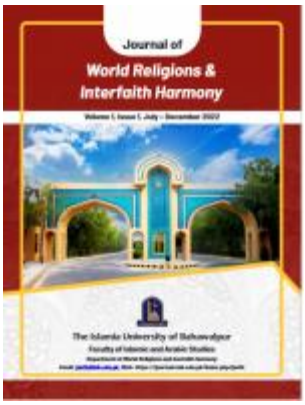


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Title Challenges of Translating the Arabic Qur'an into English: A Comparative Study of Eight Leading Translations

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Challenges of Translating the Arabic Qur'an into English:[1] A Comparative Study of Eight Leading Translations

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Abstract

Any translation of the Arabic Qur'an in English or any European language is likely to be imperfect. This is primarily due to the differences in the language, semantics, idiom, style and culture. Almost fifty such translations have appeared in the last fifty years, both by Muslim and other scholars, but none can claim any perfection in imaging the Arabic Qur'an. Nevertheless, there are some that are faithful to word-by-word[2] (literal) or sense-for-sense (free) translation,[3] but most lack the flavor of the Qur'anic essence and image either due to the translating approach, or inadequate understanding of the meaning of Sacred Arabic Text, or constraints of eloquence of the English language. This paper examines eight of the leading translations and draws conclusions relating to the use of translation techniques and literary devices and concepts that add beauty to the eloquence of Arabic Qur'an and makes it a living and literary masterpiece. It is found that the meaning of the lexical expressions have been maintained to a high degree in the process of

[1] English is the dominant language of the world and a major portion of the world population (Muslims and non-Muslims) is learning the Arabic Qur'an through its English translations, the question would be how accurate and communicative these translations are, and to what extent do they reflect the original meaning in an effective manner. Accordingly, there is a continuous need to evaluate the existing English translations of the Arabic Qur'an and to improve their quality. It is in this context that we see 'English Translation and Paraphrasing of The Qur'an' by Badr Hashemi (ISBN # 978-1-7923-8701-2), as an addition to this ever-progressing exercise.

[2] Notwithstanding that 'word for word' and 'sense-for-sense' are the commonly used methods for translating the sacred texts, many Muslim scholars have strong reservations on 'word for word' approach. They argue that this approach does not transfer the intended meaning and message of the Arabic Qur'an into English.

[3] There are a number of methods associated with translation. Some of these methods are: 1. Word-for-word translation ((literal) 2. Sense-for-sense translation ((Free) 3. Semantic translation 4. Idiomatic translation 5. Communicative translation.

translation and the use of literary devices has been adequately captured by the selected translations.

Keywords: The Arabic Qur'an, Translation/Meaning, Transliteration, Metaphors (Aistiearat), Metonymy (Alkinaya), Ellipsis (alqite alnaaqis), Irony (sukhria), Polysemy (Almufaraqa), Sarcasm (Sukhria), Embed (Tadmin), Parables (al'amthal), (Aistitrad), and Euphemism (Kinayatun).

Introduction

The Qur'an is the grand finale of all Divine Revelations and the Ultimate Truth. Allah, The Exalted and The Almighty, guaranteed to preserve its Sacred Arabic Text in its entirety and original form safe from any satanic change.[4]

Enriched with a harmonic combination of inimitable phonetic, lexical, syntactic, semantic, rhetorical, and cultural features that can never be found in any other text - it is a master piece of the most awe-inspiring revelation that has been bestowed on humanity as a matchless Divine Scripture.

The power of the Qur'anic language stems not only from its sound and structure, but also from its words which if replaced by other words, the result would be a loss of meaning, effect and harmony, etc. Every word, if not every letter, in the Qur'an contributes to its power and miraculous nature. In fact, what distinguishes this language is mainly the choice of words and the economy of expression.

The use of linguistic and rhetorical features are peculiar and challenge the translators[5] especially when translating literary devices. However, even if the translator succeeds in transferring the semantic meanings of a given text, there will be an inevitable loss in the pragmatic and implied meanings. In other words, there is no exact match between two texts in terms of linguistic realization, context of situation, and context of culture.[6] Indeed, translatability and/or its

[4] Quran/Ayah 09, Surah 15, Al-Hijr.

[5] See (i) 'Towards a structured theory on Qur'an translation for theoretical relevance and practical adequacy to Qur'an translation.' Adam Ahmed. July 2014, University of Westminster. UK. (ii) Aiwei Shi, 'Accommodation in Translation,' http//:www.proz.comltranslation-articles. (iii) Rnbeli Johnson, 'Cultural Implications for Translation,' http://w\"w.proz.comtranslation-articles/ ..

[6] The relationship between language and culture is one of 'interwoven elements'. They are closely inter-related because languages do not operate in isolation but within and as part of cultures. That metaphor as a part of a language is considered as a culture-specific and can be captured by the fact that cultural differences are associated with language differences. Metaphors carry the cultural heritage of specific language. It is therefore described as the mirror that reflects the language culture.

opposite might appear on the lexical, phrasal, or textual level or all levels at once, of any given text.[7]

The Arabic Qur'an is a 'sea of rhetoric' - it exhibits an unparalleled frequency of rhetorical features, surpassing any other Arabic text, classical or contemporary. The use of rhetoric in the Qur'an stands out from any other type of discourse. It employs a wider range and frequency of rhetorical features than any other rhymed prose - past or present.

The Qur'an uses eloquent Arabic language of the highest standard as well as a plethora of literary devices, the hallmark of any *magnum opus*. At times it employs short and fast paced Ayat/ Qur'anic Statements resembling the beatings of the heart, whilst other times slow, meticulous and clear instructive Ayat are used to lay down points of law.

However, in any translation of the Arabic Qur'an[8], one should look for one thing: How close it gets to communicating the meaning of the original, that inimitable Divine Text,[9] the very sounds of which, move men and women to tears and joy?[10]

Purpose, Methodology and Data

This is a qualitative descriptive study where linguistic analysis and comparative stylistic approaches have been employed in the analysis. It has three objectives:

(i) to develop a Comparative Study to assess whether or not the meaning and message of The Arabic Qur'an has been adequately maintained while translating into English. A sample of two Surah – Q. 02 and Q.

[7] J. MyhilL Problems in Lexical Semantics in the Old Testament, Rodopi, Amsterdam, 1997.

[8] Qur'an in Arabic – this phrase occurs four time in The Qur'an. It may imply (i) it is a translation into Arabic of the heavenly archetype/'Mother of the Book'; or (ii) it is an answer to an objection that Hebrew was thought to be the exclusive language of Divine Revelation.

[9] C. F. Bosworth and M .E. Richardson. Commentary on the Qur'an, Vol. 1, prepared by Richard Bcll, 1991. 'closely examined the Qur'anic text verse by verse, and observing the lengths of verses, their external and internal rhymes and assonances came to acknowledge that the structure of the Qur'an was far more complex than had hitherto been believed.'

[10] Qur'an/Ayah 23, Surah 39, Az-Zumar.

112 – were taken which are the most widely read, recited and memorized by almost every Muslim;

(ii) to undertake specific Case Studies to assess whether or not the selected literary devices - metaphors, metonymy, ellipsis, polysemy, irony/sarcasm, embed, parables, digression and euphemism - have been adequately identified in the Arabic Qur'an and sufficiently rendered in English by employing contextual approach as these cannot rest on their literal meaning alone;

(iii) to see whether the words, phrases and clauses that are translated are based on the nuances of the words which are closely related to the intended meaning as these are some of the areas where the Qur'an translations, especially ones with commentary, usually differ from each other and where they can be assessed objectively.

Ideology and axiology play a role in the translator's choice of a linguistic form amongst other alternatives. As an example, translator may (and do) resort to various strategies to strengthen or undermine particular aspects of the narratives they mediate, explicitly or implicitly. Such manipulations are more specific to religious discourse.

I have been particularly mindful of the above factor while making a choice of the English translations as sources of data for analysis of this paper. With one exception of a Christian academic A. J. Arberry (Arb), whom I have known in person at the University of Cambridge (UK) as a non-partisan scholar, others were/are believers and good Muslims: (Late) Muhammad Asad (Asd), Badr Hashemi (Bdr), Abdul Haleem (Hlm), (Late) Taqi Hilali-Muhammad Mohsin (HnM), Seyyed Hossein Nasr (Nsr), Ali Unal (Unl) and (Late) Abdallah Yusuf Ali (Ysf).[11] They all meet the criteria that are required for higher quality

[11] Daoud Mohammad Nassimi [A Thematic Comparative Review of some English Translations - Thesis Submitted to The University of Birmingham for the Degree of Ph.D.] provides the following background information about the translations and the translators that have been selected for this paper. However, I have added a few phrases here and there of the information about them that I have. (i) The Koran Interpreted – a Translation. Arberry, A.J. 2008, Oxford University Press. He argued that the Qur'an should be ranked among the greatest masterpieces of mankind on the basis of his study pertaining to the intricate and richly varied rhymes. He concedes the Muslim claim that the Qur'an is untranslatable, and calls it is neither prose nor poetry, but a

unique fusion of both. He has tried to compose clear English, avoiding the Biblical style favoured by some of his predecessors, especially (Late) Abdallah Yusuf Ali (Ysf) and (Late) Muhammad Asad (Asd). He was different from his predecessors because he neither adopted chronological order of the Qur'an nor had any negative agenda. As an interpreter of the Qur'an he would always be remembered not only in the West but also by the scholars of the East and his translation would be regarded as an authoritative version of the Qur'an. (ii) The Message of The Quran, Muhammad Asad, 1980. Dar Al-Andlus Limited, Gibraltar. This translation was first printed and distributed gratis (in two volumes) worldwide by Saudi Arabia. It is distinguished with certain features such as: its academic style and approach, its use of idiomatic and formal English, a logic- oriented approach in explaining some difficult Ayat and relating certain concepts and contexts, and paraphrasing certain sentences in the text to make the English sentence sound better. It is a good translation, fits well for someone reading from a traditional Judeo-Christian background. (iii) Abdel Haleem, M. A. S. A. 2010, Oxford University Press. He uses clear and simplified modern English that makes the text reader-friendly and easy to follow. One notable linguistic feature of his translation is its consideration for shifts in pronouns that occur sometimes within one Ayah. These shifts do not translate into English, so his method for clarifying them is to insert bracketed notes of who is being addressed. In addition, he keeps his translation deeply rooted in the original Arabic meanings and classical exegesis. (iv) English Translation of the Meanings and Commentary of The Noble Qur'an by. Muhammad Taqi-ud-Din al-Hilali and Muhammad Muhsin Khan. 2011, King Fahd Complex. Madinah. Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. This translation is printed and distributed gratis by Saudi Arabia. It is recognized for its features, such as its extra caution to avoid being apologetic and taking any risk of some liberal modern interpretations. Some readers, however, are distracted by the extensive notes contained in the body of the English text itself, rather than in footnotes accompanying the translation - too many words within the parenthesis, not translating many Arabic words and leaving them in Arabic, sometimes being too literal, limiting the meaning only to narrations from earlier Muslims, its lack of consideration sometimes for the non-Muslim readers, its use of some unrelated Ahadith, its ignoring of historical context of some Ayat, etc. What makes this translation even more annoying is their unnecessary insertion of both the Arabic and English forms of historical names. (v) Interpretation of The Meaning of The Noble Quran, Ali, A. Yusuf, 2013, Amana Publications. USA. This translation has been recognized for its unique features: use of chaste English, his vast knowledge of traditional Qur'anic sciences and the views of major commentators, and his broad knowledge of life and issues in the Western world. (vi) The Annotated Translation and Interpretation of The Qur'an in Modern English, 2006. Unal Ali – Tughra Books. The translation comes with interpretation and exposition on the meaning of Qur'anic Ayat in conjunction with the reasons for revelation or the circumstances of revelation with extensive notes of explanation from various authoritative sources on the *tafsir* of the Qur'an. It aims to present all truth which he has found to be in compliance with the essentials of *Islam.* It contains many explanatory parentheticals. The work focuses particularly on the *scientific facts of the Qur'an, the proofs for God's existence, and the purpose of life, etc.* (vii) The Study Qur'an, A new translation and commentary. Sayyed Hossein Nasr, 2019. Harper One, USA. This Quranic translation is unexceptional. Nasr produces an equivalent of the King James Bible idiom, with 'God' as the inevitable rendering of the divine Name and the similarly biblicized Englishing of the names of prophets, angels, places etc. The methodology falls short of that requirement even as it mimicks the activity of tafsir and ijtihad in many places. In terms of presenting Islam to non-Muslims in an advantageous light in the post-9/11 world, it would have

translations[12], namely: command of the Arabic language, knowledge of the exact meanings of the Arabic words and idioms,[13] command of the English language, expertise in text analysis, and knowledge of the Arab ancient history and culture.

It may be noted that the Arabic Qur'an does not have different versions like the Bible, so it is all the same translated by different people in different languages - The Arabic Qur'an remains unchanged. Each one of the selected translations provide the translation of the whole Arabic Qur'an – 114 Surah. In fact, five of these translations are more of an encyclopedia – everyone in its own right – Yusuf (Ysf), Asad (Asd), Unal (Unl), Nasr (Nsr) and Badr (Bdr).

Comparative Study

been a commendable effort that filled a void. However, the fact that it is, at best, mainstream in many places and absolutely heterodox in many others makes it unrecommendable in absolute terms. Those who are looking for a truly reliable holistic digest of the mercy-oriented, reason-grounded book of law, wisdom, prophets and devotion that is the Qur'an in light of its native principles of mass transmission, consensus, abrogation, jurisprudence and the inexhaustible troves of divinely-inspired Arabic polysemy and Prophetic directives, must keep looking. In many instances, the translation provides lucid, powerful commentary on Ayat related to the hereafter, repentance, virtue, and self-discipline. (viii) English Translation and Paraphrasing of The Qur'an. Badr Hashemi, 2022. The Islamia University of Bahawalpur and BUZ University, Multan. Pakistan. This translation and paraphrasing of the Qur'an promises to be a useful addition to the list of translations that are already available. It has important features that are going to be really helpful to the seekers of the simple meanings of the Qur'an and deeper knowledge of the last of the revealed Books of Allah: The language is the modern English which doesn't cause the reader to pause and wonder what exactly is he/she reading. One of its major strengths lies in its extensive reliance on references and explanations - the entire text is annotated in a meticulous and detailed way. Moreover, the Index is one of the features of the book that students and teachers may find very helpful. Reading this translation/paraphrasing shall be a pleasant experience. By and large, he has done remarkably well to remain diligently loyal to Allah's Word.

[12] Abdol-Mehdi Riazi: 'The Invisible in Translation.' Paper presented at International Conference in Language and Translation at Bahrain University, 2002.

[13] Confusion between different Arabic words. For example, Menezes mistakenly translated Abu Bakr (the name of the Prophet's famous Companion) as "the father of the virgin." Apart from the fact that this is a proper name, and is not meant to be translated, the word for virgin is *bikr* and not *bakr*. Mistaking Arabic for Hebrew or Syriac. Watt concluded that the meaning of '*rujz*' in Q.74:04 was the same as the Syriac rugza, which means 'wrath' whereas the real meaning is 'pollution' (which is used in the verse to signify idols). Some confusion with Hebrew traditions as well. For example, Jeffery confused the Arabic '*sakinah*' in Q.48:04, which means tranquility, with the Hebrew '*shekinah*', which has a different meaning.

Generally speaking, it should be borne in mind that doing translation is not a mere replacement of lexical and grammatical items but that there are also cultural and situational aspects which should be taken into consideration as cultures and situations are not always the same in different languages[14] - the situational aspects assume special importance in the Qur'anic context as these relate to the circumstances when a particular Ayah/Surah/Injunction was revealed so its contextual relevance would assume significance while rendering it to another language.

While words and conceptions function as the frame of Qur'anic meaning, the difference between the Arabic idioms from the English is a matter of its syntactic cast and the mode in which it conveys ideas.[15] It is exclusively due to the extreme flexibility of Arabic grammar owing to the peculiar system of verbal 'roots' and the numerous stem-forms which can be derived from them. Any translation, however meticulously written, can only provide an understanding of the meaning or approximate meaning of the Arabic Qur'an.

Furthermore, the Qur'an is laden with culture-specific elements that are alien and thus, incomprehensible to non-Arabs/non-Muslims. This is because The Qur'an was revealed in an Arab context of culture that is entirely alien to an audience outside the Arabian Peninsula. Generally, Qur'anic cultural elements are interwoven with Arabic-specific linguistic patterns. In addition, there are connotational overtones in the cultural and linguistic patterns. This means that Qur'anic-specific cultural features are translation-resistant.

[14] The recent dramatic global growth in conversions to Islam and multicultural communities, which can only increase in coming generations, means that a much wider, essentially non-Muslim audience in many different parts of the world is inevitably will turn to the Qur'an - almost always in translation. So that an increasingly significant proportion of those non-Arab Muslims will also turn to translations for all the multiple roles it necessarily plays in the practice and deepening of their faith.

[15] The fact remains that there are many mismatches between Arabic and English in terms of tenses, aspects, syntactic features, and stylistic features.

Take the example of the word 'Allah.'[16] It is translated as 'God' in English. But the two words have different meanings. The Christian concept of 'God' as Father, Son and Holy Spirit reflects Christian theological ideas that do not accommodate the Qur'anic notion of 'Allah.' Muslims have a semantically different image of 'God' - the Unshared Unity and Oneness and Uniqueness of God with whom no one else can be associated. Thus, the English translation will not be faithful without taking culture into consideration.

Part 1

A comparative study of eight leading translations in English reveals a considerable variation in rendering of some key words, terms and expressions of the Sacred Arabic Text. A sample of such words/expressions is taken from the two Surah: Q.01:01-07 and Q.112:01-04.

Q.01:01– 07 is one of the very early revelations to The Prophet Mohammed(P)[17], and based on some traditions, it was the first complete Surah that was revealed. It carries at least three titles: *al-Fatihah*, *Sab'a al-Mathani*, and *Umm al-Kitab* - literally meaning Mother of the Book, as it contains the condensed version of the fundamental principles laid down in The Qur'an. The Prophet(P) is reported to have said: A Salat Prayer during which al-Fatihah is not recited is deficient.[18] And whoever recites this Surah would earn the spiritual reward for reciting two-

[16] It becomes a serious problem for those terms that have no direct equivalent in English, for examples, *Rabb*, *taqwa*, *shirk*, *ghayb Samawat/Sama'*, *jahannum*, *dhikr*, *jannah,* and *tawbah,* etc. The English translations of these terms do not convey the full semantic and liturgical scope as well as other Qur'anic terms. It may also be noted that The Arabic Qur'an makes frequent use of '*wau.*' It has force, not only that of 'and' but also of 'however,' 'but,' 'when,' 'yet.' At times, when used after each in a series of names, it is used instead of comma. To translate it only as 'and' would be to misrepresent the Sacred Arabic Text, or to leave it un-translated would be injustice to the translation. Similarly, '*au*' rendered as 'or' but may also imply, depending on the context, *but*, *unless/except/but not when*, *until*, and *either…or*. They represent the different meanings that *'aw'* has, namely alternative, uncertainty, deliberate ambiguity, division, absolute addition, exception, continuance of an action to a specified time, and nexus question.

[17] The Prophet, As-Sayyed Muhammad(P) ibn Abdallah, 570-632 CE.

[18] The Book of Bokhari (Hadith # 723), and the book of Muslim (Hadith # 394.

thirds of the whole Qur'an, as well as the reward equivalent to providing charity to all faithful men and women all over the globe. [19]

Sample 1
Title of the Surah: *Al-Fatihah*
Q. 01:01-07

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَٰنِ الرَّحِيمِ ١ الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ ٢ الرَّحْمَٰنِ الرَّحِيمِ ٣ مَالِكِ يَوْمِ الدِّينِ ٤ إِيَّاكَ نَعْبُدُ وَإِيَّاكَ نَسْتَعِينُ ٥ اهْدِنَا الصِّرَاطَ الْمُسْتَقِيمَ ٦ صِرَاطَ الَّذِينَ أَنْعَمْتَ عَلَيْهِمْ غَيْرِ الْمَغْضُوبِ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا الضَّالِّينَ٧

Transliteration: 01.Bismillah hir rahman nir Raheem. 02. Alhamdu lillaahi Rabbil 'aalameen 03. Ar-Rahmaanir-Raheem 04. Maaliki Yawmid-Deen 05. Iyyaaka na'budu wa lyyaaka nasta'een. Ihdinas-Siraatal-Mustaqeem. 06. Siraatal-–lazeena an'amta 'alaihim 07. ghayril-maghdoobi 'alaihim wa lad-daaalleen.

Comparative Matrix - *Al-Fatihah*
Q. 01:01-07

Arb	**01**. In the Name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate. **02**. Praise belongs to God, the Lord of all Being, **03.** the All-merciful, the All-compassionate, **04**. The Master of the Day of Doom. **05**. Thee only we serve; to Thee alone we pray for succor. **06.** Guide us in the straight path, **07**. The path of those whom Thou hast blessed, not of those against whom Thou art wrathful, nor of those who are astray.
Asd	**01**. In the name of God, The Most Gracious, The Dispenser of Grace. **02.** All Praise is due to God alone, the Sustainer of all the worlds, **03**. the Most Gracious, the Dispenser of Grace, **04**. Lord of the Day of Judgment! **05**. Thee alone do we worship; and unto Thee alone do we turn for aid. **06**. Guide us the straight way.

[19] Abul Kalam Azad, The opening chapter of the Qur'an (rendered by Syed Abdul Latif). Islamic Book Trust. Kuala Lumpur, 200I. Ebrahim Kazim, Contemplating Suratul Fatihah, Islamic Centre. Trinidad, 1997. Ahmad Zaki Hammad, The Opening to the Quran. Quranic Literacy Institute, Chicago, 1996.

	07. The way of those upon whom Thou hast bestowed Thy blessings, not of those who have been condemned [by Thee], nor of those who go astray!
Hlm	**01**. In the name of God, the Lord of Mercy, the Giver of Mercy! **02**. Praise belongs to God, Lord of the Worlds, **03**. the Lord of Mercy, the Giver of Mercy, **04**. Master of the Day of Judgement. **05**. It is You we worship; it is You we ask for help. **06.** Guide us to the straight path: **07**. The path of those You have blessed, those who incur no anger and who have not gone astray.
. HnM	**01**. In the Name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful. **02**. All the praises and thanks be to Allah, the Lord of the Alamin (mankind, jinn and all that exists.) **03.** The Most Gracious, the Most Merciful. **04**. The Only Owner (and the only Ruling Judge) of the Day of Recompense (i.e., the Day of Resurrection.) **05.** You (Alone) we worship, and You (Alone) we ask for help (for each and everything). **06**. Guide us to the Straight Way. **07**. The way of those on whom You have bestowed Your Grace, not (the way) of those who earned Your Anger (such as the Jews) nor of those who went astray (such as the Christians).
Ysf	**01**. In the name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful. **02**. Praise be to Allah, the Cherisher and Sustainer of the worlds. **03.** Most Gracious, Most Merciful; **04**. Master of the Day of Judgment. **05**. Thee do we worship, and Thine aid we seek. **06**. Show us the straight way. **07**. The way of those on whom Thou hast bestowed Thy Grace, those whose (portion) is not wrath, and who go not astray.
	01. In the Name of God, the All-Merciful, the All-Compassionate.

Unl	**02**. All praise and gratitude (whoever gives these to whomever for whatever reason and in whatever way from the first day of creation until eternity) are for God, the Lord of the worlds. **03.** The All-Merciful, the All-Compassionate, **04.** The Master of the Day of Judgment. **05**. You alone do we worship, and from You alone do we seek help. **06**. Guide us to the Straight Path. **07.** The Path of those whom You have favored, not of those who have incurred (Your) wrath (punishment and condemnation), nor of those who are astray.
Nsr	**01**. In the Name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful. **02**. Praise be to God, Lord of the worlds, **03**. the Compassionate, the Merciful, **04**. Master of the Day of Judgment. **05**. Thee we worship and from Thee we seek help. **06**. Guide us upon the straight path **07**. The path of those whom Thou hast blessed, not of those who incur wrath, nor of those who are astray.
Bdr	**01.** *I/We begin* by the *Blessed* Name of Allah. The Immensely-Merciful *to all*, The Infinitely-Compassionate *to everyone*. **02**. All Praise *and Gratitude* is for Allah *alone, while one can never adequately praise Him and express gratitude*. Rabb - *The Lord Creator and the Lord Sustainer* of all existence *from infinity to eternity*. **03**. *Allah* - The Immensely-Merciful *to all*, *Allah* - The Infinitely-Compassionate *to everyone.* **04**. *Allah is the sole and the* Supreme Authority *on all judgments* at the Time of Final Judgment. **05**. It is You alone – *O Allah!* – we *consciously* submit to *in worship, awe and reverence,* and, it is to You alone – *O Allah!* – we call for help, *mercy and compassion.* **06**. Guide us to the righteous approach *of understanding and practicing Islam in all its connotations, and set us firmly upon it.*

	07. The approach of those whom <u>You favor</u> *and bless and,* <u>not of those who incur</u> *Your* <u>Wrath, and not of those too who are misguided</u> *and lost and are disfavored by You.*

The word 'Allah' – with root: '*a,' 'l', 'h'* - is ubiquitous in the Book. The Qur'an has many references to Allah(EA) and to His close relationship with the world; Allah(EA) is said to be closer to the human being than is the jugular vein - Q.50:16. Everything in the universe is regarded as a sign (*ayah*) of His Presence and Providence and human beings need to use their intelligence to interpret these signs. Intelligent reflection on Allah(EA)'s signs confirms the existence of Allah(EA) and of the divine and directed nature of the world's design.

Allah(EA) is incomparable and cannot be completely known. Our knowledge of Allah(EA) is limited, but we can reflect on His Majestic Attributes – 99 - through meditating on his Beautiful Sacred Names which appear alongside or sometimes as substitutes for the Name Allah(EA).[20] Allah(EA) is the creator and teacher of human beings who through the Qur'an and earlier messages instructs humanity in how to live. He has created us to submit to Him in reverence, awe and worship, and He notes our conduct and award us accordingly.

Translating 'Allah' as 'God' by Arb, Asd, Hlm, Unl and Nsr is not being faithful to the Sacred Arabic Text and is misleading – former being a symbol of 'Unshared Unity, Oneness' (*Tawheed*) and the later being a symbol of 'Trinity' (*Taslees*). If the purpose was to use a term that is already known to the audience, then that should not have been the purpose of translation.

Besides Allah(EA), there are three key words/expressions in this Surah: (i) *'na'budo'* (root word - '*a', 'b', 'd'*), (ii) '*Sirat-al Mustaqeem'* (root word - *'s', 'r',*

[20] See 'The Divine 99' by Badr Hashemi.

't'; 'q', 'w', 'm'), and (iii) '*maghdoob' (*root word - *'gh', 'd', 'b'*)*'daaalleen'* (root word - '*d', 'l', 'l'*).

'*Na'budo*' has been rendered as 'worship' (it is a Biblical term) by seven of the eight translators. In fact, *'abd'*, '*ibadah*' conveys the sense of submission, obedience, servitude and being a slave in addition to worship. While these four meanings are all intended in the Qur'anic usage of this word, all translations, exception being the one by Arb (serve) and Bdr (submit) have reduced its meaning to only ritual worship.

Seven of the eight translators have translated the Qur'anic term '*Sirat-al Mustaqeem'* as 'Straight Path/Way' leaving the reader in difficulty in understanding the meaning of this term[21]. Arb and Hlm have not added any words to say what it means; Asd, HnM, Unl, Nsr and Bdr have added words in italics/brackets to convey its intended meaning; Bdr has added a detailed footnote expressing the meaning of this phrase.[22]

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[22] Bible/Proverbs 3.5-6 (ESV) gives a different understanding of The Straight Way/Path: 'Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths.'

[22] Bdr adds this footnote: '*Sirat Mustaqeem'* of the Sacred Arabic Text is generally understood as 'The Right/Straight Path.' The theme occurs in various combinations, such as *Sirati Rabbika Mustaqima'* (Q.06:126), *'Sirati Mustaqiman'* (Q.06:153), *'Siratikal Mustaqim'* (Q.07:16), *Siratil Aziz al-Hameed'* (Q.14:01, 22:24, 34:06), *'Siratan Aliyya Mustaqiman'* (Q.15:41), *'Siratan Sawiyya'* (Q.19:43), *'Sawa as-Sirat'* (Q.38:22), '*Sirati Allah'* (Q.42:53), etc. The Qur'an advises the believers to follow 'The Right/Straight Path' by avoiding crimes against equality, family, humanity, fairness and integrity. These values are personal moral values and not, by itself, a license to punish people who violate those values. The legal limits restrict what we may and may not do to protect ourselves against such fault lines. Q.06.150-153, 02:275 and 17:26-30 provide a listing of key parameters: (i) do not worship any entity besides Him; (ii) be kind to your parents; (iii) do not kill your children for fear of impoverishment; (iv) do not come anywhere near lewdness/adultery/LGBT – Q.17:32, incest – Q.04:22-23, and homosexuality – Q.07:80-81; (v) do not kill any person except in pursuit of justice and do not murder – also Q.17:33; (vi) do not come anywhere near the assets of the orphan, except for what is best, until he/she reaches maturity; (vii) give honest full measure and weigh equitably – also Q.17:34-35; (viii) be honest in giving testimony/witness even if it may be against a relative; (ix) keep your promise made to Allah(EA); (x) do not indulge in the business of interest – Q.02:275; (xi) be sparing and kind,

The concept of '*Sirat-al Mustaqeem'* represents very concisely the idea that Islam is a direct route to the truth, and that Allah(EA) provides us with guidance through the Qur'an. However, one of its interpretations stress the naturalness of belief and of the rules of Islam, emphasizing that both the religion and the world have been made for human beings and so are not difficult to understand.

The 'straight path/way' is thus in accordance with humanity's natural inclinations (*fitrah*) – i.e., that human beings are inclined by their inner nature to submit to the Will of Allah(EA - Q.30:30. However, one must be wary of the evil thoughts and temptations incited by Satan in an effort to lead people 'astray' from the Straight Path/Way but Allah(EA)'s guidance will suffice to keep one on 'the path of those with whom Allah(EA) is pleased' – Q.01:07.

HnM specify Jews as '*maghdoob'* and Christians as *'daaalleen'* – naming the two religious communities is too limited in the perceived context. Bdr maintains, and rightly so, that it relates to those communities and nations that are mentioned in the 'punishment' stories of the Qur'an which he mentions in his footnote. Seven translators have employed the past tense and similar words for translation, he uses the present continuous tense for, as he explains: 'the phenomenon of the Divine Wrath and Anger and Punishment has always been and would always be relevant to those communities that persistently deny and disobey His Commandments conveyed through Allah's designated Messengers/Prophets.'

In support of his argument, Bdr highlights some contemporary examples, like 2004 deadliest disaster in the South Asian tsunami which effected 7 countries and killed 226,408; 2007 UK floods; 2010 earthquake in Haiti; 2011 Virginia earthquake; 2012 Hurricanes Isaac, Sandy, Katrina, etc. – were considered by the religious leaders, Muslims, Christians and Jews, as Divine Punishments for the

instead of being greedy and insulting – Q.17:26-30; do not consume those items of food that are prohibited – Q.05:03, 06:118, 145. This is My Path, Right/Straight. So follow it! And do not follow the other paths lest they divert you from His Path.

alleged sinful crimes like abortion, homosexuality, and decaying social morality. The Qur'an sets out a general framework for such people in Q.03:90, 106.[23]

'an'amta 'alaihim' – Q. 01:07- may be understood to mean the recipients of Allah(EA)'s favor, namely, the Prophets, those who follow them, the martyrs (those who chooses to sacrifice their life or face pain and suffering instead of giving up something they hold religiously sacred), and the righteous (Q.04:69), and not those who appear, briefly, to enjoy worldly prosperity and success; all too often, these people are among those whom Allah(EA) has condemned because they have lost sight of '*Sirat-al Mustaqeem'*. This negative explanation makes it quite clear that '*in'am*' (favor) denotes all those real and abiding favors and blessings which one receives in reward for righteous conduct through Allah(EA)'s approval and pleasure, rather than those apparent and fleeting favors which the Pharaohs, Nimrods and Korahs (Qaruns) used to receive in the past, and which are enjoyed even today by people notorious for oppression, evil and corruption.

Sample 2

Title of the Surah: *al-Ikhlas*

Q.112

'*Ikhlas*' means The Purity *of Faith*, because it contains the declaration of Allah(EA)'s transcendence, a confirmation of His Unshared Unity, a disavowal of His dependence on causes, and a refutation of the disbelievers' notions about the

[23] The Divine Wrath manifests itself by way of 'supernatural' and 'natural' disasters. The Qur'an mentions communities as well as individuals who became victims of Allah(EA)'s Wrath: the People of Prophet Nuh/Noah(P) (Q.26:106-102); the People of Prophet Saleh(P)/People of Thamud (Q.07:76-78; 11:61-68); the People of Prophet Lut/Lot(P) (Q.26:160-175); the People of Prophet Sho'yab(P)/Midian (Q.11:84-94); Ayka (Q.26:176-191); the People of Prophet Hud(P)/'Ad (Q.11:50-60; 26:123-140); Pharaoh (Q.03:11; 11:96-99; 20:78-79); the People of Prophet Musa/ Moses(P) (Q.02:88-90; 20:81; 60:13); etc.

divine and divinity. It is also called Surah *at-Tawheed*, meaning Declaration of Allah(EA)'s Unshared Unity and Oneness and Uniqueness - pure and undefiled. This Surah firmly establishes the Islamic belief in Allah(EA)'s Unshared Unity and Oneness just as Surah Al-Kafirun (Q.109) is a denunciation of any similarity or meeting point between the Islamic concept of Allah(EA)'s Unshared Unity and Oneness and any belief that ascribes human form or personality to Allah(EA). Each Surah deals with Allah(EA)'s Unshared Unity and Oneness from a different angle. The Prophet(P) used to start his day by reciting these two Surah in the Sunnah Prayer before the Mandatory Prayer of post-dawn/Fajr. The Prophet(P) is reported to have remarked that this Surah is equivalent to one-third of the whole Qur'an.[24]

Q.112:01-04

قُلْ هُوَ اللَّهُ أَحَدٌ ١ اللَّهُ الصَّمَدُ ٢ لَمْ يَلِدْ وَلَمْ يُولَدْ ٣ وَلَمْ يَكُن لَّهُ كُفُوًا أَحَدٌ ٤

Transliteration: 01. Qul[25] huwal laahu ahad. 02. Allah hus-samad. 03. Lam yalid wa lam yoolad. 04. Wa lam yakul-lahoo kufuwan ahad.

Comparative Matrix - *Al-Ikhlas*

Q. 112:01-04

Arb	**01**. Say: 'He is God, One, **02**. God, the Everlasting Refuge, **03**. who has not begotten, and has not been begotten, **04.** and equal to Him is not any one.'
Asd	**01**. He is the One God. **02**. God the Eternal, the Uncaused Cause of All Being.

[24] See The Book of Bokhari, Hadith # 6643, and 'Introducing The Qur'an', by Badr Hashemi.

[25] '*Qul*' of the Sacred Arabic Text is an imperative and occurs more than 300 times throughout The Qur'an. It may mean 'say', 'proclaim', 'speak' as the context may demand. In almost all cases, it is understood as addressing only The Prophet(P), but sometimes believers are also addressed: Q.03:84; 112:01.

	03. He begets not, and neither is He begotten; **04**. And there is nothing that could be compared with Him.
Hlm	**01.** Say, He is God the One, **02**. God the eternal. **03**. He begot no one nor was He begotten. **04**. No one is comparable to Him.
. HnM	**01**. Say (O Muhammad): He is Allah, (the) One. **02.** Allah is Self-Sufficient Master. Whom all creatures need (He neither eats nor drinks). **03**. He begets not, nor was He begotten. **04**. And there is none co-equal or comparable unto Him.
Ysf	**01**. Say: He is Allah, the One *and Only*; **02**. Allah, the Eternal, Absolute; **03**. He begetteth not, nor is He begotten. **04**. And there is none like unto Him.
Unl,	**01**. Say: He, God, the Unique One of Absolute Unity. **02**. God, the Eternally-Besought-of-All (Himself in no need of anything). **03**. He begets not, nor is He begotten. **04**. And comparable to Him there is none.
Nsr	**01**. Say, He, God, is One, **02**. God, the Eternally Sufficient unto Himself. **03**. He begets not; nor was He begotten. **04**. And none is like unto Him
Bdr	**01**. Proclaim *the truth:* He is Allah, the One *and Only.* **02**. Allah, the Eternally-Besought of all *at times of need while He seeks none.* **03.** *He has no family.* Neither giving birth to *nor parenting anyone: no*

	son, no daughter, no downstream family, nor being born of *anyone: no parents, no siblings, no upstream family.* **04**. And *equal or* comparable to Him is no one, *has never been any, and shall never be any.*

There are three key concepts here: '*Ahad,' 'As-Samad'* and '*Lam yalid wa lam yoolad.'*

'*Ahad*' refers to Allah(EA)'s Unshared Unity – this term is much more precise than the more frequently used term, '*Waahid.'*, which means 'one'. '*Ahad'* has the added connotations of absolute and continuous unity and an absence of equals – this connotation has been captured by adding '*the Only*' by Bdr, Ysf. Unl renders it as 'One of Absolute Unity.' Other translators have missed to offer an explanation.

***'As-Samad'* is from the root's', *'m', 'd'* which occurs only once here in the Qur'an. It has several classical Arabic connotations: to endeavor, to reach or attain something, to turn to, to need, to direct oneself toward, or aim toward something, to set up, to erect something, to be impenetrable, solid, to remain unaffected, unchanged, to be sublime, and everlasting.**

The first is the idea of self-sustaining, being self-sufficient and independent of all things. These names come together to paint a picture that He is indeed alone, indivisible, and unique. There is no entity of worship outside of Him who we can sufficiently rely upon. So we turn to Him alone for all our needs, and He is enough for the believer. All our troubles, needs, and wants are handled perfectly in the care of Allah-us Samad.

'*Lam yalid wa lam yoolad'* – coming from the root *'w', 'l', 'd'* - is another phrase that need to be understood. '*yalid'* means give birth to, generate, produce, sire, beget. '*yoolad*' means birthed, born, generated, produced, sired, and begotten.

Seven translations capture it as 'He begets not; nor was He begotten.' While this translation is fairly appropriate to convey the essence and meaning of the Sacred Arabic Text, Bdr has given a better wording: *He has no family.* 'Neither giving birth to *nor parenting anyone: no son, no daughter, no downstream family,* nor being born of *anyone: no parents, no siblings, no upstream family'.*

Part 2

In this part, I shall focus on the translations of ten literary devices - metaphors, metonymy, ellipsis, polysemy, irony, sarcasm, embed, digression, parable and euphemism. I shall use eight leading English translations and examine the extent to which the translators have been faithful and successful in capturing and conveying the meaning and messages of these ten devices - samples for this exercise comprise 50 Ayat from 40 Surah.

Case Study – 1

Metaphors [26] are a form of figurative language, which refer to words or expressions that mean something different from their literal meaning. The use of metaphors along with other rhetorical usages is a feature of the Arabic Qur'an.

In Surah al-Baqarah alone, there are at least 15 metaphorical Ayat/Statements. Some common examples of such metaphor may include the references to disbelievers 'unable to hear or see,' meaning that they are incapable of discerning the truth (of Islam). They have 'veils over their hearts, heaviness in their ears.' (Q.18:57), or they are covered in darkness (Q.10:27). Similarly, in Q. 47:04 - '*hatta tadaʿa l-harbu awzaraha'* meaning 'until the war lays down its burdens' - war is represented as a warrior who lays down the burden of arms after the war.

Consider some specific examples.

[26] *Aistiearat*/استعارات

Title of the Surah: *Yusuf*

Q.12:09

اقْتُلُوا يُوسُفَ أَوِ اطْرَحُوهُ أَرْضًا يَخْلُ لَكُمْ وَجْهُ أَبِيكُمْ وَتَكُونُوا مِنْ بَعْدِهِ قَوْمًا صَالِحِينَ ٩

Transliteration: Uqtuloo Yoosufa awitra hoohu ardany yakhlu lakum wajhu abeekum wa takoonoo mim ba'dihee qawman saaliheen.

Title of the Surah: *Yusuf*

Q.12:84

وَتَوَلَّىٰ عَنْهُمْ وَقَالَ يَا أَسَفَىٰ عَلَىٰ يُوسُفَ وَابْيَضَّتْ عَيْنَاهُ مِنَ الْحُزْنِ فَهُوَ كَظِيمٌ ٨٤

Transliteration: Wa tawallaa 'anhum wa qaala yaaa asafaa 'alaa Yoosufa wabyaddat 'aynaahu minal huzni fahuwa kazeem.

Title of the Surah: *al-Ankabut*

Q.29:41

مَثَلُ الَّذِينَ اتَّخَذُوا مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ أَوْلِيَاءَ كَمَثَلِ الْعَنْكَبُوتِ اتَّخَذَتْ بَيْتًا ۖ وَإِنَّ أَوْهَنَ الْبُيُوتِ لَبَيْتُ الْعَنْكَبُوتِ ۖ لَوْ كَانُوا يَعْلَمُونَ ٤١

Transliteration: Masalul lazeenat takhazoo min doonil laahi awliyaaa'a kamasalil 'ankaboot, ittakhazat baitaa; wa inna awhanal buyooti la baitul 'ankaboot; law kaanoo ya'lamoon.

Comparative Matrix – Case Study 1

Q.12:09; 12:84; 29:41.

Arb	**12:09** - Kill you Joseph, or cast him forth into some land, that your father's face may be free for you. **12:84** - And his eyes turned white because of the sorrow. **29:41** - The likeness of those who have taken to them protectors, apart from God, is as the likeness of the spider that takes to itself a house; and surely the frailest of houses is the house of the spider, did they but know.

Asd	**12:09** - Slay Joseph, or else drive him away to some [faraway] land, so that your father's regard may be for you alone. **12:84** - And his eyes became dim from the grief. **29:41** – The parable of those who take [beings or forces] other than God for their protectors is that of the spider which makes for itself a house: for, behold, the frailest of all houses is the spider's house. Could they but understand this!
Hlm	**12:09** - Kill Joseph or banish him to another land, and your father's attention will be free to turn to you. **12:84** - And his eyes turned white because of the grief. **29:41**- Those who take protectors other than God can be compared to spiders building themselves houses– the spider's is the frailest of all houses– if only they could understand.
HnM	**12:09** - Kill Yusuf or cast him out to some (other) land, so that the favor of your father may be given to you alone. **12:84** - And he lost his sight because of the sorrow. **29:41** – The likeness of those who take (false deities as) *Awliya* (protectors, helpers) other than Allah is the likeliness of a spider who builds (for itself) a house, but verily, the frailest (weakest) of houses is the spider's house – if they but know.
Ysf	**12:09** - Slay ye Joseph or cast him out to some (unknown) land, that so the favor of your father may be given to you alone. **12:84** - And his eyes became white with sorrow. **29:41** - The parable of those who take protectors other than Allah is that of the spider, who builds (to itself) a house; but truly the flimsiest of houses is the spider´s house; if they but knew.
	12:09 - Kill Joseph, or cast him out in some distant land so that your father's attention should turn only to you.

Unl	**12:84** - And his eyes turned white because of the grief. **29:41**- The parable of those who take to them other than God for guardians (to entrust their affairs to) is like a spider: it has made for itself a house, and surely the frailest of houses is the spider's house. If only they knew this.
Nsr	**12:09** - Slay Joseph, or cast him out to some land, that your father's concern might be for you. **12:84** - His eyes had turned white with grief. **29:41** - The parable of those who take protectors apart from God is that of the spider that makes a house. Truly the frailest of houses is the spider's house, if they but knew.
Bdr	**12:09** - Kill Joseph or drive him away in some *distant* land, so that your father's affection will be exclusively for you. **12:84** - And he lost his *eye*-sight because of the *anguish and* grief. **29:41** - The likeness of those who take protectors other than Allah is the likeness of the she-spider: it makes a house for itself of delicate webs, but, undoubtedly, the spider's house is the weakest of houses - if only they can understand.

Q. 12:09 - The metaphorical expression in this Ayah *yakhlu lakum wajhu abeekum* means that the attention and affection of the father will be passed on to his sons after killing Joseph, who received more love and care from his father. The more focused translation of the metaphor appears to be of Bdr's, while Unl, Ysf, HnM also capture the essence, but Arb and Asd do not. In fact, Arb's literal translation 'that your father's face may be free for you' does not make sense and is misleading for the readers.

Q.12:84 - The metaphorical expression in this Ayah '*wabyaddat 'aynaahu'* means that the effect of the loss of Joseph was so severe that his father lost his sight. In this case, it is only two translations (Bdr and HnM) that convey the empirical meaning; the others do not.

Q.29:41 – The Ayah uses both a simile and a metaphor to draw a parallel between the weak and vulnerable structure of a spider's web and those entities whom some people take as protectors beside Allah(EA). And just as the spider's house becomes scattered dust, so too do the creeds and rituals of those who worship entities other than Allah become scattered dust and their deeds come to naught. In this way, this Ayah points to pseudo-polytheism of those who worship Allah(EA) to be seen of men, for they have, in effect, taken a worshipful entity other than Allah(EA).

Case Study – 2

Metonymy [27] - it is a figure of speech in which an object or idea is referred to by the name of something closely associated with it, as opposed to by its own name. It involves a word or phrase substituting or standing in for another word or phrase. Translating metonymy creates problems while finding out the intended, desired and hidden meaning as substitutes - this substitution is conditioned by the existence of a contiguity relation between the literal and figurative meanings and the existence of an implicit clue indicating that the literal meaning is not intended. Consider some specific examples.

Title of the Surah: *al-Baqarah*

Q.02:279

فَإِنْ لَمْ تَفْعَلُوا فَأْذَنُوا بِحَرْبٍ مِنَ اللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ ۖ وَإِنْ تُبْتُمْ فَلَكُمْ رُءُوسُ أَمْوَالِكُمْ لَا تَظْلِمُونَ وَلَا تُظْلَمُونَ ٢٧٩

[27] *Alkinaya*/الكناية

Transliteration: Fail lam taf'aloo faazanoo biharbim minal laahi wa Rasoolihee wa in tubtum falakum ru'oosu amwaalikum laa tazlimoona wa laa tuzlamoon.

Title of the Surah: *at-Tawbah*

Q. 09:61

وَمِنْهُمُ الَّذِينَ يُؤْذُونَ النَّبِيَّ وَيَقُولُونَ هُوَ أُذُنٌ ۚ قُلْ أُذُنُ خَيْرٍ لَكُمْ يُؤْمِنُ بِاللَّهِ وَيُؤْمِنُ لِلْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَرَحْمَةٌ لِلَّذِينَ آمَنُوا مِنْكُمْ ۚ وَالَّذِينَ يُؤْذُونَ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ لَهُمْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ ٦١

Transliteration: Wa minhumul lazeena yu'zoonan nabiyya wa yaqooloona huwa uzun; qul uzunu khairil lakum yu'minu billaahi wa yu'minu lil mu'mineena wa rahmatul lil lazeena aamanoo minkum; wallazeena yu'zoona Rasoolal laahi lahum 'azaabun 'aleem.

Comparative Matrix – Case Study 2

Q. 02:279; 09:61.

Arb	**02:279 -** But if you do not, then take notice that God shall war with you, and His Messenger; yet if you repent, you shall have your principal, unwronging and unwronged. **09:61 -** And some of them hurt the Prophet, saying, 'He is an ear!' Say: 'An ear of good for you; he believes in God, and believes the believers, and he is a mercy to the believers among you. Those who hurt God's Messenger -- for them awaits a painful chastisement.'
Asd	**02:279 -** for if you do it not, then know that you are at war with God and His Apostle. But if you repent, then you shall be entitled to [the return of] your principal you will do no wrong, and neither will you be wronged. **09:61 –** And among those [enemies of the truth] there are such as malign the Prophet by saying, "He is all ear." Say: "[Yes,] he is all ear, [listening] to what is good for you! He believes in God, and trusts the

	believers, and is [a manifestation of God's] grace towards such of you as have [truly] attained to faith. And as for those who malign God's Apostle - grievous suffering awaits them [in the life to come]!"
Hlm	**02:279 -** If you do not, then be warned of war from God and His Messenger. You shall have your capital if you repent, and without suffering loss or causing others to suffer loss. **09:61 -** There are others who insult the Prophet by saying, 'He will listen to anything.' Say, 'He listens for your own good: he believes in God, trusts the believers, and is a mercy for those of you who believe.' An agonizing torment awaits those who insult God's Messenger.
HnM	**02:279 –** But if you do not do it, then take a notice of war from Allah and His Messenger but if you repent, you shall have your capital sums. Seal not unjustly, and you shall not be dealth with unjustly. **09:61 –** And among them are men who annoy the Prophet (Muhammed saw), and say: He is lending his ears (to every news). Say: He listens to what is best for you; he believes in Allah, has faith in the believers and is a mercy to those who believe. But those who annoy Allah's Messenger will have a painful torment.
Ysf	**02:279 -** If ye do it not, Take notice of war from Allah and His Messenger. But if ye turn back, ye shall have your capital sums: Deal not unjustly, and ye shall not be dealt with unjustly. **09:61 -** Among them are men who molest the Prophet and say, "He is (all) ear." Say, "He listens to what is best for you: he believes in Allah, has faith in the Believers, and is a Mercy to those of you who believe." But those who molest the Messenger will have a grievous penalty.
	02:279 - If ye do it not, Take notice of war from Allah and His Messenger. But if ye turn back, ye shall have your capital sums: Deal not unjustly, and ye shall not be dealt with unjustly.

Unl	**09:61 -** Among them (the hypocrites) are those who hurt the Prophet and say (of him): "He is all ear (listening to everyone and disposed to believe them)." Say: "Yes, he is all ear, listening to what is best for you; he believes in God, and trusts the believers, and a great mercy for those among you who believe." Those who hurt God's Messenger – for them is a painful punishment.
Nsr	**02:279 -** And if you do not, then take notice of a war from God and His Messenger. If you repent, you shall have the principal of your wealth, and you shall neither wrong nor be wronged. **09:61 -** And among them are those who torment the Prophet, and say, "He is an ear." Say, "An ear that is good for you. He believes in God and he has faith in the believers, and he is a mercy to those among you who believe." And [as for] those who torment the Messenger of God, theirs shall be a painful punishment.
Bdr	**02:279 -** And in case you do not *stop*, then be warned of a war from Allah and His Messenger *Muhammad.* However, if you repent *sincerely even now and give it up for good,* then you will have your principal *capital.* Thus you will neither be doing wrong to others nor will you be wronged. **09:61 -** There are some among them - *the hypocrites* - who offend the Prophet when they allege: 'He will listen to anybody.' Tell them: 'He listens for your *own* good, and - he trusts in Allah, and - he believes *in the integrity of* the believers, and - he is a mercy/*blessing* for those among you who *truly* believe.' Whoever offends Allah's Messenger is going to have a painful punishment.

Q.02.279 – 'war' is the common term used by all translators as the literal translation of '*harb*' - in fact, it implies a grave situation such that they have

made themselves the enemies of or hostile to Allah and the Messenger. Tabari explains - at the Time of Resurrection it will be said to the one who partook *riba*/interest money: 'Take up your sword for war.' Ibn Kathir and Razi state – The practice of *riba* can be a cause of taking up arms against violators on the part of legitimate authority, forcing them to give up their gains from *riba* or fighting them if they refuse to relinquish them or desist.' 'War' should have been substituted by a phrase like 'a grave situation.'

Q.09:61 – '*huwa uzun'* – literally meaning **'**he is an ear' – it is an idiomatic expression used as an insult to imply that the Prophet(P) was easily swayed by what he heard; he was gullible. Arb, Asd, Ysf, Unl, Nsr, Ysf translate it literally; HnM put is as 'he is lending his ear;' Bdr renders it as 'he will listen to anybody.'

Case Study – 3

Ellipsis [28] is the omission from speech or writing of a word or words that are considered residuary or still able to be understood from contextual clues. However, it is very rare for an ellipsis to occur without a linguistic antecedent. The way English uses ellipsis, it is sometimes necessary to add the elided words (which usually appear in brackets or italics) to complete a sentence in the translation.

Consider some specific examples.

Title of the Surah: *Yusuf*

Q.12:82

وَاسْأَلِ الْقَرْيَةَ الَّتِي كُنَّا فِيهَا وَالْعِيرَ الَّتِي أَقْبَلْنَا فِيهَا ۖ وَإِنَّا لَصَادِقُونَ ٨٢

Transliteration: Was'alil qaryatal latee kunnaa feehaa wal'eeral lateee aqbalnaa feehaa wa innaa lasaadiqoon

[28] القطع الناقص/ */alqite alnaaqis*

Title of the Surah: *Ghafir*

Q.40:79

اللَّهُ الَّذِي جَعَلَ لَكُمُ الْأَنْعَامَ لِتَرْكَبُوا مِنْهَا وَمِنْهَا تَأْكُلُونَ ٧٩

Transliteration: Allaahul lazee ja'ala lakumul an'aama litarkaboo minhaa wa minhaa taakuloon.

Comparative Matrix – Case Study 3

Q. 12:82; 40:79.

Arb	**12:82** - Enquire of the city wherein we were, and the caravan in which we approached. **40:79** - It is God who appointed for you the cattle, some of them to ride and of some you eat**.**
Asd	**12:82** - And ask thou in the town in which we were [at the time], and of the people of the caravan with whom we travelled hither. **40:79** - It is God who [at all times works wonders for you: thus, He] provides for you [all manner of] livestock, so that on some of them you may ride, and from some derive your food.
Hlm	**12:82** - Ask in the town where we have been; ask the people of the caravan we travelled with. **40:79** - It is God who provides livestock for you, some for riding and some for your food.
HnM	**12:82** - And ask *the people of* the town where we have been, and the caravan in which we returned. **40:79** - Allah, it is He Who has made cattle for you, that you may ride on some of them, and of some you eat.
Ysf	**12:82** - Ask at the town where we have been and the caravan in which we returned, **40:79** - It is Allah Who made cattle for you, that ye may use some for

	riding and some for food.
Unl	**12:82** - Inquire in the township where we were, and the caravan with whom we traveled hither. **40:79** - God is He Who has made the cattle (for your service), so that you use some of them for riding – and from them you obtain food. God is He Who has made the cattle (for your service), so that you use some of them for riding – and from them you obtain food.
Nsr	**12:82** - So ask the town wherein we were, and the caravan with which we approached. **40:79** - God it is Who made cattle for you, that some of them you may ride and some of them you may eat.
Bdr	**12:82** - And ask from *the people of* that city – *in Egypt* - where we were, and *people of* the caravan – *Canaanites* - with whom we have come back. **40:79** - It is Allah Who made the livestock for you, so that you may ride some of them and some of them you eat *as their meat.*

Q.12:82 - in this case, '*Was'alil qaryatal latee kunnaa feehaa'* there is absence or ellipsis of the word 'people.' The complete sentence can be formed as 'ask the people of that city', but the word 'people' is absent, and its absence does not affect or change the meaning of the Ayah/Statement. However, in English, it is better to retrieve the absent word to understand the complete meaning of the Ayah/Statement, and this is done only by Bdr and HnM; the other are quiet. Again, in Q.40:79 there is absence/ellipsis of the word 'meat' which has not been captured in seven of the eight translations.

Case Study – 4

Polysemy[29] is the coexistence of many possible meanings for a word or phrase, i.e., a word or phrase with multiple meanings. The translations will encounter obvious difficulty in conveying the intended meaning of such words if the context is not known or is not considered.

Consider, four words '*Ummah,*' '*Jannah,*' '*Mountains'* and *'Mawla'* and their multiple polysemic meanings.

Ummah – Sample of three meanings/polysemy

Title of the Surah: *Yusuf*

Q.12:45

وَقَالَ الَّذِي نَجَا مِنْهُمَا وَادَّكَرَ بَعْدَ أُمَّةٍ أَنَا أُنَبِّئُكُمْ بِتَأْوِيلِهِ فَأَرْسِلُونِ ٤٥

Transliteration: Wa qaalal lazee najaa minhumaa waddakara ba'da ummatin ana unabbi'ukum bi ta'weelihee fa-arsiloon.

Title of the Surah: *An-Nahl*

Q.16:120

إِنَّ إِبْرَاهِيمَ كَانَ أُمَّةً قَانِتًا لِلَّهِ حَنِيفًا وَلَمْ يَكُ مِنَ الْمُشْرِكِينَ ١٢٠

Transliteration: Inna Ibraaheema kaana ummatan qaanital lillaahi Haneefanw wa lam yakuminal mushrikeen.

Title of the Surah: *Az-Zukhruf*

Q. 43:22

بَلْ قَالُوا إِنَّا وَجَدْنَا آبَاءَنَا عَلَىٰ أُمَّةٍ وَإِنَّا عَلَىٰ آثَارِهِمْ مُهْتَدُونَ ٢٢

Transliteration: Bal qaalooo innaa wajadnaaa aabaaa'anaa 'alaaa ummatinw wa innaa 'alaaa aasaarihim muhtadoon.

Comparative Matrix – Case Study 4

[29] المفارقة *Almufaraqa*

Q.12:45; 16:120; 43:22.

Arb	**12:45** - after a time **16:120** – nation **43:22** – community
Asd	**12:45** - after all that time **16:120** - a man who combined within himself all virtues **43:22** - agreed on what to believe
Hlm	**12:45** - at last **16:120** - example **43:22** – tradition
HnM	**12:45** – now at length **16:120** - nation **43:22** - Following a certain way
Ysf	**12:45** - after (so long) a space of time **16:120** - model **43:22** – religion
Unl	**12:45** - after all that time **16:120** - community **43:22** - a certain religion
Nsr	**12:45** - after a while **16:120** – community **43:22** – creed
Bdr	**12:45** - after quite a while **16:120** - community **43:22** – set of beliefs

'*Ummah*' can mean a period of time, as in Q.12:45. However, in some cases, this refers to the leader of the people who teaches or guides the believers to the right

path in their religion and life, as in Q.16:120. In other instances, it refers to a religion that some people follow – Q.43:22. In this respect, majority of the eight translators did not succeed in capturing the phenomenon of polysemy in the three sample Ayat[30]/Statements, and hence the intended meaning of the Ayat.

Jannah - Sample of three meanings/polysemy

Title of the Surah: *An-Nisa'*

Q. 04:13

تِلْكَ حُدُودُ اللَّهِ ۚ وَمَنْ يُطِعِ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ يُدْخِلْهُ جَنَّاتٍ تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا ۚ وَذَٰلِكَ الْفَوْزُ الْعَظِيمُ ١٣

Transliteration: Tilka hudoodul laah; wa mai yuti'il laaha wa Rasoolahoo yudkhilhu Jannaatin tajree min tahtihal anhaaru khaalideena feehaa; wa zaalikal fawzul 'azeem.

Title of the Surah: *Al-An'am*

Q. 06:99

وَهُوَ الَّذِي أَنْزَلَ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ مَاءً فَأَخْرَجْنَا بِهِ نَبَاتَ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ فَأَخْرَجْنَا مِنْهُ خَضِرًا نُخْرِجُ مِنْهُ حَبًّا مُتَرَاكِبًا وَمِنَ النَّخْلِ مِنْ طَلْعِهَا قِنْوَانٌ دَانِيَةٌ وَجَنَّاتٍ مِنْ أَعْنَابٍ وَالزَّيْتُونَ وَالرُّمَّانَ مُشْتَبِهًا وَغَيْرَ مُتَشَابِهٍ ۗ انْظُرُوا إِلَىٰ ثَمَرِهِ إِذَا أَثْمَرَ وَيَنْعِهِ ۚ إِنَّ فِي ذَٰلِكُمْ لَآيَاتٍ لِقَوْمٍ يُؤْمِنُونَ ٩٩

Transliteration: Wa Huwal lazeee anzala minas samaaa'i maaa'an fa akhrajnaa bihee nabaata kulli shai'in fa akhrajnaa minhu khadiran nukhriju minhu habbam mutaraakibanw wa minan nakhli min tal'ihaa qinwaanun daaniyatunw wa jannaatim min a'naabinw wazzaitoona warrummaana mushtabihanw wa ghaira

[30] '*Ayat*' of the Sacred Text (plural of '*Ayah*') refer to the basic 'units' of revelation of the Qur'an (or 'verse' as erroneously rendered in English following the Biblical style), or 'Revelation' in general, or even '*Divine* Message'. Depending upon the context, '*Ayah*' can also refer to 'natural phenomenon' (as Signs of Allah's Power and Providence), to 'miracles' and other extraordinary events (associated with Allah(EA)'s Messengers(P)). In the present context, it means 'unit of Divine Revelation.

mutashaabih; unzurooo ilaa samariheee izaaa asmara wa yan'ih; inna fee zaalikum la Aayaatil liqawminy yu'minoon.

Title of the Surah: ***Qaaf***

Q. 50:09

وَنَزَّلْنَا مِنَ السَّمَاءِ مَاءً مُبَارَكًا فَأَنْبَتْنَا بِهِ جَنَّاتٍ وَحَبَّ الْحَصِيدِ ٩

Transliteration: Wa nazzalnaa minas samaaa'i maaa'am mubaarakan fa ambatnaa bihee jannaatinw wa habbal haseed.

Comparative Matrix – Case Study 4a

Q.04:13; 06:99; 50:09.

Arb	**04:13** - gardens **06:99** – gardens **50:09** – gardens
Asd	**04:13** - gardens **06:99** – gardens **50:09** – fields
Hlm	**04:13** - Gardens **06:99** – greenery **50:09** – gardens
HnM	**04:13** - gardens **06:99** - Gardens **50:09** – gardens
Ysf	**04:13** - Gardens **06:99** – gardens **50:09** – gardens
Unl	**04:13** - Gardens **06:99** – gardens

	50:09 - gardens
Nsr	**04:13** - Gardens **06:99** – gardens **50:09** – gardens
Bdr	**04:13** - Paradise **06:99** – green foliage/*greenery* **50:09** - *orchards and* gardens

'*Jannah*' can mean paradise, as in Q.04:13. However, in some cases, this refers to orchards as in Q.06:99. In other instances, it refers to farms/agriculture field/green foliage as in Q.50:09.

In this respect, majority of the translators have used 'garden' for all three intended meanings, with a subtle difference of using capital letter 'G' for Garden implying Paradise. Overall, they did not succeed in capturing the phenomenon of polysemy in the three sample Ayat/Statements, and hence the intended meaning of the Ayat; the one exception being Bdr.

'*Mountains*' also have more than one meaning or sense – Q.24:43 - He sends hail down from (such) mountains in the sky, pouring it on whoever He wishes and diverting it from whoever He wishes. And it is captured appropriately by all eight translators.

'Mawla' - coming from *Walla Yuwalli* - has multiple meanings like: to be close to, to be friends with, to have power over, patron, owner, master, guardian, protector, benefactor, ally, friend, etc. However, it occurs in three distinctive ways/forms in the Qur'an, viz., Q.02:286, Q.44:41.and Q.57:15.

Consider some specific examples.

Title of the Surah: *Al-Baqarah*

Q. 02:286

.....أَنْتَ مَوْلَانَا....

Transliteration: Anta mawlaanaa.

Title of the Surah: *Ad-Dukhaan*

Q. 44:41

يَوْمَ لَا يُغْنِي مَوْلًى عَنْ مَوْلًى شَيْئًا وَلَا هُمْ يُنْصَرُونَ ٤١

Transliteration: Yawma laa yughnee mawlan 'am mawlan shai'anw wa laa hum yunsaroon.

Title of the Surah: *Al-Hadeed*

Q. 57:15

.....مَأْوَاكُمُ النَّارُ ۖ هِيَ مَوْلَاكُمْ ۖ وَبِئْسَ الْمَصِيرُ ١٥

Transliteration: ma'waakumun Naaru hiya mawlaakum wa bi'sal maseer.

Comparative Matrix – Case Study 4b

Q. 02:286; 44:41; 57:15.

Arb	**02:286** – Thou art our Protector. **44:41** - the day a master shall avail nothing a client. **57:15** – that is your master.
Asd	**02:286** – Thou art our Lord Supreme. **44:41** - the Day when no friend shall be of the least avail to his friend. **57:15** – it is your refuge.
Hlm	**02:286** – You are our Protector, **44:41**- Day when no friend can take another's place. **57:15** – that is where you belong.
HnM	**02:286** – You are our Maula (Patron, Supporter and Protector). **44:41** – the Day when a bear relative cannot avail near relative.

	57:15 – That is your friend.
Ysf	**02:286** – Thou art our Protector. **44:41** - The Day when no protector can avail his client **57:15** – that is the proper place to claim you
Unl	**02:286** – You are our Guardian **44:41** - The Day when no guardian will be of any avail to one supported. **57:15** – that is your harbor suited to you
Nsr	**02:286** – Thou art our Master. **44:41** - The Day when no friend will avail a friend in any way. **57:15** – it shall be your master.
Bdr	**02:286** – You *alone* are our Guardian *and Protector.* **44:41** - a Time when a friend will not *be able* help his friend *in any way*. **57:15** – as it will be your only friend *to keep you company forever*.

Mawla in Q.02:286 implies *Allah*; in Q.44:41 *close friend;* in Q.57:15 *the hellfire*. All translators have rendered Q.02:286 correctly; Q.44:41 has been rendered as '*friend*' by Asd, Hlm, Nsr and Bdr, whereas Arb translates it as '*maste*r', Ysf as '*protector*', and Unl as '*guardian*' where Arb, Ysf and Unl do not appear to reflect the essence of the Arabic term in its context. Q.57:15 is captured as '*friend*' by HnM, Bdr (adding *to keep you company*); Asd, Hlm, Ysf, Unl present a situation which is synonymous with the fate of those who deserve it. Nsr's translating it as 'master' does not quite fit into the scenario.

Case Study – 5

Irony [31] **-** the meaning of the ironic lexical words may include cynical, taunt and/or sarcastic expressions. Irony depends on context just as there are no words or expressions which are humorous *per se* but by reason of their semantic or syntactic use in a context and which will have to be defined 'extrinsically' by their contextual linkages and semantic relationships.

Irony depends on context since it springs from the relationship of a word expression or action with the whole text or situation. The Qur'an is quite rich in irony. In tempting Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden, Satan suggests to them that the fruit of the forbidden tree could transform them into angels, but that Allah would not like them to become angels, hence the prohibition to eat of the tree (Q.07:20). Ironically, the angels had already bowed before Adam and acknowledged his supremacy, so that man's attempt to become an angel would constitute a descent, and not an ascent.

Consider some specific examples.

Title of the Surah: *Al-An'am*

Q. 06:10

وَلَقَدِ اسْتُهْزِئَ بِرُسُلٍ مِنْ قَبْلِكَ فَحَاقَ بِالَّذِينَ سَخِرُوا مِنْهُمْ مَا كَانُوا بِهِ يَسْتَهْزِئُونَ ١٠

Transliteration: Wa laqadis tuhzi'a bi-Rusulim min qablika fahaaqa billazeena sakhiroo minhum maa kaanoo bihee yastahzi'oon.

Title of the Surah: *Hud*

[31] Sarcasm is regarded as a form of ironic speech commonly employed to convey seriousness within comedy and vice versa. Scholars agree that both - sarcasm and irony - share approximately same sets of meanings, such as undervaluing, mocking, boasting, etc. Although both terms seem near to each other, yet they are not exactly the same and must be considered separately. See 'A Contrastive Analysis of the Translation of Irony in Holy Qur'an: the Translations of Mualawi Sher Ali and Yusuf Ali. Ibrahim I.I. Najjar. Ph.D. Thesis. University of Malaya, 2015.

Q.11:38

وَيَصْنَعُ الْفُلْكَ وَكُلَّمَا مَرَّ عَلَيْهِ مَلَأٌ مِنْ قَوْمِهِ سَخِرُوا مِنْهُ ۚ قَالَ إِنْ تَسْخَرُوا مِنَّا فَإِنَّا نَسْخَرُ مِنْكُمْ كَمَا تَسْخَرُونَ ٣٨

Transliteration: Wa yasna'ul fulka wa kullamaa marra 'alaihi mala'um min qawmihee sakhiroo minh; qaala in taskharoo minnaa fa innaa naskharu minkum kamaa taskharoon.

Title of the Surah: ***Az-Zumar***

Q.39:56

أَنْ تَقُولَ نَفْسٌ يَا حَسْرَتَىٰ عَلَىٰ مَا فَرَّطْتُ فِي جَنْبِ اللَّهِ وَإِنْ كُنْتُ لَمِنَ السَّاخِرِينَ ٥٦

Transliteration: An taqoola nafsuny yaahasrataa 'alaa maa farrattu fee jambil laahi wa in kuntu laminas saakhireen.

Comparative Matrix – Case Study 5

Q. 06:10; 11:38; 39:56.

Arb	**06:10** - Messengers indeed were mocked at before thee; but those that scoffed at them were encompassed by that they mocked at. **11:38** - So he was making the Ark; and whenever a council of his people passed by him they scoffed at him, He said, 'If you scoff at us, we shall surely scoff at you, as you scoff and you shall know to whom will come a chastisement degrading him. **39:56** - Lest any soul should say, 'Alas for me, in that I neglected my duty to God, and was a scoffer.'
Asd	**06:10** - And, indeed, [even] before thy time have apostles been derided - but those who scoffed at them were [in the end] overwhelmed by the very thing which they were wont to deride. **11:38** - And [so Noah] set himself to building the ark; and every time the great ones of his people passed by him, they scoffed at

	him. [Thereupon] he said: "If you are scoffing at us - behold, we are scoffing at you [and your ignorance], just as you are scoffing at us. **39:56** - Alas ….. for having been indeed one of those who scoffed [at the truth]!"
Hlm	**06:10** - Messengers have been mocked before you [Muhammad], and those who mocked them were engulfed by the very punishment they had mocked. **11:38** - So he began to build the Ark, and whenever leaders of his people passed by, they laughed at him. He said, 'You may scorn us now, but we will come to scorn you. **39:56** - Woe is me for having neglected what is due to God, and having been one of those who scoffed!
HnM	**06:10** – And indeed (many) Messengers before you were mocked at, but their scoffers were surrounded by the very thing that they used to mock at. **11:38** – And as he was constructing the ship, whenever the chiefs of his people passed by him, they mocked at him. He said: If you mock at us, so do we mock at you likewise for your mocking. **39:56** – Lest a person should say: Alas, my grief that I was undutiful to Allah, and I was indeed among those who mocked (at the truth).
Ysf	**06:10** - Mocked were (many) messengers before thee; but their scoffers were hemmed in by the thing that they mocked. **11:38** - Forthwith he (starts) constructing the Ark: Every time that the chiefs of his people passed by him, they threw ridicule on him. He said: "If ye ridicule us now, we (in our turn) can look down on you with ridicule likewise!

	39:56 - Lest the soul should (then) say: ´Ah! Woe is me! In that I neglected (my duty) towards Allah, and was but among those who mocked!
Unl	**06:10** - Messengers indeed were mocked before you (O Messenger), but what they used to mock overwhelmed those who scoffed (at the Messengers to humiliate them). **11:38** - And so Noah set to building the Ark. And every time the leading ones among his people passed by him, they mocked at him. He said: "Now you are mocking us, but (a day will come when) we mock you just as you mock us. **39:56** - Lest any soul should say, "Alas for me for that I have fallen short of my duty to God, and I was indeed among those who used to mock (at the truth)!"
Nsr	**06:10** - Messengers have surely been mocked before thee. Then those who scoffed at them were beset by that which they used to mock. **11:38** - And he was building the Ark, and whenever notables among his people passed by him, they would scoff at him. He said, "If you scoff at us, surely we shall scoff at you, just as you scoff. **39:56** - lest any soul should say, Alas for me, for what I neglected of my duty to God! Indeed, I was among the scoffers.
Bdr	**06:10** - And so it was that many Messengers had been mocked before you, O The Prophet. Then, they - who scoffed at them - were eventually overpowered by that which they used to mock. **11:38** - So as he was building the Ark, and whenever notables of his people passed by him, they would scoff at him. He would say to them: 'Though you scoff at us now, but a time is going to come

	when we will scoff at you just as you are scoffing at us' *now*. **39:56** - in case any person should say: 'I am doomed! I remained unaware of my duty to Allah - for certainly I was of those who mocked' the Divine Message and the Messenger.

The attempt has proved that the translation of irony is as elusive as the concept itself; it has also emphasized the difficult task of suggesting a perspective approach to translation based on the features of any number of texts. The analysis of three Qur'anic Ayat was then followed by a contrastive analysis. This was meant to point out the similarities and differences with a focus on the latter, which is the crux of any translation study.

'Mock' and 'scoff' are the two terms employed for Arabic '*istehza*' and '*tamaskhar'* – with a common root word '*ha*,' '*z*', '*hamza*' – *istihza* is translated as 'ridicule' and *tamaskhur* is rendered as 'mock' to demean the value of religious teachings. Both are taken to mean (in dictionary): jeer, sneer, gibe, mock, mockery, ridicule.

Title of the Surah: *az-Zukhruf*

Q.43:22

بَلْ قَالُوا إِنَّا وَجَدْنَا آبَاءَنَا عَلَىٰ أُمَّةٍ وَإِنَّا عَلَىٰ آثَارِهِمْ مُهْتَدُونَ ٢٢

Transliteration: Bal qaalooo innaa wajadnaaa aabaaa'anaa 'alaaa ummatinw wa innaa 'alaaa aasaarihim muhtadoon.

Title of the Surah: *Aal-Imran*

Q.03:21

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يَكْفُرُونَ بِآيَاتِ اللَّهِ وَيَقْتُلُونَ النَّبِيِّينَ بِغَيْرِ حَقٍّ وَيَقْتُلُونَ الَّذِينَ يَأْمُرُونَ بِالْقِسْطِ مِنَ النَّاسِ فَبَشِّرْهُمْ بِعَذَابٍ أَلِيمٍ

٢١

Transliteration: Innal lazeena yakfuroona bi Aayaatil laahi wa yaqtuloonan Nabiyyeena bighairi haqqinw wa yaqtuloonal lazeena ya'muroona bilqisti minannaasi fabashirhum bi'azaabin aleem.

Title of the Surah: *At-Tawbah*

Q.09:35

يَوْمَ يُحْمَىٰ عَلَيْهَا فِي نَارِ جَهَنَّمَ فَتُكْوَىٰ بِهَا جِبَاهُهُمْ وَجُنُوبُهُمْ وَظُهُورُهُمْ ۖ هَٰذَا مَا كَنَزْتُمْ لِأَنفُسِكُمْ فَذُوقُوا مَا كُنتُمْ تَكْنِزُونَ ٣٥

Transliteration: Yawma yuhmaa ‘alaihaa fee naari jahannama fatukwaa bihaa jibaahuhum wa junoobuhum wa zuhooruhum haazaa maa kanaztum li anfusikum fazooqoo maa kuntum taknizoon.

Comparative Matrix – Case Study 5a

Q. 02:175; 03:21; 09:45.

Arb	**02:175** - How patiently they shall endure the Fire! **03:21 –** give them the good tidings of a painful chastisement. **09:35 -** therefore taste you now what you were treasuring.
Asd	**02:175** - Yet how little do they seem to fear the fire! **03:21 –** announce unto them a grievous chastisement. **09:35 -** taste, then, [the evil of] your hoarded treasures
Hlm	**02:175** - What can make them patient in the face of the Fire? **03:21 –** give news of agonizing torment to those who…… **09:35 -** now feel the pain of what you hoarded!
HnM	**02:175** - So how bold they are (for evil deeds which will push them) to the Fire. **03:21 –** announce to them a painful torment.. **09:35 -** now taste of what you used to hoard.……
Ysf	**02:175** - Ah! what boldness (they show) for the Fire! **03:21 –** announce to them a grievous penalty.

	09:35 - taste ye, then, the (treasures) ye buried!
Unl	**02:175** - How they persevere in their striving to reach the Fire (and enduring it)! **03:21 –** give them the glad tidings of a painful punishment. **09:35 -** taste now what you were busy hoarding!
Nsr	**02:175** - How will they endure the Fire! **03:21 –** give them glad tidings of a painful punishment. **09:35 -** so taste that which you hoarded.
Bdr	**02:175** - So how steadfast they are *in their resolve* to reach the Fire! **03:21 –** give them the good news of an agonizing punishment. **09:35 -** So taste/*experience now the value of* what you hoarded!

Q.03:21 - In terms of translation, three translators have used literal translation to render the word as 'announce to them'. However, the word *'fa-bashshirhum'* (a command verb) starts with the conjunction letter '*fa'* which is missed in all translations, except one by Bdr. Syntactically, the translations do not carry the same structure of the lexical word since the conjunction '*fa'* is missed. However, it may be acceptable to delete the letter '*fa'* to come up with a better translation.

The use of phrase 'the glad tidings' – by Nsr, Unl and Arb - to render the Arabic ironical word is a Biblical phrase which is considered an equivalent to the Arabic ironical word *'bashshir,'* which Bdr enders as 'good news' – typically representing a taunt, a cynicism.

Looking at the other three translations, Asd, HnM and Ysf, the word employed 'announce' does not carry the meaning of the lexical word '*'bashshir.'*

Q.09:35 --The translators have managed to transfer the intended meaning of the ironic word. However, in terms of translation, it is found that translators have used the verb 'taste' to translate the lexical word but with a clear difference to the

structure of the Arabic word. They have used translation strategies that are omission and over translation. In the process of translation, the Arabic word is deleted. This omission does not distort the intended meaning of the lexical word. The conjunction 'then' is added in the translation. Semantically and although there is a deletion in the Arabic word, the meaning of the ironic word is maintained. On the syntactic level, the translations of the Arabic sentence including the ironic word carry the same structure. This is a good translation which keeps the meaning and the structure of the Ayah.

Case Study – 6

Sarcasm [32] is characterized as one of the significant rhetorical devices used in literary and religious texts for criticism. A variety of modes has been suggested to account for sarcasm depending on various contexts in which this term occurs. Some such modes are associated with some rhetorical terms as metaphor, simile, metonymy, etc. For instance, in Q.111 - 'Perish be the hands of Abu Lahab and perish he' - is metonymy illustrating sarcastically the bad nature of Abu Lahab.

Sarcasm is regarded as a form of ironic speech commonly employed to convey seriousness within comedy and vice versa. Scholars agree that both sarcasm and irony share approximately sets of meanings such as undervaluing, mocking, boasting, etc. Although both terms seem near to each other, yet they are not exactly the same and must be considered separately.

Consider some specific examples.

Title of the Surah: *al-Anfaal*

Q.08:32

وَإِذْ قَالُوا اللَّهُمَّ إِنْ كَانَ هَـٰذَا هُوَ الْحَقَّ مِنْ عِنْدِكَ فَأَمْطِرْ عَلَيْنَا حِجَارَةً مِنَ السَّمَاءِ أَوِ ائْتِنَا بِعَذَابٍ أَلِيمٍ ٣٢

[32] سخرية *Sukhria*

Transliteration: Wa iz qaalul laahumma in kaana haazaa huwal haqqa min 'indika fa amtir 'alainaa hijaaratam minas samaaa'i awi'tinaa bi 'azaabin aleem.

Title of the Surah: *al-Hijr*

Q. 15:06

وَقَالُوا يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِي نُزِّلَ عَلَيْهِ الذِّكْرُ إِنَّكَ لَمَجْنُونٌ ٦

Transliteration: Wa qaaloo yaaa aiyuhal lazee nuzzila 'alaihiz Zikru innaka lamajnoon.

Title of the Surah: *al-Furqaan*

Q.25:41

وَإِذَا رَأَوْكَ إِنْ يَتَّخِذُونَكَ إِلَّا هُزُوًا أَهَـٰذَا الَّذِي بَعَثَ اللَّهُ رَسُولًا ٤١

Transliteration: Wa izaa ra awka iny yattakhizoonaka illaa huzuwan ahaazal lazee ba'asal laahu Rasoolaa.

Title of the Surah: *Az-Zukhruf*

Q.43:19

وَجَعَلُوا الْمَلَائِكَةَ الَّذِينَ هُمْ عِبَادُ الرَّحْمَـٰنِ إِنَاثًا ۚ أَشَهِدُوا خَلْقَهُمْ ۚ سَتُكْتَبُ شَهَادَتُهُمْ وَيُسْأَلُونَ ١٩

Transliteration: Wa ja'alul malaaa'ikatal lazeena hum 'ibaadur Rahmaani inaasaa; 'a shahidoo khalqahum; satuktabu shahaadatuhum wa yus'aloon.

Comparative Matrix – Case Study 6

Q.08:32; 15:06; 25:41; 43:19.

Arb	**08:32** - And when they said, 'O God, if this be indeed the truth from Thee, then rain down upon us stones out of heaven, or bring us a painful chastisement.' **15:06** - They say: 'Thou, upon whom the Remembrance is sent down, thou art assuredly possessed! **25:41** - And when they see thee, they take thee in mockery only: 'What,

	is this he whom God sent forth as a Messenger? **43:19 -** And they have made the angels, who are themselves servants of the All-merciful, females. What, did they witness their creation? Their witness shall be written down, and they shall be questioned.
Asd	**08:32** - And, lo, they would say, "O God! If this be indeed the truth from Thee, then rain down upon us stones from the skies, or inflict [some other] grievous suffering on us. **15:06** - And yet, they [who deny the truth] say: "O thou unto whom this reminder has [allegedly] been bestowed from on high: verily, thou art mad! **25:41** - Hence, whenever they consider thee, [O Muhammad,] they but make thee a target of their mockery, [saying:] "Is this the one whom God has sent as an apostle? **43:19 -** And [yet] they claim that the angels - who in themselves are but beings created by the Most Gracious - are females: [but] did they witness their creation?
Hlm	**08:32** - They also said, 'God, if this really is the truth from You, then rain stones on us from the heavens, or send us some other painful punishment.' **15:06** - They say, 'Receiver of this Qur'an! You are definitely mad. **25:41** - Whenever they see you [Prophet] they ridicule you: 'Is this the one God has sent as a messenger? **43:19 -** They consider the angels– God's servants– to be female. Did they witness their creation? Their claim will be put on record and they will be questioned about it.
	08:32 – And (remember) when they said: O Allah! If this (the Qur'an) is indeed the truth (revealed) from You, then rain down stones on us from the sky or bring on us a painful torment.

HnM	**15:06** – And they say, O you (Muhammad) to whom the Dhikr (the Qur'an) has been sent down, Verily, you are a mad man. **25:41** – And when they see you (O Muhammad) they treat you only in mockery, saying: Is this the one whom Allah has sent as a Messenger? **43:19 -** And they make the angels who themselves are the slaves of the Most Gracious (Allah) females? Did they witness their creation? Their testimony will be recorded, and they will be questioned.
Ysf	**08:32** - Remember how they said: "O Allah if this is indeed the Truth from Thee, rain down on us a shower of stones form the sky, or send us a grievous Penalty." **15:06** - They say: "O thou to whom the Message is being revealed! truly thou art mad (or possessed)! **25:41** - When they see thee, they treat thee no otherwise than in mockery: "Is this the one whom Allah has sent as a messenger?" **43:19 -** And they make into females angels who themselves serve Allah. Did they witness their creation? Their evidence will be recorded, and they will be called to account!
Unl	**08:32** - And when they said (even this): "O God! If this is indeed the truth from You, then rain down upon us stones from the sky or bring upon us another pain-ful punishment!" **15:06** - "Why do you not bring down the angels to us if you are truthful (in your claim) **25:41** - Whenever they see you (O Messenger), they take you for nothing but a mockery, (saying): "Is this the one whom God has sent as Messenger?" **43:19 -** And yet they have judged the angels, who are themselves the servants of the All-Merciful, to be females (whom they judge to be of little value, and yet regard as His daughters). Did they witness their

	creation? This testimony of theirs will be recorded, and they will be called to account (for this falsehood in the Hereafter).
Nsr	**08:32** - And [remember] when they said, "O God, if this be the truth from Thee, rain down stones upon us from the sky, or bring us a painful punishment." **15:06** - And they say, "O you unto whom the Reminder has been sent down, truly you are possessed. **25:41** - And when they see thee they do naught but take thee in mockery: "Is this the one whom God sent as a messenger? **43:19 -** And they have made the angels, who are servants of the Compassionate, females. Did they witness their creation? Their witnessing shall be recorded, and they will be questioned.
Bdr	**08:32** - And *remember* when they would also say: 'O Allah! If this Qur'an be indeed the Truth from You, then - rain down on us stones from the sky, or inflict upon us some other grievous punishment.' **15:06** - And they say: 'O you - *Muhammad* - upon whom this Reminder - *the Qur'an* – is being sent down *as you claim*! *We think* you are certainly possessed' *and insane*. **25:41** - Hence, whenever they see you, O The Prophet, they take you in mockery, saying: 'Is this the one whom Allah has assigned as a Messenger!? **43:19 -** And *yet* they make the angels, those who are themselves creatures of The Infinitely Merciful, *as* females: *daughters of Allah*. Were they *there to* witness their creation? Their claim will be put on record, and they will be questioned *about it.*

The four Ayat contain an example of the type of cynical challenges and mockery made by those who denied the Prophet(P) and their lack of conviction that the

Qur'an is a Divine Revelation. The mockery carried out by the disbelievers is a common trait of all times**.** It portrays the disbelievers' incredulity regarding Allah's choice of Muhammad(P) as His Messenger.

Case Study – 7

Embed/Embeded [33] aims to convey the 'implied' meanings in the absence of which the translation may either be inappropriate or misunderstood.

Consider some specific examples.

Title of the Surah: Al-Baqarah

Q.02:43

وَأَقِيمُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَآتُوا الزَّكَاةَ وَارْكَعُوا مَعَ الرَّاكِعِينَ ٤٣

Transliteration: 'Wa aqeemus salaata wa aatuz zakaata *warka'oo ma'ar raaki'een*.

Title of the Surah: At-Tahreem

Q.66:10

.....وَقِيلَ ادْخُلَا النَّارَ مَعَ الدَّاخِلِينَ ١٠

Transliteration: wa qee*lad* khulan naara ma'ad daakhileen.

Comparative Matrix – Case Study 7

Q.02:43; 66:10.

Arb	**02:43** - bow with those that bow **66:10** - Enter, you two, the Fire with those who enter.
Asd	**02:43** - bow down in prayer with all who thus bow down **66:10** - Enter the fire with all those [other sinners] who enter it!
Hlm	**02:43** - bow your heads [in worship] with those who bow theirs **66:10** - Both of you enter the Fire with the others.
	02:43 - bow down (or submit yourselves with obedience to Allah) along

[33] تضمين *Tadmin*

HnM	with *Ar-Raki'un*. **66:10** – Enter the Fire along with those who enter.
Ysf	**02:43** - bow down (your heads) with those who bow down (in worship) **66:10** - Enter ye the Fire along with (others) that enter!
Unl	**02:43** - bow (in the Prayer, not by forming a different community or congregation, but) together with those who bow (the Muslims). **66:10** - Enter the Fire with all those who enter it!
Nsr	**02:43** - bow with those who bow. **66:10** - Enter the Fire with those who enter.
Bdr	**02:43** - bow down with those who bow down *in Salat and in submission to Allah.* **66:10** - Enter the Fire, both of you, with those who enter.

Q.02:43 - It goes without saying that Muslims bow down in prayers. However, the use of *'ma'raki'een'* has a deeper underlying meaning and an implied goal and purpose. '*Warka'ou'* is an imperative with those who bow down in 'congregational prayers.' Thus, investigating the axiomatic structures would provide more informative wording of the meaning of the Ayah. Arb and Nsr employ almost similar words in translation but fail to capture and convey the embedded meaning of the Ayah; the rest do so to a considerable extent.

Case Study – 8

Digression [34] is a stylistic trait of the Arabic Qur'an that entails shifts from one discourse style to another style. It comprises six categories: the shift from first to third person pronoun; the shift from second to third person pronoun; the shift from third to first person pronoun; the shift from third to second person pronoun; and the shift from first to second person pronoun; and shift from second- first person pronoun.

[34] استطراد *Aistitrad*

The tenses used, the passing from one tense to another, the nouns being definite or indefinite, the kinds of clauses (noun or verb – a clause beginning with a verb is a verb clause), and the addressee being in the second or the third person (the person in absence) – all of these make important contributions to the meaning. For example, from Q.02:30 onward, Allah(EA) addresses Adam directly, but later in Q.02:37, the Ayah talks about his approaching the forbidden tree, He(EA) addresses him in the third person.

The aim is, *inter alia*, to honor, criticize, or attract interlocutors which create a swift transition and change in person or addressee during the discourse. And in the process it does create linguistic, stylistic, and cultural problems in translations primarily due to the divergences between the Arabic and English.

Q.02 Surah al-Baqarah demonstrates the highest number of reference shifting - occurrences - compared to other Surahs. The highest frequency occurs in the shift from first to third that constitutes 16 Ayat, approximately 38.1% of 42 reference Ayat/shift.[35]

Consider some specific examples.

Title of the Surah: *Yunus*

Q.10:22

هُوَ الَّذِي يُسَيِّرُكُمْ فِي الْبَرِّ وَالْبَحْرِ ۖ حَتَّىٰ إِذَا كُنْتُمْ فِي الْفُلْكِ وَجَرَيْنَ بِهِمْ بِرِيحٍ طَيِّبَةٍ وَفَرِحُوا بِهَا جَاءَتْهَا رِيحٌ عَاصِفٌ وَجَاءَهُمُ الْمَوْجُ مِنْ كُلِّ مَكَانٍ وَظَنُّوا أَنَّهُمْ أُحِيطَ بِهِمْ ۙ دَعَوُا اللَّهَ مُخْلِصِينَ لَهُ الدِّينَ لَئِنْ أَنْجَيْتَنَا مِنْ هَٰذِهِ لَنَكُونَنَّ مِنَ الشَّاكِرِينَ ٢٢

Transliteration: Huwal lazee yusayyirukum fil barri walbahri hattaaa izaa kuntum fil fulki wa jaraina bihim bi reehin tayyibatinw wa farihoo bihaa jaaa'at haa

[35] See A Comparative Analysis of The Arabic and English Verb Systems Using the Qur'an Arabic Corpus. A corpus-based study by Jawharah Saeed Alasmari. Submitted in accordance with the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy. The University of Leeds. School of Languages, May, 2020.

reehun 'aasifunw wa jaaa'ahumul mawju min kulli makaaninw wa zannooo 'annahum 'uheeta bihim da'a wullaaha mukhliseena lahud deena la'in anjaitanaa min haazihee la nakoonanna minash shaakireen.

Title of the Surah: ***An-Nahl***

Q.16:51

وَقَالَ اللَّهُ لَا تَتَّخِذُوا إِلَٰهَيْنِ اثْنَيْنِ ۖ إِنَّمَا هُوَ إِلَٰهٌ وَاحِدٌ ۖ فَإِيَّايَ فَارْهَبُونِ ٥١

Transliteration: Wa qaalal laahu laa tatta khizooo ilaahainis naini innamaa Huwa Ilaahunw Waahid; fa iyyaaya farhaboon.

Title of the Surah: ***Maryam***

Q.19:88-89

وَقَالُوا اتَّخَذَ الرَّحْمَٰنُ وَلَدًا ٨٨ لَقَدْ جِئْتُمْ شَيْئًا إِدًّا ٨٩

Transliteration: Wa qaalut takhazar Rahmaanu waladaa. Laqad ji'tum shai'an iddaa.

Title of the Surah: ***Yaa Seen***

Q.36:22

وَمَا لِيَ لَا أَعْبُدُ الَّذِي فَطَرَنِي وَإِلَيْهِ تُرْجَعُونَ ٢٢

Transliteration: Wa maa liya laaa a'budul lazee fataranee wa ilaihi turja'oon.

Comparative Matrix – Case Study 8

Q.10:22; 16:51; 19:88-89; 36:22.

Arb	**10:22** - It is He who conveys you on the land and the sea; and when you are in the ship -- and the ships run with them with a fair breeze, and they rejoice in it, there comes upon them a strong wind, and waves come on them from every side, and they think they are encompassed; they call upon God, making their religion His sincerely: 'If Thou deliverest us from these, surely we shall be among the thankful.'

	16:51 - God says: 'Take not to you two gods. He is only One God; so have awe of Me.' **19:88-89** - And they say, 'The All-Merciful has taken unto Himself a son.' You have indeed advanced something hideous! The heavens are wellnigh rent of it and the earth split asunder, and the mountains wellnigh fall down crashing for that they have attributed to the All-Merciful a son; and it behoves not the All-Merciful to take a son. **36:22** - And why should I not serve Him who originated me, and unto whom you shall be returned?
Asd	**10:22** - He it is who enables you to travel on land and sea. And [behold what happens] when you go to sea in ships: [they go to sea in ships,] and they sail on in them in a favourable wind, and they rejoice thereat until there comes upon them a tempest, and waves surge towards them from all sides, so that they believe themselves to be encompassed [by death; and then] they call unto God, [at that moment] sincere in their faith in Him alone, "If Thou wilt but save us from this, we shall most certainly be among the grateful!" **16:51** - And God has said: "Do not take to worshipping two [or more] deities. He is the One and Only God: hence, of Me, of Me alone stand in awe! **19:88-89** - As it is, some assert, "The Most Gracious has taken unto Himself a son! Indeed, [by this assertion] you have brought forth something monstrous, **36:22** - "[As for me,] why should I not worship Him who has brought me into being, and to whom you all will be brought back?
Hlm	**10:22** - It is He who enables you to travel on land and sea until, when you are sailing on ships and rejoicing in the favouring wind, a storm arrives: waves come at those on board from all sides and they feel there is no escape. Then they pray to God, professing sincere devotion to Him, 'If You save us from this we shall be truly thankful.'

	16:51 - God said, 'Do not take two gods'– for He is the One God–' I alone am the One that you should hold in awe.' **19:88-89** - The disbelievers say, 'The Lord of Mercy has offspring.' How terrible is this thing you assert: **36:22** - Why should I not worship the One who created me? It is to Him that you will be returned.
HnM	**10:22** – He it is Who enables you to travel through land and sea, till when you are in the ships, and they sail with themwith a favourable wind, and they are glad therein, then comes a stormy wind and the waves come to them from all sides, and they think that they are encircled therein. Then they invoke Allah, making their Faith pure for Him Alone, (saying): If You (Allah) deliver us from thi, we shall truly be of the grateful. **16:51** – And Allah said (O mankind): Take not *Ilahain* (two gods in worship). Verily, He (Allah) is (the) only One *Ilah* (God). Then fear Me (Allah) much (and Me Alone), i.e. be away from all kinds of sins and evil deeds that Allah has forbidden and do all that Allah has ordained and worship none but Allah). **19:88-89** – And they say: 'The Most Gracious (Allah) has begotten a son (or offspring or children) [as the Jews say: Uzair (Ezra) is the son of Allah, and the Christians say that He has begotten a son [Isa(Jesus)] and the pagan Arabs say that He has begotten daughters (angels and others)]. Indeed, you have brought forth (said) a terrible evil thing. **36:22** – And why should I not worship Him (Allah Alone) Who has created me and to Whom you shall be returned.
	10:22 - He it is Who enableth you to traverse through land and sea; so that ye even board ships;- they sail with them with a favourable wind, and they rejoice thereat; He it is Who enableth you to traverse through land and sea; so that ye even board ships;- they sail with them with a favourable wind, and

Ysf	they rejoice thereat; **16:51** - Allah has said: "Take not (for worship) two gods: for He is just One Allah. then fear Me (and Me alone)." **19:88-89** - They say: "((Allah)) Most Gracious has begotten a son!" Indeed ye have put forth a thing most monstrous! **36:22** - "It would not be reasonable in me if I did not serve Him Who created me, and to Whom ye shall (all) be brought back.
Unl	**10:22** - He it is Who conveys you on the land and the sea. And when you are in the ship, and the ships run with their voyagers with a fair breeze, and they rejoice in it, there comes upon them a tempest, and waves surge towards them from all sides, so that they are sure that they are encompassed (by death with no way out), they call upon God, sincerely believing in Him alone (as the only Deity, Lord, and Sovereign): "If You save us from this, we will most certainly be among the thankful." **16:51** - God has said: "Do not take two (or more) deities: He is but One God. So be in awe of Me and Me alone, (and be saved from other fears bringing disgrace upon you)." **19:88-89** - As it is, some say: "The All-Merciful has taken to Himself a child." Assuredly you have (in such an assertion) brought forth something monstrous – **36:22** - And what reason do I have that I should not worship Him Who originated me with a nature particular to me, and to Whom you all (as well as I) are being brought back (to give an account of our lives)?
	10:22 - He it is Who carries you over land and sea, even when you are sailing in ships, till, when they sail with them upon a favorable wind, and rejoice therein, there comes upon them a violent gale, and the waves come at them from every side, and they think they shall be encompassed by them. They call upon God, devoting religion entirely to Him: "If Thou savest us from this, we

Nsr	shall surely be among the thankful!" **16:51** - And God says, "Do not take up two gods. Truly He is only one God. So be in awe of Me." **19:88-89** - And they say, "The Compassionate has taken a child." You have indeed asserted a terrible thing. **36:22** - Why should I not worship Him who originated me, and unto Whom you will be returned?
Bdr	**10:22** - It is He Who enables you to travel over the land and the sea, until, when you are *sailing* on the ships, and they sail upon a *gentle and* favorable wind, and you rejoice over it. However, when a violent gale comes upon them, and waves surge towards them from every side, and they are sure that they are encircled *by death with no way out – they start* calling upon Allah, professing submission to Him sincerely: 'If You salvage us from this *ordeal now*, we will definitely be among the grateful/*faithful.*' **16:51** - And Allah commands: 'Do not take two *or more* entities *in worship*. In reality, He is *the* One *and Only* Allah. So be awed of no one but Me!' **19:88-89** - And, moreover, they allege: 'The Infinitely Merciful has taken to Himself a son.' Indeed, by this monstrous allegation you have uttered a hideous thing of blasphemy. **36:22** - *And as far as I am concerned* why should I not submit to Him *in worship* Who created me? And, you will *all* be returned to Him' *to give an account of your lives.*

Case Study – 9

Parable [36] is another name for an allegory - these are typically brief and symmetrical where details are left out. Most of the parables of the Qur'an have

[36] Abdu-Rahman Ibn Naasir Aal-Sa'dee, Parables of the Qur 'an, Salafi Publications, Birmingham, UK, 2005.

been presented by comparing certain ideas or principles to some more familiar things (objects, events, etc.) known to the people. They have been used to establish a pattern of reasoning by using carefully selected or crafted parables that the reader can understand easily. The parables of the Qur'an provide a path for understanding the meaning of some important points and illustrate some others as pictures.

In specific terms, the Qur'an discusses such topics that depict Allah(EA) as the Light of the Heavens and the Earth (Q.24:35); the persistence of the truth and the transience of the falsehood (Q.31:17); the Messenger(P) of Allah(EA) and his Companions (Q.48:29); the abundance of good and scarcity of evil (Q.14:24); the hypocrites (Q.02:17, 59:15); the responsibility that comes with knowledge (Q.62:5, 07:175); the peoples who have slandered their messengers (Q.16:112); the weight of the message of the Arabic Qur'an (Q.59:21); belief versus disbelief (Q.06:122, 7:58, 11:24, 16:75, 28:61); the hardening of the hearts (Q.02:74); the attitude of disbelievers against the Message (Q.02:171); the situation of those who have forgotten Allah(EA) and have refrained from spending in His Causes (Q.68:17-33); and the resurrection and life after death (Q.02:259, 35:9).

Consider some specific examples.

Title of the Surah: *al-Hajj.*

Q. 22:73

وَمَا لِيَ لَا أَعْبُدُ الَّذِي فَطَرَنِي وَإِلَيْهِ تُرْجَعُونَ ٢٢

Transliteration: Yaaa ayyuhan naasu duriba masalun fastami'oo lah; innal lazeena tad'oona min doonil laahi lai yakhluqoo zubaabanw wa lawijtama'oo lahoo wa iny yaslub humuz zubaabu shai'an laa yastanqizoohu minh; da'ufat taalibu wal matloob.

Comparative Matrix – Case Study 9

Q. 22:73

Arb	O men, a similitude is struck; so give you ear to it. Surely those upon whom you call, apart from God, shall never create a fly, though they banded together to do it; and if a fly should rob them of aught, they would never rescue it from him. Feeble indeed alike are the seeker and the sought!
Asd	O Men! A parable is set forth [herewith]; hearken, then, to it! Behold, those beings whom you invoke instead of God cannot create [as much as] a fly, even were they to join all their forces to that end! And if a fly robs them of anything, they cannot [even] rescue it from him! Weak indeed is the seeker, and [weak] the sought!
Hlm	People, here is an illustration, so listen carefully: those you call on beside God could not, even if they combined all their forces, create a fly, and if a fly took something away from them, they would not be able to retrieve it. How feeble are the petitioners and how feeble are those they petition!
HnM	O mankind! A similitude has been coined, so listen to it (carefully): Verily those on whom you call besides Allah, cannot create (even) a fly, even though they combine together for the purpose. And if the fly snatches away a thing from them, they will have no power to release it from the fly. So weak are (both) the seeker and the sought.
Ysf	O men! Here is a parable set forth! listen to it! Those on whom, besides Allah, ye call, cannot create (even) a fly, if they all met together for the purpose! and if the fly should snatch away anything from them, they would have no power to release it from the fly. Feeble are those who petition and those whom they petition!
Unl	O humankind! A parable is struck, so pay heed to it: Those whom, apart from God, you deify and invoke will never be able to create even a fly,

	even if all of them were to come together to do so. And if a fly snatches away anything from them, they cannot recover that from it. Powerless indeed is the seeker, and (so is) the sought!
Nsr	O mankind! A parable is set forth, so hearken unto it! Truly those upon whom you call apart from God will never create a fly, even if they gathered together to do so. And if the fly should rob them of aught, they could not rescue it from it. Feeble are the seeker and the sought!
Bdr	O The People! Here is an illustration for you, so listen to it *attentively*! Surely those entities you call upon apart from Allah, will never *be able to* create *as much as* a housefly, even if they joined together *their forces* to do so. And *more so* if a housefly were to take away something from them, they would never *be able to* get it back from it! Weak and *powerless* are the seeker and the sought *alike.*

'*Mathal'* of the Sacred Arabic Text has been translated as 'parable' by 4 translators, 'illustration' by 2, 'similitude' by 2. Allah(EA) challenges those who worship other objects or beings beside One Allah(EA) to bring proof that these are worthy of worship, and asks what those objects have created that can be understood as a sign of their status to be worshipped. The *mathal* of a house fly has been appropriately paraphrased to show that even if it snatched away something from them they could neither prevent it nor retrieve it - this shows how weak they are and how powerless are the entities they worship.

Title of the Surah: *Ibrahim*

Q.14:24-27

أَلَمْ تَرَ كَيْفَ ضَرَبَ اللَّهُ مَثَلًا كَلِمَةً طَيِّبَةً كَشَجَرَةٍ طَيِّبَةٍ أَصْلُهَا ثَابِتٌ وَفَرْعُهَا فِي السَّمَاءِ ٢٤ تُؤْتِي أُكُلَهَا كُلَّ حِينٍ بِإِذْنِ رَبِّهَا ۗ وَيَضْرِبُ اللَّهُ الْأَمْثَالَ لِلنَّاسِ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَتَذَكَّرُونَ ٢٥ وَمَثَلُ كَلِمَةٍ خَبِيثَةٍ كَشَجَرَةٍ خَبِيثَةٍ اجْتُثَّتْ مِنْ فَوْقِ الْأَرْضِ مَا لَهَا

مِنْ قَرَارٍ ٢٦ يُثَبِّتُ اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا بِالْقَوْلِ الثَّابِتِ فِي الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا وَفِي الْآخِرَةِ ۖ وَيُضِلُّ اللَّهُ الظَّالِمِينَ ۚ وَيَفْعَلُ اللَّهُ مَا يَشَاءُ ٢٧

Transliteration: 24. Alam tara kaifa darabal laahu masalan kalimatan taiyibatan kashajaratin taiyibatin asluhaa saabitunw wa far'uhaa fis samaaa.' 25 - Tu'teee ukulahaa kulla heenim bi izni Rabbihaa; wa yadribul laahul amsaala linnaasi la'allahum yatazak karoon. 26 -Wa masalu kalimatin khabeesatin kashajaratin khabee satinij tussat min fawqil ardi maa lahaa min qaraar. 27 - Yusabbitul laahul lazeena aamanoo bilqawlis saabiti fil hayaatid dunyaa wa fil Aakhirati wa yudillul laahuz zaalimeen; wa yaf'alul laahu maa yashaaa.'

Comparative Matrix – Case Study 9a

Q.14:24; 14:25; 14:26; 14:27.

Arb	**14:24** - Hast thou not seen how God has struck a similitude? A good word is as a good tree - its roots are firm, and its branches are in heaven; **14:25** - it gives its produce every season by the leave of its Lord. So God strikes similitudes for men; haply they will remember. **14:26** - And the likeness of a corrupt word is as a corrupt tree -- uprooted from the earth, having no stablishment. **14:27** - God confirms those who believe with the firm word, in the present life and in the world to come; and God leads astray the evildoers; and God does what He will.
Asd	**14:24** – Art thou not aware how God sets forth the parable of a good word? [It is] like a good tree, firmly rooted, [reaching out] with its branches towards the sky, **14:25** - yielding its fruit at all times by its Sustainer's leave. And [thus it is that] God propounds parables unto men, so that they might bethink themselves [of the truth].

	14:26 - And the parable of a corrupt word is that of a corrupt tree, torn up [from its roots] onto the face of the earth, wholly unable to endure. **14:27** - [Thus,] God grants firmness unto those who have attained to faith through the word that is unshakably true in the life of this world as well as in the life to come; but the wrongdoers He lets go astray: for God does whatever He wills.
Hlm	**14:24** - [Prophet], do you not see how God makes comparisons? A good word is like a good tree whose root is firm and whose branches are high in the sky, **14:25** - yielding constant fruit by its Lord's leave– God makes such comparisons for people so that they may reflect– **14:26** - but an evil word is like a rotten tree, uprooted from the surface of the earth, with no power to endure. **14:27** - God will give firmness to those who believe in the firmly rooted word, a both in this world and the Hereafter, but the evildoers He leaves to stray: God does whatever He will
HnM	**14:24** – See you not how Allah sets a parable? A goodly word as a goodly tree, whose root is firmly fixed, and its branches (reach) to the sky (i.e., very high). **14:25** – Giving its fruit at all times, by the Leave of its Lord, and Allah sets forth parables for mankind in order that they remember. **14:26** – And the parable of an evil word is that of an evil tree uprooted from the surface of earth, having no stability. **14:27** – Allah will keep firm those who believe, with the word that stands firm in this world (i.e. they will keep up on worshipping Allah Alone and none else), and in the Hereafter. And Allah will cause to go astray those who are Zalimin (polytheists and wrongdoers), and Allah does what He Wills.

Ysf	**14:24** - Seest thou not how Allah sets forth a parable? A goodly word like a goodly tree, whose root is firmly fixed, and its branches (reach) to the heavens of its Lord. So Allah sets forth parables for men, in order that they may receive admonition. **14:25** - It brings forth its fruit at all times, by the leave of its Lord. So Allah sets forth parables for men, in order that they may receive admonition. **14:26** - And the parable of an evil Word is that of an evil tree: It is torn up by the root from the surface of the earth: it has no stability. **14:27** - Allah will establish in strength those who believe, with the word that stands firm, in this world and in the Hereafter; but Allah will leave, to stray, those who do wrong: Allah doeth what He willeth.
Unl	**14:24** - Do you not see how God strikes a parable of a good word: (a good word is) like a good tree – its roots holding firm (in the ground) and its branches in heaven, **14:25** - It yields its fruit in every season due by its Lord's leave. So God strikes parables for human beings, in order that they may reflect on them and infer the necessary lessons. **14:26** - And the parable of a corrupt word is that of a corrupt tree uprooted from upon the earth, having no constancy. **14:27** - God keeps firm those who believe by the true, firm word in the life of this world and in the Hereafter; and God leads the wrongdoers astray. And God does whatever He wills.
Nsr	**14:24** - Hast thou not considered how God sets forth a parable? A good word is as a good tree: its roots firm and its branches in the sky. **14:25** - It brings forth fruit in every season, by the Leave of its Lord. God sets forth parables for mankind that haply they may remember. **14:26** - And the parable of a bad word is a bad tree: uprooted from the face of the earth; it has no stability. '

	14:27 - God makes firm those who believe with firm speech in the life of this world and in the Hereafter. And God leads the wrongdoers astray; God does whatsoever He wills.
Bdr	**14:24** - Have you not considered how Allah illustrates the example of good word? *It is* like a good tree, its root holding firm *in the ground* and its branches *reaching out* to the sky. **14:25** - Yielding its fruits every season, *time after time*, by the Will of its Rabb - *The Lord*. In this way Allah sets out examples for a people so that they may reflect. **14:26** - And *on the other hand* the example of a bad word is like a bad tree, uprooted from the *ground* soil, having no stability. **14:27** - Allah will *support and* uphold those who believe through the good word - both in the life of this world and in the Hereafter; but Allah will let the unjust go astray. And Allah does whatever He Wills.

The Qur'an uses this parable to illustrate the stability and permanence of a 'good word' as opposed to the instability of an 'evil word'. While the 'good word' refers to the word and concepts of truth, the 'evil word' refers to their opposite. The 'good word' is so highly fruitful and productive that were individuals or groups of people to base their lives on it, they will continually benefit from the good results ensuing from it. The 'evil word' is obviously just the opposite of the 'good word.' It embraces every variety of falsehood - false doctrines, atheism, deism, polytheism, idolatry - every worldview other than the one taught by the Prophets.

This parable affirms the fact that besides being logical and natural, truth is a positive, beneficial and constructive concept, while falsehood is harmful and destructive to society. The truth based on *Tawheed/*Unshared Unity of Allah(EA)

leads to stability in human values; the falsehood being rootless only leads to misery and frustration.

A part of Q.14:27 reads: '*wa yudillul laahuz zaalimeen'* has been understood and rendered in two different ways.

i. One done by Asd: 'the wrongdoers He lets go astray,' and Bdr: 'Allah will let the unjust go astray.'

ii. And the other done by Hlm – 'the evildoers He leaves to stray'; HnM – 'And Allah will cause to go astray those who are Zalimeen;' Ysf – 'but Allah will leave, to stray, those who do wrong;' Unl – 'and God leads the wrongdoers astray;' Nsr – 'And God leads the wrongdoers astray.'

In fact, both may be considered correct. [37]

Title of the Surah: *An-Nur*

Q.24:35

[37] All Qur'anic references to Allah's 'letting a person go astray' may be understood against the background of Q.02:26-27 – '…. He causes many to go astray *from the truth on account of their disbelieving bond with Allah*, and many He guides *on account of their believing in it*. However, He does not *let anyone be* confused by them, except the defiantly disobedient' - that is to say, a person's 'going astray' is a consequence of his own attitudes and inclinations and not a result of an arbitrary 'predestination' in the popular sense of this word. Furthermore, considering the aspect of 'free choice' on the part of a person, and that 'Allah does not cause anyone to go astray except one who, as He knows, will never attain to faith; and He does not guide anyone aright except one who, as He knows, will attain to faith.

Hence, the *expression* 'causing to go astray' denotes *Allah's* leaving *one* alone (*takhliyah*) and depriving *him* of all favor, whereas *the expression* 'guidance' denotes *His* grant of fulfilment (*tawfiq)* and favour.... Thus, He does not forsake anyone except those who deserve to be forsaken, and does not bestow His Favor upon anyone except those who deserve to be favored.' Commenting on the identical phrase occurring in Q.16:93, Zamakhshari states: "[God] forsakes him who, as He knows, will [consciously] choose to deny the truth and will persevere in this [denial]; and ... He bestows His favor upon him who, as He knows, will choose faith: which means that He makes the issue dependent on [man's] free choice (*al-ikhtiyar*), and thus on his deserving either [God's] favor or the withdrawal of [His] aid ... and does not make it dependent on compulsion [i.e., predestination], which would rule out [man's] deserving anything of the above.'

اللَّهُ نُورُ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ ۚ مَثَلُ نُورِهِ كَمِشْكَاةٍ فِيهَا مِصْبَاحٌ ۖ الْمِصْبَاحُ فِي زُجَاجَةٍ ۖ الزُّجَاجَةُ كَأَنَّهَا كَوْكَبٌ دُرِّيٌّ يُوقَدُ مِنْ شَجَرَةٍ مُبَارَكَةٍ زَيْتُونَةٍ لَا شَرْقِيَّةٍ وَلَا غَرْبِيَّةٍ يَكَادُ زَيْتُهَا يُضِيءُ وَلَوْ لَمْ تَمْسَسْهُ نَارٌ ۚ نُورٌ عَلَىٰ نُورٍ ۗ يَهْدِي اللَّهُ لِنُورِهِ مَنْ يَشَاءُ ۚ وَيَضْرِبُ اللَّهُ الْأَمْثَالَ لِلنَّاسِ ۗ وَاللَّهُ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيمٌ ٣٥

Transliteration: Allaahu noorus[38] samaawaati wal ard; masalu noorihee kamishkaatin feehaa misbaah; almisbaahu fee zujaajatin azzujaajatu ka annahaa kawkabun durriyyuny yooqadu min shajaratim mubaarakatin zaitoonatil laa shariqiyyatinw wa laa gharbiyyatiny yakaadu zaituhaa yudeee'u wa law lam

[38] The term '*noor/nur'* has been used in different contexts and perspectives throughout The Qur'an. A few examples: (i) 'Nur' as a reference to the Religion of Islam: 'They [the disbelievers] want to extinguish Allah's light (*nura allahi*) with their mouths, but Allah refuses but to perfect His Light, though the disbelievers be averse' (Q.09.32). (ii) Nur as a reference to faith: 'Allah is the Protector of those who believe. He leads them out from darkness into light (*nur*). But as for those who disbelieve, their protectors are entities of falsehood; they lead them out from light (*nuri*) into darkness' (Q.02.257). (iii) Nur as a reference to Allah's commandments and moral laws in the Torah and Gospels: 'Indeed We did send down the Torah, therein was guidance and light (*nurun*) by which the Prophets judged' (Q.05.44); 'And in their footsteps, We sent Jesus, the son of Mary, confirming the Torah that had come before him, and We gave them the Injil in which was guidance and light (*nurun*)' (Q.05.46). (iv) Nur as a reference to the light of day: 'Praise be to Allah who created the celestial realm and the terrestrial world, and originated the darkness and the light (*al-nur*); yet those who disbelieve hold others as equals with their Rabb' (Q.06.01). (v) Nur as a reference to justice: 'And the earth will shine with the light of its Rabb (*bi-nuri rabaha*), and the Book shall be placed open, and the Prophets and the witnesses shall be brought forward, and it shall be judged between them with truth, and they shall not be wronged' (Q.39.69). (vi) Nur as a reference to the guiding light that Allah gives the faithful on the Time of Resurrection: 'At that Time when the hypocrites, men and women, will say to those who have believed: ''Wait for us, so that we may borrow your light (*nurikum*)!'' It shall be said to them: ''Turn back behind you, and seek for a light (*nuran*)''' (Q.57.13). The expression 'turn back behind' here refers to the previous life on earth, with the meaning that the hypocrites should have sought a light while they lived on earth. (vii) Nur as a reference to the commandments and injunctions of the Qur'an: 'Therefore believe in Allah and His Messenger and in the light (*al-nuri*) which We have sent down. And Allah is All-aware of your deeds' (Q.64.8). (viii) Nur as a reference to the light of the moon: 'Do you not see how Allah has created the seven heavens one above the other, and how He has made the moon a light (*nuran*) therein and made the sun a lamp?' (Q.71.15–16); 'It is he who has made the sun radiance (*diya'an*) and the moon a light (*nuran*)' (Q.10.5); etc.

tamsashu naar; noorun 'alaa noor; yahdil laahu linoorihee mai yashaaa'; wa yadribul laahul amsaala linnaas; wallaahu bikulli shai'in Aleem.

Comparative Matrix – Case Study 9b

Q.24:35

Arb	God is the Light of the heavens and the earth; the likeness of His Light is as a niche wherein is a lamp (the lamp in a glass, the glass as it were a glittering star) kindled from a Blessed Tree, an olive that is neither of the East nor of the West whose oil well-nigh would shine, even if no fire touched it; Light upon Light; (God guides to His Light whom He will.)
Asd	God is the Light of the heavens and the earth. The parable of His light is, as it were, that of a niche containing a lamp; the lamp is [enclosed] in glass, the glass [shining] like a radiant star: [a lamp] lit from a blessed tree - an olive-tree that is neither of the east nor of the west - the oil whereof [is so bright that it] would well-nigh give light [of itself] even though fire had not touched it: light upon light! God guides unto His light him that wills [to be guided]; and [to this end] God propounds parables unto men, since God [alone] has full knowledge of all things.
Hlm	God is the Light of the heavens and earth. His Light is like this: there is a niche, and in it a lamp, the lamp inside a glass, a glass like a glittering star, fueled from a blessed olive tree from neither east nor west, whose oil almost gives light even when no fire touches it– light upon light– God guides whoever He will to his Light; God draws such comparisons for people; God has full knowledge of everything.
.	Allah is the Light of the heavens and the earth. The Parable of His Light is as (if there were) a niche and within it a Lamp, and the lamp is in a glass, the glass as it were a brilliant star, lit from a blessed tree, an Olive, neither of the east (i.e. neither it gets sun-rays only in the morning) nor of the West (i.e. nor

HnM	it gets sun-rays only in the afternoon but it is exposed to the sun all day long),, whose oil would almost glow forth (of itself), though fire touched it: Light upon Light! Allah guides to His Light whom He wills. And Allah sets forth Parables for mankind: and Allah is All-Knower of everything.
Ysf	Allah is the Light of the heavens and the earth. The Parable of His Light is as if there were a Niche and within it a Lamp: the Lamp enclosed in Glass: the glass as it were a brilliant star: Lit from a blessed Tree, an Olive, neither of the east nor of the West, whose oil is well-nigh luminous, though fire scarce touched it: Light upon Light! Allah doth guide whom He will to His Light: Allah doth set forth Parables for mankind: and Allah doth know all things
Unl	God is the Light of the heavens and the earth. The example of His Light is like a niche wherein is a lamp; the lamp is in a crystal, and the crystal, shining as if a pearl-like radiant star, lit from the oil of a blessed olive tree that is neither of the east nor of the west. The oil would almost give light of itself though no fire touches it. Light upon light! God guides to His Light whom He wills. God strikes parables for people. God has full knowledge of all things.
Nsr	God is the Light of the heavens and the earth. The parable of His Light is a niche, wherein is a lamp. The lamp is in a glass. The glass is as a shining star kindled from a blessed olive tree, neither of the East nor of the West. Its oil would well-nigh shine forth, even if no fire had touched it. Light upon light. God guides unto His Light whomsoever He will, and God sets forth parables for mankind, and God is Knower of all things.
Bdr	*The example of belief in* Allah is *like the* example of the Light of the celestial realm and the terrestrial world. The example of His Light is as *if there were* a niche in which is a lamp. The lamp is in a glass. And the glass is *shining* like a radiant star - *whose flame is* kindled from *the oil* of a blessed tree – an olive *tree from* neither *of the* East nor *of the* West. Its oil is glowing *by itself* even

	when untouched by fire. *Thus, it is* Light upon light! Allah guides towards His Light *of enlightenment* whoever He wants. And *this is how* Allah emphasizes these examples *and comparisons* for *guidance of* people, for Allah *alone* is All-Knowledgeable about everything

It presents another example of the inspiring beauty of the Qur'anic parable. This is a very rich and profound parable that has been explained by Allah(EA) more extensively than any other parable in the Qur'an.

It starts with explaining that Allah(EA) is the light of the entire universe - light is something that makes itself and the others around it become visible, and that darkness would prevail if disconnected from light. As such, Allah(EA) has used the term 'light' in this sense. However, it should not be taken literally as it is different from the physical light and its material.[39]

[39] Another example in Q.02:17-20 uses a natural phenomenon to paint a picture of hypocritical behaviour. It uses some scenarios of darkness, fire, rain, lightning, and thunder to paint vivid pictures of a complex portrait of the hypocritical personality. The parables also describe the rewards and punishments of the hereafter in human terms to which people in general can relate to, understand, and visualize. In many places, the Hell and Paradise are described by using our worldly terminology and concepts while their real nature is beyond our imagination and perception. People with a proper attitude find these examples, scenarios, and imagery very useful, and they concentrate on the point being made. Consequently, they get a very clear understanding of the subject matter and appreciate the value of the truth clarified by these means. On the other hand, those whose concern is not finding the truth but looking for points to criticize the Qur'an pick an issue with the words and objects used for examples and scenarios, instead of the message conveyed by the example. They come up with objections such as why does the Qur'an refer to insignificant and unsophisticated objects? What does God, the exalted, have to do with such mundane things? Why is there mention of spouses or such and such in Paradise? How can hell be this way or that way? And, so on. This behavior of some people towards the parables of the Qur' an is explained in the following Ayat: "We have explained in detail in this Qur'an, for the benefit of mankind, every kind of similitude: but man is, in most things, contentious. " (Q.18:54) "And We have explained to man, in this Qur'an, every kind of similitude: yet the greater number of men refuse - (Q.17:89). Allah uses spider, fly, ant and so many other not-so-sacred things for making points. For example, Q. 02:26-27, the example of a mosquito is used to elucidate the psychology of the people who deprive themselves of the guidance of the Qur'an after recognizing its truth. These examples paint vivid pictures of their mental state. Asd explains that the use of the term 'parable' (*mathal*) immediately or shortly after a description of men's condition - whether good or bad - in the hereafter is meant to remind us that all such descriptions relate to something that is

This parable has been rendered and explained by all eight translators in inspiring ways. While all translators have rendered the opening statement as 'Allah/God is the light of the heavens and the earth,' Bdr has added words in italics to make it more meaningful saying: *The example of belief in* Allah is *like the* example of the Light of the celestial realm and the terrestrial world.

Asd explains: the parable of 'the light of God' is not meant to express His reality but only to allude to the illumination which He, who is the Ultimate Truth, bestows upon the mind and the feelings of all who are willing to be guided. Unl explains: it is God Who has created light and illuminates everything in the universe. Ysf states that parable of Light contains layer upon layer of transcendental truth about spiritual mysteries.

Anna haa kawkabun durriyyuny is rendered as 'radiant star' by Asd, Bdr, Unl; and as shining star by Nsr, brilliant star by Ysf, HnM, glittering star by Hlm, Arb. Four synonyms are employed where each represents intensity of the adjective. Consider the dictionary meanings: 'radiant' implies beams of light, vividly bright and shining; 'shining' means emitting or reflecting light and often splendid in appearance; 'brilliant' implies intense often sparkling brightness; and 'glittering' means shining with many bright points of light. So, in essence, all four adjectives are appropriately translated for the Arabic synonym.

"beyond the reach of a created being's perception" (*al-ghayb*), and cannot, therefore, be conveyed to man otherwise than by means of allegories or parables expressed in terms of human experience and therefore accessible, in a general sense, to human imagination. Parables can be negative, too, asserting that two things are unlike in one or more respects. For example, the Qur'an negates the similarity of anything else to Allah in the following words: " there is nothing whatever like unto Him .. ." (Q.42:11). The parable of a good word versus an evil word that is narrated in Q.14:24-27, the parable of the spider's web that has been narrated in Q.29:41-44. In Q.02 alone there are 15 Ayat that may be considered metaphorical: 07, 16, 25, 27, 41, 43, 49, 61, 74, 93, 112, 115, 125, 143, 144, 261 and 264. In addition, there are also others in Q.03:26, Q.08:17, Q.12:09 n 84; Q.22:46.

Ka-mishkaa-tin rendered as 'niche'[40] is a common expression adopted by all. Consider: Arb: the likeness of His Light is as a niche; Asd: The parable of His light is, as it were, that of a niche; Hlm: His Light is like this: there is a niche; Ysf and HnM: The Parable of His Light is as (if there were) a niche; Nsr: The parable of His Light is a niche; Bdr: The example of His Light is as *if there were* a niche.

Asd, Bdr, Ysf, Unal and HnM discuss these concepts and others in their learned explanatory notes. Hlm, Arb have further explained the meaning of this statement in their commentary differently. Ysf has explained: Allah as the true light and all the other physical lights as the reflection of that true light. Asd has explained that what is meant by this statement is Allah alone is the main cause for the existence of all that exists.

Al-Ghazzali teaches that 'symbols are not mere parables/metaphors. Rather, there is a real and transcendent nexus between symbol and symbolized, type and antitype, outer and inner.' The beautiful Qur'anic expressions of light, niche, glass, oil, tree, East, and West - all contain psychological and religious-metaphysical meaning.

Case Study – 10

Euphemism [41] is a purposeful act of softening existing terms or expressions with neutral, courteous, polite, socially 'clean' or religiously sensitive expressions – like abortion instead of premature birth, fee for fine, Intellectually challenged for

[40] Dictionary meaning: a position that is very suitable.

[41] كناية *kinayatun.* Literature provides a large number of studies investigating the concept of euphemism. However, studies conducted on the translation of euphemistic expressions in the Holy Quran are few. See (i) Ahmad Sobhy Salem Abd-Ellatif Rakhia, Banha University, Faculty of Arts Dept. of English Language and Literature, Egypt, thesis on 'Using Euphemism in the Holy Quran "Analytical Approach."(ii) Euphemism in Arabic & English Translation: Quranic Texts as a Case Study by Al-Ma'mon College Journal (2010). (iii) The Translability of Euphemism in The Holy Qur'an by Mohammad Qasem Al-Hamad. European Scientific Journal, January 2013 edition Vol.9, No.2 ISSN: 1857 – 7881).

being mentally retarded, gender reassignment for sex change, etc. Euphemism is an evident phenomenon in the Qur'an but the process of translating it into English is generally problematic for reasons of language and cultural diversity. The Arabic Qur'an shows a high level of politeness and refinement through the use of various euphemized expressions.

Consider some specific examples.

Title of the Surah: *al-Baqarah*

Q.02:222

وَيَسْأَلُونَكَ عَنِ الْمَحِيضِ ۖ قُلْ هُوَ أَذًى فَاعْتَزِلُوا النِّسَاءَ فِي الْمَحِيضِ ۖ وَلَا تَقْرَبُوهُنَّ حَتَّىٰ يَطْهُرْنَ ۖ فَإِذَا تَطَهَّرْنَ فَأْتُوهُنَّ مِنْ حَيْثُ أَمَرَكُمُ اللَّهُ .....

Transliteration: Wa yas'aloonaka 'anil maheedi qul huwa azan fa'tazilun nisaaa'a fil maheedi wa laa taqraboo hunna hattaa yathurna fa-izaa tatah-harrna faatoohunna min haisu amarakumul laah.

Title of the Surah: *an-Nisa'*

Q.04:43

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا تَقْرَبُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَأَنْتُمْ سُكَارَىٰ حَتَّىٰ تَعْلَمُوا مَا تَقُولُونَ وَلَا جُنُبًا إِلَّا عَابِرِي سَبِيلٍ حَتَّىٰ تَغْتَسِلُوا ۚ وَإِنْ كُنْتُمْ مَرْضَىٰ أَوْ عَلَىٰ سَفَرٍ أَوْ جَاءَ أَحَدٌ مِنْكُمْ مِنَ الْغَائِطِ أَوْ لَامَسْتُمُ النِّسَاءَ فَلَمْ تَجِدُوا مَاءً فَتَيَمَّمُوا صَعِيدًا طَيِّبًا فَامْسَحُوا بِوُجُوهِكُمْ وَأَيْدِيكُمْ .....

Transliteration: Yaaa aiyuhal lazeena aamanoo laa taqrabus Salaata wa antum sukaaraa hatta ta'lamoo ma taqooloona wa laa junuban illaa 'aabiree sabeelin hatta taghtasiloo; wa in kuntum mardaaa aw 'alaa safarin aw jaaa'a ahadum minkum minal ghaaa'iti aw laamastumun nisaaa'a falam tajidoo maaa'an fatayam mamoo sa'eedan taiyiban famsahoo biwujoohikum wa aideekum.

Title of the Surah: *an-Naml*

Q.07:26

يَا بَنِي آدَمَ قَدْ أَنْزَلْنَا عَلَيْكُمْ لِبَاسًا يُوَارِي سَوْآتِكُمْ وَرِيشًا ۖ وَلِبَاسُ التَّقْوَىٰ ذَٰلِكَ خَيْرٌ ۚ ذَٰلِكَ مِنْ آيَاتِ اللَّهِ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَذَّكَّرُونَ ٢٦

Transliteration: Ya banee adama qad anzalnaAAalaykum libasan yuwaree saw-atikumwareeshan walibasu attaqwa thalikakhayrun thalika min ayati AllahilaAAallahum yaththakkaroon.

Comparative Matrix – Case Study 10

Q.02:222, 04:43; 07:26.

Arb	**02:222** - and do not approach them till they are clean. **04:43** - Or if any of you comes from the privy or you have touched women. **07:26** - a garment to cover your shameful parts.
Asd	**02:222** - and do not draw near unto them until they are cleansed. **04:43** - Or have just satisfied a want of nature, or have cohabited with a woman. **07:26** - garments to cover your nakedness.
Hlm	**02:222** – Do not approach them until they are cleansed. **04:43** - Or have relieved yourselves, or had intercourse. **07:26** - garments to cover your nakedness.
HnM	**02:222** - And do not go unto them till they are purified. **04:43** - Or one of you comes after answering call of the nature, or have been in contact with women. **07:26** - Raiment …. to cover yourselves.
Ysf	**02:222** - and do not approach them until they are clean. **04:43** - Or one of you cometh from offices of nature, or ye have been in contact with women.

	07:26 - Raiment ….. to cover your shame.
Unl	**02:222** - and do not approach them until they are cleansed. **04:43** - Or if any of you has just satisfied a call of nature, or you have had contact with women. **07:26** - a garment to cover your private parts.
Nsr	**02:222** - and do not approach them until they are purified. **04:43** - one of you has come from satisfying a call of nature, or you have touched women. **07:26** - raiment to cover your nakedness.
Bdr	**02:222** - And do not get near them *for cohabitation* until they have cleansed *themselves by way of taking ritual bath.* **04:43** - Or relieved yourself from the toilet, or cohabited with spouses. **07:26** - *a garment* - it covers your privacy.

Q.02:222 is, indeed, a rich example of euphemism. In their two occurrences, references to sex were replaced by two different metaphors, by which a high level of euphemism was achieved. The second occurrence is an imperative derived from the root which generally means 'came'. However, the use of the very general imperative would fail to deliver the intended meaning that is a permission of cohabitation, and a claim that euphemism has been given far more weight than meaning would be valid, if not accompanied by the earlier antecedent. The former is a prohibition of cohabitation at the time of menstruation.

Q. 04:43 – '*lamastum'* and '*'nisa'* has been literally translated as 'you have touched woman' or 'have been in contact with women,' and culturally blunt and socially offensive expression of 'had intercourse' by Hlm (that is like introducing the wording of Biblical narratives), against Asd's and Bdr's 'cohabited with a woman,' and 'cohabited with spouses.' The Ayah is talking about husband-wife situation, not a man and any woman situation – so Bdr's wording is closer to the

intention of the Sacred Arabic Text. The cultural aspect appears to have been compromised by almost everyone. '*alghaa'ti'* has also been captured as 'call of the nature' or 'from the privy' by Arb; Bdr renders it as 'relieved *yourself* from the toilet.'

Q. 07:26 – Asd, Hlm and Nsr use the Biblical term 'to cover your nakedness,' others term it as 'cover your shame' and 'cover your privacy' – where all are suitable paraphrasing. In fact, the process of transmitting euphemized expressions and cultural elements through translation is a complicated task.

Conclusions

The Arabic Qur'an is different from any other Arabic text - it is divine, sacred, and sensitive. Although translations are helpful, yet they are unable to reach the real meaning of the Qur'an simply because translating the Divine Words into human words creates loss in their divine value and consequently the message loses its real meaning too.

Each one of the selected eight translators has done a remarkable job in performing the very difficult task of translating the meaning of the Arabic Qur'an as examined in a sample of 40 Surah and 50 Ayat - and in offering a great service to the English readers. They have all strived and competed in accuracy and clarity as the main values of their translations. Each of the eight leading translations has its own strengths and merits. The differences have been mainly due to their particular approaches and backgrounds.