* has to do with absorption in thought and the person being excessively concerned with something but not to the extent of being haunted as Asad's word [obsessed] suggests.

The researcher considers the meaning [made heedless] the best because this word is more general and a person who is made heedless commits a greater offense against himself than that whose mind is diverted or taken up. For the "heedless" any matter in life -although insignificant- such as new fashion or singer or sport- is enough to distract his attention from considering the Hereafter. On the other hand, some may focus on more serious issues to gain such as, money or an occupation and remain preoccupied and distracted from seeking the Hereafter and vehemently desiring it.

It is important to mention that the word *lahu* in the Holy Qur'an has various meanings; Al-Damighani (الدامغاني) (1985:423) shows that the same word in the Holy Qur'an appears in six different meanings:

1) Sarcasm and mockery. (اللهو السخرية و الإستهزاء)

﴿ وَذَرِ الَّذِينَ اتَّخَذُوا دِينَهُمْ لَعِبًا وَلَهْوًا وَغَرَّتْهُمُ الْحَيَاةُ الدُّنْيَا ﴾

(Q6:70 (الانعام: ٧٠)

﴿ الَّذِينَ اتَّخَذُوا دِينَهُمْ لَهْوًا وَلَعِبًا وَغَرَّتْهُمُ الْحَيَاةُ الدُّنْيَا ﴾

(Q7:51 (الاعراف: ٥١)

2) Offspring, progeny. (اللهو الولد)

﴿ لَوْ أَرَدْنَا أَنْ نَتَّخِذَ لَهُمْ لَاتَّخِذْنَاهُ مِنْ لَدُنَّا إِنْ كُنَّا فَاعِلِينَ ﴾

Q21:17 (الانبياء: ١٧).

3) Drumming, drum beating. (اللهو ضرب الطبل)

﴿ وَإِذَا رَأَوْا تَحَارَةً أَوْ لَهْوًا انفَضُّوا إِلَيْهَا وَتَرَكُوكَ قَائِمًا ﴾

Q62:11 (الجمعة: ١١)

4) Occupancy, engrossment. (اللهو الاشتغال)

﴿ لَا تُلْهِكُمْ أَمْوَالُكُمْ وَلَا أَوْلَادُكُمْ عَنْ ذِكْرِ اللَّهِ ﴾

Q63:9 (المنافقون: ٩)

﴿ أَلْهَاكُمْ التَّكَاثُرُ ﴾

Q102:1 (التكاثر: ١)

﴿ ذَرَهُمْ يَأْكُلُوا وَيَتَمَتَّعُوا وَيُلْهِهِمُ الْأَمَلُ فَسَوْفَ يَعْلَمُونَ ﴾

Q15:3 (الحجر: ٣)

5) Vanity, triviality. (اللهو الباطل)

﴿ إِنَّمَا الْحَيَاةُ الدُّنْيَا لَعِبٌ وَلَهْوٌ ﴾

Q47:36 (محمد: ٣٦)

6) Singing (اللهو الغناء)

﴿ وَمِنْ النَّاسِ مَنْ يَشْتَرِي لَهْوَ الْحَدِيثِ لِيُضِلَّ عَنْ سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ بِغَيْرِ عِلْمٍ ﴾

Q31:6 (لقمان: ٦)

### 3. Verse (1) *Altakathur* التكاثر

Asad (1980:973) clarifies the term *altakathur* as:

It bears the connotation of 'greedily striving for an increase', i.e., in benefits, be they tangible or intangible, real or illusory... it denotes man's obsessive striving for more and more comforts, more material goods, greater power over his fellow-men or over nature, and unceasing technological progress.

Table (6) The Meaning of *Altakathur* التكاثر in Arabic Dictionaries.

| المعنى                                                                                                             | الكلمة  |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------|
| ١-الزحيلي (١٩٩١، جزء ٢٩، ٣٨٣) : التفاخر بالأموال والأولاد والرجال.<br>٢-الزمخشري (جزء ٤، ٢٨٠): التباري في الكثرة . | التكاثر |

Table (7) The Meaning of *Altakathur* التكاثر in Arabic-English Dictionaries.

| المعنى                                                                                                                      | الكلمة  |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------|
| ( البعلبكي ، ١٩٩٠ ، ٣٥٨ ) :<br>Increase, growth, augmentation, multiplication, propagation,<br>proliferation, reproduction. | التكاثر |

Table (8) Translations of *Altakathur* التكاثر

| Translator                                                         | <i>Altakathur</i> التكاثر                                         |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Arberry                                                            | gross rivalry                                                     |
| Asad                                                               | greed for more and more                                           |
| Dawood                                                             | worldly gain                                                      |
| Maududi                                                            | craze for more and more and mutual rivalry for worldly gains.     |
| P.O.I.R                                                            | the mutual rivalry for piling up ( the good things of the world). |
| P.O.I.R. = (The Presidency of Islamic Researches: Al Madinah 1985) |                                                                   |

During the pre-Islamic period, the ultimate objective of any Arab tribe had been based on the exuberant number of: family members, members of tribe, or big number of camels and money. Therefore, the Arabic word *Al-takathur* has the sense of pride and arrogance based on the competition for possessing greater abundance of wealth, children and men.

Arberry's expression "gross rivalry", for example, does not supply the implied parts of the meaning (rivalry in what?) whether it is in gaining more, and/or boasting about what one has.

Asad's translation of *Al-takathur* "greed for more and more" does not focus upon the arrogance and the show-off aspect.

I fully accept Maududi's as the top translation, but due to my own personal analysis, I do feel that the best translation should be as follows:

[Boastful rivalry for worldly gains has made you heedless.]

#### 4. Verse (3) and (4) (٣) ثم كلا سوف تعظمون (٤)

Ibn Kathir (2000:578), quotes Al-Hasan Al-Basri saying: " This is a threat after a threat".

Qutb ( 1979: 270) explains the two verses as follows:

With a deep and grave rhythm The Qur'an then strikes their hearts with the terror awaiting them after coming to the graves: ' Indeed you shall know'. Then it repeats the same note with the same words and with the same firm and terrifying rhythm: ' Again, you shall certainly come to know'.

#### 4.1 *Kalla* كلا

The Arabic word *kalla* كلا is an article of negation , used to negate the rule occurring after it or to deny its affirmation. El-Dahdah (1993:18)

Table (9) The Meaning of *Kalla* كلا in Arabic Dictionaries.

| المعنى                                                                  | الكلمة |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------|
| الفيروز آبادي (١٩٨٧ : ١٧٤٢) : تكون صلة لما بعدها، وردعا وزجرا و تحقيقا. | كلا    |

Table (10) The Meaning of *Kalla* كلا in Arabic-English Dictionaries.

| المعنى                                                                                                                                                      | الكلمة |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------|
| ١- البعلبكي ( ١٩٩٠ : ٨٩٨ ) :<br>No! Never! Certainly not! Not at all! <b>By no means!</b><br>٢- الندوي ( ١٩٨٦ : ٥٧٨ ) :<br>Nay but, or but ( particle) nay! | كلا    |

And since *kalla* (كلا) connotes the meaning of reprimand and restrain, and over that implies a threat, therefore the phrase “by no means” may carry some of the previous connotations.

#### 4.2 سوف *Sawfa*

Table (11) The Meaning of *Sawfa* سوف in Arabic Dictionaries.

| الكلمة | المعنى                                                                                                                  |
|--------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| سوف    | الفيروز آبادي (١٩٨٧ : ١٠٦٢) : حرف معناه الإستئناف ، أو كلمة تنفيس فيما لم يكن بعد، وتستعمل في التهديد و الوعيد و الوعد. |

Table (12) The Meaning of *Sawfa* سوف in Arabic-English Dictionaries.

| الكلمة | المعنى                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
|--------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| سوف    | <p>١- البعلبكي ( ١٩٩٠ : ٦٥١ ) will, shall :</p> <p>٢- الدحداح ( ١٩٩٣ : ٣٢٢ ) : حرف استقبال يختص بالمضارع وهو أطول زمانا من السين.</p> <p>A letter of future specific to the conform verb having a longer effect than the letter S. El-Dahdah (1993:322)</p> |

As we have seen above, *sawfa* (سوف) is rendered to either “will” or “shall”. To me, “shall” is more appropriate than “will” because it is stronger, and expresses Allah’s threat to the unbelievers.

Eilouti (1997: 60) discusses the progressive aspect in Arabic. He mentions negative particles and the future indicators ( sa س / sawfa سوف) in the following verses:

a- [ The fools among the people ( pagans, hypocrites and Jews) **will say** “What has turned them (Muslims) from their *Qibla* (prayer direction towards Jerusalem) Q2:142] ( Al-Hilali & Khan 1996:29)]

﴿ سَيَقُولُ السُّفَهَاءُ مِنَ النَّاسِ مَا وَلَّاهُمْ عَنْ قِبَلَتِهِمْ ﴾ (البقرة: ١٤٢)

b- [And Allah **will** grant the believers a great reward. Q4:146] (ibid: 134)

﴿ وَسَوْفَ يُؤْتِي اللَّهُ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ أَجْرًا عَظِيمًا ﴾ (النساء: ١٤٦)

Eilouti states:

These verses exemplify different types of situations, the imperfect verb refers to different reference times: in sentences (a) and (b) there is an explicit reference to future events with a slight difference in meaning- (sayaqul-سيقول) expresses a prediction about a potential situation triggered by the generic subject (alsufaha'-السفهاء) ; thus it might be rendered as ‘ The foolish would say...’ whereas (sawfa-سوف) suggests a promise or a guarantee about/of a future situation, and can be rendered as ‘shall’ rather than ‘will’

Table (13) Translations of Verse (3) and (4).

| Translator                                                         | Verse (3) and (4) كلا سوف تعلمون ثم كلا سوف تعلمون                                                 |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Arberry                                                            | No indeed; but soon you shall know Again, no indeed; but soon you shall know.                      |
| Asad                                                               | Nay, in time you will come to understand. And once again: Nay in time you will come to understand. |
| Dawood                                                             | But you shall learn. Then you shall surely learn.                                                  |
| Maududi                                                            | By no means! Soon you shall know! Again ( note it well) by no means! Soon you shall know.          |
| P.O.I.R                                                            | But nay, ye soon shall know ( the reality) Again, ye soon shall know.                              |
| P.O.I.R. = (The Presidency of Islamic Researches: Al Madinah 1985) |                                                                                                    |

In my view, from the previous analysis, Maududi's translation: [By no means! Soon you shall know!] seems to be the best rendition because he succeeds in presenting the meaning of reprimand in *kalla* (كلا) and the meaning of warning in *sawfa* (سوف). I would like to mention here that in Arabic *sawfa* (سوف) is concerned with the far away future while *sa* (س) with the near future, therefore translators should carefully distinguish between the two. As in surah 102 verse 3 *swafa* (سوف) is rendered as "soon you shall know", while in another surah, Al-Naba' (النبا: ٦٠٥) (كلا سيعلمون (٥) ثم كلا سيعلمون) *sa* (س) is rendered by Maududi (1991: 997) as:

[By no means! They shall soon know! Yes, by no means! They shall soon know! Q78: 5,6]

Maududi (1990: 199) explains that *soon* may mean the Hereafter because " The Being (Allah) Whose sight comprehends all ages, from eternity to

eternity, a few thousand years or a few hundred thousand years can only be a short span of the eternal time”. He also indicates that *soon* can also mean death, for death is so near and not very far away from anybody, and soon after death the person will come to know his fate.

## 5 . Verse (5) and (6) كلا لو تعلمون علم اليقين (٥) لترون الجحيم (٦)

Qutb (1979: 270) states his interpretation:

Then it adds to the depth and awe of this assurance, and hints at the grave future that lies beyond, the terrifying essence of which they do not recognize in the flush of intoxication and rivalry for worldly riches: ‘ *Indeed, were you to have certain knowledge...*’ **The conditional sentence is not completed in the text. This is acceptable as a refined form of Arabic. It adds to the feeling of awe generated by the surah.** The inference here is that had they known what they should know for certain, they would have not indulged in such rivalry for petty gains. The surah then discloses the fearful fact, which has been withheld: ‘*You shall certainly see the fire of Hell*’.

### 5.1 *Alyaqeen* اليقين

Table (14) The Meaning of *Alyaqeen* اليقين in Arabic Dictionaries.

| الكلمة | المعنى                                    |
|--------|-------------------------------------------|
| اليقين | الفيروز آبادي (١٩٨٧ : ١٦٠١) : إزاحة الشك. |

Table (15) The Meaning of *Alyaqeen* اليقين in Arabic-English Dictionaries.

| الكلمة | المعنى                                                                                |
|--------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| اليقين | الندوي (١٩٨٦: ٧٥٢):<br>١- اليقين: Certainty<br>٢- علم اليقين: The surety of knowledge |

Certainty, according to (P.O.I.R) (1985:1812), may have certain degrees:

- Ilm-ul-yaqeen* (علم اليقين): certainty by reasoning or inference.
- Ain-ul-yaqeen* (عين اليقين): certainty of seeing something with our own eyes "Seeing is believing".
- Haqq-ul-yaqeen* (حق اليقين): The absolute truth, with no possibility at all of error of judgment, or error of the eye. "Knowledge of true certainty which comes as a result of a theory or a law that is put into empirical test and results in true certainty" Khatib (1984:820 ).

## 5.2 *Lau and Latarawunna* (لو) و (لترون)

Table (16) The Meaning of *Lau* لو in Arabic-English Dictionaries.

| الكلمة | المعنى                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
|--------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| لو     | ١- الدحداح (١٩٩٣: ٥١٦):<br>أ- حرف شرط غير جازم: لو شاء لأكرمته.<br>ب- حرف امتناع لامتناع يدخل على الماضي و المضارع.                                                                                              |
| If     | a- Letter of condition non-eliding: <i>If he wanted so, I would have honored him.</i><br>b- Letter of abstention for the sake of abstention, it is used with the past and the conform verb. El-Dahdah (1993:516) |

Table (17) The Meaning of *Latarawunna* لترون in Arabic-English Dictionaries.

| المعنى                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | الكلمة |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------|
| <p>١- الدحداح (١٩٩٣: ٦٣٤، ٥٨٢، ٥١٠) :</p> <p>أ- اللام حرف جواب يقع في جواب القسم: والله لأكرمناك .</p> <p>ب- (ترون) فعل مضارع مرفوع و(النون) نون التوكيد الثقيلة.</p> <p>a- <i>La</i> letter of answer, it occurs in the answer to an oath: <i>By God I will honor you.</i></p> <p>b- <i>tarawun</i> conform verb. ( a mood indicating a fact in present or future time).</p> <p>c- <i>na</i> letter of conformation, called heavy "n" of conformation, it is connected with the verb. El-Dahdah (1993: 634,582,510)</p> | لترون  |

From the above analysis the **grammatical structures** for verse (5) and (6) are the following:

**Verse (5)** لو تعلمون علم اليقين [Had you known with certainty of knowledge]

In Arabic, there is a way of speaking called the conditional style; a conditional article plus two verbs, which constitute it. The first is called a conditional verb, and the second, an answer to the condition.

In the case of verse (5) the conditional sentence is not completed. The second verb, which is the answer to the condition, is omitted. "It is acceptable as a refined form of Arabic" Qutb (1979: 270).

Thus, to the researcher, the full meaning of the sentence should be:

[Had you known with certainty of knowledge (the end of this way of life, you would never have acted as such)].

Verse (6) لترونّ الجحيم [You shall certainly see Hell]

This is an answer to an implied oath, ( By God or I swear by God) You shall certainly see Hell. Sabooni (1998, vol. 3: 572).

According to Robinson (1996:103), human beings generally make oaths to solemnize, corroborate, or add valid force to statements. The oaths in the Qur'an, of which God is the implied speaker, function in a similar way.

Furthermore, Abdul-Raof(2001:88) argues that some Qur'anic oath-structures do not involve the usual oath expression; Qur'anic structures employ the "stress tools" which are attached to the verb: the initial letter *L* (ل) and the *N* (ن). This type of implicit oath highlights the certainty of the proposition expressed in the verb as in:

لترونّ الجحيم(٦) ثم لترونها عين اليقين(٧) ثم لتسنلنّ يومئذ عن النعيم(٨)

[*Latarawunna aljaheem*(6) *Thumma latarawunnaha ayna alyaqeen* (7)

*Thumma latus-alunna yawma-ithin an alna'eem*(8)]

The three verbs *taraw* (تروا) , *taraw* (تروا) and *tus-alu* (تسنلوا) have been attached with the stress tools: initial *L*(ل) and the *N* (ن) that are attached to the verb; thus, an implicit oath is achieved to express certainty.

Table (18) Translations of Verse (5) and (6).

| Translator                                                         | Verse (5) and (6) كَلَّا لَوْ تَعْلَمُونَ عِلْمَ الْيَقِينِ لَتَرَوُنَّ الْجَحِيمَ                                                                          |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Arberry                                                            | No indeed ; did you know with <b>the knowledge of certainty</b> , you shall surely see Hell.                                                                |
| Asad                                                               | Nay, if you could but understand (it) with an <b>understanding (born) of certainty</b> (6) you would indeed, most surly, behold the blazing fire (of hell). |
| Dawood                                                             | Indeed, if you learned the truth with <b>certainty</b> , you would see the fire of Hell                                                                     |
| Maududi                                                            | Nay! Had you known with <b>certainty of knowledge</b> ( the end of this way of life, you would never have acted thus). You shall certainly see Hell.        |
| P.O.I.R                                                            | Nay, were ye to know with <b>certainty of mind</b> , ( ye would beware!). Ye shall certainly see Hell-fire.                                                 |
| P.O.I.R. = (The Presidency of Islamic Researches: Al Madinah 1985) |                                                                                                                                                             |

According to the Qur'anic exegesis, the conditional sentence [If you learned, Had you known...] is incomplete. Therefore, it should not be rendered as a complete conditional sentence.

As we have seen above, amongst the five translators, only Maududi and (P.O.I.R) preserve the original Qur'anic structure according to the meaning, which is provided by exegetes, while the rest have rendered it as a complete conditional sentence thus failing to convey the Qur'anic rhetorical devices; the incomplete conditional sentence and the omitted oath.

6. Verse (7) and (8)    ثم لترونها عين اليقين (٧) ثم لتسألن يومئذ عن النعيم (٨)

In these verses an eschatological scenery is set to enhance the people to envision the Day of Judgment. Poonwala (1993:233) comments on the Hereafter in the Qur'an and claims "the vivid description of the Day of Judgment, is meant to arouse fear in the hearts of the erring and serenity in the heart of the faithful."

Poonwala (ibid) confirms that believing in the Hereafter and the Day of Judgment is one of the pillars of faith and he adds that, "the wisdom behind this belief is the assertion that God did not create this universe in sport and that the people will be judged on that Day according to their deeds."

Ibn-Kathir ( 2000:578) explains the two verses No.7 and No.8 as follows:

Allah threatens them (the wrongdoers) with this situation, which refers to what the people of the Fire will see, and which if it exhaled one breath, every angel who is near (to Allah) and every Prophet who was sent would all fall down on their knees due to fear, awe and the sight of its horrors. This is based upon what has been reported in the narrations concerning it. Allah then says, (ثم لتسألن يومئذ عن النعيم) [ Then on that Day you shall be asked about the delights] meaning, "on that Day you all will be questioned concerning your gratitude towards the favors that Allah blessed you with".

Maududi (1990, vol.15: 196) affirms that: " These blessings which you are amassing and enjoying thoughtlessly, are not mere blessings but are also a means of your trial. For each one of these blessings and comforts you will surely be called to account in the Hereafter."

In verse (7) and (8), I will concentrate on the word *Al-Na'eem* (النعيم).

### 6.1 *Al-Na'eem* النعيم

Table (19) The Meaning of *Al-Na'eem* النعيم in Arabic Dictionaries.

| المعنى                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | الكلمة |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------|
| <p>١- الفيروز آبادي (١٩٨٧ : ١٥٠٠) : الخفض و الدعة و المال.<br/> النعيم: الترفه.<br/> النعمة: المسرة.<br/> نعيم الله تعالى: عطيته.</p> <p>٢- الزحيلي (١٩٩١: جزء ٢٩، ٣٨٣) : النعيم ما يلتذ به في الدنيا من الصحة و الفراغ والأمن و الطعام و الشراب و غير ذلك.</p> | النعيم |

Table (20) The Meaning of *Al-Na'eem* النعيم in Arabic-English Dictionaries.

| المعنى                                                                                                                                                            | الكلمة |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------|
| <p>البلعكي (١٩٩٠ : ١١٨١) :<br/> رغد : Ease, comfort<br/> غبطة، سعادة: Happiness, bliss, felicity<br/> نعمة: بركة عطية: Blessing, boon, favor, grace, kindness</p> | النعيم |

Table (21) Translations of *Al-Na'eem* النعيم .

| Translator                                                         | <i>Al-Na'eem</i> النعيم                                                                                                                                                                   |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Arberry                                                            | Again, you shall surely see it with the eye of certainty then you shall be questioned that day concerning <b>true bliss</b> .                                                             |
| Asad                                                               | In the end you will indeed, most surely, behold it with the eye of certainty: and on that Day you will most surly, be called to account for (what you did with) <b>the boon of life</b> . |
| Dawood                                                             | you would see it with your very eyes. Then, on that day, you shall be questioned about <b>your joys</b> .                                                                                 |
| Maududi                                                            | Again (note it well that) you shall most certainly see it. Then, on that Day, you shall certainly be called to account for the <b>blessings and comforts</b> of life.                     |
| P.O.I.R                                                            | Again, ye shall see it with certainty of sight! Then, shall ye be questioned about <b>the joy</b> (ye indulged in)                                                                        |
| P.O.I.R. = (The Presidency of Islamic Researches: Al Madinah 1985) |                                                                                                                                                                                           |

Based on the above, the translators use: bliss, boon, joy, blessings and comforts for *Al-Na'eem* (النعيم). But if we look at the meanings of these words in English dictionaries, we may be able to differentiate between their use and the standard Arabic meaning.

Table (22) The Meaning of the Words Chosen by the Translators for *Al-Na'eem* النعيم in English Dictionaries.

| The Word                                                                                                               | The Meaning                                                                                                                                                               |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Bliss                                                                                                                  | WordNet (1997):<br>1- A state of extreme happiness. Synonym to "seventh heaven".                                                                                          |
| Boon                                                                                                                   | A.H.D (2000):<br>1- A benefit bestowed, especially one bestowed in response to a request.<br>2- A timely blessing or benefit: <i>A brisk breeze is a boon to sailors.</i> |
| Joy                                                                                                                    | WordNet (1997):<br>1- The emotion of great happiness.<br>2- Something or someone that provides pleasure; a source of happiness.                                           |
| Blessing                                                                                                               | W.R.U.D (1996):<br>1- A means of happiness; that which promotes prosperity and welfare; a beneficent gift.                                                                |
| Comfort                                                                                                                | A.H.D (2000):<br>1- A condition or feeling of pleasurable ease, well-being, and contentment.                                                                              |
| A.H.D : The American Heritage Dictionary of the English language.<br>W.R.U.D: Webster's Revised Unabridged Dictionary. |                                                                                                                                                                           |

From the tables cited above, we get a closer look at the meanings of *Al-Na'eem* (النعيم) in Arabic and English language. But it is important to investigate how the Prophet (peace be upon him) explained the meaning of *Al-Na'eem* (النعيم) in Islam.

Maududi (1990, vol.15: 199) quotes the following *Hadith* (saying of the Prophet):

عن جابر قال: أتاني النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم وأبو بكر وعمر، فاطعمتهم رطباً،  
وأسقيتهم ماء فقال النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم: "هذا من النعيم الذي تسألون عنه."  
(مسند أحمد، جزء (٥): ٩٩)

Hadrat Jabir bin Abdulla says: The Holy Prophet once visited us and we served him with fresh dates and gave him cool water to drink. Thereupon he said: " These are the blessings (*Al-Na'eem*) about which you will be questioned."

( Musnad Ahmad, Nasa'i, Ibn Jarir, Ibn al-Mundhir, Abd bin Humaid, Baihaqi in Ash-Shu'ab).

If we consider, carefully, the previous Prophet's words, we will find it regarding "dates" and "water" as part of *Al-Na'eem*, whereas Arberry's rendition for *Al-Na'eem* "true bliss" may be considered a synonym to "seventh Heaven" according to WordNet (1997) online dictionary (Table 22). This denotes that Allah-on the Day of Judgment- will question the people about Heaven, which is incorrect because Heaven is the believer's reward in the Hereafter.

The other meaning-given in Table (22) above- for "true bliss" -which is "extreme happiness" - is also far away from the standard Arabic word *Al-Na'eem* because "extreme happiness" is a great thing and there is no need for us to be reminded by Allah about it. What the people do need to be reminded about is the things considered by them small and worthless like "fresh dates and cool water".

Asad uses "the boon of life" which according to the American Heritage Dictionary (A.H.D.2000)-in Table (22)- is " a benefit bestowed in response to a request" or "a timely blessing or benefit". To me, the word "boon" does not cover all the shades of meanings implied in *Al-Na'eem*.

Both Dawood and (P.O.I.R) use “joy” which means “the emotion of great happiness” (WordNet, 1997) while *Al-Na’eem* –in my opinion- has a wider and more profound meaning.

To me, Maududi’s translation seems the best because he combines the two words “blessings and comforts” to convey the meaning of spiritual and physical pleasure.

## Second: Literary Aspects

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

﴿ أَلْهَاكُمْ التَّكَاثُرُ (١) حَتَّى زُرْتُمُ الْمَقَابِرَ (٢) كَلَّا سَوْفَ تَعْلَمُونَ (٣) ثُمَّ كَلَّا سَوْفَ تَعْلَمُونَ (٤) كَلَّا لَوْ تَعْلَمُونَ عِلْمَ الْيَقِينِ (٥) لَتَرَوُنَّ الْجَحِيمَ (٦) ثُمَّ لَتَرَوُنَّهَا عَيْنَ الْيَقِينِ (٧) ثُمَّ لَتَسْأَلُنَّ يَوْمَئِذٍ عَنِ النَّعِيمِ (٨) ﴾

Rahman (2000:278) quotes 'Ibn Qutaiba's' definition of Qur'anic *majaz* (the ways (methods) of speech and the modes of handling it) as "naturally superior to those of any human. This is due to the fact that the Qur'an has more methods of speech, which include among other things metaphor (استعارة), ellipses and abbreviation (حذف و إختصار), repetition and pleonasm (تكرار الكلام و), metonymy and allusion (الكناية و التعريض), and idiom (مخالفة ظاهر اللفظ (الزيادة فيه), Rahman (ibid) quotes 'Ibn Qutaiba's' statement that "it is impossible to translate the Qur'an into other languages since the non-Arabs, lack the variety of *majaz* that Arabs have at their disposal."

### 1. Verse (1) الهكم التكاثر

In his book "Discovering the Qur'an", Robinson (1996:101), explains that most of the 'early Makki' surahs commence with oaths, commands, questions, or other linguistic devices which provide a stronger emphasis more than a mere direct statement. To him, surah 102 (*Al-Takathur*) begins with a reproach.

Therefore, verse (1) contains the following literary aspects:

**a) Reproach.** “ This surah was revealed to reproach them (the wrongdoers) for bragging about their multiplication.” ( Khatib, 1984: 824).

**b) Admonition and rebuke** (Sabooni- الصابوني, 1998, vol. 3: 572).

Robinson (ibid: 117,118) points out that the reproaches in the Qur'an are initially addressed to human kind or to specific groups of human beings, apart from this instance (in surah 102), they are preceded by (*bal-* بل): (rather), or (*kalla, bal-* كلا، بل) a particle of reprimand which is usually translated ‘by no means’. Robinson adds that the grounds of reproach are over-attachment to this life, denial of the coming judgment and greed.

## 2. Verse (2) حتى زرت المقابر

Maududi (1990:199) says regarding verse (2) that :

You expend your whole life in the same craze and endeavor, until  
the time comes when you must die and leave the world.

“Metonymy is the substitution of some attributive or suggestive words for what is actually meant.” (Corbet, 1971: 44) cited in Al-Ubaidy (1997: 37).

The literary aspects in verse (2) are:

**a) Metonymy**, the word “die” is substituted by the metonymy phrase “ have visited the graves”. ( Sabooni-الصابوني, (ibid) ) , ( Zuhalee- الزحيلي, 1991, vol.29: 383).

Al-Ubaidy (ibid) adds that the use of metonymic expressions brightens or emphasizes the significance of artistic and luciditic image given in the Qur'anic verse.

b) **Irony** to mock at them (the wrongdoers) ( Zamakhshari- الزمخشري: 281)

In my opinion, the expression “until you have visited the graves” contains metonymy reflected by the use of the word “visit”.

The literal meaning of “visit”- according to “Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary” (1998: 1330) - is to: “ stay temporarily at a place” whereas visiting the graves mean, “becoming its inhabitants.” ( Ibn-Kathir, 2000: 575).

Therefore, “visit” is used metaphorically to attract the people’s attention and warn them.

Table (23) Translations of Verse (2).

| Translator                                                         | Verse (2) حتى زرت المقابر                                                      |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Arberry                                                            | Even till you <b>visit</b> the tombs                                           |
| Asad                                                               | Until you <b>go</b> down to your graves                                        |
| Dawood                                                             | Your hearts are taken up with worldly gain <b>from the cradle to the grave</b> |
| Maududi                                                            | Until (in the same craze ) you <b>reach</b> the graves                         |
| P.O.I.R                                                            | Until ye <b>visit</b> the graves                                               |
| P.O.I.R. = (The Presidency of Islamic Researches: Al Madinah 1985) |                                                                                |

As we have seen above, only Arberry and “P.O.I.R” opt for literal translation (visit) keeping the metonymy unchanged. Asad and Maududi translate the metonymy into non-metonymy ( go, reach).

Dawood, on the other hand, gives a totally different image that does not exist in the original text. He adds the expression ( من المهد إلى اللحد ) (from the cradle to the grave) which may be considered, in my opinion, unfaithfulness to the Arabic text.

**Onomatopoeia:** (the symbolism of sounds and the verbalization of noises)

According to Abdul-Raof (2001:59), onomatopoeic expressions are language-specific and have a communicative purpose; Qur'anic onomatopoeic sound effects defy translation into another language, as in:

﴿فَدَمَدَمَ عَلَيْهِمْ رَبُّهُمْ بِذَنبِهِمْ فَسَوَّاهَا﴾ (الشمس: ١٤)

*Fadamdama alaihim rabbuhum bithambihim fasawaaha*

[So their Lord, on account of their crime, obliterated their traces and made them equal ( in destruction, high and low). Q91:14]

Therefore, The sound of some Qur'anic expressions carries a semantic value. An example of this case is surah 102.

All the letters in *الهكم التكاثر* are easy to utter and express how they are indulged in the easy life until the second sentence *حتى زرتم المقابر* strikes the ears -by its sharp sounds like the letter (ز) (z) and (ق) (q)- and the hearts by its harsh reality. The soft voiceless sounds (h) (الهاء) , (k) (ك) and (th) (ث) suggest inadvertence and indifference by the wrongdoers. While the sharp and strong voiced letters such as (ج) (z) and (ح) (h) introduce the element of shock.

As we have noticed in the different translations of surah 102 *Al-Takathur* the onomatopoeic expressions have become an ordinary expressions with no rhetorical value.

### 3. Verse (3) and (4) *كلا سوف تعلمون* (٣) ثم كلا سوف تعلمون (٤)

#### **Epizeuxis (Repetition):**

“Epizeuxis: A figure by which a word is repeated with vehemence or emphasis, as in the following lines: Alone, all all alone, Alone on a wide wide sea.” (Webster’s Dictionary 1996)

“This text-building strategy is recurrently used in the Qur’an. Repetition is motivated not simply by the need to create a pattern of sound to involve the reader or to persuade the reader to adopt a similar view; repetition is also designed to reinforce particular meanings. The repetitions create deeper levels of meaning which also reinforce the overall semantic design of the text.” (Abdul Raof: 2001: 117).

Al-Ubaidy (1997: 47) states:

Repetition in the Holy Qur’an stimulates a highly considerable sense of musical harmony. However, an element of contribution to the meaning is recognized in repetition in terms of marking the repeated units and the idea with emphasis, whereby a certain intended impression or effect is gathered. The repetition of words, phrases or even sentences is inherent in Arabic as a part of its peculiar flavor, which is utilized widely in the Holy Qur’an.

As we see in this surah, verse (3) and (4) are repeated and joined together by *thumma*, (ثم) a major conjunctive element recurrently used in the Qur’an. This letter of attraction, which indicates order and interval, is repeated to confirm the warning and indicates that the second warning is stronger than the first. Repetition in Arabic is not a mere symbolic feature, but it is-in fact- an affirmative emphatic gesture: a structure, which is not familiar in the English language. To me, it is profoundly appreciated to have such a structure for the Arab reader. Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon him) had read this very verse to strengthen Faith in the hearts of the new believers at the earliest period of Islam. Therefore, Allah in these short surahs used this literary style to match

with the Arab mentality and rhetoric during the time of prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon him).

Although Newmark (1998:70) states that he: “suspects that emphasis and word order are the most neglected factors in translation” and adds that: “In principle, there is always a strong case of retaining the same subject of a sentence in a translation”. Fortunately, Epizeuxis (repetition) is a rhetorical cohesive device, which can be applied in the target language, as in:

[ By no means! Soon you shall know! Again ( note it well) by no means! Soon you shall know. ] Maududi (ibid).

#### 4. Verse (5) and (6) (كَلَّا لَوْ تَعْلَمُونَ عِلْمَ الْيَقِينِ) (٥) لَتَرَوُنَّ الْجَحِيمَ (٦)

##### Ellipsis:

Rahman (2000:281) argues that ellipsis means “to produce a phrase which should have an apodosis (جواب الشرط) but where the apodosis is elided for the sake of abbreviation (اختصاراً) because of the hearer’s awareness of it.”

We also encounter instances of ellipted structures in the Qur’an. “Ellipted items in the source language can cause misunderstanding and misrepresentation of the meaning of Qur’anic texture, unless a footnote is provided or the source language ellipted elements themselves are added by the translator”. Abdul-Raof (2001: 128).

There are two ellipted items in surah 102 *Al-Takathur*:

1) The conditional sentence [Had you known with certainty of knowledge] (كَلَّا لَوْ تَعْلَمُونَ عِلْمَ الْيَقِينِ) is incomplete for the purpose of intimidation. Meaning, ‘if you knew with true knowledge, you would envision such

horrifying scenes of Hell-fire and you would not be diverted by rivalry for wealth from seeking the abode of the Hereafter. (Sabooni-الصابوني-1998, vol 3: 572).

Ellipsis in a conditional sentence appears many times in the Qur'anic text. Rahman (2000:281) gives two examples:

The first one is: [And if there were (و لو أن) a reading (قرآنًا) by which the mountains would be moved or the earth would be torn apart or the dead would be made to speak. But, the matter is with God entirely. Q13: 31]

﴿وَلَوْ أَنَّ قُرْآنًا سُيِّرَتْ بِهِ الْجِبَالُ أَوْ قُطِّعَتْ بِهِ الْأَرْضُ أَوْ كُلِّمَ بِهِ الْمَوْتَىٰ بَلْ لِلَّهِ الْأَمْرُ جَمِيعًا﴾  
(الرعد: ٣١)

In this verse, as can be clearly seen, there is a deletion of the apodosis expected to balance (و لو أن) “and if”, the construction of which would be something like (لكان هذا القرآن) , “it would be this Qur'an”.

The other example is Q 24:20 which is introduced by the conditional clause (لولا) “had it not been”:

[And had it not been for the Grace of Allah and His Mercy on you.]

﴿وَلَوْلَا فَضْلُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْكُمْ وَرَحْمَتُهُ وَأَنَّ اللَّهَ رَؤُوفٌ رَحِيمٌ﴾  
(النور: ٢٠)

Here again the apodosis to (لولا) is omitted because the hearer is cognizant of the answer (جواب الشرط). The complete statement, Rahman (ibid) adds, might have read [And had it not been for the Grace of Allah and His Mercy on you, (Allah would have hastened the punishment upon you). And that Allah is full of Kindness, Most Merciful.]

Therefore, the omission of the apodosis in conditional clauses is more eloquent (البلغ) than its retention, since the mind is left to pursue every possible meaning.





“vision” we reach the culmination of the literary style and the spiritual impression.

Haleem (1999:209) argues that

“ Emphasis adds to the intensity of the language in the Qur’an. Because the Qur’an was addressing non-believers of various creeds and ideologies who denied or were doubtful about its message, it employs the various degrees of emphasis used in the Arabic language. The more doubt addressees show, the more emphasis the Qur’an employs in answering them, as scholars of Arabic rhetoric make clear. Some English translators of the Qur’an render emphasis by saying ‘verily’, but this is outdated and adequate only for certain degrees of emphasis. Unfortunately many translators overlook the emphasis in the Arabic text altogether, which is misleading since it serves an important function in the sentence.”

The surah also includes:

### **Antithesis**

“Antithesis is a contrast or opposition between two things, a contrast of ideas expressed by parallelism of strongly contrasted words.” (The Concise Oxford Dictionary 1995: 55)

*Al-Na’eem* and *Al-Jaheem* (النعيم) و (الجحيم) in this surah have been retained in the target text as “Hell and Blessings”. Thus, an approximate rhetorical effect has been achieved.

### **Rhyme and Rhythm (*Al-fasilah*)**

This technique is called “isocolon” by Abdul-Raof (2001:120) who explains it as: “symmetrical linguistic and phonetic structure”. The Arabic expression *Al-fasila* is a term used to denote the last word in each Qur’anic ayah

(verse). Previous writers on this subject drew attention to the apparent similarity between the *fasila* and the rhythmic schemes of poetry and rhyming prose.

Al-Ubaidy (1997:44) points out that *Al-fawasil* (الفواصل), which are the connectors between each verse and the other in the Holy Qur'an, constitute the musical ending of each verse. It contributes to the coherence of Qur'anic text in terms of harmony. But Omar (1999:238) argues that the *fasila* has a wider significance, and demonstrates that each occurrence of *fasila* has an organic connection to the 'content' of each sentence.

Rhyme and Rhythm (*Al-fasila* - الفاصلة) is strongly employed in this surah, as in (*takathur, maqabir* - التكاثر، المقابر) and (*ta'lamoon, yaqeen, jaheem, na'eem* - تعلمون، يقين، جحيم، نعيم) where it is almost frequently noticed that the verses end up with two common sounds (m - م) and (n - ن) which are the natural sounds in music itself.

## 2. Al-Nasr (Surah No.110)

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ  
﴿إِذَا جَاءَ نَصْرُ اللَّهِ وَالْفَتْحُ (١) وَرَأَيْتَ النَّاسَ يَدْخُلُونَ فِي دِينِ اللَّهِ أَفْوَاجًا (٢) فَسَبِّحْ بِحَمْدِ رَبِّكَ  
وَاسْتَغْفِرْهُ إِنَّهُ كَانَ تَوَّابًا (٣)﴾

### Transliteration

*Bismillah Alrrahman Alrraheem*

*[Itha jaa'a nasrullahi walfath (1) Wara'ayt annasa yadkhuloona fee deen illahi  
afwaja (2) Fasabbih bihamdi rabbika wastaghfirhu innahu kana tawwaba (3) ]*

### The Translations of *Al-Nasr* (Surah No.110)

(1) Arthur J. Arberry (1998)

#### Help

In the Name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate

When comes the help of God, and victory,  
and thou seest men entering God's religion in throngs,  
then proclaim the praise of thy Lord, and seek His forgiveness;  
for He turns again unto men.

(2) Muhammad Asad (1980)

**Succour**

IN THE NAME OF GOD, THE MOST GRACIOUS, THE DISPENSER OF  
GRACE:

When God's succour comes, and victory, (2) and thou seest people enter God's religion in hosts, (3) extol thy Sustainer's limitless glory, and praise Him, and seek His forgiveness: for, behold, He is ever an acceptor of repentance.

(3) N.J. Dawood (1998)

**Help**

In the Name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful

When God's help and victory come, and you see men embrace God's faith in multitudes, give glory to your Lord and seek His pardon. He is ever disposed to mercy.

(4) S. Abul A'Ala Maududi (1990)

**An-Nasr**

In the name of Allah, the Compassionate, the Merciful

When Allah's help comes and victory is attained, and (O Prophet,) you see that the people are entering into Allah's Religion in crowds, then glorify your Lord with His praise, and pray for His forgiveness, Indeed, He is ever inclined to accept repentance.

(5) The Presidency of Islamic Researches: Al Madinah 1985) (P.O.I.R)

**Help**

In the name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful

(1) When comes the Help  
Of Allah, and Victory,  
(2) And thou dost see  
The People enter Allah's Religion  
In crowds,  
(3) Celebrate the Praises  
Of thy Lord, and pray  
For His Forgiveness:  
For He is Oft-Returning  
(In forgiveness).

### **Theme and Subject Matter**

This surah is pertinent to Al- Madinah period and considered as one of the latest surahs, which was revealed to the Prophet. It refers to the fulfillment of Allah's promise to support the believers over the idolaters and achieve a decisive victory. This promised victory urged people all over the Arab peninsula to join the Prophet and support him in consecutive groups and announce sincere willingness to embrace Islam. The victorious believers remain humble and more conscious of their own failings, mainly because the surah reminds them that "victory is the crown of service, not an occasion for exultation. All victory comes from the help of Allah" (Al Madinah P.O.I.R, 1985: 2023)

## First: Linguistic Aspects

### Meaning of important words:

(نصر، فتح، أفواجا، سبّح، استغفره، توابا)

#### 1. Verse (1) and (2) (٢) إذا جاء نصر الله والفتح (١) ورأيت الناس يدخلون في دين الله أفواجا

Qutb (قطب) (1979: 336) explains the verses as follows:

This short surah brings the good news to Allah's Messenger concerning the advent of victory, The Conquest and peoples' collective acceptance of Allah's religion...Ibn Kathir said in his commentary on the Qur'an: " (The Conquest) (Al fath-الفتح) ; it is unanimously agreed, it is a reference to the conquest of Makkah. The Arab tribes were awaiting the settlement of conflict between Quraish and the Muslims, before accepting Islam, saying: 'If he, Muhammad, prevails over his people, he would indeed be a Prophet.' Consequently, when that was accomplished they accepted Islam in large numbers. Not two years were to pass after the conquest of Makkah when the whole Arabian Peninsula was dominated by Islam, and all thanks to Allah, every Arab tribe had declared its belief in Islam."

## 1.1 النصر *Al-Nasr*

Table (24) The Meaning of النصر *Al Nasr* in Arabic Dictionaries.

| الكلمة | المعنى                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
|--------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| نصر    | <p>١. الفيروز آبادي (١٩٨٧ : ٦٢١) : نصر المظلوم: أعانه. والنصرة: حسن المعونة</p> <p>٢. الزحيلي (١٩٩١، جزء ٢٩ : ٤٤٨): العون أو الإعانة على تحصيل المطلوب.</p> <p>٣. القرطبي (١٩٦٧، جزء ٢٠ : ٢٢٩) : العون، مأخوذ من قولهم: قد نصر الغيث الأرض: إذا أعان على نباتها من قحطها.</p> <p>٤. الزمخشري (جزء ٤ : ٢٩٣) : الإغاثة و الاظهار على العدو.</p> <p>٥. ابن رجب (١٩٨٥ : ٥٢) : نصر الله هو معونته على الأعداء.</p> |

Table (25) The Meaning of النصر *Al-Nasr* in Arabic-English Dictionaries.

| الكلمة | المعنى                                                                                                                             |
|--------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| نصر    | <p>البلعكي (١٩٩٠ : ١١٧٤) :</p> <p>أ- انتصار، غلبة، ظفر : victory, triumph</p> <p>ب- معونة تأييد: to help, aid, assist, support</p> |

Table (26) Translations of *Nasrullah* نصر الله

| Translator                                                         | <i>Nasrullah</i> نصر الله |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------|
| Arberry                                                            | the help of God           |
| Asad                                                               | God's succor              |
| Dawood                                                             | God's help                |
| Maududi                                                            | Allah's help              |
| P.O.I.R                                                            | the Help of Allah         |
| P.O.I.R. = (The Presidency of Islamic Researches: Al Madinah 1985) |                           |

Al Fairouzabadi, The famous Arab linguist, says that the Arabs usually use *Nasr* to mean “help” or “aid” or “succor”. To me, therefore, it seems that “victory” or “triumph” are closer to mean *Fath* (فتح) rather than *Nasr* (نصر). This issue will be explained in more details later.

In fact my viewpoint is supported by Al-Khudrawi (1995: 410) who thinks that *nasara* mostly means to aid, assist, protect and succor. He mentions that the verse from the Qur'an:

﴿وَلَيَنْصُرَنَّ اللَّهُ مَن يَنْصُرُهُ﴾

Q22:40 (الحج: ٤٠)

should be translated as [And verily Allah will succor those who aid Him].

Taking into consideration the available five translations, all seem close to the meaning given by the Arab scholars in linguistics and Qur'an exegetes.

I think it is essential to note that the word *Nasr* (نصر) in the Holy Qur'an has many different meanings.

Al-Damighani (1985:458) says that “*Nasr* (نصر) in the Holy Qur’an implies the following meanings:

1) *Nasr* is prevention (المنع)

﴿وَلَا يُؤْخَذُ مِنْهَا عَدْلٌ وَلَا هُمْ يُنصَرُونَ﴾

Q2: 48 (البقرة: ٤٨)

﴿هَلْ يَنْصُرُونَكُم أَوْ يَنْتَصِرُونَ﴾

Q26:93 (الشعراء: ٩٣)

2) Help (العون)

﴿وَلَيَنْصُرَنَّ اللَّهُ مَن يَنْصُرُهُ﴾

Q22:40 (الحج: ٤٠)

﴿يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِن تَنْصُرُوا اللَّهَ يَنْصُرْكُمْ﴾

Q47:7 (محمد: ٧)

﴿وَإِنْ قُوتِلْتُمْ لَنَنْصُرْكُمْ﴾

Q59:11 (الحشر: ١١)

3) Victory (الظفر)

﴿وَمَا النَّصْرُ إِلَّا مِنْ عِنْدِ اللَّهِ﴾

Q8:10 (الأنفال: ١٠) ، Q3:126 (آل عمران: ١٢٦)

﴿وَانصُرْنَا عَلَى الْقَوْمِ الْكَافِرِينَ﴾

Q3:147 (آل عمران: ١٤٧) ، Q2:250 (البقرة: ٢٥٠)

#### 4) Revenge ( الانتقام )

﴿ وَلَمَنِ انتَصَرَ بَعْدَ ظُلْمِهِ ﴾

Q42:41 (الشورى: ٤١)

﴿ وَلَوْ يَشَاءُ اللَّهُ لَانتَصَرَ مِنْهُمْ ﴾

Q 47:40 (محمد: ٤)

﴿ أَنِّي مَغْلُوبٌ فَأَنْتَصِرُ ﴾

Q 54:10 (القمر: ١٠)

### 1.2 Al-Fath الفتح

Table (27) The Meaning of *Al-Fath* الفتح in Arabic Dictionaries.

| الكلمة | المعنى                                                                                                                              |
|--------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| فتح    | ١- الفيروز آبادي (١٩٨٧ : ٢٩٧) : النصر.<br>٢- الزحيلي (١٩٩١، جزء ٢٩ : ٤٤٨) : الفصل بين الفريقين المتحاربين بانتصار أحدهما على الآخر. |

Table (28) The Meaning of *Al-Fath* الفتح in Arabic-English Dictionaries.

| الكلمة | المعنى                                                                                       |
|--------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| الفتح  | البعلبكي (١٩٩٠ : ٨١٤) :<br>أ- فتح البلاد : Conquest, occupation<br>ب- نصر : victory, triumph |

Table (29) The Meaning of “Victory” and “Triumph” in Arabic and English dictionaries.

| The word | The meaning                                                       |
|----------|-------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Victory  | WordNet (1997):<br>A successful ending of a struggle or contest.  |
| Victory  | البعليكي (١٩٩١ : ١٠٣٠) : نصر، انتصار، ظفر                         |
| Triumph  | A.H.D (2000):<br>Exultation or rejoicing over victory or success. |
| Triumph  | البعليكي ( ١٩٩١ : ٩٩٢) : فرحة النصر أو النجاح*انتصار عسكري، نصر   |

A.H.D : The American Heritage Dictionary of the English language.

Let us consider the following points to analyze the meanings of the word *Al- Fath* (الفتح) :

1- The verb *Fataha* (فتح) is equivalent to the English word “open”. But, in the Qur’anic expression written above, it seems to have other meanings such as: “conquest, victory, and triumph”. (Table 28)

2- *Al-Fath* (الفتح), according to the Arab linguists mentioned previously means *Al-Nasr* (النصر).

3-*Al-Nasr* (النصر), has two different meanings:

a) Help /aid/ assist/ support, and b) Victory/ triumph  
( Baalbaki: 1990).

4- The second meaning of *Al-Nasr* : ( victory or triumph) is the most favorable by Al-Damighani ( ibid:347), Al-Nadawi (ibid: 466) and Al-Zuhaili الزحيلي (1991, vol.29 : 448).

Now, since that we have decided on “victory or triumph” to mean *Al-Fath* (الفتح), Let us decide whether *Al-Fath* (الفتح) means “victory” or “triumph”.

According to the dictionaries, we notice the following:

- 1- Victory is: “a successful ending of a struggle or contest”, and this is accepted and agreed upon by the commentators explanation for *fath* (فتح).
- 2- Triumph, on the other hand, means: “exultation or rejoicing over victory or success” which –in my opinion- does not comply with the genuine Islamic concept that the victorious should be humble and neglect showing off or pride at the moment of victory.

Fortunately, all the five translators have rendered *Al-Fath* (الفتح) as “victory”.

But *Al-Fath*, which is a word with more than one meaning, is considered ambiguous by Muhaidat (1996:54) because it may carry the meaning of “victory” or “judgment”. To me, there is no ambiguity in the word *Al-Fath* if we refer to it in its context as follows:

Al-Damighani (1985:347) states that *Al-Fath* (الفتح) implies the following meanings:

- 1) (القضاء) judgment.

﴿ إِنَّا فَتَحْنَا لَكَ فَتْحًا مُبِينًا ﴾ أي قضينا لك قضاء بينا

Q48:1 (سورة الفتح: ١)

﴿ ثُمَّ يَفْتَحُ بَيْنَنَا بِالْحَقِّ وَهُوَ الْفَتَّاحُ الْعَلِيمُ ﴾ يعني القاضي

Q34:26 (سورة سبأ: ٢٦)

﴿ وَيَقُولُونَ مَتَى هَذَا الْفَتْحُ ﴾ أي يقولون متى هذا القضاء

Q32:28 (السجدة: ٢٨)

﴿ قُلْ يَوْمَ الْفَتْحِ لَا يَنْفَعُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا إِيمَانُهُمْ وَلَا هُمْ يُنْظَرُونَ ﴾ يعني يوم القضاء

Q32:29 (السجدة: ٢٩)

2) (الارسال) Sending out.

﴿ مَا يَفْتَحُ اللَّهُ لِلنَّاسِ مِنْ رَحْمَةٍ فَلَا مُمْسِكَ لَهَا ﴾ يعني ما يرسل الله من رحمة

Q35:9 (فاطر: ٩)

﴿ حَتَّىٰ إِذَا فُتِحَتْ يَأْجُوجُ وَمَأْجُوجُ ﴾ يعني أرسلت

Q21:96 ( الانبياء: ٩٦ )

﴿ حَتَّىٰ إِذَا فَتَحْنَا عَلَيْهِم بَابًا ذَا عَذَابٍ شَدِيدٍ إِذَا هُمْ فِيهِ مُبْلِسُونَ ﴾ اي أرسلنا عليهم

Q23:77 ( المؤمنون: ٧٧ )

3) (النصر) To give victory.

﴿ فَإِنْ كَانَ لَكُمْ فَتْحٌ مِّنَ اللَّهِ قَالُوا أَلَمْ نَكُنْ مَّعَكُمْ ﴾ يعني نصرا

Q4:141 ( النساء: ١٤١ )

﴿ فَعَسَىٰ اللَّهُ أَنْ يَأْتِيَ بِالْفَتْحِ ﴾ يعني النصر

Q5:52 ( المائدة: ٥٢ )

وكذلك ﴿ نَصْرٌ مِّنَ اللَّهِ وَفَتْحٌ قَرِيبٌ ﴾

Q61:13 ( الصف: ١٣ )

### 1.3 أفواجا *Afwaja*

*Afwaja*, in Arabic, is the plural of *fawj*, which means the following:

Table (30) The Meaning of *Fawj* فوج in Arabic Dictionaries.

| الكلمة | المعنى                                                                                                                                                                                       |
|--------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| فوج    | <p>١- الفيروز آبادي (١٩٨٧ : ٢٥٩) :</p> <p>الفوج الجماعة.</p> <p>أفاج: أسرع و عدا، وأرسل الإبل على الحوض قطعة قطعة.</p> <p>٢- ابن رجب (١٩٨٥ : ٦١) :</p> <p>الأفواج : الجماعة إثر الجماعة.</p> |

Table (31) The Meaning of *Fawj* فوج in Arabic-English Dictionaries.

| الكلمة | المعنى                                                                                                                              |
|--------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| فوج    | <p>البعليكي (١٩٩٠ : ٨٣٦) :</p> <p>أ- فرقة، جماعة : Group, troop, band, company, party.</p> <p>ب- حشد : Crowd, throng, multitude</p> |

Table (32) Translations of *Afwaja* أفواجا

| Translator                                                         | Verse (2) ورأيت الناس يدخلون في دين الله أفواجا                                              |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Arberry                                                            | and thou seest men entering God's religion <b>in throngs</b>                                 |
| Asad .                                                             | and thou seest people enter God's religion <b>in hosts</b>                                   |
| Dawood                                                             | and you see men embrace God's faith <b>in multitudes</b>                                     |
| Maududi                                                            | and (O Prophet,) you see that the people are entering into Allah's Religion <b>in crowds</b> |
| P.O.I.R                                                            | And thou dost see the People enter Allah's Religion <b>in crowds</b>                         |
| P.O.I.R. = (The Presidency of Islamic Researches: Al Madinah 1985) |                                                                                              |

Based on the above, the translators use: throngs, hosts, multitudes and crowds for *afwaja* (أفواجا). But if we look at the meanings of these words in English dictionaries, we may be able to differentiate between their use and the real Arabic meaning.

Table (33) The Meaning of the Words Chosen by the Translators for *Afwaja* أفواجا in English Dictionaries.

| The Word                                                          | The Meaning                                                                                                                           |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Throng                                                            | A.H.D (2000):<br>1- A large group of people gathered or crowded closely together; a multitude.<br>2- A large group of things; a host. |
| Host                                                              | A.H.D (2000):<br>1- An Army.<br>2- A great number; a multitude.                                                                       |
| Multitude                                                         | WordNet (1997):<br>1- A large indefinite number.<br>2- A large gathering of people..                                                  |
| Crowd                                                             | WordNet (1997):<br>1- A large number of things or people considered together.<br>2- An informal body of friends.                      |
| A.H.D : The American Heritage Dictionary of the English language. |                                                                                                                                       |

In conclusion, all the previous meanings seem to me inaccurate because the basic meaning of the Arabic word (أفواجا) *Afwaja*- given by Al-Fairouzabadi and Ibn Rajab (Table 30)- reveals the element of mobility-not stability. They explain the verb *Afaja* (أفاج), which is derived from the noun *Fawj* (فوج) as: (to hurry, quicken, run, race) or (to send the camels to the pond/pool consecutively) or a group followed by another.

With this understanding in mind, none of the English renderings given by the translators implements these two elements: mobility and consecutiveness.

Therefore, as a researcher myself, the best translation for *Afwaja* is “consecutive groups” who adhere to Islam in every generation.

As for **the grammatical structure**, consider the following:

a) “Thou” and “seest”.

According to Iqbal (2000:114) the abundant use of “ye” s and “thou” s elevates the language and adds solemnity to the translation and constantly reminds the reader that the text being read belongs to another category.

Robinson (1996:4) also says that the advantage of the old style translation like Arberry’s over more modern translations is that they clearly distinguish between the second person singular “thou” and the second person plural “ye” or “you”. While Newmark (1998:2) believes that “Only modern language is likely to have the maximum impact on readers.” For Morris (2000:54) this style of Biblical English expressions results in failure in communication especially amongst the young generations.

In my personal view, I agree with Newmark and Morris in avoiding a translation style based on the classical old English.

b) The verb *yadkhuloon* (يدخلون).

“The main tenses of the Arabic verb are the perfect and the imperfect. The perfect denotes a complete action, often referring to the past, while the imperfect denotes an incomplete action, most often referring to the present or the future”. (Nadawi 1995:55).

Thus, *yadkhuloon* (يدخلون) is an imperfect verb referring to the present or the future in a continuous action, therefore it is better to substitute it with a verb in its present continuous form “entering”.

Only Arberry and Maududi succeed in preserving the continuous form which, in turn, denotes the persistence growth of Islam.

## 2. Verse (3) فسبح بحمد ربك و استغفره انه كان توابا (۳)

Qutb (قطب) (1979:338) comments on verse (3) as follows:

The duty of the Messenger and his companions, whom Allah chose and gave the privilege of being the instruments of His victory, was to turn to Him at the climax of victory in praise, expressing gratitude and seeking forgiveness. Gratitude and praise are for His being so generous as to have chosen them to be the standard bearers of His religion; for the mercy and favor He did to all humanity by making His religion victorious; and for the Conquest of Makkah and the people's collective acceptance of Islam.

His forgiveness is sought for the various unrevealed, defective feelings, such as vanity, which sometimes creep into one's heart at the overwhelming moment of victory attained after a long struggle.

In verse (3), I will concentrate on the three expressions: *sabbih* , *estaghfirhu*, and *Tawwaba*. (سبح، استغفره، توابا).

## 2.1 سَبَّحَ *Sabbih*

Table (34) The Meaning of *Sabbih* سَبَّحَ in Arabic Dictionaries.

| الكلمة  | المعنى                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
|---------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| سَبَّحَ | <p>١- الفيروز آبادي (١٩٨٧ : ٢٨٤):<br/>سبحان الله: تنزيها لله من الصاحبة و الولد.</p> <p>٢- الزحيلي (١٩٩١، جزء ٢٩ : ٤٤٩):<br/>فسبح بحمد ربك: نزه الله و صل له حامدا على نعمه.</p> <p>٣- الصابوني (١٩٩٨، جزء ٣، ٥٨٩):<br/>التسبيح: التعظيم.</p> <p>٤- الزمخشري (جزء ٤ : ٢٩٤):<br/>فسبح بحمد ربك: فتعجب لتيسير الله ما لم يخطر ببالك. أو فاذكره مسبحا حامدا.</p> |

Table (35) The Meaning of *Sabbih* سَبَّحَ in Arabic-English Dictionaries.

| الكلمة  | المعنى                                                                                                                                                                           |
|---------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| سَبَّحَ | <p>البعليكي (١٩٩٠ : ٦٢٢):<br/>سبح بحمده: to praise, glorify, extol, laud, eulogize</p> <p>الننوي (١٩٨٦ : ٢٥٤):<br/>To praise, glorify, hallow, to magnify God with the word.</p> |

Table (26) Translations of *Sabbih* سَبِّح

| Translator                                                         | <i>Fasabbih bihamdi Rabbica</i> فسَبِّحْ بِحَمْدِ رَبِّكَ |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------|
| Arberry                                                            | , then <b>proclaim the praise</b> of thy Lord             |
| Asad                                                               | , <b>extol</b> thy Sustainer's limitless glory            |
| Dawood                                                             | , <b>give glory</b> to your Lord                          |
| Maududi                                                            | , <b>then glorify</b> your Lord with His praise           |
| P.O.I.R                                                            | , <b>celebrate the Praises</b> of thy Lord                |
| P.O.I.R. = (The Presidency of Islamic Researches: Al Madinah 1985) |                                                           |

From the table cited above , *Sabbih* (سَبِّح) is rendered by the five translators as:

“Proclaim the praise”, “extol”, “give glory”, “glorify” and “celebrate the praises”.

Table (37) The Meaning of the Words Chosen by the Translators of *Sabbih* سَبَّح in Arabic and English Dictionaries.

| The Word                                                                                                                           | The Meaning                                                                                                                                                                                            |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Proclaim                                                                                                                           | <p>A.H.D (2000):</p> <p>1- To announce officially and publicly.</p> <p>2- To praise; extol.</p>                                                                                                        |
|                                                                                                                                    | البعليكي ( ١٩٩١ : ٧٢٦ ) : يصرح ، يعلن.                                                                                                                                                                 |
| Extol                                                                                                                              | <p>W.R.U.D (1996):</p> <p>1- To place on high; to lift up; to elevate.</p> <p>2- To elevate by praise; to eulogize; to praise; to magnify; as, to extol virtue; to extol an act or a person.</p>       |
|                                                                                                                                    | البعليكي ( ١٩٩١ : ٣٣٠ ) : يمدح يطري بإفراط.                                                                                                                                                            |
| Glorify                                                                                                                            | <p>A.H.D (2000):</p> <p>1- To give glory, honor, or high praise to; exalt.</p> <p>2- To give glory to, especially through worship.</p>                                                                 |
|                                                                                                                                    | البعليكي ( ١٩٩١ : ٣٩١ ) : يمدح، يعظم، يجل.                                                                                                                                                             |
| Celebrate                                                                                                                          | <p>A.H.D (2000):</p> <p>1- To perform a (religious ceremony) : <i>celebrate Mass</i>.</p> <p>2- To extol or praise: <i>a sonnet that celebrates love</i>.</p> <p>3- To make widely known; display.</p> |
|                                                                                                                                    | البعليكي ( ١٩٩١ : ١٦١ ) : يمدح، يذيع، يعلن، يقيم قداسا.                                                                                                                                                |
| <p>A.H.D : The American Heritage Dictionary of the English language.</p> <p>(W.R.U.D) Webster's Revised Unabridged Dictionary.</p> |                                                                                                                                                                                                        |

The Arabic imperative *Sabbih* (سَبِّحْ) is derived from the noun *Tasbeeh* (تَسْبِيح), which –according to Maududi (ibid:312): “means to regard Allah as pure and free from every blemish and weakness...Besides, there is an aspect of wonder also in pronouncing the *tasbeeh* i.e. *Subhan-Allah*. When a wonderful incident takes place, one exclaims *Subhan-Allah*, thereby implying that only by Allah’s power such a wonderful thing had happened; otherwise no power of the world could have caused it to happen.”

Following the Arabic meaning of *Sabbih* (سَبِّحْ), it seems that this term does not have an equivalent in English; therefore, it requires an explanatory footnote.

Amongst the five translators, only Maududi explains the meaning of *Sabbih* (سَبِّحْ) in a footnote.

“Proclaim” used by Arberry, does not comply with the Islamic tradition of praising Allah with a low voice as in: [And remember your Lord within yourself, humbly and with fear and without loudness in words. Q7: 205] (Al-Hilali & Khan 1996: 230)

﴿وَاذْكُرْ رَبَّكَ فِي نَفْسِكَ تَضَرُّعًا وَخِيفَةً وَدُونَ الْجَهْرِ مِنَ الْقَوْلِ﴾ (الاعراف: ٢٠٥)

and : [And offer your *Salat* (prayer) neither aloud nor in a low voice, but follow a way between. Q17: 110 ] (ibid: 384)

﴿وَلَا تَجْهَرُ بِصَلَاتِكَ وَلَا تُخَافِتُ بِهَا وَابْتَغِ بَيْنَ ذَلِكَ سَبِيلًا﴾ (الاسراء: ١١٠)

; because the meaning of “public announcement” implied in the word “proclaim” requires a loud voice.

The word “celebrate” used by (P.O.I.R) may connote some Biblical reference, which may mislead the foreign reader- and Christian in particular.

According to Al-Damighani (الدامغاني) (1985:225) there are seven different meanings for the term *Sabbaha* (سَبَّحَ) in the Holy Qur'an:

1- ( الصلاة ) prayer.

﴿ فَسُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ حِينَ تُمْسُونَ وَحِينَ تُصْبِحُونَ ﴾

Q30:17 (الروم: ١٧)

﴿ يُسَبِّحُ لِلَّهِ مَا فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ ﴾

Q62:1 (الجمعة: ١)

2- ( العجب ) wonder or admiration

﴿ سُبْحَانَ الَّذِي أَسْرَى بِعَبْدِهِ لَيْلًا ﴾

Q17:1 (الاسراء: ١)

3- ( الذكر ) to remember Allah

﴿ وَيُسَبِّحُ الرَّعْدُ بِحَمْدِهِ ﴾

Q13:13 (الرعد: ١٣)

﴿ تُسَبِّحُ لَهُ السَّمَاوَاتُ السَّبْعُ وَالْأَرْضُ وَمَنْ فِيهِنَّ وَإِنْ مِنْ شَيْءٍ إِلَّا يُسَبِّحُ بِحَمْدِهِ ﴾

Q17:44 (الاسراء: ٤٤)

4- ( التوبة ) repent.

﴿ قَالَ سُبْحَانَكَ تُبْتُ إِلَيْكَ ﴾

Q7:143 (الأعراف: ١٤٣)

﴿ وَلَوْ لَا إِذْ سَمِعْتُمُوهُ قُلْتُمْ مَا يَكُونُ لَنَا أَنْ نَتَكَلَّمَ بِهَذَا سُبْحَانَكَ هَذَا بُهْتَانٌ عَظِيمٌ ﴾ (أي توبة اليك)

Q24:16 (النور: ١٦)

5-(الإستثناء) to exclude or select the *tasbeeh* as a solution or protection.

﴿ قَالَ أَوْسَطُهُمْ أَلَمْ أَقُلْ لَكُمْ لَوْلَا تُسَبِّحُونَ ﴾ (يعني لولا تستثنون)

Q68:28 (القلم: ٢٨)

6- (براءة الله عز و جل من السوء) Allah is beyond any doubt of ill-doing.

﴿ فَسُبْحَانَ الَّذِي بِيَدِهِ مَلَكُوتُ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ ﴾ (يعني براءة الله من السوء)

Q36: 83 (يس: ٨٣)

7-(التنزيه) elevation.

﴿ وَتُسَبِّحُوهُ بُكْرَةً وَأَصِيلًا ﴾

Q48: 9 (الفتح: ٩)

As **sentence structure** is concerned, the conditional sentence in the surah is introduced by the particle (إذا) “when”.

The conditional sentence consists of two parts: (فعل الشرط) “the conditional verb” and (جواب الشرط) “answer of the condition”.

In Arabic the condition and its answer, in verbal sentences, are sometimes in the perfect mood, with (ف) of conjunction prefixed to the verb of “the answer of the condition”. (إذا جاء نصر الله و الفتح... فسبح).

“(فسبح) *fasabbih* (فاء الجزاء) of sanction “Fa”

El-Dahdah (1993: 471) explains that:

“(Fa” of sanction (فاء الجزاء) is a letter of signification structured on vowel /a/, it has no place in the analysis and intervenes in the answer to the condition; it is called “Fa” of answer or “Fa” connecting the answer to the condition.

فاء الجزاء حرف معنى مبني على الفتح لا محل له من الاعراب ، يدخل على جواب الشرط و يسمى فاء الجواب أو الفاء الرابطة جواب الشرط.

In the five translations, the letter “Fa” is either exchanged with the comma (,) or with “then” which may be considered correct.

According to Abdul-Raof (2001:24) the use of the cohesive tie “Fa” (ف) before the verb (سبح) has a semantic function of immediate action with no hesitation, i.e., to execute the action verb ( to praise-سبح) at once.

## 2.2 *Estaghfirhu* استغفره

Table (38) The Meaning of *Estaghfirhu* استغفره in Arabic Dictionaries.

| الكلمة  | المعنى                                                                                        |
|---------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| استغفره | الفيروز آبادي (١٩٨٧ : ٥٧٩) :<br>أ- غفره، يغفره: ستره.<br>ب- غفر الله ذنبه: غطى عليه وعفا عنه. |

Table (39) The Meaning of *Estaghfirhu* استغفره in Arabic-English Dictionaries.

| الكلمة  | المعنى                                                                                                                                                                         |
|---------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| استغفره | البعليكي (١٩٩٠ : ٩٥) :<br>أ- استغفر: استصفح، طالب الغفران:<br>To ask (someone's) pardon, ask (someone's) forgiveness, apologize (to).<br>ب- استغفر الله: Ask God's forgiveness |

Table (40) Translations of *Estaghfirhu* استغفره

| Translator                                                         | <i>Estaghfirhu</i> استغفره |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------|
| Arberry                                                            | seek his forgiveness       |
| Asad                                                               | seek his forgiveness       |
| Dawood                                                             | seek his pardon            |
| Maududi                                                            | pray for His forgiveness   |
| P.O.I.R                                                            | pray for His forgiveness   |
| P.O.I.R. = (The Presidency of Islamic Researches: Al Madinah 1985) |                            |

“Pray for His forgiveness” may be the best translation because “forgiveness” is stronger than “pardon” and more suitable to be associated with Allah. Since that:

“Forgive points to inward feelings, and suppose alienated affection; when we ask forgiveness, we primarily seek the removal of anger. Pardon looks more to outward things or consequences, and is often applied to trifling matters, as when we beg pardon for interrupting a man, or for jostling him in crowd”.

W.R.U.D (1996)

Webster’s Revised Unabridged Dictionary

Thus, the word “pray” suits the religious context more than “seek” , where praying means: “To ask earnestly for; to seek to obtain by supplication; to entreat for”.

W.R.U.D (1996)

Webster’s Revised Unabridged Dictionary

### 2.3 Tawwaba توابا

Table (41) The Meaning of *Tawwaba* توابا in Arabic Dictionaries.

| الكلمة | المعنى                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
|--------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| توابا  | <p>١- الفيروز آبادي (١٩٨٧ : ٧٩) :</p> <p>أ- تاب الى الله : رجع عن المعصية.</p> <p>ب- تاب الله عليه: وفقه للتوبة، أو رجع به من التشديد الى التخفيف، أو رجع عليه بفضلله وقبوله.</p> <p>٢- الزحيلي (١٩٩١ ، جزء ٢٩ : ٤٤٨) :</p> <p>توّاب: صيغة مبالغة على وزن فَعَّال.</p> <p>٣- الصابوني (١٩٩٨ ، جزء ٣ : ٥٨٩) :</p> <p>إنه كان توابا: إنه جل و علا كثير التوبة، عظيم الرحمة لعباده المؤمنين.</p> |

Table (42) The Meaning of *Tawaba* توابا in Arabic-English Dictionaries.

| الكلمة | المعنى                                                                                                                                                                                           |
|--------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| توابا  | <p>البعليكي (١٩٩٠ : ٣٨٥) :</p> <p>أ- تاب الى الله : to turn to God in repentance</p> <p>ب- توّاب: غفور : forgiving, merciful</p> <p>ج- التوّاب: الله : the Most Merciful, the Most Forgiving</p> |

Table (43) Translations of *Tawaba* توابا

| Translator                                                         | Verse (3) إنه كان توابا                            |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------|
| Arberry                                                            | for He turns again unto men.                       |
| Asad                                                               | for, behold, He is ever an acceptor of repentance. |
| Dawood                                                             | He is ever disposed to mercy.                      |
| Maududi                                                            | Indeed, He is ever inclined to accept repentance.  |
| P.O.I.R                                                            | for He is Oft-Returning ( In forgiveness).         |
| P.O.I.R. = (The Presidency of Islamic Researches: Al Madinah 1985) |                                                    |

From the above translations, we assume that *tawwab* carries the meaning of “Allah returning in forgiveness” with a tendency or disposition to do it again and again, therefore, Maududi’s rendering “inclined to accept repentance” may be the closest meaning to the Arabic word.

The Arabic root *tawb* (توب) means to return from the path of sin to obedience and the hyperbole in *tawwab* (تواب) means intensifying the manner of returning to repentance . This manner may be applied to man where he is often returning to Allah in repentance, and for Allah Himself where He is the One Who always accepts repentance from the believers and forgives them.

As **sentence structure** is concerned, I will focus on the phrase (إنه كان توابا) and mainly on “Indeed” (إن) and “ever” (كان).

**a) “Indeed” (إن)**

El-Dahdah (1993: 118) explains that:  
 “Indeed” (إن) is a letter of confirmation, it means “I confirm”.

حرف توكيد بمعنى أؤكد.

إن *inna* in this structure could mean “indeed” in order to confirm that Allah is the acceptor of repentance. And from this point of view, only Maududi has succeeded in rendering the confirmation in this expression, while the others use “for” (which means because *لأنه*) which-in turn- does not occur in the surah.

#### b) “Ever” (كان)

According to Al-Fairouzabadi (الفيروز أبادي) (1987:1585) *kana* (كان) may mean:

1. Futurity. [And they fear a Day whose evil **will be** wide-spreading. Q76: 7] (Al-Hilali & Khan 1996:803)

كان بمعنى الاستقبال

﴿وَيَخَافُونَ يَوْمًا كَانَتْ شَرُّهُ مُسْتَطِيرًا﴾ (الانسان: ٧)

2. The simple past. [ And there **were** in the city nine men. Q27:48] (ibid:510)

وبمعنى الماضي المنقطع

﴿وَكَانَ فِي الْمَدِينَةِ تِسْعَةُ رَهْطٍ﴾ (النمل: ٤٨)

3. At present. [ You (true believers in Islamic Monotheism, and real followers of Prophet Muhammad and his Sunnah) **are** the best of peoples ever raised up for mankind. Q3:110] (ibid:89)

وبمعنى الحال

﴿كُنْتُمْ خَيْرَ أُمَّةٍ أُخْرِجَتْ لِلنَّاسِ﴾ (ال عمران: ١١٠)

Nadawi (1986: 584) claims that *Kana* (كان) in this verse may mean “ is” in the sense of an eternal fact, habitual, or for ever:

[And I said: ask forgiveness of your Lord. Verily He is ever Most Forgiving]

﴿ فَقُلْتُ اسْتَغْفِرُوا رَبَّكُمْ إِنَّهُ كَانَ غَفَّارًا ﴾

Q71:10 (نوح: ١٠)

All the five translators have translated the verb *Kana* to a present tense form -“is” or “turns”- which is, in my opinion correct, because Allah “was” and still “is” and “will always be”: The acceptor of repentance.

## Second: Literary Aspects

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ  
﴿إِذَا جَاءَ نَصْرُ اللَّهِ وَالْفَتْحُ (١) وَرَأَيْتَ النَّاسَ يَدْخُلُونَ فِي دِينِ اللَّهِ أَفْوَاجًا (٢) فَسَبِّحْ بِحَمْدِ رَبِّكَ  
وَاسْتَغْفِرْهُ إِنَّهُ كَانَ تَوَّابًا (٣)﴾

In this surah (النصر) “Victory” I notice the aspect of personification clearly set up to address the Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon him) and all Muslims as well. Thus victory is approaching and coming soon just like a person who gives pleasant tidings. This “approaching victory” is confirmed by the particle “when” (إذا) which introduces the conditional sentence and “implies a sure knowledge which is certainly going to happen”. Lasheen (1982: 55).

"إذا" تدخل على المتيقن من الأمور.

For example, the word *ja'aa* (جاء) in Arabic “come” does not represent only the attitude of walking, but also denotes the expected news and information to be told by that person.

The other aspect in this lofty literary style of the Qur'an is presented by the word *ra'aita* (رأيت).

The verb *ra'aita* (رأيت) in Arabic is in the past tense, but it actually refers to futurity for all people who are expected to embrace Islam in the long run. To me, this kind of manifestation is unique in literature. It refers to the eternal fact and the dominance of the Qur'an over the minds of the believers. Therefore, these literary aspects in the “victory” surah will lead to the full satisfaction of the readers, and could certainly provide a spiritual solace to all people who embrace Islam.

I also notice another literary aspect in the word *fasabbih* (فسبِّح) (which means praise Allah) as an imperative.

This word *fasabbih* (فَسَبِّحْ) encourages the Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon him) to thank Allah for His endless boons. In literature, praising Allah is not a compulsory attitude, but it is verily the spiritual satisfaction of praising Allah without any interference or force.

In conclusion, these three words : (جاء، ورأيت، فسبّح) *ja'aa*, *fara'aita*, and *fasabbih* constitute three literary pillars in this short surah.

*Tawwaba* تَوَّابَا is an adjective in the intensive form and represents hyperbole. Abdel-Haleem (1999:210) argues that the employment of such intensive forms in Arabic signifies another feature that adds vibrancy to the language of the Qur'an, adding that this technique is particularly noticed in mentions of Allah, showing His boundless power and grace as in *Tawwaba* "Oft-Returning (in forgiveness)".

## CHAPTER 5

### CONCLUSION

The study which I have conducted on the linguistic and literary aspects of surah *Al-Takathur* and *Al-Nasr* shows that no translation can replace the words of Allah in the Qur'an. No one can even produce a single verse that could match it.

[And if you be in doubt whether the Book We have sent down to Our Servant is from Us or not, then produce, at least, one surah like this. Q2: 23] Maududi (1991:7)

﴿وَإِنْ كُنْتُمْ فِي رَيْبٍ مِّمَّا نَزَّلْنَا عَلَىٰ عَبْدِنَا فَأْتُوا بِسُورَةٍ مِّثْلِهِ﴾  
(البقرة: ٢٣)

This is because translation is mainly based on the translator's personal knowledge of the source language and the target language. Therefore, translating the Holy Qur'an requires not only the surface meaning of the words, but it definitely needs a more profound knowledge of both linguistic and literary aspects of the words of Allah.

Even the best Arab poets, rhetoricians, and linguists, have all failed to compose similar words. "A translator who aspires to achieve total lexical and/or textual equivalence is chasing a mirage" (Abdul-Raof 2001:7).

The study have discussed the differences in the various translations of two surahs given by five well-known translators of the Holy Qur'an ; (1) Arthur J.

Arberry, (2) Muhammad Asad, (3) N.J. Dawood, (4) S. Abul A'Ala Maududi and (5) The Presidency of Islamic Researches (P.O.I.R).

The procedure in the study is based on a profound analysis of the various translations of the two chosen Surahs ( *Al-Takathur* and *Al-Nasr*). More focus has been on the analysis of the various translations and the careful comparison of their linguistic and literary aspects.

Judgment is based on the famous interpretations of The Holy Qur'an by Al-Zamakhshari, Al-Qurtubi, Al-Sabooni, Al-Razi, Al-Zuhaili and Ibn-Kathir.

The best translation of the five is chosen and-in some cases- a modified translation is suggested by the researcher.

Based on the discussion in the previous chapters, it is clear that translators should not depend on the combinations of words on the surface. They should use the 'linguistic' and 'literary' aspects in a better way to capture the intended meaning fully. Therefore a complex and demanding task is awaiting the translator.

The following example represents the **linguistic aspect** which I discussed in *Al-Takathur*, verse (5) and (6):

(كَلَّا لَوْ تَعْلَمُونَ عِلْمَ الْيَقِينِ. لَتَرَوُنَّ الْجَحِيمَ)

The two verses here are considered as two separate sentences by all commentators. The first one is:

[Nay! Had you known with certainty of knowledge (the end of this way of life, you would never have acted thus). Q102: 5] (Maududi 1990:197)

In this verse the second part of the sentence, the answer of the condition, is ellipted (left unsaid) for rhetorical reasons.

Qutb (1979:270) comments on this matter and says:

“The conditional sentence is not completed in the text. This is acceptable as a refined form of Arabic. It adds to the feeling of awe generated by the surah”.

“Ellipted items in the source language can cause misunderstanding and misrepresentation of the meaning of Qur’anic texture, unless a footnote is provided or the source language ellipted element themselves are added by the translator.” (Abdul-Raof 2001:128).

Amongst the five translations given for this verse, only Maududi (cited above) and (P.O.I.R) render the grammatical structure successfully:

[Nay, were ye to know with certainty of mind, (ye would beware!). Q102: 5] (P.O.I.R 1985:2000)

Arberry, Asad, and Dawood have rendered verse (5) as a conditional sentence and verse (6) as the answer of the condition, unlike the source text, they join the two verses together; thus the source language texture has not been maintained.

The second independent sentence, which is considered by the commentators, verse (6) (لَتَرَوُنَّ الْجَحِيمَ) is not the answer of the condition. In fact, it is another ellipted structure implemented for a rhetorical reason.

[You shall certainly see Hell. Q102:6] (Maududi ibid)

This is an answer to an implied oath: (By God or I swear by God) you shall certainly see Hell. (Sabooni الصابوني 1998, vol.3:572).

Briefly, amongst the five translators, only Maududi and (P.O.I.R) preserve the original Qur’anic structure according to the meaning provided by exegetes, while the rest have rendered it as a complete conditional sentence, thus failing to convey the Qur’anic rhetorical devices; the incomplete conditional sentence and the omitted oath.

Another aspect of the Qur’anic language, which translators face, is **the rhetorical aspect**, which is evident in the following example:

*Al-Takathur* verse (2):

(حتى زرت المقابر)

Most of the commentators believe that verse (2): [Until ye visit the graves] is a metonymy, where the word (die) is substituted by the metonymy phrase “visit the graves”. see( Sabooni الصابوني 1998, vol.3:572) and (Zuhailee الزحيلي 1991, vol.29: 383).

“Visit”, in this verse is used metaphorically to strike the unbelievers minds.

After a careful investigation of the five translations, only Arberry and (P.O.I.R) opt for literal translation “visit”, keeping the metonymy unchanged. While Asad and Maududi translate the metonymy into non-metonymy “go, reach”.

On the other hand, Dawood (1998) gives a totally different image that does not exist in the original text, adding the expression:

[from the cradle to the grave]

(من المهد الى اللحد)

which, I believe, is unacceptable and distorts the original image given in the source text.

Translating the Qur'an, therefore, requires a thorough exegetical analysis and reference to exegetical works otherwise the meaning of the Qur'an will be distorted and drastically misrepresented in the target language.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Currently, and after the tragic events of the “Eleventh of September 2001”, the great demand for translations of the Qur’an, even among the non-Muslims has become far greater than any time in the past. These recent dramatic incidents mean that non-Muslims in many different parts of the world are motivated to read the Qur’an. Therefore, the researcher recommends the following:

1. Translators and researchers should strongly adhere to the linguistic patterns and the order of the surahs of the Holy Qur’an without any slight change. This is because one of the non-Muslim translators, N. J. Dawood, distorted the original order of the surahs. In his latest edition, Dawood has put the surahs back in their original order.
2. All native and non-Arab translators should study the pre-Islamic history of Arabic language, traditions, and culture in order to gain the needed language competence in both cultures.
3. I also encourage the Islamic League of Translators in all related centers worldwide to revise the available translations of the Holy Qur’an in the future.
4. Teamwork for any translation of the Qur’an is essential which is under the auspices of some official authority such as, ‘The Presidency of Islamic Researches (P.O.I.R)’ is hoped to produce a comprehensive and adequate work.

5. As I have attempted to show in this study, the Qur'an-with its distinctive rhetorical features-is untranslatable. Therefore, translators are advised to use the needed translation devices, for example, footnotes, marginal or 'within-the-text' notes, and the typographical tools such as: italics, boldface, capitalization and different fonts.
6. Most of the Islamic literature of the Qur'an has been written in Arabic, although the authors of this literature mostly belonged to non-Arab origin. This fundamental area of Qur'anic understanding is essentially cut off from the English speaking audience. Therefore, I suggest that researchers in the future translate the Islamic books such as: *asbab al-nuzool* (أسباب النزول) 'occasions of revelation' , *tafseer* (التفسير) "exegesis" , *hadeeth*, "tales of the Prophet", rhetoric and certain fields of *fiqh* (الفقه) .
7. Pave the way to provide useful CD-ROMs and Internet cites about Qur'an and its translations and encourage the use of such technological means.
8. Qur'anic music, sound and rhythm have their spiritual impact on the hearer. Therefore, gifted translators are called upon to integrate the musicality of the verses with their underlying meaning. Newmark (1998:102) considers the 'sounds' of the literary language as important as it's meaning, thus "the literary translator should have a command of an exceptionally wide affective vocabulary."
9. The researcher hopes that this study will pave the way to encourage further studies on Qur'anic discourse which does not only explain Qur'an translational problems, but also provides a comprehensive survey of its

unique syntactic, semantic, phonetic, prosodic, pragmatic, and rhetorical features.

10. Islamic expressions such as *taqwa* (تقوى), *tawheed* (توحيد), *kafir* (كافر), *mushrik* (مشرک) should be retained in their Arabic form. This allows the Qur'an to address the reader directly without any interpretation or improper English equivalents. Morris (2000:57) admits "It is striking to discover how so many fundamental Islamic expressions are very quickly adopted and understood by students in religious studies, after only a cursory introductory acquaintance."

11. None of the available translations of the Holy Qur'an (according to Robinson, 1996: 291) is entirely satisfactory. Even some are extremely unreliable, therefore the reader should be warned of some serious defects in several recent translations such as 'Ahmadiyya Muslims (Zafrulla Khan, Muhammad Ali), or Dr Rashad Khalifa's translation who omitted two verses from the Holy Quran, and pretended to be the present messenger of Allah (God).

﴿سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَىٰ عَمَّا يَقُولُونَ عُلُوًّا كَبِيرًا﴾

(الاسراء: ٤٣)

[He is free from and far above the things that they say about Him. Q17: 43]

Maududi (1991:449)

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## نبذة عن البحث

الأوجه اللغوية و الأدبية في ترجمة سورتين من القرآن الكريم للغة الإنجليزية:  
(مقارنة تقييمية)

تهدف الدراسة هذه إلى مقارنة و تقييم خمس ترجمات لسورتين من القرآن الكريم للغة الإنجليزية هما سورتي التكاثر و النصر والتي قام بها كل من : آرثر آربيري، محمد أسد، إن. جي. داو ود، أبو الأعلى المودودي و الرئاسة العامة لإدارات البحوث العلمية و الإفتاء بالمدينة المنورة. وتركز دراستي على تحليل دقيق، و مقارنة بين هذه الترجمات لاختيار أقرب ترجمة إلى المعاني الأصلية للغة العربية و أفضلها إذ تتفرد اللغة العربية دون سواها بمفرداتها الثرة و معانيها الرائعة و خير مثال على ذلك، كلمة "ألهاكم" التي وردت في سورة التكاثر. فاللهو له معان مختلفة حسب السياق ، فهو يعني السخرية و الاستهزاء تارة ﴿الَّذِينَ اتَّخَذُوا دِينَهُمْ لَهْوًا وَلَعِبًا وَغَرَّتْهُمُ الْحَيَاةُ الدُّنْيَا﴾ (الأعراف: ٥١) وتارة الاشتغال ﴿أَلْهَاكُمْ التَّكَاثُرُ﴾ (التكاثر: ١) وتارة أخرى يأتي بمعنى اللغو و الغناء ﴿وَمِنَ النَّاسِ مَن يَشْتَرِي لَهْوَ الْحَدِيثِ لِيُضِلَّ عَن سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ بِغَيْرِ عِلْمٍ﴾ (لقمان: ٦).

وقد اعتمدت في دراستي هذه على تفاسير عدة منها: تفسير ابن كثير و القرطبي و الرازي و غيرهم وذلك لبيان المعنيين اللغوي و الديني لكل مصطلح. و تضم دراستي هذه خمسة فصول: الفصل الأول يمثل مقنمة الدراسة، و الثاني يتضمن الطريقة المتبعة في هذا البحث، و الفصل الثالث يضم ما سبق من دراسات و بحوث ذات صلة لصيقة بموضوع الدراسة، و أخيرا الفصل الخامس و يتضمن الخاتمة، و بعض التوصيات المستوحاة من الدراسة التي يمكن أن يستفيد منها الباحثون مستقبلا. وقد خلصت الدراسة إلى الجزم بعدم إمكانية ترجمة القرآن الكريم إلى لغة أخرى دون مساسها بالجوانب اللغوية و الأدبية التي يحتويها النص القرآني، بالإضافة إلى ضرورة تعمق المترجم بالعربية و الإنجليزية لغة و ثقافة وذلك للارتقاء بمستوى الترجمة التي لن تصل على أية حال لمستوى الكمال. وقد صدق سبحانه و تعالى بقوله:

﴿ قُلْ لِّئِنْ اجْتَمَعَتِ الْإِنْسُ وَالْجِنُّ عَلَى أَنْ يَأْتُوا بِمِثْلِ هَذَا الْقُرْآنِ لَا يَأْتُونَ بِمِثْلِهِ وَلَوْ كَانَ

بَعْضُهُمْ لِبَعْضٍ ظَهِيرًا ﴾ (الإسراء : ٨٨)