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**Aspects of the Inimitability (I3jaz) of
the Holy Qur'an:
A Comparative Analytical Study of some Science-Related
Qur'anic Words and Selected Translations of their Meanings**

*Dissertation Submitted to the Department of Letters and English Language in
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Dedication

In the Name of Allah, the Most Merciful, the Most Compassionate

This work is for the sake of Allah, my Creator and my Master.

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First, *Alhamdulillah*; for I could never have done this work without the blessings of the Almighty, my source of inspiration, strength, knowledge and understanding.

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to my dearest sister for her motivation and ever-present care;

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Abstract

The Qur'an is the miraculous verbatim Word of Allah, which addresses the entire humanity by its transcending time and space, and by the diversity and accuracy of its knowledge. Its wording is so concise and precise that no linguistic element is out of place, redundant or used haphazardly. On account of all its peculiarities, it is an unprecedented inimitable miracle. Although the numerous translations of its meanings have been major contributions to the spreading of Islam, only the Arab reader can enjoy the grace of the 'I3jaz' miraculousness of some of its eloquent lexical items that hold and impart possible scientific implications, only recently uncovered with the advances of science and technology. This dissertation attempts to highlight the fact that what is lost when the Qur'an is encountered in translation is the Qur'an itself as many of its miraculous features are exclusively granted to its authentic language (Arabic). Thus, this research explores equivalence and faithfulness and investigates the possibility of preserving the meanings, particularly possible scientific inferences as one of the i3jaz features, of some science-related words through a comparative analytical study of these divine words and their English counterparts in five widespread translations. The review has revealed that the renditions suffer linguistically from serious shortcomings, non-equivalence, mistranslation and lack of accuracy; leading consequently to a partial or total absence of the scientific dimension. Subsequently, the study has drawn the conclusion that the holy Qur'an is definitely untranslatable (yet, if it has to be translated at all, literalness is the key to approximate most of these words true meanings); for any translation is certainly doomed to failure and could never ever serve, in any way, as a substitute for Allah's message since it is nothing but a mere desperate attempt to approach the most eloquent inimitable speech of all speeches (the Qur'an).

List of Abbreviations

ST: Source Text

TT: Target Text

SL: Source Language

TL: Target Language

A: Asad

M: Malik

P: Pkthall

Y A: Yusuf Ali

H & K: Al-Hilali and Khan

Table of the Arabic Alphabet Transliteration System

The following Arabic Alphabet Transliteration System is used to transliterate Arabic words and expressions used throughout this work into Latin script.

Arabic Alphabet	Transliteration	Arabic Alphabet	Transliteration
Alif أ	A	Ta' ط	<u>T</u>
Ba ب	B	Dha ظ	<u>DH</u>
Ta ت	T	Ayn ع	3
Tha ث	TH	Ghayn غ	GH
Jim ج	J	Fa ف	F
Ha ح	<u>H</u>	Qaf ق	Q
Kha خ	KH	Kaf ك	K
Daal د	D	Lam ل	L
Dhaal ذ	DH	Mim م	M
Ra ر	R	Nun ن	N
Zey ز	Z	Ha ه	H
Sin س	S	Waw و	W
Shin ش	SH	Ya ي	Y
Sad ص	<u>S</u>	Hamza ء	'
Daad ض	<u>D</u>	Ta' Marbuṭa ة	A

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GENERAL INTRODUCTION

1. Statement of the Problem

Based on the fact that Allah sent the Prophet and the holy Qur'an to all humanity, spreading the message of Islam across the world through translating its meanings was a necessity. Subsequently, there has been a blossoming in recent years of many English translations, which have become among the most read books in the world. As a matter of fact, the Qur'an is miraculous in nature, including the everlasting and renewable knowledge some of its words contain. Of the examples are the scientific truths that have only been uncovered by the science and technology of the twentieth century and which were stated in the Qur'an more than 1400 years ago. However, the existing renditions of these science-related words are believed to be unsuccessful to transfer the original meanings, in terms of i3jaz, accurately into the target language. The main problem is, of course, the Qur'an's untranslatability or the fact that any translation is a replacement of the divine Speech/Words by human substitutions. Consequently, the effective expressive use of the divine words and the power and truth of their meanings, especially the ones related to science and which are pointed to be among the illustrations of its inimitability, are completely or partially lost or destroyed in the different translations while most translations readers, regrettably, fall for them as faithful renderings.

In other words, this study sets out to identify some of the problematic areas in the translation of the Qur'an's meanings at the lexical level (the case of some science-related words). It does not undermine the Qur'anic exegeses (tafsir) of these words in any way as they are the only ones that are religiously legitimate; yet, it has opted for tadabbur (reflection). As it is well known, Allah has strongly encouraged humans to reflect on the Qur'an, and this has been used here as a way to pinpoint the shortcomings of the selected translations from the linguistic and scientific perspectives as these renditions, on the contrary to the original, do not

allow to discover some new insights that are fully compatible with contemporary science. Nevertheless, these reflections cannot be called or treated as interpretations of the holy Qur'an. In short, the main problem when translating the meanings of the Qur'an is that the English reader is not exposed to some aspects of the miraculousness of the Qur'an; for a translation can never be a second original as it will be illustrated in this study that will determine what brings literal translation the closest to the genuine message.

2. Aims of the Study

The main purpose of this study is to highlight the fact that much is lost when the Qur'an is encountered in translation. It investigates the Qur'an's inimitability 'i3jaz'; each time one returns to the Arabic words, one finds new perspectives and fresh ways to understand them because it is a living document. The study is then a contribution towards a greater understanding of the meanings of some Qur'anic words in the light of the advancements of science and technology. So, it aims at exploring the possibility of preserving the meanings, particularly the scientific implications that have been spread among the Muslim community, and checking their correctness (in case of existence) in the selected translations. The principal intention of this dissertation is then to discuss the renditions of some Qur'anic words that pose a great challenge to any translator and make the task overwhelmingly arduous if not unattainable because these words are divine and contain miraculous information.

An important point is that this work aims at presenting the scientific miraculousness through true scientific references and quotes; i.e. relying on scientific books because what exist today are only hints about the subjects, which have sometimes been suspected. That is to say, many Muslims today, though with a good will, relate many Qur'anic statements to scientific discoveries without reporting evidence and/ or not being completely accurate; thus, many people -whether Muslims or not- judge them as liars or at least reporters of unreliable

information and inaccurate scientific claims. Hence, we aim at establishing a sound scientific background to the scientific miraculousness aspect of the last divinely inspired Book.

So, this research aims at discussing the linguistic and scientific reasons why the English target reader of the meanings of the holy Qur'an is actually deprived from comprehending the scientific meanings of some of its words. Also, it emphasises the fact that if it is impossible to acquire full equivalence for an ordinary source text, then success is obviously much more difficult to achieve in the translation of a sensitive text such as the Qur'an. In addition, it attempts to confirm that literalness might be one of the best workable methodologies for translating these particular words. Hence, it contributes to overcoming some of the shortcomings and enhancing some of the weaknesses of the existing translations. Nonetheless, what is best is learning Arabic so as to be directly exposed to the divine discourse. Thus, the ultimate purpose is to establish the truth that no matter how precise a translation can be, it can never replace the original Word of Allah.

These special divine words that have a correlation with science contain, miraculously, scientific data that have only recently been discovered, and this is one reason, among many, that the Qur'an is inimitable. Hence, this study serves as a humble reference to the following verses. On the one hand, for the scientific content in the Qur'an, we refer to the Almighty's saying: “سَنُرِيهِمْ آيَاتِنَا فِي الْأَفَاقِ وَفِي أَنْفُسِهِمْ حَتَّىٰ يَبَيِّنَ لَهُمُ أَنَّهُ الْحَقُّ ...”; “We will show them Our Signs in the universe, and in their ownelves, until it becomes manifest to them that this (the Qur'an) is the truth....” (Fussilat:53). On the other hand, for its inimitability and the shortcomings and absolute non-equivalence of the renditions compared to the original, we illustrate with the following divine challenge to produce the like in surat Al-baqarah: “وَإِنْ كُنْتُمْ فِي رَيْبٍ مِّمَّا نَزَّلْنَا عَلَىٰ عَبْدِنَا فَأْتُوا بِسُورَةٍ مِّثْلِهِ وَادْعُوا شُهَدَاءَكُمْ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ (23) فَإِنْ لَمْ تَفْعَلُوا وَلَنْ تَفْعَلُوا فَأْتُوا نَارَ الَّتِي عَدَدْنَا لِلْكَافِرِينَ (24)”; “And if you (Arab pagans, Jews, and Christians) are in doubt concerning that which We have sent down (i.e. the Qur'an) to Our slave (Muhammad

Peace be upon him), then produce a Surah (chapter) of the like thereof and call your witnesses (supporters and helpers) besides Allah, if you are truthful (23) But if you do it not, and you can never do it, then fear the Fire (Hell) whose fuel is men and stones, prepared for the disbelievers (24)''.

3. Research Questions

The present piece of research aims at addressing the following questions:

- 1- Is it possible to transfer accurately into English every shade of meaning that is contained in the Qur'anic words, particularly the science-related ones (the scientific miraculousness)? In other words, can translations preserve the linguistic meanings and the scientific implications that are contained in the divine words?
- 2- Can a translation ever take the place of the original Qur'an? Or, is the miraculous Qur'an inimitable and thus untranslatable?
- 3- So, how accurate are the Qur'an's English renditions (at least the selected ones) and is literal translation the best way to approach the messages of these particular divine words?

4. Assumptions

In the light of the above questions, we assume the following:

- 1- Translation equivalence can only be an approximation because it is impossible to transfer accurately into English every shade of meaning that is contained in the Qur'anic words, particularly the science-related ones (the scientific miraculousness). In other words, the translations of the meanings of the Qur'an cannot preserve the exact linguistic meanings and maintain the scientific dimension that is possibly suggested by the original words.
- 2- As the translations of the Qur'an's meanings refer to the renderings of the Speech of Allah -the most eloquent of all speeches- into human interpretations and rephrasing, it is beyond the bounds of possibility for a perfect accurate human translation to be attained or to be

considered as a substitute for the original. So, the miraculous Qur'an is inimitable and thus untranslatable.

3- We assume that the existing Qur'an's meanings English renditions (at least the selected ones) suffer from many shortcomings, loss and even mistakes regarding the i3jaz contained in its science-related words and that literal translation is the best way to approach them; yet, learning Arabic is the only way to guarantee the direct and full exposure to its scientific miraculousness; i.e. the Qur'an is the Qur'an only when read in its authentic language (Arabic).

5. Methodology and Research Tools

This dissertation is based on comparing and contrasting some renditions in five well-known English translations with the original. The reason behind selecting these particular translations is their wide-spread popularity, and also the correspondent translators are popular figures in the history of the English translations of the noble Qur'an's meanings. These professional translators are Muḥammad Marmaduke William Pickthall, Abdullah Yusuf Ali, Muḥammad Farooq-i-Azam Malik, Muḥammad Asad, and both of Muḥammad Khan and Taqi-ud-Din Al-Hilali. (The translation of Al-Hilali and Khan has been selected as the English version of any verse that is mentioned in this work). These renditions may have serious discrepancies in comparison with their science-related divine counterparts. Thus, we'll examine and study them from two different perspectives related to inimitability 'i3jaz' of the holy Qur'an -linguistic and scientific. They are analysed to determine to which extent they reflect the referential and the denotative meanings and to evaluate if they maintain the scientific implications; i.e. to measure adequacy and faithfulness with reference to the original. This will be done firstly through exhibiting the contextual meanings as the exegetes interpreted them and then the denotative meanings of the words under discussion. Secondly, there will be displaying of the scientific reflections related to those words relying on authentic

scientific references, including some graphs, diagrams, pictures... etc. Lastly, we will analyze and discuss the provided equivalents in the five English translations in the light of the aforementioned explanations and features. At the end we may add comments or suggestions for solving some problems if possible.

6. Structure of the Dissertation

This dissertation is composed of five chapters in addition to a general introduction and conclusion. The first two chapters are devoted to the theoretical review while the other three constitute the practical part. The first chapter, *The Qur'an and its Linguistic Inimitability or I3jaz*, deals with the definition of the Holy Qur'an, its names, structure, language, content and other special features and characteristics as well as its linguistic miraculousness 'i3jaz'. The second chapter, *The Qur'an: The Scientific Miraculousness and Translation*, is divided into two sections: the first one discusses the scientific miraculousness of the Qur'an illustrated with some examples, whereas the second one deals with its interpretations (meanings), exegeses and translations. The three last chapters are devoted to the practical part, including the methodology of research. They focus on analyzing, comparing, contrasting and assessing the faithfulness and equivalence of the five renditions of the words with reference to the original regarding the linguistic meanings and the scientific implications elicited from the Qur'anic words. These chapters are entitled: *Inimitability (Miraculousness) in Analogy*, *Inimitability (Miraculousness) in Polysemy and Broad Sense*, and the last one: *Inimitability (Miraculousness) in Denotative or Literal Meaning*. Finally, we will suggest some recommendations as how to enhance the existing translations and, by the same token, improve translation in this particular important area of translation.

CHAPTER ONE

The Qur'an and its (Linguistic) Inimitability or I3jaz

Introduction

As the intended purpose was to believe that it is Allah Who has created everything and that He must be the only One to worship, He sent prophets and messengers with many divine miracles to testify to their rank as such and to deliver this divine message. For example, Moses (peace be upon him) was endowed with many miracles; to name just two: He changed a stick into a snake and parted the sea; Jesus (peace be upon him) spoke from the cradle while still a new born infant and even resurrected the dead; ...etc. However, the Prophet Muḥammad (peace be upon him), the last and final messenger of Allah, who was sent to the whole world was different in that contrary to their miracles that took place during their lifetimes, the main miracle of Muḥammad -THE INIMITABLE QUR'AN- remains miraculous, effective, everlasting, and challenging until the Day of Resurrection.

1.1. The Holy Qur'an

It is the sacred scripture of Islam and the last divinely inspired Book. Muslims define the Qur'an as follows: The speech, the literal Word of Allah, or the final Book of divine revelation that was revealed in Arabic through the angel Gabriel (Jibreel) to the Prophet Muḥammad, the last messenger, both in word and in meaning over a period of twenty-three years in separate revelations at Mecca and Medinah, and it is an ongoing challenge to anyone on earth. Allah referred to His Book as the Speech or "*the Word of Allah*" saying: "*وَإِنْ أَحَدٌ مِّنَ الْمُشْرِكِينَ اسْتَجَارَكَ فَأَجِرْهُ حَتَّىٰ يَسْمَعَ كَلَامَ اللَّهِ*"; "*And if anyone of the Mushrikun (polytheists, idolaters, pagans, disbelievers in the Oneness of Allah) seeks your protection then grant him protection, so that he may hear the Word of Allah (the Qur'an)...*" (Attawbah:06).

Due to its great importance as the sacred scripture of Islam, many scholars have endeavoured to give a more precise and scholarly definition. Gandapur (2009) defined the Qur'an as: "the universal message of God for humankind. It is the Heavenly Book of Knowledge, wisdom, guidance, and information that reveals physical facts about the physical universe and man and about the eternal metaphysical worlds. Quran teaches way of life."(p.53). For Fatihi (in Alhaj, 2015), it is the Word of Allah, sent down upon His last Prophet Muḥammad (peace be upon him) by means of which Allah is worshiped, and transmitted to us by many people. Addausaree (2013) gave the following definition:

"كلام الله ' المنزل على نبيه محمد (صلى الله عليه وسلم)' المعجز بلفظه ' المتعبد بتلاوته ' المكتوب في Allah Speech, as revealed to His Prophet Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him); its wording is miraculous in nature; to recite it as an act of worship; it is that which is written in Al-Masaahif (written copies of the Quran), and is related in Mutawaatir form. (p.15)

Mutawaatir form means that the Qur'an was reported by a significant number of narrators at each level in the chain of narration. According to Rizvi (1994), *mutawaatir* means that at every stage it is narrated by so many people that anyone logically reaches a conviction that it is true. Thus, it is impossible that they all lied or made mistakes, and this provides confirmation that the Qur'an is authentically attributed to its source.

1.1.1. The Different Names of the Qur'an

The noble Qur'an bears many names or attributes that carry meaningful thoughts. Al Zamakhshari (in Almula, 1989) distinguished fifty-five titles and epithets of the Qur'an, all of which are drawn from its verses. In this light, of these various and numerous names by which the glorious Qur'an is known and which Allah Himself has attributed to His Book, only few of the most frequently used ones have been mentioned and briefly discussed here.

1.1.1.1. Al- Furqan (The Distinction / Criterion)

A complete chapter, Surah number 25, has taken its name, *Al-Furqan*, from its first verse where Allah describes His Book as *Al-Furqan*, which literally means the criterion or the decisive factor between good and evil or the true standard of the right and the wrong: “تَبَارَكَ الَّذِي نَزَّلَ الْفُرْقَانَ عَلَى عَبْدِهِ لِيَكُونَ لِلْعَالَمِينَ نَذِيرًا”; “Blessed be He Who sent down the criterion (of right and wrong, i.e. this *Qur'an*) to His slave (Muhammad) that he may be a warner to the 'Alamin (mankind and jinns)”. (Al-Furqan: 01).

1.1.1.2. A-Dhikr (The Remembrance / Reminder)

Allah refers also to His final scripture as *A-Dhikr*. It is used to highlight the meaning that it is a remembrance or a Reminder: “إِنَّا نَحْنُ نَزَّلْنَا الذِّكْرَ وَإِنَّا لَهُ لَحَافِظُونَ”; “Verily We: It is We Who have sent down the Dhikr (i.e. the *Qur'an*) and surely, We will guard it (from corruption)” (Al Hujr: 09). Similarly, in surat Al-3imran verse 58, the Almighty said: “ذَلِكَ تِلْكَ نُتْلُوهُ عَلَيْكَ مِنَ الْآيَاتِ وَالذِّكْرِ الْحَكِيمِ”; “This is what We recite to you (O Muhammad) of the Verses and the Wise Reminder (i.e. the *Qur'an*)”.

1.1.1.3. Al-Kitab (The Book / Scripture)

Al-Kitab is also an important and common name of the *Qur'an* and which literally means *the Book*. The Almighty introduced His Book saying: “ذَلِكَ الْكِتَابُ لَا رَيْبَ فِيهِ هُدًى لِّلْمُتَّقِينَ”; “This is the Book (the *Qur'an*), whereof there is no doubt, a guidance to those who are *Al-Muttaqun*”(Al-Baqarah:02). Allah also said in the beginning of Surat Al-Kahf: “الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ الَّذِي أَنْزَلَ عَلَى عَبْدِهِ الْكِتَابَ وَلَمْ يَجْعَلْ لَهُ عِوَجًا”; “All the praises and thanks be to Allah, Who has sent down to His slave (Muhammad) the Book (the *Qur'an*), and has not placed therein any crookedness”(Al-Kahf:01).

There are many other alternatives to the word ‘*Qur'an*’ which have been mentioned to refer and describe the Book of the divine inspiration. These references are by such words as:

Tanzil (Revelation, Sent down), Nur (Light), Huda (Guidance), Raḥma (Mercy), Shifa' (Healing), Bashir (Announcer of glad tidings), Nathir (Warner)...etc. These attributes are actually parts of the Qur'an's real significance as they reflect explicitly various aspects of the revealed Word of Allah. Nonetheless, among these many different names, the most widely used name given to the Holy Scripture that was revealed to the Prophet Muḥammad is 'Al-Qur'an' that may be best translated as 'the Recital', 'the Recitation' or 'the Reading'.

1.1.1.4. Al-Qur'an (The Recitation / Reading)

The word 'Al-Qur'an' has been mentioned in the Qur'an more than sixty times. It may be used to designate the entire Book as in the following quoted verse: “ إِنَّ هَذَا الْقُرْآنَ يَهْدِي لِلَّتِي هِيَ ”; “Verily, this Qur'an guides to that which is most just and right ...”(Al-Isra': 09); or a single verse/passage or a group of verses as in: “ وَإِذَا قُرِئَ الْقُرْآنُ فَاسْتَمِعُوا لَهُ... ”; “So, when the Qur'an is recited, listen to it...”(Al-A3raf: 204). Some other examples from the Qur'an using this name are the following: “ نَحْنُ نَقُصُّ عَلَيْكَ أَحْسَنَ الْقَصَصِ بِمَا أَوْحَيْنَا إِلَيْكَ هَذَا الْقُرْآنَ وَإِن كُنْتَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِ لَمِنَ ”; “We relate unto you (Muhammad) the best of stories through Our Revelations unto you, of this Qur'an. And before this (i.e. before the coming of Divine Inspiration to you), you were among those who knew nothing about it (the Qur'an)” (Yucef: 03). Another verse reads: “ إِنَّ هَذَا الْقُرْآنَ يَقُصُّ عَلَىٰ بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ أَكْثَرَ الَّذِي هُمْ فِيهِ يَخْتَلِفُونَ ”; “Verily, this Qur'an narrates to the Children of Israel most of that about which they differ” (Annaml: 76).

1.1.1.4.1. The Meaning of the Word 'Qur'an'

The outstanding Muslim scholars did not share the same point of view concerning the etymology and the origin of the word 'Qur'an', its derivation, and hence its meanings, as stated by Alḥaj (2015). Nevertheless, maybe the most commonly acceptable and famous opinion is that it is a verbal noun which is derived from the Arabic verb 'قرأ' 'qara'a', meaning 'to recite' or 'to read'. According to him (2015), the word Qur'an is “a verbal noun, is equivalent in meaning to “qira'ah”, as both come from the verb “qara'a” which means to

read. That is, Quran literally means “a reading or reciting”(p.48). The Qur’anic verse which relates the word Qur’an with this meaning is: “أَوْ زِدْ عَلَيْهِ وَرَتِّلِ الْقُرْآنَ تَرْتِيلًا”; “*Or add to it, and recite the Qur'an with measured recitation*” (Al-Muzzammil: 04). As a matter of fact, the first revealed word of the Qur’an was ‘*اقْرَأْ*’ ‘iqra’ ’ or ‘read’, which was a command that was literally repeated three times by Gabriel to the Prophet Muḥammad (peace be upon him) in the cave of Hira’. So, this was the first word of the divine inspiration that changed Muḥammad the most trusted member of his city into Muḥammad the Messenger of God (Rassulu Allah).

In spite of the fact that the holy Qur’an contains laws, procedural prescriptions, scientific facts...etc, it doesn’t call itself by these aspects because it has a different emphasis that can be seen from the names that Allah used when referring to it. These special designations as ‘Al-Qur’an’, ‘Al-Furqan’, and so on have been considered by western scholars as loan words; that is to say, to be used as they are, without any kind of substitution.

1.1.2. The Structure of the Qur’an

The Qur’an is basically divided into foundational divisions, portions or chapters called ‘*suwar*’ or ‘*surahs*’, the plural of ‘*surah*’. There are different views about the meaning of the word and what it is derived from. Therefore, according to its derivation, the meanings of the term ‘*Surah*’ could be ‘collection’, ‘elevation’, ‘hight’, or ‘surrounding part’ that is like the outer walls that surround ancient cities. Ayoub (1984) included Tabari’s explanation of the linguistic meaning of the word ‘*surah*’ saying that it could be either derived from *sur*, which refers to a wall or an enclosure or from *su’rah* that means a separate section of a thing.

The Qur’an is divided into 114 *surahs* or chapters which are of varying lengths -some consist of just a few lines while others run for many pages. Except for surat *Attawba*, all chapters or *surahs* commence with ‘In the Name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate’. This formula is known as the ‘*Basmalah*’. *Surahs* are then divided into smaller parts called ‘*ayat* ’ or ‘*ayahs*’ the plural of ‘ayah’ which literally means ‘sign’, ‘evidence’ or even

‘miracle’. However, they are unfaithfully referred to in English as verses (consider the difference in meaning). The Holy Book comprises over 6000 ayahs. Both of the words *surah* and *ayat* are mentioned in the first ayah of surat Nur: “سُورَةٌ أَنْزَلْنَاهَا وَفَرَضْنَاهَا وَأَنْزَلْنَا فِيهَا آيَاتٍ بَيِّنَاتٍ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَذَكَّرُونَ”; “(This is) a surah which We have sent down and made (that within it) obligatory and revealed therein verses of clear evidence that you might remember”. Moreover, the Qur’an has also another division that is into 30 parts of almost the same length, each of which is called ‘Juz’’. Each ‘Juz’ ’ consists of two sub-parts, each one is called ‘*Hizb*’. This means that there are 60 *hizb* in the holy Qur’an.

1.1.3. The Language of the Qur’an and its Great Significance

As is well known, the language of the Qur’an is Arabic. The Qur’an itself asserts its Arabic language and gives some indications or declarations about it through some verses. The Most High says in His Book: “إِنَّا أَنْزَلْنَاهُ قُرْآنًا عَرَبِيًّا لَعَلَّكُمْ تَعْقِلُونَ”; “Verily, We have sent it down as an Arabic Qur’an in order that you may understand (Yucef: 02). Likewise, the Most-Glorious says: “بِلِسَانٍ عَرَبِيٍّ مُبِينٍ”; “in the plain Arabic language” (Ashu3ara’: 195). With the rise of Islam, Arabic shifted from being an ordinary medium of communication to the lingua franca for the Muslim world. Therefore, for every Muslim to perform his religious deeds of worship and be proficient in the recitation of the Qur’an as well as comprehend it in the most correct way, the knowledge of the Arabic language became a matter of the utmost seriousness. Shaykh-ul-Islam Ibn Taymiyah (in Spencer, 2009, p.61) clarified that:

The Arabic Language is from the Religion, and the knowledge of it is an obligation. For surely the understanding of the Qur’an and the Sunnah is an obligation, and these two are not understood except with the understanding of the Arabic Language, and whatever obligation is not fulfilled except by certain steps then those steps themselves become obligatory (to fulfil the initial obligation).

Furthermore, the very essence of the Qur’an is that it is the Book or the Word of Allah, that is to say its language and the meanings it contains are divine, and this clearly contradicts the notion of translation which implies human wordings. Thus, Dr. Muḥammad Taqi-ud-Din

Al-Hilali, a translator of the Noble Qur'an's meanings, (in Giacomini, 2008) constricted the role of translations as mainly meant for people before embracing Islam. Essentially, they are for the sake of informing them about the principles of Islam and the teachings of Muḥammad (*peace be upon him*). However, when they reach the point when they accept Islam, they must learn Arabic; for it is the only way to understand this religion's teachings and messages correctly. In fact, Muslims who depend only on the translations are absolutely depriving themselves of the extraordinary miracles (ayat) of the Speech of Allah. Dr. Al-Hilali attested to the total agreement among Muslim scholars about the necessity and obligation of teaching the Qur'an in Arabic saying: "all the religious scholars unanimously agree that the Qur'an and the Sunnah should be taught in the language of the Qur'an (i.e. Arabic Language)" (Giacomini, 2008, p.144). This is because the person who does not know Arabic will certainly have difficulties comprehending the Qur'an's message and, consequently, will even face serious misunderstandings of its content.

1.1.4. The Content of the Qur'an

The last divine Inspiration, the Qur'an, is a code of this life and the everlasting life as it contains various teachings and aspects related to both the physical and spiritual life of the human beings. It goes without saying that the Muslims consider the Qur'an as the only everlasting book of divine guidance and direction. In the opinion of Gabriel (2015), the Qur'an has its own complete perfected philosophy and as such it is considered the most agreeable code of human life. So, the Qur'an is a complete code of this short life and the long eternal life (Khulud) -after death. Allah, the Almighty, said: "وَنَزَّلْنَا عَلَيْكَ الْكِتَابَ تَبْيَانًا لِّكُلِّ شَيْءٍ... وَهُدًى وَرَحْمَةً وَبُشْرَىٰ لِّلْمُسْلِمِينَ"; "...And We have sent down to you the Book (the Qur'an) as an exposition of everything, a guidance, a mercy, and glad tidings for those who have submitted themselves (to Allah as Muslims)" (Annahl: 89).

1.1.4.1. The Various Qur’anic Teachings and their Importance

Even though the fundamental message of the Qur’an may be summarized in the term ‘*tawhid*’, the oneness of God, it has dealt with a vast range of subjects. Ghazali (2000) mentioned that “The Qur’an is a vast and rich world, with widely varying themes and subjects”(p.x). Contrary to the opinion of some people who consider the Holy Qur’an to be confined only to worship, prayers and morals, i.e. solely about spiritual benefit, the Qur’anic teachings are comprehensive, complete, balanced and practical. Besides faith and ritual acts of worship, it gives clear and complete guidance concerning such diverse issues as business transactions, social matters (marriage, divorce,...etc), the laws of warfare, historical accounts of certain prophets and peoples, wisdom...etc. In addition, of the recurring diverse and numerous themes of the Qur’an there is the universe, its creation and its Creator, the definition of a believer (mu’min) and his characteristics, the good news for the believers and the warnings for the disbelievers. Moreover, there are some other notions as ‘enjoining good and forbidding evil’, the prophecies and even science.

In fact, there are many reasons that the Qur’an enjoys a multifaceted content, and that each field within possesses various branches and divisions. One of them is the different aspects of life that require special guidance. In addition, there are the multiple needs and desires of human beings that need to be well-controlled. Besides, it often seeks to convince by reference to history, to what happened to earlier generations, by explanations from nature, and through logic among others. Also, Allah’s Book was not revealed just for one people at a specific time but was meant for peoples of very different times, places and categories (including scientists in different fields and from different eras). Gandapur (2009) has acknowledged that the holy Qur’an divulges information of the past, the present and the future because God knows everything.

In other words, the Qur’anic teachings are of a proper balance and variety so as to make the person behave in the best manner possible and to make one’s life a true and complete form of worship of God Alone -the one only goal for the creation of mankind (and djin). Allah, the Almighty, said: “وَمَا خَلَقْتُ الْجِنَّ وَالْإِنْسَ إِلَّا لِيَعْبُدُونِ”; “And I (Allah) created not the jinns and humans except they should worship Me (Alone)” (Adhariat:56). This means that all man’s deeds should be under the shade of the comprehensive guidance of the Qur’an as a way of worshipping God through obeying His commands in every aspect of his life. So, the teachings of the Qur’an are universal, addressing all people throughout the world, and give guidance in every aspect of a personal life in that they provide the regulations that create proper relations between man and his Creator, himself, society, and the world in general.

In fact, the last divine Miracle, the Qur’an, was revealed piecemeal according to the needs of the time and events. According to Khan (2014), “The truth of the matter is that the Quran was not revealed in the complete form in which it exists today. It was revealed from time to time, according to the circumstances, over a time span of 23 years.” (p.16). Regarding the location of the time of revelation, very early commentators classified the chapters of the Qur’an into *Meccan Surahs* and *Medinan Surahs*. More than three-fourths of the surahs were revealed during the 13 years of the Prophet’s mission in Mecca. The remaining ones were revealed after the hijrah (migration), which means during the entire 10 years of his life in Medinah. The Qur’anic material received by the Prophet in Mecca is distinguished in terms of content, by scholars, from that in Medina.

1.1.4.1.1. The Content of the Meccan Surahs

The Meccan Surahs are the chapters that were revealed before the migration of the prophet Muḥammad and his followers from Mecca to Medina. Sultan (2011) has stated that eighty-five of the 114 surahs were revealed during the Meccan phase, with the majority of them are pretty short and appear -unlike the Medinan ones- at the back of the Book, and that

they are of such major themes that could be categorised as follows: God Oneness (Tawhīd), Day of judgement and afterlife, and pious conduct. These surahs address mankind as a whole. They primarily deal with the basics of the belief such as the unity and majesty of God, denouncing worshipping idols, the prophethood of Muḥammad and the resurrection or scenes of the Hereafter and final judgement. They promise paradise for the righteous and warn wrongdoers of the severe punishment of hellfire.

1.1.4.1.2. The Content of the Medinan Surahs

Compared to the Meccan ones, the Medinan surahs are usually much longer and the majority of them are found at the beginning of the Book. In Medina where the Muslims were no longer the persecuted minority but rather an established community with the Prophet Muḥammad (peace be upon him) as its leader, there were growing needs for legal, political and social injunctions to guide the expanding Muslim population. Therefore, the Medinan surahs are more concerned with organizing the social life, introducing criminal laws, economic rules (commerce and finance), stating policies (of war, peace...etc), and practising faith and aspects of Islam. Examples of these practices include fasting, zakat (compulsory alms), hajj (pilgrimage)...etc. Another frequent theme in the Medinan surahs is *munafiqun* or hypocrites, who pretended to profess Islam, in addition to discussions about ‘People of the Book’ with particular reference to Jewish and Christian communities. Sultan (2011) has mentioned that these surahs address the community of believers more than all mankind. Thus, according to him, they focus on subjects like legal code, relationships between immigrants and hosts, the hypocrites, people of the Book...etc.

1.1.5. I3jaz (Miraculousness or Inimitability) of the Qur’an

I3jaz is an Arabic word that literally means ‘incapability or incapacity’. Elimam (2013) gave the literal translation of i3jaz as “rendering incapable or powerless” (p.20). It is translated in English as ‘miraculousness’ or ‘inimitability’. ‘Mu3jjazah’ or ‘a miracle’ could be

defined as an extraordinary act, a divine act, or an event that surpasses the power of humans and contradicts or can't be explained by natural or scientific laws. Beckwith (1989) provided the following definition for the word miracle: "A miracle is a divine intervention which occurs contrary to the regular course of nature within a significant historical-religious context." (p.07). So as to make them credible, God sent the prophets and the messengers with different miracles, and the main miracle of the Prophet Muḥammad is the Qur'an. In the opinion of Tawfik (2008), it is necessary for a book to be considered the speech of God to display at least a miracle. In fact, the Qur'an is so rich of miracles that it uses the word 'Ayat' 'signs/ miracles' to refer to its verses. Hence, it is an undermining of importance and value as well as a lack of equivalence and faithfulness when translating the word 'ayat' as verses.

Due to the fact that the Qur'an is the Speech or Word of Allah, it is not surprising at all that it is miraculous (inimitable). The theory of i3jaz, according to Elimam (2013), maintains that the Qur'an is a miracle bestowed on the Prophet Muḥammad, which is unsurpassable not only in its style and composition but also in its meaning and content and that inimitability refers to the impossibility of reproducing the Qur'an in Arabic, let alone any other language. So, inimitability of the Qur'an is the belief that it has such a miraculous quality (in content and form and even effect) that no human word or speech can match. For Gandapur (2009), the Qur'an is not and cannot be human-made because the information therein speaks of the Divine nature and that God is the Author; thus, it challenges man and the Jinn to produce one verse similar to it.

1.1.5.1. The Intended Purposes of the Supernatural Nature of the Qur'an

There are two overall purposes of the supernatural nature (inimitability) of the Qur'an. First, it proves the authenticity of the Qur'an as being a source of guidance from the Creator. The ideas and words of the Qur'an are arranged in the form of '*Ayat*', so as to provide its readers with the capacity to perceive them as miracles or signs of God's extensive knowledge

and super power, reaching ultimately the ultimate purpose which is accepting Islam. Second, it proves the genuineness of Muḥammad's prophethood that leads to convince people of the truthfulness of his message. Akbar (2002) said that God had bestowed His messengers supernatural signs to persuade people of the truth of their prophethood. Yet, for a miracle to fulfil its purpose(s) and have full impact, in the opinion of Al-Mehri (2013), "it should relate to an area of knowledge in which its intended audience are well versed"(p.03). So, for the Qur'an, the final divine inspiration, to fulfil its special purpose, it has to be unprecedented and different from any other miracle. The following is a detailed explanation.

1.1.5.2. The Qur'an: A Different Unprecedented Miracle

The truth of the matter is that the greatest miracle Allah bestowed upon the Prophet Muḥammad, the Qur'an, greatly differs from those of other Messengers in many aspects.

1.1.5.2.1. The Qur'an: The Universal Everlasting Miracle

The miracles that were given to the messengers of different communities and periods were only witnessed by their respective contemporaries, i.e. they were present and relevant only during their own life times. None of these miracles ever survived after them nor they were meant to do so in the future. Yet, the Qur'an which is the miracle of the last and final messenger is certainly distinct. It is a universal everlasting miracle, which means that it is sent to mankind and jinn and will survive and remain effective until the Day of Resurrection. According to Khan (2013), the message of the Qur'an is for the whole mankind and the Prophet Muḥammad is the messenger of all the nations, in contrast to all other messengers; so, the Book of Allah is of no spatial and temporal boundaries. Similarly, Al-Mehri (2013) argued that the Qur'an is not bound by time and geographical considerations; for "every individual at every stage of human history, no matter where he lived in the world, is hence justified in saying, 'If Muhammad is a Prophet for me today, I would like to behold a miracle today'"(p.03). Tawfik's (2008) point of view about the subject is that unlike temporary

miracles performed by other prophets and messengers, the literary, mathematical and scientific miracles of the Qur'an are permanent.

1.1.5.2.2. The Qur'an: An Intellectual Miracle

In contrast to the former Messengers of Allah who were given physically perceptible signs that were only effective as long as they were alive, the main miracle of the Prophet Muḥammad, the Qur'an, is intellectual so as to fit the universal and everlasting peculiarities. Al-hajj Ahmad (2010) under the subtitle *Superiority of the Qur'anic Miracles Over Physically Perceptible Miracles* has pointed out that the miracle of the Qur'an is an intellectual one that corresponds with the fact that the message of Islam is meant for the entire humanity, and for all times. Hence, its i3jaz fundamentally depends on what is beyond all sciences and cultures. Giving the reason behind this distinct entity of the final miracle as being intellectual and not tangible is explained by Al-Mehri (2013) as: "The effectiveness of the tangible miracles would have their greatest impact on eye witnesses and their full impact would end with the death of these witnesses."(p.03).

1.1.5.2.3. The Qur'an: A Verbatim Revelation

Unlike the Torah, Gospel, Sunnah, and Aḥadith Qudsia (contrary to ordinary Aḥadith where both meanings and words were the Prophet Muḥammad's phrasings, in Aḥadith Qudsia the meanings were from Allah), the arrangement, the exact words, letters, and meanings of the Qur'an were all divinely inspired. Al-Suyuti (in Algar et al., 2011) distinguished between Qur'an and Sunnah in terms of the way of revelation saying that Gabriel transmitted the Sunnah according to its meaning; as a result, it is religiously permitted to transmit it according to its meaning (rather than verbatim (in exactly the same words)). Yet, it is impermissible to transmit the Qur'an by meaning; for Gabriel transmitted it verbatim; so, it is compulsory to use exactly the same words -with the slightest details- revealed by Allah. According to Denffer, the Qur'an is "the Speech of God, sent down upon the last Prophet Muhammad,

through the Angel Gabriel, in its precise meaning and precise wording, transmitted to us by numerous persons (tawatur), both verbally and in writing”(Fahad,1995,p.10). The reasons behind this unique verbatim Qur’an’s revelation and that God did not permit to Gabriel to inspire the Prophet according to the meaning have been stated by Al-Suyuti as follows:

the secret in this is that what is intended is worship with God’s own words, with the miraculous inimitability (al-i’jaaz) therein; for it is impossible for anyone to invent expressions that could substitute for it, and because underneath every letter of it there are meanings that the multitudes will never comprehend; and no one can produce anything which comprises what it comprises.(Algar et al.,2011,p.101)

Inevitably, the Qur’an must be read in its original language (Arabic), and whenever the term ‘Qur’an’ is mentioned, it should immediately come to the minds both its Arabic words and meanings correspondingly as being one inextricable constituent. Thus, when considering ‘the translation versions of the Qur’an’s meanings’ -in which it exists only the meanings (to some degree) that are carried through substitutes in other languages, there is a separation of the inseparable, i.e. the words and meanings. In regard to this matter, for Al-Suyuti (in Algar et al.,2011), if the Qur’an had been brought down according to meaning, it would have been doubted because of corruptions and alterations of the words. However, though the Qur’an was sent down verbally (not as a written book), it has been and will always be well preserved.

1.1.5.2.4. The Qur’an: The Preserved Book

Within the holy Qur’an there are many clear references as to how the previous peoples completely failed to preserve the messages that they received from alteration and falsification. One example is when Allah said: “... يُحَرِّفُونَ الْكَلِمَ عَنْ مَوَاضِعِهِ ...”; “...*They change the words from their (right) places...*”(Al-Ma’ida:13). In contrast, the text of the Holy Qur’an has been handed down to our age in its complete and original form since the time of the Prophet Muḥammad, peace be upon him. Tawfik (2008) mentioned that “It is well known that the Quran is the only book that has stood for fourteen centuries with unaltered text while all other scriptures were subject for human interpolation.”(p.01). In fact, the millions of copies of the

Qur'an circulating in the world today are all identical down to a single letter. This is the result that, as being the final holy Book, its preservation had been enforced much more strictly than that of its forerunners, and Allah promised that He Himself will protect and guard it until the end of time. Allah, the Almighty, said: “إِنَّا نَحْنُ نَزَّلْنَا الذِّكْرَ وَإِنَّا لَهُ لَحَافِظُونَ”; “*Verily We: It is We Who have sent down the Dhikr (i.e. the Qur'an) and surely, We will guard it (from corruption)*”(Al-Hijr:09).

During all ages since the time of the Prophet Muḥammad (peace be upon him), there have existed several millions of ‘Huffadh’ -Muslims of all age groups who memorize the holy Qur'an. So, if it happens that all the books were to be burned to ashes, the Qur'an would still survive because a lot of Muslims would be able to rewrite the entire Qur'an from memory. This is a unique distinction, which makes the Qur'an the only book in human history that has been continuously preserved through this method along with the written form. This assures the protection of its integrity and the failure of all attempts at altering or corrupting it. In the opinion of Tawfik (2008), “The Quran is conserved in its original language by virtue of its transcendent style and digital code; the slightest change of even one word is practically impossible.”(p.01).

1.1.5.2.5. The Qur'an is neither Prose nor Poetry

Any Arabic production always falls within the known Arabic literary forms of either prose or poetry. Yet, the literature of the holy Qur'an is special in that it is neither prose nor poem. Allah said: “وَمَا عَلَّمْنَاهُ الشِّعْرَ وَمَا يَنْبَغِي لَهُ إِنْ هُوَ إِلَّا ذِكْرٌ وَقُرْآنٌ مُّبِينٌ”; “*And We have not taught him (Muhammad) poetry, nor is it meet for him. This is only a Reminder and a plain Qur'an*”(Yasin:69). Alluding to the same truth, Zarabozo (2007) insisted that it has a unique sentence structure and rhythm that sets it apart from both prose and poetry; yet, it sometimes resembles one more than the other but never being completely one or the other. Arberry agreed on that and concluded that it is “a unique fusion of both”(Alḥaj,2015,p.53).

1.1.5.2.6. The Qur'an: New Perspectives

Another unique peculiarity of the Qur'an is that it contains many hidden miracles that demand a considerable degree of contemplation before their secrets are unlocked (reflection is highly encouraged in Islam as stated in many instances in the Qur'an). Of the miraculous features of this Book, as believed by the Muslim community, is its ability to offer new knowledge to each generation according to its capacities. Mahmoud (2000) was certain that the future would provide fresh approaches and deeper insights into its meanings. Malik (2010) likened reading the Qur'an to climbing a mountain, "the higher one climbs, the further one can see"(p.45). Also, besides deeper reflection, the more technology develops, the better the Qur'anic miracles are explained and uncovered. So, we are speaking here about modern readings and new perspectives of the Qur'an (not new interpretations/exegeses); for the Qur'an always yields new and more profound insights to successive generations.

In other words, Allah in His infinite wisdom has sent down the Qur'an with its divine everlasting objective in such a way that the text will be the same but new possible lights can be thrown on the superficial significances of some verses. With changing time and developing technology, many Muslims are convinced that they will keep on deriving new possible insights (as mere reflections on this Holy Book). As a matter of fact, books of physicists, scientists, biologists, philosophers,...etc actually represent the knowledge available to them at a certain time and place; but, as knowledge keeps advancing, every book written by a human being becomes obsolete after some time. This is because the information is found to be either false or incomplete; so, it requires verification and this raises the need for books to be revised or re-written.

However, while revising a scientific book is pretty acceptable and quite welcomed, doubting the Qur'an for a scientific detail that needs to be revised due to its scientific interpretations is not and is religiously seriously dangerous. Thus, it is highly recommended to

clarify that we use words such as reflections, perspectives, or insights rather than real interpretations of it; for it is not permissible to interpret the Qur'an according to one's understanding or even new discoveries. We are bound by the exegesis 'tafseer' given by the Prophet or as understood and explained by the companions 'Sahabah' or exegetes. Thus, the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) strongly warned that interpreting Qur'an according to personal opinions is forbidden and leads to Hell (more on that in the following chapter).

1.1.5.2.7. Foreknowledge of the Qur'an

The Qur'an's foreknowledge means to have previous knowledge or predictions before occurrence, either of events or scientific facts that could not have been known at the time of the Qur'an or a verse revelation. As the Qur'an has a record of things to come, they come to pass in accordance with the way God has intended. One example is when Allah anticipated an event by a vision sent to the Prophet and then by this ayah: “*لَقَدْ صَدَقَ اللَّهُ رَسُولَهُ الرُّؤْيَا بِالْحَقِّ لَتَدْخُلُنَّ*”
الْمَسْجِدَ الْحَرَامَ إِنْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ آمِنِينَ مُحَلِّقِينَ رُءُوسَكُمْ وَمُقَصِّرِينَ لَا تَخَافُونَ فَعَلِمَ مَا لَمْ تَعْلَمُوا فَجَعَلَ مِنْ دُونِ ذَلِكَ فَتْحًا قَرِيبًا”
“Indeed Allah shall fulfil the true vision which He showed to His Messenger (i.e. the Prophet saw a dream that he has entered Makkah along with his companions, having their (head) hair shaved and cut short) in very truth. Certainly, you shall enter Al-Masjid-al Haram; if Allah wills, secure, (some) having your heads shaved, and (some) having your head hair cut short, having no fear. He knew what you knew not, and He granted besides that a near victory.”
 (Alfath:27). The spiritual reason behind the prophecies and the foreknowledge in the Qur'an is that “They are put forth to inspire the belief in the Word of God” (Sita, 2002, p.88).

1.1.5.2.8. The Qur'an: A Contradictions and Errors-Free Book

The Qur'an is a large book which includes many facts and various arts. Nevertheless, despite all this variety, it is free from contradictions, discrepancies and errors. According to Rizvi (1994), practically there is no book, whatever its content might be, that is free from mistakes; yet, “Considering the range of the topics the Qur'an comments on, the repetition of

some stories, the non-classification of the topics, it is hard to find such a book without contradictions and errors.”(p.52). As a point of fact, no human being has ever written a comprehensive book with such absolute perfection and certainty of knowledge. Allah said: “أَفَلَا يَتَذَكَّرُونَ الْقُرْآنَ وَلَوْ كَانَ مِنْ عِنْدِ غَيْرِ اللَّهِ لَوَجَدُوا فِيهِ اخْتِلَافًا كَثِيرًا”; “do they not then consider the Qur'an carefully? Had it been from other than Allah, they would surely have found therein much contradictions”(Annisa':82). Therefore, when reading books, generally we find in the introduction the writer apologizes in advance for any mistakes or errors, except for the Qur'an; Allah said in the very beginning of it: “ذَلِكَ الْكِتَابُ لَا رَيْبَ فِيهِ هُدًى لِّلْمُتَّقِينَ”; “This is the book (the Qur'an), whereof there is no doubt, a guidance to those who are Al-Muttaqun” (Al Baqarah:02). Accordingly, for Gandapur (2009), the Qur'an is “the unaltered word of God, proven to be beyond the shadow of doubt. It is perfect and is without error”(p.53).

1.1.5.3. Aspects of the Qur'an's Miraculousness

The Qur'an is Allah's Speech and as such every little thing in it manifests a miracle. In this regard, Al-Qahtani's (2015) belief was that there is a miracle or an invention, in many cases more than one invention, behind every verse, expression and even every word of the Qur'an. Unfortunately, the word 'miraculousness' for a great number of people is related only to the beauty of expressions and superiority of this Book as being the Word of Allah to the point that he (2015) began to wonder whether the term “had lost its real significance for us, having reverted to being nothing but some term whose original significance we no longer recalled or recognized, and which no longer meant anything to us but superiority, excellence, or brilliance” (p.07). The Qur'an is indeed a miracle; yet, what constitutes this miracle is a subject that has engaged Muslim scholars for many centuries. In fact, from both earlier and later periods countless and thorough studies have dealt with the miraculousness of the Qur'an, each of which has tackled a different perspective. The following list is not exhaustive and represents just some of the miraculous aspects, or types (as some like to call them (not

preferred by some scholars as they have pointed out many times; for they all together constitute i3jaz Al-Qur'an)). These aspects are among the main reasons why it has not been possible to emulate the Qur'an to this day. So, what are these different aspects of the miraculousness or inimitability of the Qur'an?

I3jaz Al-Qur'an shows human limits, weaknesses and inability to do extraordinary things and is associated to the notion of variety coupled with perfection, accuracy and challenge. It includes many dimensions, aspects, or types, like legislative miraculousness, metaphysical, numerical...etc. For some, it is the concept that relates to its unmatched quality -form and content; thus, there are basically two broad divisions in the doctrine of inimitability: inimitability of content and inimitability of form. Leaman (2006) has mentioned that the first includes such categories as accuracy of prediction, prophecies, science and innovation in legislative and civic laws. The latter, according to him, is devoted to rhetoric and style, comprising such features as figurative expressions. Yet, Qur'an's miraculousness, according to Al-Qahtani (2015), is related to four main areas or aspects: the aesthetic miracle or the rhetorical aspect based on its language and arrangement; the expressional aspect or the linguistic miracle because of its precision of expression; the scientific aspect that is related to cosmic realities and natural phenomena; and finally the numerical miraculousness. As for this dissertation, it will focus only on the linguistic and scientific aspects, serving as one unit, to show i3jaz of the Qur'anic words. (The scientific aspect will be discussed in the next chapter).

1.1.5.3.1. The Linguistic Miraculousness of the Qur'an

Scholars have written a lot about the language, beauty, and meanings of the Qur'an, which have been included in what is known as the linguistic miracle. It is regarded as the greatest miraculous aspect of the Qur'an. Abdul-Raof (2006) confirmed that it was considered from the first moment of the Qur'an's revelation, as the Word of God, an immortal linguistic miracle, inimitable and beyond human faculty. For Al-Qahtani (2015), "it (the language of the

Qur'an) consists of an ongoing series of astonishing linguistic innovations with a variety of features and forms. They are linked to another in such a way that whoever attempts to imitate them comes up against an impenetrable wall”(p.12). Long (2005) too agreed upon the linguistic miraculousness of the last holy Book and the transcendental meanings that cannot be captured fully by human faculty. Moreover, in the opinion of Al-Jurjani, the question which deserves serious consideration, in terms of language, is: *What was it which made the Qur'an inimitable?* Then, he himself answered it saying:

The opponents of the Qur'an observed elegance in the setting and order of the words and in their order, peculiarities of narration, extraordinary beginning and ending of the verses, position and flow of words, the introduction of parables, statement of events, forms of admonition, reminders, allurements, warning and the style of argument. (Fahad, 1995, p.11)

Nonetheless, among the scholars who have written differently about the Qur'an's linguistic miracle is Alhaj (2015), believing that it is more than the beauty of the language and the various rhetoric tools; for it is a direct communication between Allah and his slaves and it is “a permanent inimitable literary miracle”(p.53).

As such, i.e. a linguistic miracle, Muslim scholars have emphasized that its translation products can only be entitled: *The Meanings of the Qur'an, The Message of the Qur'an, The Translated Meanings of the Qur'an,...*etc; but, *The Qur'an* as such should never be used as a title for its translation versions. This is due to the fact that a translation can never replace the holy Qur'an (more details in the following chapter). In this regard, John Naish said that the Qur'an in its original Arabic dress “has a seductive beauty and charm of its own. Couched in concise and exalted style, its brief pregnant sentences, often rhymed, poses an expressive force and explosive energy which is extremely difficult to convey by literal word for word translation”(Zaragoza,2007,p.54). In short, from all the above quotes, we note that the scholars seem to understand the Qur'an's linguistic inimitability (miraculousness) in terms of its eloquence and rhetoric.

1.1.5.3.1.1. Definition of Eloquence

Eloquence 'الفصاحة' can be understood as the powerful and effective expressiveness or language. Thelwall (1810) acknowledged that it is "the art of expressing our thoughts and feelings, with precision, force and elegance; and of heightening the impressions of reason, by the colourings of imagination"(p.03), and that it is referred to whether the verbal discourse is oral or written. According to Abdul-Raof (2006), الفصاحة *al-fasahah* is synonymous with البيان *al-bayan*. Principal Campbell provided a comprehensive definition saying that it is: "that art or talent by which discourse is adapted to its end" (Cox, 1836, p.178). Similarly, for Blair (in Maury,1842), it is speaking in such a way as to reach the end for which we speak, and since that end is most commonly to persuade, he restricted afterwards its definition to the art of persuasion. In Maury's estimation (1842), the simplest and most precise definition of eloquence is the art of speaking well.

1.1.5.3.1.2. Definition of Rhetoric

Linguistically speaking, rhetoric 'البلاغة' *albalaghah* is derived from the verb بلغ *balagha*, meaning to reach. So, it is the art or skill of speaking or writing as a way to reach an end or achieve a goal, which is generally to persuade or influence people. According to Alhaj (2015,p.56), it is the transferring of the meaning in the best of verbal forms for pleasing and persuading. For Abdul-Raof (2006), "It is a linguistic discipline that aims to sharpen up and upgrade the linguistic competence of writing and speaking. It provides us, as language users, with the appropriate and effective stylistic mechanism required for eloquently forceful discourse."(p.01). Najim (2010) under the title *balaghah in Arabic* argued that lexicographers say that it is related to semantics, علم البيان, and علم البديع and that according to linguists in Al-Qamoos Al-Muheet, it is to say in a certain situation what should be said using the suitable style and form of speech. He (2010) provided the following Arabic proverb, as best describing

balaghah, which says: “للكل مقام مقال وإن لكل حادثه حديث”; “It means that every situation requires an utterance that suits it and every incident has its suitable form of speech.”(p.24).

1.1.5.3.1.3. Eloquence Vs Rhetoric

From the above definitions we can deduce that rhetoric and eloquence share almost the same meaning and they seem also to have the same constituents: words, meanings, style, constructions,...etc. In fact, the two terms are used for the majority of times interchangeably. In essence, it means no great distinction has been made between the two notions. Abdul-Raof (2006) has stated that for rhetoricians, rhetoric is defined as the employment of eloquent expressions and that in the view of Al-Baquillani, Abd al Quahir al-Jurjani, Al-Zamakhshari and Al-Razi, there is no difference between rhetoric and eloquence and that Abd Al-Qahir Al-Jurjani considered them as “two sides of the same coin since both notions designate the unearthing and the clarification of the intended signification” (p.75). Similarly, Ibn Manzar defined *balaghah*, as used by linguists, as “eloquence of speech” (Al-Liheibi,1999,p.59). In the opinion of Ali, “*balagah* does not only mean the conformity of the utterance to the requirements of the situation but also using *fasih* discourse” (Najim,2010,p.24).

However, some scholars have a different opinion. For example, Gannett and Brereton (2016) mentioned that Coppens distinguished among the two terms. According to him, rhetoric is defined as the art of communicating thoughts in a manner to influence or control the other people’s minds and wills; whereas to define eloquence, he preferred to use Webster’s Dictionary: “the expression or utterance of strong emotion in a manner adapted to excite correspondent emotions in others”(p.168). Nonetheless, even in these two definitions much is common, in addition to a wide range of overlap. Some scholars regard rhetoric as concerned with discourse and eloquence with words, which is the opinion of Abdul-Raof (2006) who assured that “eloquence is a feature of the lexical item” (p.95) and that “Other rhetoricians before al-Jurjani such as ‘Abd al-Jabbar Abadi have also considered rhetoric as a

discoursal feature rather than a word-level notion.”(p.75); consequently, according to him (2006), in Arabic it can be said *Kalimah fasihah* -an eloquent word, *kalam fasih* -an eloquent discourse; however, it is not possible to say *kalmia balighah* -an effective word, but it can be still said *kalam baligh* -an effective discourse.

1.1.5.3.1.4. Eloquence and Rhetoric of the Qur’an

Concerning the Qur’an, scholars generally relate its inimitability directly to its eloquence/rhetoric. For Pomerantz and Shahin (2016), “The positioning of Muhammad and the Qur’an as closely related to linguistics and moreover rhetoric, is certainly pertinent.” (p.169). Al-Baqillani explained that the *i3jaz* of the Qur’an, despite the wide range of themes it deals with, comes from its constant “unfluctuating peak of eloquence” (Elimam, 2013,p.22). His point of view seems to be that the Qur’an has an unmatched degree of eloquence compared with existing literary forms; he wrote: “Qur’an did not only break the mould with its extraordinary degree of eloquence, but that it also broke with the tradition of existing literary forms” (Elimam,2013,p.22). Nursi (2005) pointed out that Abd al-Qahir Al-Jurjani, Al-Sakkaki, Zamakhchari and many other geniuses of literature and science of eloquence had drawn the conclusion that the Qur’an’s eloquence is unequalled.

Actually, the eloquence/rhetoric of the Qur’an reaches a miraculous level. Ibn Kathir pointed out that “As for the Qur’an, it is entirely eloquent in the most perfect manner.”(Abdul-Rahman,2011,p.106). This unmatched eloquence/rhetoric is a distinctive feature of the Qur’an which renders it unique and incomparable to any human communication. It includes the beauty of its words, order and composition (*nathm*), the uniqueness of its styles, the power and truth of its meanings, and excellence of its language. Hemaya (2011) gave his point of view about the rhetoric of the Qur’an as: “(it) is shown in its special style, in the magnificence of its descriptions and the precision of its word choice, and in the fact that several meanings are united in such a few words in the Qur’an, without

rendering them complicated or leaving them unclear”(p.173). Likewise, for Rippin and Knappert (1986), the highest level of eloquence is miraculous and belongs only to the Qur’an, and that eloquence can be analysed into ten sections: “(1) concision; (2) simile; (3) metaphor; (4) harmonious use of words and individual letters; (5) analogous endings of speech divisions; (6) paranomasa; (7) alteration; (8) implication; (9) hyperbole (including synecdoche); and (10) pleasing expression.”(p.49-50).

The eloquent use of the language of the Qur’an is generally to please and persuade. Zarabozo (2007) has explained that there is a perfect balance as well as a consistency in style between emotional and intellectual passages of the Qur’an. He has mentioned that according to Draz, within the human beings there are always two active forces: the intellectual force aiming to know the truth to adopt it, and the emotional force related to feelings. So, for Draz, we cannot speak of a perfect style unless both needs are satisfied and this beauty can only truly be found in the Qur’an. Therefore, he has wondered: “Do we find such perfection in human style? We have seen the writings of scientists and philosophers, and works of poets and fine prose [yet they cannot meet this goal]”(Zarabozo,2007,p.56). In fact, the construction of the Qur’anic sentences shows an unmatched beauty, effective and impressive use of words and absence of inharmonious or strange combinations. The ideas are easily followed by everybody whether learned or ignorant. In short, the last divinely inspired Book is indeed linguistically miraculous. For Abu Sulayman Hamd Ibn Muhammad Al-Khattabi (in Rafiabadi,2003),in his book *Kitab Bayan Ijaz al-Qur’an*, the key to Qur’anic i3jaz is balaghah (eloquence) which according to him consists of three elements: words, meanings, and nadhm.

1.1.5.3.1.4.1. The Qur’anic Words and Meanings

Muslims boast that the Qur’an is a literary masterpiece. Some of them attribute that to employing the most potent and eloquent words, resulting in the most expressive and powerful meanings. Tawfik (2008) noted that the statements in the Qur’an used very specific words

(key words) so as to directly convey what should be conveyed. For Ibn Kathir, the words and meanings of the Qur'an are all eloquent and impossible to be surpassed (Abdul-Rahman,2011,p.106). Leaman (2006) explained the important role of the Qur'an for Arabic vocabulary saying that it enriched the lexicon by reviving ancient and rare words, using words in entirely new contexts, and by using semantic and phonological relationships between words, like synonymy, antonymy, hyponymy, homonymy, polysemy and others. Due to this uniqueness, using close synonyms as substitutes for Qur'anic words results in a distortion of their meanings and elegance. Zarabozo (2007) argued that each word was used in its precise place and could not be moved or exchanged for a close synonym without its beauty or meaning being lost. In like manner, Al-Jurjani's point of view has been expressed as, "But they could not find a single word which was inappropriate or which could be objected to or improved upon. On account of these qualities not one among them could hope to imitate it." (Fahad,1995, p.11).

Based on the great role and the superhuman aspect of the lexical sets of the Qur'an, it surely participates consequently in elaborating and enriching the meanings (semantics). This is because words serve as vehicles to thoughts. Al-Jurjani calls words "awiyah li lmaani (receptacles for meanings)"(Rafiabadi,2003,p.249). That is to say, there is coordination between the words and ideas. The linguistic perfection of the Qur'an exposes itself when the linguistic abilities of the Arabs of Djahilia were hindered by the fact that the Qur'an's eloquence expressed delicate ideas and rare truths in a familiar manner and worded them in the shortest of forms without loss of clear meaning (bayan). In other words, in addition to the perfect choice of expressions with the best of verbal forms and accuracy of meanings, the sentences use the smallest number of words -conciseness-, going directly to the point without losing any necessary meaning.

1.1.5.3.1.4.2. The Qur'anic Nadhm (Syntactic Construction)

The idea of *nadhm* has basically arisen in connection with the discussion on the i3jaz 'inimitability' of the Qur'an. *Nadhm* is the composition or the choice and arrangement of words. Ibn Al-Muqaffa³ argued that "the essence of *nazm* is the placing of words in their exact positions"(Al-Liheibi,1999,p.227). Al-Jurjani considered it as the fundamental proof of the Qur'anic i3jaz and the core of eloquence and defined it as "a certain special way of joining words [...](or) (a)ttaching words to each other and making some (words) causes for others, according to the principles of grammar and syntax." (Elimam,2013,p.23).

Speaking about *ata3alluq wa tarabuṭ* (association and bonding) which are between the individual words and the whole meaning, Al-Jurjdni (in Al-Liheibi,1999,p.229) explained the interdependence of the words forming the sentence by comparing a person's speech to someone who takes pieces of gold or silver, melts them and then fuses them together until they finally become one piece. He exemplified with: "*Zayd hit Amr on Friday very hard in order to discipline him*"(p.229) saying that there is just one meaning or one conception from all these words and not many meanings as some people may think. Abu Bakr Ibn AL-Arabi expressed (in Elimam,2013,p.23) that the words in the Qur'an were tightly chained to each other, syntactically and semantically, in such a way that the entire Qur'an looked like one single word. In effect, Arab rhetoricians strongly believe in the uniqueness and miraculousness of the Qur'anic *nadhm*. In this context, Al-Baqillani has maintained that despite the many faces and the different aspects of the Qur'an, its construction is "outside their [the Arabs'] customary speech and different from their usual speeches." (Al-Liheibi,1999,p.228).

There are two distinguishable views about *nadhm*. Rafiabadi (2003) said that there were those who understood it as the relationship between words and meanings, and those who interpreted it as a linear connection, like the one existing between the Qur'anic verses, surahs,

or both verses and surahs. Among the Qur'anic scholars who lay more stress on word-meaning relationship is Abu Sulayman Hamd Ibn Muḥammad Al-Khattabi who has the belief that: "The Qur'an is inimitable, in that it employs the most eloquent words in ideal forms of composition (ahsan nuzum at-talif) embodying the truest meanings" (Rafiabadi,2003,p.248). However, Zamakhchari's point of view about the Qur'anic *nadhḥm* was comprehensive in that he (in Rafiabadi,2003,p.248) has laid much emphasis on the suitability of the Qur'anic words to the Qur'anic ideas and also dealt with the structure of the Qur'anic sentences and tried to bring out the relation between the verses of a passage.

1.1.5.3.1.4.3. The Qur'anic Style

The Qur'anic style imitates nothing and no one, nor can it be imitated because of its uniqueness. Akgul (2009) has argued that in each and every verse of the Qur'an there is an inimitable and eloquent style. He has further recognised the peerless nature of the Qur'anic style saying that it "is strikingly different from that of other books in both the choice of words and sentence construction. However, this style does not appear strange to us, even though each and every word has a style unique"(p.87). Similarly, for Al-Baqillani (in Al-Liheibi,1999), the Qur'an is of a unique style because of its expressions, which are quite different from ordinary speech. Palmer (in Elimam,2013,p.22-23) has explained the uniqueness of the style of the Qur'an in the introduction to his translation, comparing it with other styles, clarifying that it is natural, and the words are of every-day ordinary life; whereas the style of the later Arabic authors is imitative and the old linguistic items are used as a "literary embellishment". The natural consequence in his opinion is that their works look unreal and laboured compared to its "impromptu and forcible eloquence" (Elimam,2013,p.23).

In spite of dealing with different subjects and using a wide variety of expressions, the Qur'an has an extraordinary style that delivers the ideas accurately, smoothly and with pleasure of reading or listening. Firstly, of the different subjects there are stories, arguments,

promises, admonitions, laws, scientific facts, excuses, threats, truths, teachings of noble character, and descriptions of various kinds. Secondly, it is rich of various forms of expressions, like detailed descriptions, abbreviations, conjunctions, disjunctions, metaphors, explicit descriptions and so on. Also, the Qur'an is characterised by the combination of abundant and different ideas in one continuous sentence, and this surpasses the human abilities. This is, sometimes, achieved by using words capable of several interpretations and the interrelation between style, structure and meaning. So, all these peculiarities in addition to its beautiful and correct use of words, easiness of constructions and correctness of ordering made the minds of the masters of the tongue (Arabs) amazed because it is impossible to find such qualities, characteristics and varieties in one composition or style. Hence, when comparing all the above features with human productions, the super human nature of the Qur'anic style comes as evident.

In summary, the literature by and large agrees on the linguistic inimitable nature of the Qur'an. Its linguistic miraculousness is exhaustive, including every aspect of the whole book down to the single letter. This includes lexical choices that are perfectly suited to the meaning they want to impart, the powerful and expressive meanings, the well knit construction (*nadhm*), the beautiful fluent unmatched style,...etc. The Qur'an employs them in a very special eloquent inimitable manner. Hence, the literature argues that it is the cumulative effect of this use that makes it linguistically miraculous and inimitable.

1.1.5.3.1.4.4. Higher Frequency and Selection of Rhetorical Devices

Unlike any other Arabic text, the last holy Book is definitely a sea of rhetoric. For Al-Sakkaki (in Abdul-Raof,2006), a discourse is characterised as having the highest level of effectiveness if it is inimitable by other text producers and includes appropriately a range of metonymy, simile and allegory. This is unquestionably the case of the Qur'an. Yilmaz (2018) wrote: "The Qur'an is a unique book and a literary Magnum Opus that masters many rhetoric

devices”(p.07). The following is a summarized account of some examples that exhibit the Qur’an’s unparalleled use of a wide range and frequency of rhetorical features.

1.1.5.3.1.4.4.1. Alliteration

This is a literary or rhetorical stylistic device that occurs when the same initial consonant or vowel sound is conspicuously repeated in words, usually next to each other. Lipson (2008) has defined it as: “When the beginning of words start with the same consonant or vowel sounds in stressed syllables and the words are close together, the effect is called alliteration.”(p.15). Example: ‘A big bully beats a baby boy’. An example from the Qur’an is in the following verse where the letter meem ‘م’ is repeated in quick succession: “*أَلَمْ نَخْلُقْكُمْ مِّنْ مَّاءٍ مَّهِينٍ*”; “*Did We not create you from a worthless water (semen, etc)?*” (Almursalat:20).

1.1.5.3.1.4.4.2. Assonance

It is the repetition of vowel sounds within phrases or sentences. In its narrower sense, it is the likeness of vowels in the end syllables of words. Selvam (1988) has noted that the simplest definition of assonance is that it is “a form of vowel repetition”(p.61). ‘There and everywhere’ is an instance of assonance. In the following two verses, the words ‘*إِنِّيَابُهُمْ*’ and ‘*حِسَابُهُمْ*’ are considered an example of assonance: “*إِنَّ إِلَيْنَا إِيَابُهُمْ ثُمَّ إِلَيْنَا حِسَابُهُمْ*”; “*Verily, to Us will be their return; then verily, for Us will be their reckoning.*” (Al-Ghashiyah:25-26).

1.1.5.3.1.4.4.3. Analogy

In ordinary language, it is a comparison between two objects or concepts that share some of the same or similar characteristics, typically for the purpose of explanation. For Brande (1842), it denotes a relation or similarity between different things in certain respects. Put simply, this rhetorical device designates an imperfect degree of correspondence and used to explain difficult concepts in a much easier form through highlighting some form of semantic similarity between the compared items. Campione and Metz (2007) wrote:

“Reasoning by analogy is generally considered a core component of human cognition. It is important for learning and classification, and for thought and explanation.” (p.55). Describing a feeling of being uncomfortable saying ‘*I feel like a fish out of water*’ is an instance of analogy. Another example is when Allah revealed: “... *إِنَّمَا مَثَلُ الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا كَمَاءٍ أَنْزَلْنَاهُ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ ...*”; “*Verily the likeness of (this) worldly life is as the water (rain) which We send down from the sky...*”(Yunus:24). Since analogy includes all types of comparisons, some common literary devices such as simile and metaphor are considered examples of it.

1.1.5.3.1.4.4.3.1. Simile

It is when expressing a direct comparison between two different things by highlighting the similarities using words such as ‘like’. Granger and Meunier (2008) defined it as a figurative expression used to make an explicit comparison of two unlike things by means of the prepositions ‘*like*’, ‘*as*’ or conjunctions *as*, *as if* and *as though*. An example is when comparing the colour of something dark to the very dark coal colour saying: ‘*as black as coal*’. “... *ثُمَّ قَسَتْ قُلُوبُكُمْ مِنْ بَعْدِ ذَلِكَ فَهِيَ كَالْحِجَارَةِ أَوْ أَشَدُّ قَسْوَةً...*”; “*Then, after that, your hearts were hardened and became as stones or even worse in hardness...*”(Albaqarah:74) is also a simile.

1.1.5.3.1.4.4.3.2. Metaphor

A metaphor is a figure of speech in which words are used to indicate something different from its literal meaning. It is a term that concisely implicitly compares two things that are unrelated but share some common characteristics. For Deignan (2005), it is: “a word or expression that is used to talk about an entity or quality other than that referred to by its core, or most basic meaning. This non-core use expresses a perceived relationship with the core meaning of the word, and in many cases between two semantic fields”(p.34). Dickins et al. (2002, p.147) have believed metaphor to be a figure of speech in which a word or phrase is used in a non-basic sense that suggests a likeness or analogy with another more basic sense of the same word or phrase. Look at the difference in expressing grief depths in these two

sentences (the metaphor is in the second): ‘*She was sad*’ and ‘*She drowned in a sea of grief*’.

Also, it is in Allah’s saying when teaching us the way we treat our parents: “... *وَإِخْفِضْ لَهُمَا جَنَاحَ* ...”; “*And lower unto them the wing of submission and humility through mercy,* ...”; “*التُّلَّ مِنَ الرَّحْمَةِ*”; “*And lower unto them the wing of submission and humility through mercy,* ...” (Al-Isra’:24). Another example is: “... *وَقَدِمْنَا إِلَىٰ مَا عَمِلُوا مِنْ عَمَلٍ فَجَعَلْنَاهُ هَبَاءً مَّنثُورًا*”; “*And We shall turn to whatever deeds they (disbelievers, polytheists, sinners, etc) did, and We shall make such deeds as scattered floating particles of dust.*” (Al-Furqan:23). Sita (2002) has noted that the Qur’an extensively uses the metaphorical devices and that the benefit of this mode of language is allowing the expressions of facts to be useful for all times, and also allowing “people to reflect and make rational uses of their minds to search for the truth” (p.88).

1.1.5.3.1.4.4.4. Metonymy

It is called a metonymy when a thing or a concept is named or referred to by the name of something intimately associated with it. Metonymy according to Evan and Martin is “A trope in which one word is substituted for another on the basis of some material, causal, or conceptual relationship.” (Matzner,2016,p.05). For example, when someone is asking to listen to him attentively says: ‘*lend me your ears*’, this sentence is an instance of metonymy and the word ‘ears’ replaces the concept of attention. In the following verse, some of the ships parts have been used as a substitute for it (the ship): “... *وَحَمَلْنَاهُ عَلَىٰ ذَاتِ أَلْوَاحٍ وَدُسُرٍ*”; “*And We carried him on a (ship) made of planks and nails*” (Al-Qamar:13).

1.1.5.3.1.4.4.5. Antiphrasis

It is a figure of speech used to mean the opposite. It is often used in irony and sarcasm. Dupriez and Halsall (1991) have said that antiphrasis is a word used in a manner contrary to the natural one. For example: ‘*He is but a child of sixty years*’. One related illustration from the Qur’an is: “... *ثُمَّ صُبُّوا فَوْقَ رَأْسِهِ مِنْ عَذَابِ الْحَمِيمِ, ذُوقْ إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ الْعَزِيزُ الْكَرِيمُ*”; “*Then pour over his head the torment of boiling water, taste you (this)! Verily, you were (pretending to be) the mighty, the generous!*” (Addukhan: 48-49).

1.1.5.3.1.4.4.6. Antithesis

It is referred to an antithesis when two positions are matched against each other. It means one statement is a direct contrast to the other, maintaining the same structure. Shaffer (2009) gave the following definition: “Antithesis is a balance of contrasting terms with parallel grammatical structure.”(p.174). ‘*Speech is silver, but silence is gold*’ is an antithesis instance. In the Qur’an, an example is: “*الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا لَهُمْ عَذَابٌ شَدِيدٌ وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ لَهُمْ*” *مَغْفِرَةٌ وَأَجْرٌ كَبِيرٌ*; “*Those who disbelieve, theirs will be a severe torment; and those who believe (in the Oneness of Allah Islamic Monotheism) and do righteous good deeds, theirs will be forgiveness and a great reward (i.e. Paradise).*” (Fatir:07).

1.1.5.3.1.4.4.7. Asyndeton

Stylistically speaking, asyndeton is when conjunctions are deliberately omitted between (related) clauses. Russ McDonald noted that this figure worked “by means of juxtaposition rather than coupling” (Keller, 2009, p.56). Unlike syndeton in ‘*he eats and drinks and sleeps*’, an asyndeton is like: ‘*he eats, drinks, sleeps*’. In the following verses from the holy Book, the actions are listed within the same verse without any linkage: *... يُدَبِّرُ الْأُمْرَ يُفَصِّلُ الْآيَاتِ لَعَلَّكُمْ بَلِقَاءَ رَبِّكُمْ تُوقِنُونَ*” *... He regulates all affairs, explaining the Ayat (proofs, evidences, verses, lessons, signs, revelations, etc.) in detail, that you may believe with certainty in the meeting with your Lord.*” (ArRa3d:02).

1.1.5.3.1.4.4.8. Chiasmus

In rhetoric, chiasmus is the figure of speech in which there is a reversal in the order of words in two otherwise parallel phrases. Lissner (2007) explained that chiasmus referred to “the repeating and reversing of a minimum of two elements held to a given structure. This is to say that the structure’s first element of repetition-reversal substitutes for the second element of repetition-reversal, and the second element substitute for the first”(p.56). Here is an

example: 'One should eat to live, not live to eat', and from the Qur'an: "تُولِجُ اللَّيْلَ فِي النَّهَارِ وَتُولِجُ النَّهَارَ فِي اللَّيْلِ وَتُخْرِجُ الْحَيَّ مِنَ الْمَيِّتِ وَتُخْرِجُ الْمَيِّتَ مِنَ الْحَيِّ..."; "You make the night to enter into the day, and You make the day to enter into the night (i.e. increase and decrease in the hours of the night and the day during winter and summer), You bring the living out of the dead, and You bring the dead out of the living..."(Al-3imran:27).

1.1.5.3.1.4.4.9. Epizeuxis

It is a rhetorical figure by which a word or a phrase is repeated in immediate succession for emphasis, with no intervention of any word. Wales (2011) said that Epizeuxis was a figure of repetition, with no words intervening. It is as: 'Never, never do that again'. Also, in Surat Asharh we read: "فَإِنَّ مَعَ الْعُسْرِ يُسْرًا , إِنَّ مَعَ الْعُسْرِ يُسْرًا"; "So verily, with the hardship, there is relief, verily, with the hardship, there is relief (i.e. there is one hardship with two reliefs, so one hardship cannot overcome two reliefs)."(Asharh:05-06).

1.1.5.3.1.4.4.10. Hyperbole

A figure of speech employed for the sake of emphasis, and it involves an intentional exaggeration of ideas. Myers (2009) clarified that hyperbole, or exaggeration, was a figure of speech used to emphasize a point, an opinion, or a situation. For example: 'I am so hungry, I could eat a horse'. In the Qur'an, "إِنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا بِآيَاتِنَا وَاسْتَكْبَرُوا عَنْهَا لَا تُفْتَحُ لَهُمْ أَبْوَابُ السَّمَاءِ وَلَا يَدْخُلُونَ الْجَنَّةَ حَتَّى يَلِجَ الْجَمَلُ فِي سَمِّ الْخِيَاطِ وَكَذَلِكَ نَجْزِي الْمُجْرِمِينَ"; "Verily, those who belie Our Ayat (proofs, evidences, verses, lessons, signs, revelations, etc.) and treat them with arrogance, for them the gates of heaven will not be opened, and they will not enter Paradise until the camel goes through the eye of the needle (which is impossible). Thus do We recompense the Mujrimun (criminals, polytheists, sinners, etc.)" (Al-A3raf:40).

1.1.5.3.1.4.4. 11. Isocolon

This device is used in rhetoric to designate a succession of members (phrases, clauses, or sentences) of approximately equal length and corresponding structure. Farnsworth (2011) said that it was one of the most common and important rhetorical figures, which meant the use of successive sentences, clauses, or phrases similar in length and parallel in structure. *'The bigger they are, the harder they fall'* is a form of an isocolon, and from the Qur'an we recite: “... فَحَاسِبْنَاهَا حِسَابًا شَدِيدًا وَعَذِّبْنَاهَا عَذَابًا نُكْرًا...”; “... and We called it to a severe account, and We shall punish it with a horrible torment (in Hell in the Hereafter)”(Attalaq:08).

1.1.5.3.1.4.4.12. Palindrome

This is a word or phrase that can be read both forward and backward, i.e. from right to left and also from left to right. Maria (1986) confirmed that palindrome was “a word or sentence which is the same read backward or forward”(p.114). Some examples are ‘level’, ‘refer’ and ‘Step on no pets’. In fact, to construct palindromes in the Qur'an is a miracle because it is a very difficult task to undertake especially for unlettered person as the Prophet Muḥammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon Him). Allah says in the third verse of surat Al-Muddaththir: “وَرَبِّكَ فَكْبِيرٌ”; “And your Lord (Allah) magnify!” (Almouddaththir:03).

1.1.5.3.1.4.4.13. Parenthesis

It is a literary device which includes a word, phrase or sentence that interrupts a flow of a passage without affecting it. It is not grammatically connected and it is marked off by brackets, dashes or commas. It can provide explanation, clarification, description, synonym,...etc. Mann (2012) gave the following definition for parenthesis: “a form of speech or a clause comprehended within another sentence, which (though it gives some strength) may very well be left out, and yet the speech perfect, or the sense sound”(p.100). For example: *'He finally answered (after taking five minutes to think) that he did not understand the question.'*

Here, as it is noted, the parenthesis added some information to the meaning without affecting the structure of the sentence. “لَا تُكَلِّفُ نَفْسًا إِلَّا وُسْعَهَا”; “We tax not any person beyond his scope” is the parenthesis instance in the following verse: وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ لَا نُكَلِّفُ نَفْسًا إِلَّا وُسْعَهَا “أُولَئِكَ أَصْحَابُ الْجَنَّةِ هُمْ فِيهَا خَالِدُونَ” “But those who believed (in the Oneness of Allah-Islamic Monotheism), and worked righteousness – We tax not any person beyond his scope, such are the dwellers of Paradise. They will abide therein.”(Al-A3raf:42).

1.1.5.3.1.4.4.14. Polyptoton

It is the rhetorical repetition of the same root word in different inflections and derivations. Bello (2007) wrote that polyptoton referred to the repetition of the same word variously throughout a sentence or thought. Example: ‘*Life is worth living*’. In the Qur’an Allah says: “أَنَا صَبَبْنَا الْمَاءَ صَبًّا ثُمَّ شَقَقْنَا الْأَرْضَ شَقًّا”; “That We pour forth water in abundance, and We split the earth in clefts.”(3abassa:25-26). Unfortunately, the translation distorted the beauty of the expression as no polyptoton exists in it.

1.1.5.3.1.4.4.15. Equivoque

This is the use of an ambiguous term or a word susceptible of different significations. McArthur’s definition of ‘equivoque’ is: “An ambiguous statement or passage, often intentionally evasive or phrased to have two possible interpretations, double meaning, word play or pun.”(Al-Aabedi,2015,p.09). It is like the use of the word ‘جبال’ ‘mountains’ in the following verse: أَلَمْ تَرَ أَنَّ اللَّهَ يُرْجِي سَحَابًا ثُمَّ يُؤَلِّفُ بَيْنَهُ ثُمَّ يَجْعَلُهُ رُكَامًا فَتَرَى الْوَدْقَ يَخْرُجُ مِنْ خِلالِهِ وَيُنزِّلُ مِنْ “السَّمَاءِ مِنْ جِبَالٍ فِيهَا مِنْ بَرَدٍ...” “See you not that Allah drives the clouds gently, then joins them together, then makes them into a heap of layers, and you see the rain comes forth from between them. And He sends down from the sky hail (like) mountains, ...” (Annur:43).

1.1.5.3.1.4.4.16. Synecdoche

A synecdoche is a member of the figurative language family in which a part of something is used to represent or to refer to the whole. According to Nerlich (2003), it is “a categorical transfer phenomenon based on semantic inclusion as conceived by the speaker between a more comprehensive and a less comprehensive category”(p.196). ‘New wheels’ is a synecdoche that hints at a new car. In the following Qur’anic verse there is a synecdoche where the word ‘رَقِيبَةٌ’ ‘neck’ is used to refer to the whole, i.e. a slave: “ فَكُّ رَقِيبَةٍ ”; “(It is) Freeing a neck (slave), etc.”(Al-Balad:13).

1.1.5.3.1.4.4.17. Rhetorical Questions

A rhetorical question is a figure of speech in the form of a question that is asked for the persuasive effect of its asking, without the expectation of a reply. Most of the time rhetorical questions encourage the listener to think about what the (often obvious) answer to the question must be, or sometimes it is the opposite; i.e. the question is very hard or profound to be answered. According to Black (1992), a question is rhetorical if “it is either so profound that answering it is obviously impossible, or so superficial that answering it is impossibly obvious. A rhetorical question uses the auditor’s silence for its own confirmation. It may be the most miniature of iterated persuasive patterns”(p.02). ‘What is the meaning of life?’, ‘Is rain wet?’, and “ هَلْ جَزَاءُ الْإِحْسَانِ إِلَّا الْإِحْسَانُ ” “Is there any reward for good other than good?” (Arrahman:60) are all examples of rhetorical questions.

1.1.5.4. The Qur’an’s Challenge

Due to all these unmatched features and aspects of i3jaz and more, the Qur’an includes an open challenge until the day of judgement. As a thing does not appear as a supernatural manifestation unless it remains unconquered, it appears that the Qur’an’s inimitability is logically concluded from this challenge that it invokes (the Qur’an has not

called itself a miracle and the term *i3jaz* itself does not exist in it). Allah, the Exalted, has challenged the opponents of the Prophet Muḥammad (peace be upon him) who claimed that he forged the Qur'an to produce the like. According to Draz, "the Quran did not close the door to competition. Indeed, it left it wide open, calling on them, individually and collectively, to take up its challenge and produce anything similar to it" (Zarabozo,2007,p.55). Yet, they failed to do so and they will always do. Tawfik (2008) maintained that the holy Qur'an could never be imitated or reproduced by anyone.

The Qur'an's challenge, however, is not simply to write something of equal literary merit, but rather to produce something like the Qur'an. Here are some of the verses which Muslim exegetes call 'Verses of Challenge' (Ayat attahaddi). Allah the Most High draws attention to the inimitable nature of the Qur'an by giving an open challenge to produce the like saying: *قُلْ لَئِنِ اجْتَمَعَتِ الْإِنْسُ وَالْجِنُّ عَلَىٰ أَنْ يَأْتُوا بِمِثْلِ هَٰذَا الْقُرْآنِ لَا يَأْتُونَ بِمِثْلِهِ وَلَوْ كَانَ بَعْضُهُمْ لِبَعْضٍ ظَهِيرًا* "Say: "if the mankind and the jinns were together to produce the like of this Qur'an, they could not produce the like thereof, even if they helped one another."(Al-Isra':88). Allah reduced the challenge to only ten surahs like it saying: *أَمْ يَقُولُونَ افْتَرَاهُ قُلْ فَأْتُوا بِعَشْرِ سُوْرٍ مِثْلِهِ* "Or they say, "He (Prophet Muhammad) forged it (the Qur'an). "Say: "Bring you then ten forged Surah (chapters) like unto it, and call whomsoever you can, other than Allah (to your help), if you speak the truth!.."(Hud:13). Another verse in which the Qur'an introduces itself to be a miracle by way of challenge to produce only one surah says: *وَإِنْ كُنْتُمْ فِي رَيْبٍ مِّمَّا نَزَّلْنَا عَلَىٰ عَبْدِنَا فَأْتُوا بِسُوْرَةٍ مِثْلِهِ وَادْعُوا شُهَدَاءَكُمْ مِمَّنْ كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ* "And if you (Arab pagans, Jews, and Christians) are in doubt concerning that which We have sent down (i.e. the Qur'an) to Our slave (Muhammad Peace be upon him), then produce a Surah (chapter) of the like thereof and call your witnesses (supporters and helpers) besides Allah, if

you are truthful. But if you do it not, and you can never do it, then fear the Fire (Hell) whose fuel is men and stones, prepared for the disbelievers.”(Al-Baqarah:23-24).

As a well known fact, Arabs were proud of their excellence in Arabic language, eloquence and rhetoric, and they were even competing through eloquent poems. Nevertheless, they failed to defeat the Qur’an’s challenge, and instead of accepting this challenge they chose the field of the sword rather than the word, and this was a real proof of the miraculous nature of the final Book. According to Al-Qahtani (2015), “To produce a single surah like it was more than extraordinary; it signalled far more than the usual confidence of someone making a dare.”(p.11). Alhaj (2015) confirmed that neither the Arabs of the past nor the present could have the ability to meet this open challenge. Similarly, Tawfik (2008) stated that it was a fact that the challenge to produce only one line like it was not answered by all mankind until this moment. Besides this linguistically miraculous aspect of the Qur’an which is nothing like it can ever be written by human endeavour, including the translations of its meanings, Allah also invites and challenges non-believers to find one mistake or contradiction in His book. According to Draz (in Zarabozo,2007), “None of them could challenge or compete with it, or even suggest that a single word be changed, moved, added or omitted from the sentence where it occurs.”(p.55). Al-Qahtani (2015) pointed out that although such challenge was provocative, it was also realistic and reasonable.

Conclusion

On account of the aforementioned features, the Qur’an is a miracle in itself and each and every aspect of it is unique and has no match compared to any other book or scripture. It is obvious that no one man could possess the diversity and accuracy of the knowledge contained in it. Consequently, non-believers are naturally seeking an explanation as to the source of this accurate knowledge; for it is impossible to be the work of a mere mortal. According to Tawfik (2008), the Qur’an “appeals to human reason with wisdom of good

example and hence does not postulate dogmas to be accepted on blind faith”(p.01). In fact, for a miracle to be regarded as such it is imperative to be believed in. The Qur’an is considered an exceptional miracle by those who believe in it and also those who are inclined towards its learning with objectivity. Yet, for those who have resolved not to believe in it, its miracles will not mean anything as they clog their senses with oblivion and refuse to see the truth; thus, Allah Almighty says about them: *وَلَوْ أَنَّنَا نَزَّلْنَا إِلَيْهِمُ الْمَلَائِكَةَ وَكَلَّمَهُمُ الْمَوْتَى وَحَشَرْنَا عَلَيْهِمْ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ قُبُلًا مَا كَانُوا لِيُؤْمِنُوا إِلَّا أَنْ يَشَاءَ اللَّهُ وَلَكِنَّ أَكْثَرَهُمْ يَجْهَلُونَ* “and even if We had sent down unto them angels, and the dead had spoken to them, and We had gathered together all things before their very eyes, they would not have believed, unless Allah willed, but most of them behave ignorantly”(Al-An3am:111). In short, the language of the Qur’an is unsurpassed in its accuracy of meanings, expressions, eloquence and rhetoric and is free from any fault, which is found manifested in the use of even one word, a single letter or a preposition. As a result of this miraculousness, translations of the message of the Qur’an are bound to have many shortcomings, especially when dealing with words where the linguistic and the scientific miraculousness meet.

CHAPTER TWO

The Qur'an: The Scientific Miraculousness and Translation

Introduction

The Holy Qur'an is in fact a book of signs (Ayat) and not of science. Yet, it is characterised by its abundance of scientific information that ranges from basic to the most advanced topics in distinct fields of knowledge pertaining to Astronomy, Biology, Botany, Geology, Embryology and many others. These scientific data (expressed in the most concise and profound manner) surpassed the primitive science and intellectual level at the time of the Qur'an's revelation and have only recently been discovered or proven by the advanced science and technology. Unfortunately, the existing translations of the Qur'an's meanings are far from conveying faithfully these miracles that are regarded as contemporary proofs of the Qur'an's divinely inspired nature, and thus the impossibility to be replicated 'I3jaz'.

2.1. The Qur'an and Science

How the Qur'an and science relate to each other has generated a heated debate due to the different Islamic attitudes on the subject. The ongoing controversy is mainly between advocates and rejectionists of the existence of science in such a book of guidance.

2.1.1. Definition of Science

Science, in short, is the pursuit of knowledge. For Morris (2002), science is knowledge; grasping truth or facts. He (2002) gave the following definition: "‘science’, n. (fr. From L.scientia, from scio, to know) 1. In a *general sense*, knowledge, or certain knowledge; the comprehension or understanding of truth or facts by the mind"(p.23). According to Sardar (1984), it is the studying of the phenomenon of nature by a rational and empirical method. Dodd (2005) held the opinion that thanks to science the explanation of things was provided; so, it has a relation with meaning in that for something to be meaningful, it must be rational

and it “is often even identified as the very project of human understanding itself” (p.05). Yet, Montello and Sutton (2013) believed it to be “a personal and social human endeavour in which ideas and empirical evidence are logically applied to create and evaluate knowledge about reality”(p.03). To sum up, science is the organized manner through which the human being tries to understand the material world and it is both a body of knowledge and a process.

2.1.2. The Qur’an’s Approach to Science and Scientists

The Qur’an plainly stresses the importance of acquiring knowledge and science and perhaps the best example is that the first verse revealed to the Prophet (peace be upon him) commands him to read. Allah said in the first verse of surat Al3alaq: “*اقْرَأْ*” “*Read!*”. According to Halo (2016), the meaning of “*اقْرَأْ*” “is to venture deeper and study, and it is not confined to merely reciting because a person who recites the Qur’an without *tadabbur* is as a talking bird. In fact, one of the problems regarding reciting the Qur’an is reading it with neither pondering nor understanding. Allah, the Almighty, said in Surat Sad, verse 29: “*كِتَابٌ أَنْزَلْنَاهُ إِلَيْكَ مُبَارَكٌ لِيَدَّبَّرُوا آيَاتِهِ وَلِيَتَذَكَّرَ أُولُو الْأَلْبَابِ*”; “*(This is) a Book (the Qur'an) which We have sent down to you, full of blessings that they may ponder over its Verses, and that men of understanding may remember*”. Also, Gandapur (2009) mentioned that the Qur’an frequently guided man to acquire scientific knowledge. According to Dr. Aijazul (in Dalafi and Hassan, 1994), nothing can emphasise the value of science more than the fact that the Holy Qur’an contains some 750 verses, which makes almost the one eighth of it, exhorting the believers to reflect and to make the best use of reason. Moreover, even in Sunnah there are many prophetic well known similar statements.

As a matter of fact, there are many verses in the Qur’an where it is mentioned the superiority of people of knowledge. For example, in surat Al-Mudjadila, verse 11, Allah said: “*...يَرْفَعُ اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا مِنْكُمْ وَالَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْعِلْمَ دَرَجَاتٍ...*”; “*...Allah will exalt in degree those of you who believe, and those who have been granted knowledge...*”. Also, in surat Azzumar, verse 09:

“...قُلْ هَلْ يَسْتَوِي الَّذِينَ يَعْلَمُونَ وَالَّذِينَ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ إِنَّمَا يَتَذَكَّرُ أُولُو الْأَلْبَابِ”
 to those who know not?" It is only men of understanding who will remember (i.e. get a lesson
 from Allah's Signs and Verses)". Besides, the Qur'an also reveals: “...يُفَصِّلُ الْآيَاتِ لِقَوْمٍ يَعْلَمُونَ”;
 “...He explains the Ayat (proofs, evidences, verses, lessons, signs, revelations, etc.) in detail
 for people who have knowledge”(Yunes:05). Therefore, the Prophet Muhammed declared that
 the men of knowledge have a special status and name: *The Inheritors of the Prophets*. To
 conclude, as confirmed by Asadulla (2008), it is evident that Allah and his prophet
 Muhammed incite people to acquire knowledge, including scientific knowledge.

2.1.3. Science in the Qur'an

Approaches to this subject matter can differ radically. Yet, denying the existence of
 science in the Qur'an or saying that the Qur'an is completely devoid of scientific implications
 is definitely a wrong claim, and the idea that the Qur'an and science should not coexist ought
 to be revisited. This is due to the fact that they have never a relationship of discord. Even
 though science in the seventh century was primitive, the Qur'an contains a number of
 scientific themes and details which have only been discovered and validated by modern
 science. The Qur'an contains data related to worldly phenomena and many other subjects, and
 this establishes the truth that it has really anticipated modern scientific theories and facts.
 Gandapur (2009) has stated that 1500 to 2000 verses, which make approximately the one-
 third of the Qur'an are science-related dealing with the creation of the universe and man and
 its related matters. According to Tawfik (2008), “Science is prevalent in the Quran and we
 shall find many new scientific things in this glorious book as we go along.”(p.03).

As a point of fact, there is an indication of almost every science in the Qur'an, revealing
 an awareness and foreknowledge of natural phenomena and some mysteries that exhibit a
 magnetic attention to contemporary scientists. Allah said: “...مَا قَرَطْنَا فِي الْكِتَابِ مِنْ شَيْءٍ...”;
 “...We have neglected nothing in the Book...”(Al-An3am:38). Similarly, “...وَنَزَّلْنَا عَلَيْكَ الْكِتَابَ تِبْيَانًا لِكُلِّ...”

شَيْءٍ وَهُدًى وَرَحْمَةً وَبُشْرَىٰ لِلْمُسْلِمِينَ”; “...And We have sent down to you the Book (the Qur'an) as an exposition of everything, a guidance, a mercy, and glad tidings for those who have submitted themselves (to Allah as Muslims)”(Annahl:89). Sardar (1984) reported that:

There are accurate Qur'anic accounts and interpretations of several scientific principles and disciplines such as cosmogony and cosmology, astronomy, anatomy, geology, mineralogy and metallurgy, meteorology, agriculture and horticulture, animal husbandry and dairy farming, navigation and aviation, food preservation, rationing and storage. (p.20)

Concerning the manner these scientific data have been stated in the Qur'an, they are exhibited either explicitly or implicitly, i.e. the Qur'an alludes to them (through imagery for example). Gandapur (2009) has had the belief that the science-related verses are sometimes revealed in an esoteric form; in the form of signs, symbols, similitude, allegory, or in plain words. Thus, in regard to this matter, he (2009) perceived science as a means to understand this kind of Qur'anic verses and that it was the duty of men of knowledge to decode the allegorical sense encompassed in them, which he believed to be an easy task for them compared to others. According to Al Rifai (2016), every single word of Allah is deliberate, purposefully phrased, and revealed for the minds of men and “not as a sort of magic never to be understood” (p.55).

2.1.4. The Qur'an's Scientific Miraculousness (Inimitability)

Among the aspects, gleams or multi-facetedness of the Qur'an's I3jaz is the scientific miraculousness (inimitability). It resides in the Qur'an's reference to scientific subjects that are in total agreement with modern scientific discoveries. As a book revealed more than fourteen centuries ago, it is miraculous in that there are not only scientific assertions, implications and prescient statements about scientific phenomena, but that they also comport with modern science. Thanks to contemporary scientific research and technology, it is only today that the numerous science-related verses have become comprehensible. According to

Tawfik (2008), the implication of science in the Qur'an is a recent topic and most of its science-related statements could be understood only in the domain of modern science.

At the time of the Qur'an's revelation, sufficient scientific means were absent; thus, the scientific matters within it are far beyond the level of knowledge of that time. Yet, for the sake of its permanence and immortality in time, i.e. the everlasting eternal quality of the Qur'an, some science-related words and verses have a strong reasonable relation with the correspondent ongoing perceptible scientific discoveries. It has been mentioned in Abu Zayd (2006) that "the great miracle of the Quran is its universality, which enables every generation to discover relevant meaning in it, irrespective of the constant increase in human knowledge" (p.33). Nevertheless, only people who are acquainted with science can perceive these kinds of verses, each in its field of research; for the Qur'an strictly acknowledges implications about various branches of knowledge with minute details and absolute accuracy and preciseness. Bucaille (1977) remarked that the Qur'an contained infinitely more precise data that exercised a magnetic attraction for today's scientists. He (1977) also thought that however knowledgeable the authors of the Qur'an's old commentaries, they were of a total inability to grasp the depth of meaning of the science-related verses and that to understand such verses one should have an absolutely encyclopedic knowledge, embracing the various numerous scientific disciplines. Well, the question now is: Why does science exist in the holy Qur'an?

In fact, the primary reason behind the existence of the science-related verses that are in perfect conformity with modern science is that this scientific knowledge when seeking truth in an unbiased and unprejudiced way is highly conducive to reflection on and stressing the existence of God, His omnipotence and the authenticity of Qur'an's divineness and the genuineness of Muḥammad's prophethood. Allah said: "سُرِّيهِمْ آيَاتِنَا فِي الْأَفَاقِ وَفِي أَنْفُسِهِمْ حَتَّىٰ يَتَّبِعُونَ" "لَهُمْ أَنَّهُ الْحَقُّ...". "We will show them Our Signs in the universe, and in their own selves, until it becomes manifest to them that this (the Qur'an) is the truth..."(Fussilat:53). Gandapur (2009)

noted: “Science laws are in agreement with the Quran, and this proves the Divine nature of the Quran through modern established science”(p.54). In the opinion of Tawfik (2008), science is now in a position to answer the question of the true origin of any sacred book.

2.1.4.1. The Miraculous Science-Related Qur’anic Words

The scientific miraculous side of the Qur’an can reside in its miraculous words that have a variety of meanings and new possible interpretations, corresponding with the advances of science and technology. According to Nursi (2005), each word of the Qur’an is a miracle, “for just like a seed, each word may contain a tree of truths; just like a heart’s center, it may have relations with all parts of a mighty truth”(p.460). Anisah Huda explained (in Dale,2016) that the verses and words might have many possible meanings none of them was wrong as the Qur’an always with time and with new scientific discoveries offered new meanings and interpretations that widened our understanding. In addition, even the letters of the Holy Book are of a supernatural nature. Nursi (2005) argued that: “specialists in the science of letters assert that each letter of the Qur’an contains as many mysteries as may cover a page, and prove it to those who have expert knowledge in that science” (p.460).

Unfortunately, however, the Qur’an’s scientific miraculousness is a subject of an ongoing debate because of some scholars’ unhealthy behaviours when pointing to it. Al-Qahtani (2015) cited the evidence that: “most of the contemporary scholars who have treated this theme have done little more than made fools of both themselves and their readers. They demonstrate no specialized knowledge of the miraculousness they purport to demonstrate, nor do they present their case in an academic fashion”(p.09). For this, and to avoid claims of lying, bias, prejudices, or providing unreliable information, whenever we refer in this work to some scientific data, we quote non-Arabs and include the exact scientific information with some detail as stated in science books, like in the following examples.

2.1.5. Some Examples of the Scientific Facts in the Qur'an

This section is devoted to shedding light on some of the stunning scientific miracles that are mentioned in the holy Qur'an on different subjects.

2.1.5.1. Oceanography

It is the science that studies the physical, chemical and biological features of oceans.

2.1.5.1.1. The Barrier between Sweet and Salt Waters

Allah has informed us in the holy Qur'an that there is a barrier between the two seas when meeting side by side. Allah said: “وَجَعَلَ بَيْنَ الْبَحْرَيْنِ حَاجِزًا”; “and has set a barrier between the two seas (of salt and sweet water)” (Annaml:61). This barrier has been given the name ‘بَرْزُخٌ’; “مَرَجَ الْبَحْرَيْنِ يَلْتَقِيَانِ (19) بَيْنَهُمَا بَرْزُخٌ لَا يُبْغِيَانِ (20)”; “He has let loosed the two seas (the salt water and the sweet) meeting together. Between them is a barrier which none of them can transgress”(Arrahman:19-20). Similarly, but with more specification (the fresh sweet water and the salty bitter one), Allah said: “وَهُوَ الَّذِي مَرَجَ الْبَحْرَيْنِ هَذَا عَذْبٌ فُرَاتٌ وَهُوَ الَّذِي مَرَجَ الْبَحْرَيْنِ هَذَا عَذْبٌ فُرَاتٌ”; “And it is He Who has let free the two seas (kinds of water), one palatable and sweet, and the other salt and bitter, and He has set a barrier and a complete partition between them”(Al-Furqan:53). The conclusion here is that although there is a ‘مَرَجٌ’ which literally means ‘a mixing’, there is a ‘بَرْزُخٌ’.

The basic meaning of the word ‘بَرْزُخٌ’ is ‘a barrier’ or ‘a separation’ between two things or states. It was defined by Glassé (2002) as: “Barzakh (AR. A “barrier”, an “obstruction between two things or places; specifically, a “isthmus”). A point of transition where entities similar yet different come together”(p.78). Besides, the word ‘بَرْزُخٌ’ has been mentioned another time in the Qur'an to refer to the separation between the here and the hereafter. Allah said: “لَعَلِّي أَعْمَلُ صَالِحًا فِيمَا تَرَكْتُ كَلَّا إِنَّهَا كَلِمَةٌ هُوَ قَائِلُهَا وَمِنْ وَرَائِهِمْ بَرْزُخٌ إِلَى يَوْمِ” “لَعَلِّي أَعْمَلُ صَالِحًا فِيمَا تَرَكْتُ كَلَّا إِنَّهَا كَلِمَةٌ هُوَ قَائِلُهَا وَمِنْ وَرَائِهِمْ بَرْزُخٌ إِلَى يَوْمِ” “So that I may do good in that which I have left behind!” No! It is but a word that

he speaks, and behind them is Barzakh (a barrier) until the Day when they will be resurrected” (Almu’minun:100). Glassé (2002) mentioned that this term had many applications in metaphysics and was considered as a bridge as it touched the two worlds.

Modern science has discovered a natural barrier between adjacent seas, each of which has its own temperature, salinity and density. So, how can these two bodies of water with all these differences mix (مرج) while having between them a barrier (برزخ) that forbids any transgression and prevent encroaching? Well, oceanographers explain this by the existence of a transitional zone. When fresh water is mixed with salty water, different salinity zones exist. Earle (1992) detailed this like: “(1) the zone of fresh water, with salinity less than 0.5 parts per thousand; (2) the zone of fresh-salt transition (the oligohaline), with salinities of 0.5-3 parts per thousand; and (3) the zone of salty water, with salinity above 3 parts per thousand”(p.34). So, as it is obvious, the second zone here is the barrier (برزخ).

In fact, this transitional zone is the barrier that has scientifically been given the name ‘halocline’. White and Culver (2012) wrote that: “The boundary between the freshwater and salt water is called the halocline (“halo” meaning salt, “cline” meaning boundary) if it is a sharp boundary. If the boundary is broad, containing water of brackish salinity, it is called a mixing zone.”(p.157). Similarly, in the *Encyclopedia of the Arctic*, Nuttall (2005) stated that whenever the oceanographic term “halocline” is used, it means that there is a change in salinity and that it “represents a stable barrier to surface mixing”(p.400). According to Nelson (1972), fresh water is separated from salty water by a strong halocline. This phenomenon exists, according to Brock (1969), where two mighty oceans meet, and one example of it is the great dividing barrier between the Atlantic and Indian Oceans. ‘Merging Oceans’ is the name that was suggested for the following picture. It was “captured by Kent Smith on a cruise in Alaska”, according to Grizzle (2012,p.56) who has commented on it saying that it is an amazing natural phenomenon where there is a permanent white line at the point where

the tides meet. It depicts the result of the melting glaciers being composed of fresh water and the ocean and shows a clear separation line or a white bar between two bodies of water, according to Smith.



Figure 01: *Merging Oceans* (captured by Kent Smith on a cruise in Alaska).
Retrieved from: <https://www.flickr.com/photos/kentsmith9/4955772693>

2.1.5.1.2. Internal Waves and Darkness in Oceans Depth

Allah said: “أَوْ كَظُلُمَاتٍ فِي بَحْرٍ لُجِّيٍّ يَغْشَاهُ مَوْجٌ مِّنْ فَوْقِهِ مَوْجٌ مِّنْ فَوْقِهِ سَحَابٌ ظُلُمَاتٌ بَعْضُهَا فَوْقَ بَعْضٍ إِذَا أَخْرَجَ يَدَهُ لَمْ يَكُنْ يَرَاهَا...”
“Or [the state of a disbeliever] is like the darkness in a vast deep sea, overwhelmed with a great wave topped by a great wave, topped by dark clouds, darkness, one above another, if a man stretches out his hand, he can hardly see it! ...” (Annur:40).

2.1.5.1.2.1. Internal Waves

The above verse states that *there are waves above which are waves*, i.e. waves topped by other waves in seas and oceans. Apart from the surface waves, no one previously knew about the existence of the phenomenon of internal waves -the waves that occur underwater. Pinet (2016) mentioned that “Unlike ocean swell, which travels over the water, internal waves move below the water surface”(p.256) and that the U.S. Navy has made a great attention to internal waves and to investigating them due to suspecting them being the cause of several submarines’ sinking. The generation of these internal waves is due to the stratification effect, i.e. the varying ocean layers. According to Fang and Duan (2014), an internal wave is a dynamic process that generally exists in the ocean because of the different

layers, and after its formation, it can simultaneously propagate over a considerable distance towards the deep water as well as the shallow water. Similarly stated by Pinet (2016), the water column is stratified, not homogeneous, and thus, these underwater surfaces between water masses are the ideal locations for the formation of internal waves.

Contemporary science has not only discovered their existence but also some of their characteristics. Pinet (2016) noted that they traveled at much slower speeds compared to the surface waves, but they were observed to be much grander, exceeding 100 meters of height which was almost three times higher than the larger of the ocean swell. Concerning the wave length and velocity, Shanmugam (2012) stated that while the greatest wave length exists at intermediate depths, the greatest velocities are at the bottom. About their visibility, Barale and Gade (2008) mentioned that although no elevation of the sea surface is produced, unlike the surface waves, they induce a variable horizontal surface current or a change in the sea surface roughness; thus, under certain conditions, their manifestations are visible on radar images, visible ultraviolet or infrared bands. The following figure (in Barale and Gade,2008,p.321) depicts a typical example of a nonlinear internal wave packet consisting of three solitary waves of depression. The water density is denoted by the colour coding; however, the velocity is represented by the arrows.

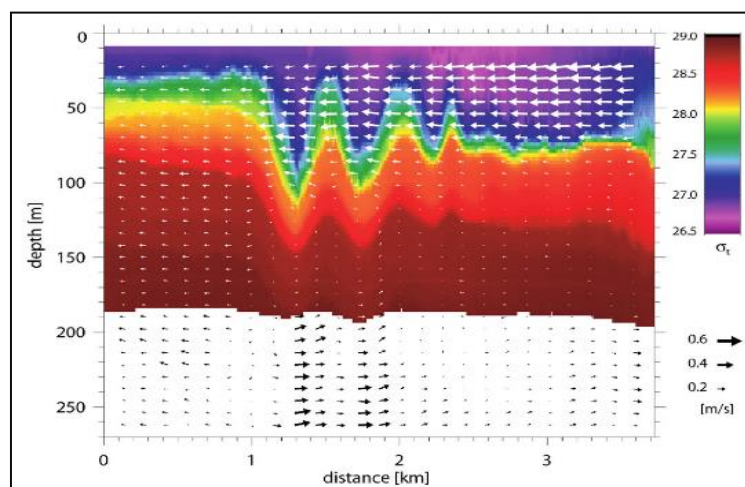


Figure 02: Density distribution of the water column and distribution of the Velocity north of the Strait of Messina measured by ship-borne sensors during the passage of a highly nonlinear internal wave packet on 25 October 1995.

The following is a satellite image (in Shanmugam,2012,p.195), which has been documented by NASA on the Indian Ocean waters near the Andaman Islands in which smaller surface waves are propagating in a north-south directions while internal waves are propagating in an east-west directions.



Figure 03: Satellite image showing both surface waves (near horizontal faint waves, left) and internal waves (long diagonal waves, right) on the Indian Ocean near Andaman Islands. Large internal waves have a wavelength of 5 km. This Advanced Land Imager (ALI) on the Earth Observing 1 satellite acquired the image on March 6, 2007.

Since Allah has created these internal waves, they are certainly of a great significance. According to Shanmugam (2012), they maintain ocean circulation and sustain biological productivity by downward mixing of heat and supplying nutrients respectively.

2.1.5.1.2.2. Darkness in Oceans Depth

The above Qur'anic verse also speaks about darkness in seas. Due to such intense darkness, one can scarcely see his hand if he holds it out. With the aid of special equipment, scientists have recently discovered that an overwhelming darkness is what, in fact, characterises the depth of the oceans and seas. Garrison (2006) established the fact that the sun illuminates only a thin surface layer of seawater and that most of the oceans lie in complete blackness. For Dana(1896,p.56),“Below 420 to 480 feet are the regions of darkness”.

As a matter of fact, sunlight faces many obstacles in its way to reach and penetrate the ocean, causing it to be reflected, shattered and attenuated. Garrison (2006) clarified that the

sunlight is subject to reflection by the clouds and the sea surface, and to absorption and scattering by atmospheric gases and particles. Then, when penetrating the sea, it is finally absorbed after being scattered by striking the different suspended particles and others. The truth is that water absorbs sunlight more than air does. Cavendish (2006) under the sub-heading “*The Dark Depths*” said: “Ocean water soaks up sunlight. Near the surface everything in the water is well lit, but as light penetrates deeper, more of it is absorbed, so everything gets darker. The region below 660 feet (200 meters) is often known as the twilight zone because there is barely enough light to see by.”(p.04). Garrison (2006) made it clear that even perfectly clear seawater is not completely transparent.

The truth is that water absorption of light comes in stages. Regarding the fact that light has different colours, “Sunlight includes all the colors of the rainbow” (Cavendish,2006,p.4), they are believed to be faded differently according to depths. Cavendish (2006) exhibited that water absorbs the red light first, then the yellow, and then the green; yet, at 100 meters below the surface, only blue light remains, and it is absorbed altogether at the top of the abyssal zone; So, there is no sunlight at all at this layer of the ocean. This gradation in absorbing the colours of sunlight by water is demonstrated in detail (in Garrison,2006,p.117) by the use of the following table and then the graph that serves as a visual elucidation to the part of the verse 40 of surat Annur: “ظُلُمَاتٌ بَعْضُهَا فَوْقَ بَعْضٍ”; “darkness, one above another”.

Color	Wavelength (nm)	% Absorbed in 1 m of water	Depth by which 99% is absorbed (m)
Infrared	800	82.0	3
Red	725	71.0	4
Orange	600	16.7	25
Yellow	575	8.7	51
Green	525	4.0	113
Blue	475	1.8	254
Violet	400	4.2	107
Ultraviolet	310	14.0	31

Table 01: The percentage of light absorbed in the uppermost meter of the ocean and the depths at which only 1% of the light of each wavelength remains

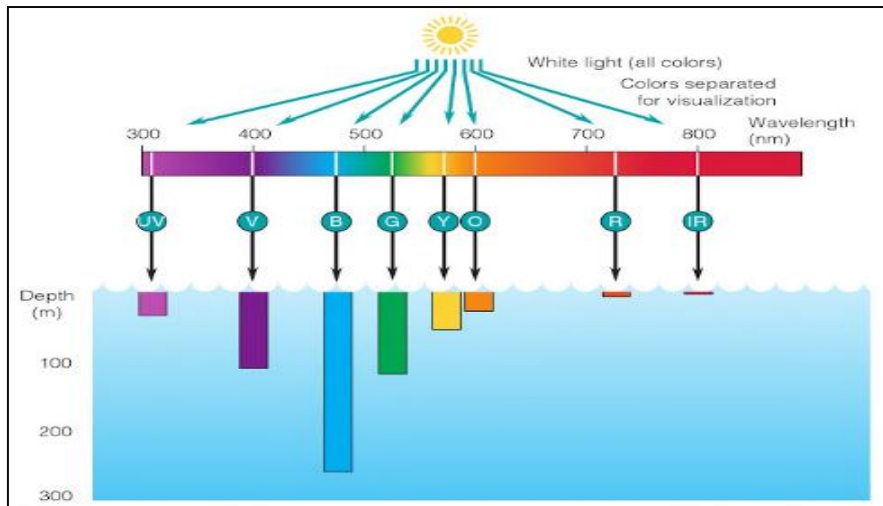


Figure 04: The bars show the depths of penetration of 1% of the light of each wavelength (as in the last column of the table).

At the bottom of deep oceans, there is a zone called the abyssal zone or abyssopelagic. Kemp (1998) defined it as: “The deepest part of the oceans lying more than 2000 m beneath the surface”(p.02). In the opinion of Cavendish (2006), the abyssal zone is a region of complete darkness and its depth depends on the degree of water cloudiness, but “in clear, tropical oceans it lies around 3300 feet (1000 meters) below the waves”(p.04). As a result, it is a region of a very low temperature and extreme water pressures. So, as a conclusion, as it is apparent, sunlight remains superficial and most of the oceans is distinguished by total darkness preceded by successive degrees or nuances of darkening.

2.1.5.2. Fingerprints

The disbelievers often claim that no return is possible. Thus, Allah Almighty said in surat Al Qiyamah: “أَيَحْسَبُ الْإِنْسَانُ أَلَّن نَجْمَعُ عِظَامَهُ (03) بَلَىٰ قَادِرِينَ عَلَىٰ أَنْ نَسْتَوِي بِنَآئِهِ (04)”; “Does man (a disbeliever) think that We shall not assemble his bones? Yes, We are Able to put together in perfect order the tips of his fingers”. Many scholars have explained these verses as having the following meaning: if man doubts the recreation ‘Alba3th’, Allah assures that it is not only that He can gather his bones when the day of resurrection comes; but, He can even reshape his

fingertips, i.e. reforming or recreating the same features and the slightest details. So, they are related to the recreation; for they might be a precise way of identification and distinction.

In other words, maybe the reason behind mentioning the fingertips in particular is that they contain prints. Jainet et al. (2006) defined fingerprints as: “graphical flow-like ridges present on human fingers. Their formations depend on the initial conditions of the embryonic development and they are believed to be unique to each person (and each finger).”(p.07). Formerly, fingerprints have been regarded as simple curves and shapes with no significance; however, it has been scientifically proven that no two people, not even twins, have the same prints; i.e. every person has unique prints that distinguish him from any other person. Starr (2006) assured: “Each human has a unique set of fingerprints.”(p.226). Similarly, the fact that no two fingerprints are alike is confirmed by Balding (2005) saying that they are not only like DNA as they are genetically determined; but, they are much better for the reason that the fingerprints of even identical twins are distinguishable.

Another fact is that the uniqueness or exclusiveness of each fingerprint to each human remains the same and distinct forever, i.e. fingerprints are permanent. Miller (2012) was certain that there was no change in fingerprints over time. According to Leo (2004), the fingerprints remain true to their first form from before birth until long after death, and even when destruction occurs through injuries, as they heal the original lines assert themselves exactly as before. Hence, it is an established fact that “No longer is there any doubt about the individuality or permanence of fingerprints.” (Hawthorne,2009,p.ix).

As individuals have distinctive and unique fingerprints, and no two fingerprints have ever been found to be exactly alike, man recognized their value as a tool for identification purposes. According to Leo (2004), every person has ten infallible witnesses as to his identity, and it is only during the last few years that fingerprints have been utilized as a reliable means of identification. Cole (2001) wrote: “fingerprints were used as signatures or seals.” (p.60).

Therefore, they have been used in forensic sciences. While Jainet et al. (2006) considered them as one of the most mature biometric technologies used in criminal investigations in the whole world, Spaulding (2008) gave even some historic facts about their first utilitarian use saying: “In 1892, Sir Francis Galton published his book *Finger prints*. That same year, in Argentina, the first-ever criminal conviction based on fingerprint evidence was handed down.”(p.06). According to Hawthorne (2009), it took a very long time, three to four centuries, and different means of technology to discover the varied uses of fingerprints. In brief, what has been recently greatly appreciated and seen as a marvellous reliable discovery in the criminal investigations field and others, the holy Qur’an miraculously referred to it more than fourteen centuries ago.

2.1.5.3. Dates

Maryam, one of the greatest women to ever live, was chosen to give birth to the prophet 3issa (peace be upon him). After an unusual conception, when the last stage of her pregnancy came, the pains of labour drove her to a trunk of a palm-tree, Allah Almighty said in surat Maryam, verse 23: “... فَأَجَاءَهَا الْمَخَاضُ إِلَى جِذْعِ النَّخْلَةِ ...”; “*And the pains of childbirth drove her to the trunk of a date-palm...*”. Allah, then, ordered her to shake the trunk towards her so as to drop a kind of ripe dates named ‘رُطْبًا’. Allah said: “ وَهَرَي إِلَيْكَ بِجِذْعِ النَّخْلَةِ ”; “*And shake the trunk of date-palm towards you, it will let fall fresh ripe-dates upon you*” (Maryam:25). So, what is so special about dates, especially during labour?

Dates are considered to be both food and medicine. In one of the Prophet’s Aḥadith, it has been mentioned that the people of a house that is without dates are in a hunger state. So, they are a good source of nutrition, energy and sustenance. As a result, they are a common ingredient on the Muslims’ tables in Ramaḍan with which they start and break their fast; “In the month of Ramazan dates are extensively used by the Muslims to open their fast as they are a rich source of instant energy and vitality.”(Arya,2014,p.173). Due to its food value, this

extremely healthy food has been referred to, according to Arya (2014), as the ‘crown of sweets’ -providing approximately 3000 calories/kg- because it is an ideal food for a balanced diet as it is a rich source of sugar, protein, fats and many essential nutrients as:“Iron, Calcium, Potassium, Phosphorous, Manganese, Magnesium, Sulphur and Copper, vitamin B-6, copper and folic acids”(p.173). 70% of dates components, according to Manickavasagan et al.(2012), are carbohydrates (mainly sucrose, glucose, and fructose). For them, they are “an almost ideal food that provides a wide range of essential nutrients”(2012,p.371) and, besides their nutritional significance, are believed to have many potential health benefits and medicinal properties as: boosting the immunity, providing strength and even bringing relief against pain.

The word ‘الْمَخَاضُ’ in the above verse means labour. Allah ordered Maryam to eat specifically dates at the time of her labour for some reasons only recently fully revealed. Labour is a strenuous activity that requires energy. Under the title: *Eating and drinking in labour*, Pairman et al. (2010) defined labour as “a physically challenging process and requires as much fuel as any other strenuous activity” (p.493). They asserted that for women experiencing normal labour, they should be free to eat and drink as their body demands. Allah said: “فَكُلِّي وَاشْرَبِي وَرَازِقِي عَيْنًا...”; “So eat and drink and be glad” (Maryam:26).

Science has revealed that eating dates is of a great importance during and after labour. A recent study on *the effect of late pregnancy consumption of date fruit on labour and delivery* included a comparison between sixty-nine women who consumed six date fruits per day four weeks prior to their due date with women who ate no date fruit. According to Clark (2015), it has been concluded that dates significantly reduced the need for induction and augmentation of labour through the use of prostagelatin/oxytocin and shortened early labour by nearly half. This interesting result, in numbers, is exactly that 96% of the date eating women had spontaneous labour. Also, those who consumed dates showed significantly higher proportion of intact membranes and cervical dilatation upon admission. Moreover, Manickavasagan et al.

(2012) specified that: “The most common medicinal use of dates and its products is as a tonic, especially for women who are close to delivery and at postpartum stage” (p.370) as they strengthen the uterine muscles, activate the delivery process and may also prevent the post delivery bleeding due to the presence of some constricting substances.

Of the hormones that appear to be involved the most in child birth is the oxytocin. According to Jones and Lopez (2006), this hormone in Greek means the “quick birth” whose role is to increase the intensity of uterine contractions during later stages of labor. For containing an oxytocin-like substance, dates are believed to be good for labour. In the opinion of Arya (2014), dates are rich in hormones that are involved in toughening the uterus, and eating them initiates contractions of the uterus at the time of delivery mainly because of an oxytocin-like substance. Besides, dates are also good for lactation and lactating mothers. Manickavasagan et al. (2012) mentioned that “The potassium, glycine, and threonine contents of dates are thought to activate the production of milk hormone (prolactine)” (p.370). According to Arya (2014), dates increase milk production and can also alleviate the depression associated with breast-feeding.

Another fact to mention about the subject is that, despite the fact that Maryam was in a state of extreme weakness, the time of delivery, Allah shows us that we should always provide some causes so as to have results (cause-effect relationship); Allah said “ *وَهَزَيٰ اِلَيْكَ* ” “*And shake the trunk of date-palm towards you*” (cause); “ *تَساقِطُ عَلَيْكَ رَطْبًا جَنِيًّا* ”; “*it will let fall fresh ripe-dates upon you*” (result). Shaking a palm-tree, definitely, needs a considerable effort; so, there is a need for some motion or action at that particular state. In the opinion of Clark (2015), the more women move around, go up and down stairs, walk up hills, the more the pelvis is moving and thus can stimulate oxytocin production.

2.1.5.4. The Skin: The Pain Receptor

Consider the following part of the verse 56 from Surat Annissa': " إِنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا بِآيَاتِنَا "؛ "سَوْفَ نُصَلِّيهِمْ نَارًا كُلَّمَا نَضِجَتْ جُلُودُهُمْ بَدَّلْنَاهُمْ جُلُودًا غَيْرَهَا لِيَذُوقُوا الْعَذَابَ...". "Surely! Those who disbelieved in Our Ayat (proofs, evidences, verses, lessons, revelations, etc.) We shall burn them in Fire. As often as their skins are roasted through, We shall change them for other skins that they may taste the punishment...". Here Allah is threatening those who disbelieve in His Ayat and reject them to admit them to a burning fire in the hereafter. Whenever this burning process reaches the stage when their skins are burnt thoroughly 'نَضِجَتْ', He exchanges or replaces these skins with fresh ones so as to taste the torment 'لِيَذُوقُوا الْعَذَابَ' and to experience pain again and again. So, in this part of the verse, one can deduce two important facts: the first one is that pain is sensed at the level of the skin and the second is that there is a degree of skin damage beyond which no pain is felt.

Pain in general is known as the perception of an unpleasant sensation. The International Association for the Study of Pain has defined it as: "an unpleasant sensory and emotional experience associated with actual or potential tissue damage, or described in terms of such damage"(Goldstein,2013,p.351). When felt at the level of the skin, it is scientifically termed nociceptive or cutaneous pain that is characterized by "sharp, picking, stabbing, or burning sensations"(Tiidus,2008,p.61). Recent discoveries have proved the existence of pain receptors at the level of the skin, named 'nociceptors', without which a person would never be able to sense pain, i.e. devoid of any sensation. According to Siegel and Sapru (2006), "Painful (noxious) stimuli (e.g., sharp pricking or slow burning) stimulate specialized receptors called nociceptors by the central nervous system (CNS) is called nociception."(p.262). Greger and Windhorst (1996) have written under the sub-heading *Nociceptive Pain* that nociceptors are characterised by their abundance in the skin.

Most cutaneous nociceptors respond to several modalities of stimuli, such as heat, strong mechanical stimuli and chemical stimuli; thus, they are termed *polymodal nociceptors*, in contrast to *unimodal nociceptors* which respond selectively to heat stimuli for example, as emphasized by Lautenbacher and Fillingim (2012). Amthor (2012) noted that those which responded to temperature and pain looked like the axon terminals and were termed *free nerve endings* and that extreme heat activated receptors, which was interpreted as pain that signaled impending damage to the skin. Tiidus (2008) described the free nerve endings as “nociceptors, which are highly branched and have large areas of sensitivity” (p.61). The following figure (in Goldstein,2013,p.351) represents how a nociceptive pain is felt, starting first with the activation of the nociceptors in the skin. Then, signals from the nociceptors are transmitted to the spinal cord and then through some pathways to the brain.

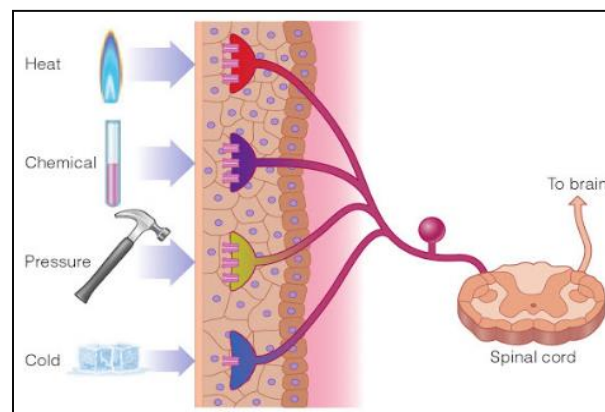


Figure 05: Nociceptive pain is created by activation of nociceptors in the skin that respond to different types of stimulation. Signals from the nociceptors are transmitted to the spinal cord and then up the spinal cord in pathways that lead to the brain.

Evaluating the different kinds of injuries, burns are among the most serious, painful, and dangerous ones, according to the American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons (1993). It has explained that they happen when the body receives a quantity of thermal or heat energy that exceeds its capacity to absorb it without being injured. McCulloch and Kloth (2010) pointed out that “Burn pain occurs from tissue trauma secondary to a thermal, chemical, or electrical insult. Burn pain can be very intense, with the majority of patients reporting

severe or excruciating pain, with pain occurring daily.”(p.401). Therefore, Hellfire is the exact punishment for the disbelievers and sinners in the hereafter.

Estimating the severity or the seriousness of any burn in terms of the skin layer(s) that is/are damaged, cutaneous burns are categorized or classified into three degrees; namely as: first, second and third degree burns. Williams and Wilkins (2005) expressed that “The depth of skin and tissue damage determines burn classification.” (p.563). First, in first degree burns, the damage occurs only in the epidermis, as it is confirmed by McCulloch and Kloth (2010): “With first-degree burns, tissue injury is localized to the epidermis.”(p.401). In this burn degree, mild to moderate pain is experienced; like the one of a sunburn. Second, in the second degree burns both the epidermis and dermis are involved. Pain can be quite severe because of the damage and potential exposure of the free nerve endings -nociceptors, as maintained by McCulloch and Kloth (2010). Third, in addition to the two above cutaneous layers, the subcutaneous tissue is also injured in third degree burns, i.e. all the skin layers are involved. Rubin et al. (2008) wrote: “Third-degree burns char both epidermis and dermis. Histologically, they are carbonized and cellular structure is lost.”(p.271). Likewise, according to Atlee (2007), in this type of burns all dermal elements are destroyed and the burn penetrates into the subcutaneous tissue, and individuals with this type of injury are pain-free due to the complete destruction of the nociceptors or the free nerve endings. Aglio and Urman (2017) stated: “These burns are painless as the nociceptive nerve endings have also been burned away.” (p.465).

So, the supposition that the greater the damage is, the more pain is reported is not necessarily true as the tissue response to burning is different in third-degree burns. Kazanowski and Laccetti (2002) mentioned that “First-and second-degree burns are far more painful for the client than a more severe and destructive third-degree burn.” (p.50). McCulloch and Kloth (2010) explained this by the presence of the large number of

nociceptors that transmitted pain to the cortex (in case the damage reaches both the epidermis and dermis (superficial tissues)). However, their complete destruction means no pain messages are transmitted to the central nervous system, and thus no feeling of burning pain. Hence, these two researchers have concluded that there is an absence of correlation between the amount of tissue damage and pain behaviours. Although fourth-degree burns is a classification that is sometimes mentioned to refer to the type of burns that extend deeply, reaching the muscles and the bones, a more contemporary division of burns is that first and second degree burns are named partial-thickness burns while third and fourth degree burns are termed full-thickness burns. The following is a figure (in Xu,2004,p.22) showing a diagram of skin structure illustrating burns depth.

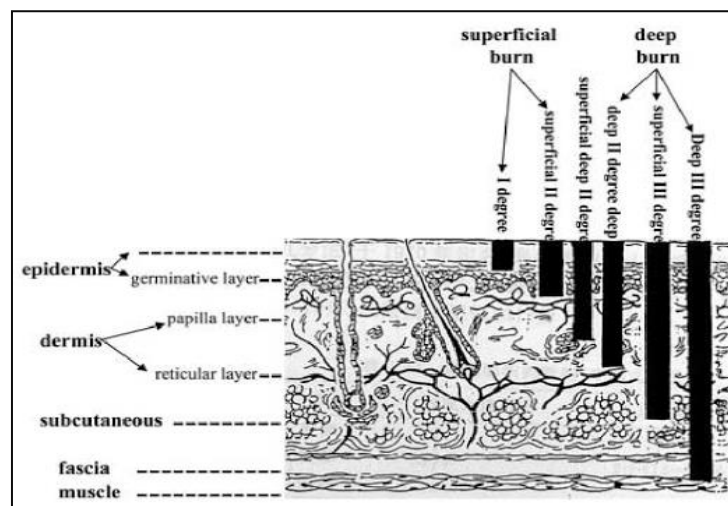


Figure 06: Diagram of skin structure illustrating burns depth

However, what comes next is a real picture (in McCulloch and Kloth,2010,p.401) of a burn injury located on a leg which has very deep third-degree central burns and second degree burns on the periphery. The writers have commented that this patient due to the destruction of the nociceptors, would likely complain of intense pain around the periphery while no pain is felt in the centre due to their total absence in there.



Figure 07: Burn pain in relation to tissue damage

While the healing process in partial-thickness burns is mainly about the regeneration of the skin, which is an extremely painful process, full-thickness burns need skin grafting. Rubin et al.(2008) said: “Deeper burns that destroy the skin appedages require new epidermis to be grafted to the Débrided area to establish a functional covering.”(p.271). Also, Xu (2004) reported that while the superficial third degree burns reaching the subcutaneous layer might heal by skin regeneration, skin grafting was required in the large deep third degree burns. Therefore, Allah said that He would exchange their skins and not that the skins would regenerate by themselves. Similarly stated by Atlee (2007), “Third-degree burns should be grafted to preserve function”(p.504). So, as long as this function is preserved, the disbelievers will be in continuous endless cycle of God’s punishment (the burning pain).

2.1.5.5. The Lying Sinful Prefrontal Cortex

Another interesting fact that deserves mentioning is in Surat Al-3alaaq when Allah said: “أَرَأَيْتَ إِنْ كَذَّبَ وَتَوَلَّى (13) أَلَمْ يَعْلَم بِأَنَّ اللَّهَ يَرَى (14) كَلَّا لَئِنْ لَمْ يَنْتَهِ لَنَسْفَعًا بِالنَّاصِيَةِ (15) نَاصِيَةٍ كَاذِبَةٍ خَاطِئَةٍ (16)”

“Tell me if he (the disbeliever, Abu Jahl) denies (the truth, i.e. this Qur'an), and turns away? (13) Knows he not that Allah does see (what he does)? (14) Nay! If he (Abu Jahl) ceases not, We will catch him by the forelock,(15) **A lying, sinful forelock!**(16)”. These verses explain that if the denier of Allah’s divine oneness, who turns away from faith without awareness that Allah sees, does not abstain from his disbelief, Allah will drag him by his ‘ناصِيَةٍ’, which is described as being lying and iniquitous. The word ‘ناصِيَةٍ’ is mentioned in another Surah -Hud-

verse 56: “... مَا مِنْ دَابَّةٍ إِلَّا هُوَ آخِذٌ بِنَاصِيَتِهَا...”; “...*There is not a moving (living) creature but He has grasp of its forelock...*”. So, why is exactly this area of the brain worth to mention?

To begin with, the brain is an organ that is, generally speaking, recognised by its complex structure and responsibility for skills, thoughts and even ethical decisions; thus, a special branch of science is paid a great attention to, Neuropsychology, as reported by Savur and Sandhu (2017). Tonry (1998) has defined this branch as the study of the brain mechanisms that are responsible for the behaviour. More specifically, it is ‘النَّاصِيَةِ’, which is explained as being either the forelock or the front part of the head by many exegetes who have also believed that it is used figuratively to mean the individual. Contemporary science has discovered interesting facts about the prefrontal cortex of the brain (PFC), which is the anterior part of the frontal lobes of the brain. It is the closest area of the brain to the forehead and it is of highly important functions. About its location in the head, Savur and Sandhu (2017) said that its place is in the very front of the brain just behind the forehead. For Pimenidis (2009), “The prefrontal cortex is the most evolved part of the brain. It occupies the front third of the brain, underneath the forehead.” (p.45). It is shown in the following figure.

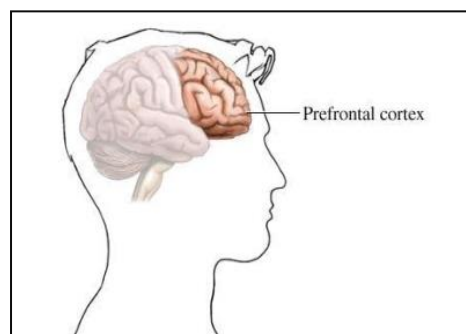


Figure 08: Prefrontal cortex. Retrieved from: <http://www.connersclinic.com/lyme-and-prefrontal-cortex-problems/>

Neuropsychologists have recently discovered the significant role of the prefrontal cortex mainly in relation to actions and behaviour. It is now known as the part of the brain that is responsible for the executive functions. DeGangi (2012) assured that the PFC was the executive functioning engine of the brain. According to Varner (2012), “the frontal cortex as a

whole is action-oriented”(p.188). As such, this part of the brain is the manager of many complex processes. DeGangi (2012) clarified that “it is important in supervising time management, decision making, impulse control, planning and organization of behaviour, and critical thinking. It is critical for forming goals, planning ahead, plan execution, and to adapt and modify the plan as obstacles or mistakes occur”(p.309). Besides, one of the executive functions that is governed by this area, according to Levey and Polirstok (2011), is rejecting wrong or inappropriate behaviours. Correspondingly, Tonry (1998) assumed that the executive function of inhibiting inappropriate behaviour was located in this area. For Savur and Sandhu (2017), it is the PFC that is in charge of ethical decision making.

In addition, the PFC confers the ability to act in a thoughtful way without impulsiveness. The latter refers to any action that is done without forethought, i.e. without considering potential future consequences. In the opinion of DeGangi (2012), the PFC allows us to “think about our thoughts, feelings, and behaviours before we act” (p.309). Pimenidis (2009) said that it also helped to solve problems relying on past experience and learn from mistakes. Also, Levey and Polirstok (2011) mentioned that “This area governs sensitivity to rewards and punishments.” (p.109). For these reasons, Allah mentioned it in the verse above as deserving the punishment of the Hellfire since the wrong actions are done by a strong will and a complete recognition and awareness of the consequences (punishments).

Many of the PFC functions are in fact brought to light, identified and revealed when they are decreased or absented in people having problems in this area of the brain. Regarding this matter, Acton (2013) argued that frontal lesion patients exhibited a reduced autonomic response to aware errors and deficits in monitoring them. Tonry (1998) mentioned that the frontal lobe syndrome was related to offending. Payne (2014) cited the following signs in individuals with poor prefrontal cortex functioning that are apt to have:

There might be pronounced difficulty with attention span, a desire to live in the moment, impulsivity, disorganization, procrastination, poor judgment, a lack of empathy, a failure to pay close attention to details, a lack of insight, trouble learning from mistakes, trouble listening, a tendency to lose things, a tendency to be easily distracted, poor planning skills and a lack of clear goals or forward thinking. (p.38)

Moreover, these people have a tendency to generally make the same mistakes. According to Pimenidis (2009), “They tend to make repetitive mistakes.”(p.45) and they do not rely on experience for their actions, but rather on their instant wants and needs. Actually, we cannot speak about the PFC disorders without mentioning the oft-cited case of Phineas Gage -a bizarre incident happened in 1848. According to Tonry (1998), interest in the frontal lobes started by the case study of a railway worker, Phineas Gage, who was a victim of an accident in which a steel rod was blown through his forehead. Amazingly, he survived the accident, but the injury resulted in dramatic personality changes. Coon and Mitterer (2016) have said that all the details were carefully recorded by Dr. Harlow; for it was the first in-depth case of study regarding this area of the brain. Pastorino and Doyle-Portillo (2012,p.66) provided the following figure depicting the effect of the accident.



Figure 09: figure depicting the effect of the accident

Here are the new personal characteristics of Phineas Gage. After the accident, According to Tonry (1998), he was impulsive, irreverent, capricious and frequently swearing. Coon and Mitterer (2016) said: “Instead of the honest and dependable worker he had been before, Gage became a surely, foul-mouthed liar.” (p.43). Pastorino and Doyle-Portillo (2012) added being irresponsible. Walkup et al. (2012) stated: “After his accident, Gage reportedly

experienced serious adverse changes in his impulse control, personality, and behavior, effects so profound that friends saw him as « no longer Gage ».”(p.49).

Many studies have been conducted to know some of the functions of the PFC, like its involvement in lying or telling the truth. One hypothesis suggested that lying needs a preparation and a planning; that is to say different mental processes are engaged for lies production. Gerrig et al. (2012) reported an experiment conducted on both truth telling and lying people, analysing patterns of their brains activities. The fMRI scans revealed that regions responsible for planning and emotions were more active when participants prepared their lies. Another study looked into the brains of pathological liars (people that abnormally regularly lie). The results showed that they “are particularly well equipped to plan their lies. These results, however, leave open the question of cause and effect: Did pathological liars start life with brains of this type (which, perhaps, caused or allowed them to lie frequently) or did frequent lying change their brains?” (p.293). Since the first assumption could not be considered as Allah threatens to punish liars and the like: criminals, sinners...etc, as their actions involve planning and willing, we are left with the second one which is frequent lying changes the brain. Allah, the Almighty, said: “يُعْرِفُ الْمُجْرِمُونَ بِسِيمَاهُمْ فَيُؤْخَذُ بِالنَّوَاصِي وَالْأَقْدَامِ”;
“*The Mujrimun (polytheists, criminals, sinners, etc.) will be known by their marks (black faces), and they will be seized by their forelocks and their feet*” (Arrahman:41).

All in all, the uninhibited behaviour, lying, committing mistakes and sins with awareness and many others are all attributed to that part of the brain called ‘النَّاصِيَة’ as revealed by many recent scientific studies. Thus, Payne (2014) argued that in the opinion of many experts, it is the PFC that makes us humans as it acts our conscience, and keeps us from doing dumb things. According to him (2014), “It’s that little voice that reminds us what is right and wrong. It helps us control our action, consider the consequences and plan accordingly.” (p.34). In short, in his opinion, its absence is like the supervisor is missing.

Hence, it is miraculous, not a mere coincidence, that this specific part of the brain was mentioned many centuries ago in the divine revelation, the Qur'an, in relation to lies and sins.

2.1.5.6. The Stages of Human Creation

The Almighty said: “ *ثُمَّ خَلَقْنَا النُّطْفَةَ عَلَقَةً فَخَلَقْنَا الْعَلَقَةَ مُضْغَةً فَخَلَقْنَا الْمُضْغَةَ عِظَامًا فَكَسَوْنَا الْعِظَامَ لَحْمًا ثُمَّ* ” *أَنْشَأْنَاهُ خَلْقًا آخَرَ ۖ فَتَبَارَكَ اللَّهُ أَحْسَنُ الْخَالِقِينَ* ”; “*Then We made the Nutfah into a clot (a piece of thick coagulated blood), then We made the clot into a little lump of flesh, then We made out of that little lump of flesh bones, then We clothed the bones with flesh, and then We brought it forth as another creation. So blessed be Allah, the Best of creators*” (Al-Mu'minun:14). The word ‘*خَلَقْنَا*’ has been exegeted as ‘*We made it become*’ and not as ‘*We created*’. The Best of creators has pointed out to the wonderful process of human creation through the following subsequent stages: *nutfah* (the drop of semen), *3alaqah* (this Arabic word has three possible meanings: a suspended thing, a blood clot and a leech), *mudghah* (little lump of flesh about the size of what one would be able to chew), bones, then clothing the bones with flesh, and finally producing it another creation (which has been interpreted as the spirit by some exegetes who said that Allah after the completion of the flesh stage didn't use the word ‘*خَلَقْنَا*’, but ‘*أَنْشَأْنَا*’, as having the meaning of *creating*; for only in this stage this creature becomes a human being). This verse is in fact an astonishing scientific miracle, which exhibited minute details about the stages of the embryonic development prior to any scientific discovery about the subject. Daneshgar and Saleh (2017) acknowledged a declaration of Keith L. Moore, a Canadian anatomist who, in 1986, worked on the Embryology Committee of King Abdulaziz University in Saudi Arabia, admitting that “the Qur'an contains precise embryological notions that cannot be explained in light of human knowledge at the time of revelation” (p.345).

Until very recently this process was beyond the human knowledge and hence a lot of theories and assumptions were made. Kessler (2009) asserted that the Romans' belief regarding the order of fetal development was that “the fetus develops from the “outside to

inside”, meaning skin and flesh are formed first, followed by bones and sinews” (p.72). Also, the U.S. Congress, Office of Technology Assessment (1988) maintained that “From ancient times until the early 1600s, the view persisted that babies were conceived by mixing menstrual and seminal fluids.” (p.294). In addition, despite of the invention of the microscope, which allowed the discovery of the sperm and eggs in the 1670s, according to it (1988), the idea persisted that for the egg to develop it needs stimulation from the male semen, which are believed to be parasites and not fertilisers. Similarly, Moore (2007) agreed that even with the invention of the microscope “they could still only theorize about sperm’s exact role in reproduction” (p.24). This means that the mystery of embryo formation and the role of semen in the reproduction as fertilisers were still unrevealed.

Pursuing this further, although it sounds nowadays odd, ‘the preformationism’ received wide acceptance for more than a century and was rejected only in the early nineteenth century, according to Wood and Garner (2009). It was one of the popular theories about human reproductive biology or the embryological development from the 1670s on. This theory held that organisms develop and evolve from miniature versions of themselves during gestation and that their characteristics are preset and predetermined. Dobie (2004) defined it to be “the argument that human life is preformed either in the egg or the sperm, and that the sexual encounter between male and female provides merely a stimulus to conception” (p.46). The reason behind its popularity as a proposed alternative was that it seemed inconceivable to many of the early naturalists that “the human or animal body could develop in the womb from unformed matter by the action of purely material forces” (Wood and Garner, 2009, p.14). In like manner, Harris and Butterworth (2002) argued that the preformationism claim was that the developmental transformations of the embryo were illusory.

However, in the mid 1850s, the established fact that the sperm fertilizes the female egg and forms the first cell of a new embryo was revealed. Moore (2007) recalled that by the

beginning of the 20th century it had been mapped out the physiology of fertilization. Jackson and Scott (2002) mentioned that while the egg has a passive role, waiting, the sperm is the actor, the one that makes it all happen. The basic process begins, according to them (2002), “when many sperm first attach loosely and then bind tenaciously to receptors on the surface of the egg’s thick outer coat, the zona pellucid”(p.387). According to the U.S. Congress, Office of Technology Assessment (1988), fertilization is when the sperm penetrates and dissolves within the egg. Then, “The sperm and ovum normally fuse into a genetic entity of forty-six chromosomes called a zygote in a process spanning about a day.” (Devettere, 2016,p.168). Similarly, Muller (in White et al., 2012) confirmed that all humans start with the fertilized egg which is a single unstructured cell. Allah described it as mingled sperm (أَمْشَاج) in Surat Al-Insan, verse 02 saying: “إِنَّا خَلَقْنَا الْإِنْسَانَ مِنْ نُطْفَةٍ أَمْشَاجٍ...”; “*Verily, We have created man from Nutfah drops of mixed semen (discharge of man and woman), ...*”.

After fertilization, the next process is implantation or the Zalaqah stage which involves the insertion of the blastocyst (the fertilized egg in the second phase of growth) into the uterine wall. Carson (1999) stated that “Implantation involves the early stages of the attachment of the conceptus to the maternal circulation.”(p.03). Devettere (2016) has mentioned that while the fertilization occurs in the fallopian tube, the implantation of the fertilized ovum occurs in the uterus several days later and that not all fertilized eggs implant successfully. Coad and Dunstall (2011) said that until implantation at day 7, the blastocyst might remain free-floating in the uterine cavity. The following figure (in Collison et al., 2001, p.41) illustrates ovulation, fertilization and implantation.

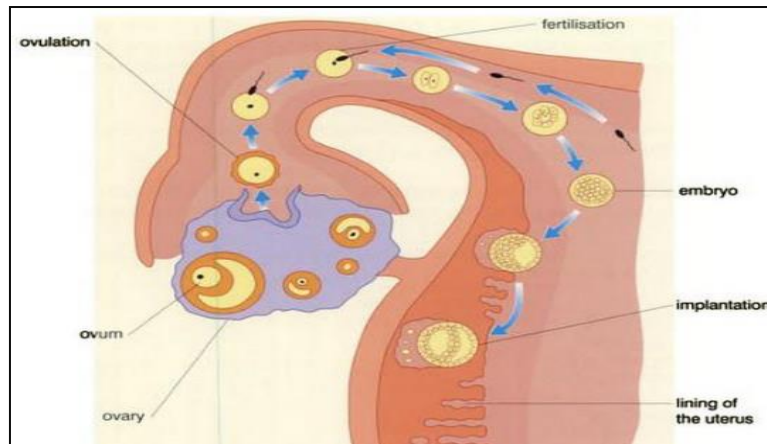


Figure 10: Ovulation, Fertilisation and Implantation

The next stage that has been mentioned in the Qur'an is *mudghah* (a chewed-like lump of flesh). This stage starts with the appearance of somites in the third week (these somites give rise to muscles, bones,...etc.). Al-Ghazal (2006) noted that “The difference in these somites look like ‘teeth imprints’ on bitten bread” (p.18). The following figure compares an embryo at this stage with a chewed gum; for the *mudghah* stage resembles in appearance a chewed gum, and the somites look like teeth marks.

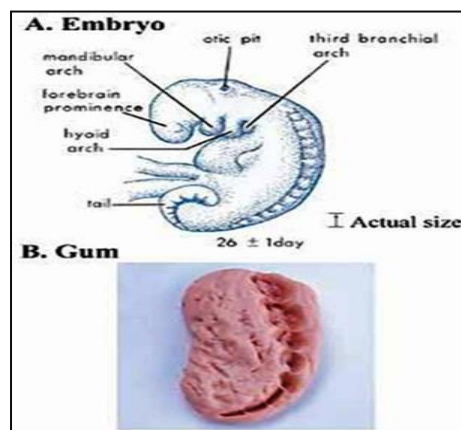


Figure 11: A comparison between an embryo at the *mudghah* stage and a chewed gum. Retrieved from: <https://maria911.wordpress.com/2009/09/13/192/>

After that, the embryo follows these stages. First, it is the stage of osteogenesis or bone formation. According to Scott and Fong (2017), “During the eighth week of embryonic development ossification begins. That is, mineral matter starts to replace previously formed cartilage, creating bone.” (p.85). Next, it is the formation of muscles and flesh. Cavendish (2011) clarified that muscles “make up most of the body’s flesh” (p.44). Al-Ghazal (2006)

reported that: “First, the cartilage tissue of the embryo ossifies. Then muscular cells that are selected from amongst the tissue around the bones come together and wrap around the bones.”(p.23). At the end of the eighth week the embryonic development ends, and the embryo is recognizably human, starting by this the fetal stage which is characterized by rapid changes in body proportions. Finally, the consecutive stages come to an end by birth.

2.1.6. The Qur’an is a Book of Signs and not a Book of Science

Despite all the above examples and others, which bear witness that science is compatible with the Qur’an and does not contradict it, the last holy Book is not meant to be a book of science at all and cannot have a scientific purpose per se, but rather a book of revelation, signs and guidance par excellence. The Qur’an itself said: “*شَهْرُ رَمَضَانَ الَّذِي أُنزِلَ فِيهِ* ... *الْقُرْآنُ هُدًى لِّلنَّاسِ وَبَيِّنَاتٍ مِّنَ الْهُدَىٰ وَالْفُرْقَانِ...*”; “*The month of Ramadan in which was revealed the Qur'an, a guidance for mankind and clear proofs for the guidance and the criterion (between right and wrong)*” (Al-Baqarah:185). Hence, it is wrong to conceive it as a scientific textbook. Daneshgar and Saleh (2017) mentioned that for Sardar, treating it as a database was wrong and that Golshani had the belief that the identification of scientific notions in it “wrongly provokes the treatment of the Qur’an as a catalogue of scientific facts and not as a book of guidance”(p.348).

Embracing science at the expense of religion is religiously dangerous due to the instability of the scientific interpretations of the Qur’an. Contrary to the science-related verses, which are constant, immutable and unchangeable, science is not absolute, i.e. sometimes a U-turn, refinement or even abandoning and discarding are needed for some theories, assumptions, and hypotheses that needed verification or proved to be false. Consequently, some people have a critical stance and opposing Islamic attitude towards scientific I3jaz; considering it as a trend of ‘islamizing’ science and knowledge. Daneshgar and Saleh (2017) recalled that for Golshani, “scientific theories change, so that the supposed

correspondence of the Qur'an and science cannot be taken as decisive validation of the Qur'an itself" (p.348) and that Guessoum, an Algerian physicist, made some harsh comments about the scientific i3jaz describing it as intellectually, philosophically and Islamically dangerous, and acknowledged that it was like "a snowball that started out small and white but then rolled and collected rubbish (ignorant contributions); it has become a mass of dirty ice that easily melts under the intense light of objective and methodical scrutiny" (p.349).

That said, discounting or neglecting the scientific dimension in Qur'an is a huge mistake because science is subservient to Qur'an and is considered among its signs (ayat). In fact, scientific commentary of Qur'an can be an important path of guidance. For Gandapur (2009), Qur'an's beauty resides in that the scientific side supports the religious one. So, the scientific implications are a way of guidance to people (disbelievers) seeking knowledge; leading eventually to stress the omnipotence of God. Sardar's (1984) point of view is that Qur'an exhorts the believer to pursue knowledge not for science's sake because it is not an end in itself, but as a means, "for the sake of understanding the ayats, the signs, of God and thereby understanding Him" (p.23). Correspondingly, Gandapur (2009) has maintained that the reason behind the science-related verses and the need to ponder over them is to know that there is God (Allah) and that the Holy Quran is His message to humanity. Allah said: *وَيَرَى الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا "وَالْعِلْمَ الَّذِي أَنْزَلَ إِلَيْكَ مِنْ رَبِّكَ هُوَ الْحَقُّ وَيَهْدِي إِلَى صِرَاطِ الْعَزِيزِ الْحَمِيدِ"*; *"And those who have been given knowledge see that what is revealed to you (O Muhammad) from your Lord is the truth, and guides to the Path of the Exalted in Might, Owner of all praise"* (Saba':06).

In fact, the scientific study of the Qur'an cannot be accepted unless its outcomes are not considered as true real interpretations (exegeses) of Allah's message and the following condition is also strongly respected. When a scientific fact and a science-related verse contradict each other, it is necessary either to revise the truthfulness of the former or the humans' scientific understanding of the correspondent verse (if the scientific information is

soundly established); for Allah's Book never proves wrong; yet, our understanding is vulnerable to mistakes. He said: “ذَلِكَ الْكِتَابُ لَا رَيْبَ فِيهِ هُدًى لِّلْمُتَّقِينَ”; “*This is the Book (the Qur'an), whereof there is no doubt, a guidance to those who are Al-Muttaqun*”(Al-Baqarah:02).

2.2. The Qur'an and Translation

The Qur'an is the last sacred book that is very specifically in Arabic. Despite the fact that reading it in its original language is a must, its language for non-Arabs is real impediment to understand, interpret and decipher its meanings. Thus, translations, which are heavy responsibilities, are of a paramount importance; yet unlikely to be faithful; for they deal with a sacred miraculous book as such.

2.2.1. Definition of Translation

Providing an exact definition to translation is not an easy task because various definitions have been proposed. Allen and Bernofsky (2013) opined that translation was a peculiar English word because it was incapable of definition; for “it is a sort of node -a point of intersection”(p.44). Yet, in its simple and rather broad definition, to translate is to express or communicate the message of the source language (SL) by means of a text in the target language (TL). For Allen and Bernofsky (2013), “translation, used in the most ordinary of its many senses, refers to something that takes place, or at least seems to take place, between two languages” (p.44). Catford (in Das,2005) said that, linguistically speaking, to translate is to replace a text material in one language (SL) by equivalent material in another language (TL).

As translation is “a truth-seeking activity”, according to Newmark (in Schäffner, 1999, p.72), it is highly likely to include ‘the meaning’ in its definition. Gambier and Doorslaer (2012) have defined it as: “an exchange of surface structure entities by keeping «the meaning» invariable” (p.52). So, translation is the process of changing into another language with the basic objective of retaining the sense. Nonetheless, this is not always achievable.

Newmark (in Das, 2005) had the opinion that there was always some loss of the original meaning in each act of translation. As a result, theorists often define translation in terms of equivalence relations and among them, according to Baker and Malmkjær (2009), “(Catford 1965; Nida and Taber 1969; Toury 1980a; Pym 1992a, 1995; Koller 1995)” (p.96).

2.2.2. Equivalence

Equivalence is a key concept in translation and it is believed to be a translation principle. For Glanert (2014), it is “the ultimate ideal in translation”(p.51). According to Baker and Malmkjær (2009), it “is variously regarded as a necessary condition for translation, an obstacle to progress in translation studies, or a useful category for describing translations” (p.96). But, although it is a central concept in translation theory, it is undoubtedly a subject of much heated debate among translation scholars; as a result, various definitions and interpretations have been elaborated. Nord (2005) insisted that its concept “is one of the most ambiguous concepts in translation studies, and consequently has been interpreted in very different ways”(p.25). It could be conceived as fidelity, faithfulness, or correspondence when decoding and encoding. Therefore, a TT is normally expected to have all the relevant features of the ST. According to Nord (2005), equivalence refers to the greatest possible correspondence between the ST and the TT and that the latter should imitate, reflect, or mirror the former. For Schaffner (1999), it is a relation between ST and TT “which is based on an identity of meaning, and when we do not have this identity, then the texts would not come under the cover term ‘translation’, but would have to be called adaptation, for example”(p.73).

Nevertheless, in practice, absolutely identical words or equivalents in different languages are hard to find. In other words, renditions never replace originals, and the task of translation is based on a highest degree of approximation rather than absolute equivalence. Pym (2010) believed that the best that translation should hope to achieve was a likeness since an absolute equivalence could never be reached. For Newmark (in Schaffner,1999),

equivalent means approximate or as close as possible as all translation is and does not mean exact, but is always an essay, an attempt; besides, “The fact that there is no correct or perfect translation, that there are only various translations, shows that one is trying to reach the truth. And that’s as far as one can go in another culture.” (p.72). Similarly stated by him (in Abdul-Raof, 2001), equivalence can only be an approximation as the concept of an ideal or perfect translation is an illusion. Thus, for Melamed (2001), equivalence is subjective. Fatihi has pointed out: “all types of translations involve loss, addition and/or skewing of information. Ultimately, the result is a distortion of the original text as the exact intended meanings may not be possible” (Khan, 2013, p.03). If so, what about translating a religious book such as the Qur’an?

2.2.3. The (Un)translatability of the Qur’an

Is the Qur’an translatable or not? the legitimacy of translating the Qur’an, translating the untranslatable, or Qur’an’s untranslatability are all expressions used to refer to an essential issue related to translating the inspired Arabic Words of the Exalted into other languages. Translatability is a concept often called upon when having difference between the ST and the TT. Glanert (2014) has defined it as, depending on its status or quality, the capability of a linguistic element to be translated into another language. According to Goettl et al. (1998), it is when any concept expressed in the SL is covered or can be expressed in the TL. For Pym and Turk, it “is mostly understood as the capacity for some kind of meaning to be transferred from one language to another without undergoing radical change”(Crisafulli,2003,p.34).

Owing to the fact that equivalence is indispensable in any task of translation, most scholars believe in the i3jaz (inimitability) and thus the untranslatability of the Divine Word -the most eloquent Speech of all speeches; the miraculous Qur’an. Abdul-Raof has agreed that “the word of God cannot be reproduced by the word of man” (Elimam,2013,p.17). Khan (2013) quoted Tibawi: “every translation of the Qur’an proclaims its own inadequacy”(p.01)

and wrote that the translation of the last holy Book into a mundane language had, linguistically speaking, multifarious problems and then concluded that no translation could substitute the original Qur'an as the equivalence was virtually impossible; for ultimately any translation was no more than an approximation of the Qur'an's meanings. Also, Nassimi (2008) argued that it was indeed a unique case of non-equivalence because if the human speech were sometimes difficult to translate, translating the divine Speech could not be possible without losing some of its original meanings. Likewise, For Behbudi and Turner (1997, p.xiii),

It (the Qur'an) is distinguished by excellences of sound and eloquence, of rhetoric and metaphor, of assonance and alliteration, of onomatopoeia and rhyme, of ellipsis and parallelism so sublime that all attempts to replicate its verses in tongues other than Arabic cannot but take on the form of well-intentioned parody.

In addition, the following are some more scholars' opinions about the untranslatability of the Qur'an. Behbudi and Turner (1997) reported that the general consensus among Muslim scholars was that it was ultimately untranslatable and thus, one should bear in mind when reading a translation of the Qur'an that what was lost was definitely the Qur'an itself. Abdul-Raof (2001) said: "The Qur'an is the most significant reference of Islam. A real translation of the Qur'an does not exist due to its sacred nature."(p.03). Most Muslim intellectuals believe that the Qur'an's specific linguistics (the quintessential divine nature of the Qur'an) is untranslatable because Allah is the Only One Who knows its true meanings. Under the title *The translatability and legitimacy of translating the Qur'an*, Baker (2001) has stated that "it has traditionally been considered illegitimate to translate the Qur'an" (p.201) and that Imam Shatby has based his view that the Qur'an is untranslatable on the premise that it has senses that are restricted to Qur'anic Arabic and that even rendering them in non-Qur'anic Arabic is doomed to non-success. Thus, according to Elimam (2013), scholars have always argued, providing many arguments, that a translation is not a substitute for the Qur'an at all.

Consequently, despite the great importance of spreading the treasure of the Qur'an through translation into various languages, especially English (the most common lingua franca), the majority of Muslim scholars prioritize reading the Qur'an in Arabic because God's Word is the Arabic Qur'an and no translation can be considered as the Qur'an. Behbudi and Turner (1997) affirmed that this was the attitude of most of the mainstream Muslim scholars to translations of the last holy Book and that "The Quran is only the Quran if it is in Arabic"(p.xiii). Baker and Malmkjær (2001) have gone further to consider any Muslim who is unable to read the Qur'an in Arabic as illiterate. In the second ayah of surat Yusuf, the Exalted said: "إِنَّا أَنْزَلْنَاهُ قُرْآنًا عَرَبِيًّا لَعَلَّكُمْ تَعْقِلُونَ"; "Verily, We have sent it down as an Arabic Qur'an in order that you may understand".

2.2.4. Translation of the Meanings of the Qur'an

Though translation generally goes with the written form and interpretation with the oral one, they are often used interchangeably. Yet, the latter is also used to designate the act of explaining, clarifying, illuminating or showing understanding of something. In fact, each translation involves a kind of interpretation as the transmittal comes subsequently after a deep analysis and understanding of the ST and then projecting a certain point of view. For BeDuhn (2003), "It is true that translation always involves a degree of interpretation, even in deciding which lexical meaning of a word to choose among the many possibilities." (p.24). The Qur'an is untranslatable, but if it is to be translated at all, it should be perceived as a human interpretation or understanding of its meanings because this is what a translation of the Qur'an really is. The last Holy Book has already been translated into numerous languages reaching by that audiences other than the Arabs and gaining even converts. However, there should not be such thing called "*The translation of the Qur'an*", for the final product is never the translated Qur'an but mere interpretations of its meanings. Baker (2001) acknowledged that according to Imam Shatby, as long as a translation of the Qur'an was regarded as a translation of its

meanings, a paraphrase or basic interpretation, there could be no objection on it, and that this was exactly what the Rector of Al-Azhar believed in, as he gave his consent only when he knew that Pickthall would call it *The Meanings of the Glorious Qur'an*.

In effect, this opinion is shared by many scholars. Abdul-Raof's (2001) belief about sacred or religious translation such as of the Qur'an is that the best it is hoped to achieve is interpretation of the underlying meanings rather than a substitution for the original. For Alhaj (2015), translation of the Qur'an means expressing its meanings in a different language from that of the Qur'an so that those not familiar with it may have the possibility to know about it and grasp Allah's Guidance and Will. Halo (2016) held the same conviction and assumed that such action should never be considered as interpretation of the Qur'an. Also, according to Behbudi and Turner (1997), the translation product "can never be anything more than one man's humble -and, it goes without saying, fallible- interpretation"(p.xiii). Moreover, Yilmaz (2018) had no doubt that to exactly represent (Verbatim translation) the miracle of literature, the Qur'an, or the original will of Allah into other languages was definitely impossible because it had many analogous Ayat, and the interpretations emphasised only one of the Qur'an's rich meanings. Elimam (2013) clarified that these interpretations reflected the preferences and understandings of translators which could be right or wrong; affecting, thus, the religion of people depending on them instead of the Arabic Qur'an.

Actually, not any attempt at translating the Qur'an's meanings is accepted; for it should be based on the exegetical interpretations of the mufassirun (exegetes). Alhaj (2015) stated that "All translations of the holy Qur'an are in fact tafseers, some more accurate than others. Most translations list in their foreword the names of the classical tafseers and lexicons on which they relied" (p.54). Baker (2001) mentioned that translation of the Qur'an was essentially a form of exegesis and that "Terms such as 'explanation', 'interpretation' and 'paraphrase' take on exegetic hues in the context of translating the Qur'an, and this has

implications for legitimizing any such attempt.” (p.206). In the opinion of Alḥaj (2015), one of the hardest tasks that a translator may encounter is the rendering of the Holy Qur’an because it should include the various interpretations of authorized exegeses. One reason behind the reliance on exegeses, according to Yilmaz (2018), is that “Any Qur’anic word must be examined in their pure form prevalent in the time they were revealed and thus carried to the present. Otherwise the message can not be conveyed as it must be.” (p.07).

Regarding the elucidations of the Qur’an’s meanings, two terms are frequently used: *tafsir* and *ta’wil*. According to some scholars, they are used interchangeably and stand for *explanation*. Yet, for others, they designate two distinct branches of the science of the Qur’an.

2.2.4.1. Tafsir (Exegesis)

Tafsir is the Arabic technical term for the exegesis of the Qur’an which refers to the unveiling, uncovering or illumination and explanation of the Qur’an’s various meanings or designations. According to Jullundhry (2010), “the verbal form of *tafsir* is *fassara*, to explain, or *safar* from *asfar al-subh*, meaning daybreak” (p.06) and all its various definitions are of the same point that it is a lucid explanation of the Qur’an. In the opinion of Versteegh (1993), it is “the result of the transmission of authoritative witnesses concerning the interpretation of the Qur’an”(p.64). For many scholars, as reported by Al-Tha3labi (in Saleh,2004,p.92), the function of *tafsir* is ‘*al-kashf*’ ‘the unveiling’ of the verse’s subject, story, meaning, and the reasons of why it has been revealed. Similarly, Ayoub (1984) explained that the science of *tafsir* was the general interpretation and elucidation to discover the exoteric meaning and application, and it was primarily about the transmission (riwayah) of tradition and,

It includes the elucidation of the occasion or reason for the revelation of a verse, its place in the *surah* to which it belongs, and its story or historical reference. *Tafsir* must also determine whether a verse or passage belongs to the Meccan or Medinan period of revelation, whether it is *muhkam* or *mutashabih*, abrogating or abrogated, and whether it has a general or specific reference or purpot” (p.20).

In addition, one branch of *tafsir*, according to him (1984), is the science of meanings (*maʿānī*) of the Qur’an, which deals specifically with elucidating a verse, ambiguous words or phrases, and general linguistic problems. About the sources of *tafsir*, Jullundhry (2010), as most scholars, was convinced that they were the Qur’an, the Prophet, and the companions; and about his opinion on its importance, he said that if the companions, although they were close to the Prophet, were in need of *tafsir*, our need is surely greater.

So, *tafsir* is based on only knowing about the traditional interpretations without any permissible new additions or points of view. Al-Thaʿlabi (in Saleh, 2004) explained that because *tafsir* was restricted to the subject matter of the verse (the reasons behind its revelation and all the related information received from previous generations reaching back to the Prophet Muḥammad and his followers), it was forbidden to speculate in this area or to adduce new material. As it is based on the Sunnah of the Prophet and the views of his companions and their successors, “a mufassir (exoteric exegete/commentator) is primarily a transmitter” (Khan,2013,p.84). Sometimes people wonder about the Companions’ or Successors’ different interpretations of the same verse or word. In the opinion of Ibn Taymiyah (in Ayoub, 1984), they are of variety and not of difference; an example is the word *ṣirat* in surat Alfatīḥa, which has received all the following possible interpretations that perhaps, according to him, they are all intended: Islam, the Qur’an, and the sacred law.

2.2.4.2. Ta'wil

The word *ta'wil* was mentioned in surat Al-A3raf, verse 53: “ هَلْ يَنْظُرُونَ إِلَّا تَأْوِيلَهُ يَوْمَ يَأْتِي ” ; “تَأْوِيلَهُ يَقُولُ الَّذِينَ نَسُوهُ مِنْ قَبْلُ قَدْ جَاءَتْ رُسُلُ رَبِّنَا بِالْحَقِّ...”; “Await they just for the final fulfillment of the event? On the Day the event is finally fulfilled (i.e. the Day of Resurrection), those who neglected it before will say: "Verily, the Messengers of our Lord did come with the truth, ...". Also, in surat Yunus, verse 39, Allah said: “...بَلْ كَذَّبُوا بِمَا لَمْ يُحِيطُوا بِعِلْمِهِ وَلَمَّا يَأْتِهِمْ تَأْوِيلُهُ...”; “Nay, they deny that; the knowledge whereof they could not compass and whereof the interpretation has not yet come unto them.”. So, what does *ta'wil* mean?

The word *ta'wil* was defined by Ayoub (1984) as the final purpose meaning or the final end (3aqibah) of a thing or a matter, and as a science, it is elucidating the general and particular meanings of the words of the Qur'an, and it deals with the deeper comprehension (dirayah) of the inner meaning without doing violence to the literal sense of meaning; yet, it is also subject to error. In the opinion of Versteegh (1993), *ta'wil* is “the result of research and expertise” (p.64), and it is referred to exclusively for the allegorical interpretation of the Qur'an and may also be perceived as the interpretation that only God knows. Allah said: “...بَلْ كَذَّبُوا بِمَا لَمْ يُحِيطُوا بِعِلْمِهِ وَلَمَّا يَأْتِهِمْ تَأْوِيلُهُ...”; “... but none knows its hidden meanings save Allah...”(Al-3imran:07).

Ta'wil stands also for any possible interpretation of a verse or a word. This idea has been supported by many scholars. According to Saleh (2004, p.92-93), it is the art of rendering the meanings of the Qur'an into any possible explanation (ma'na yahtamiluh) that is coherent and consistent with what comes before and after it; thus, as long as the explanations of the scholars are in agreement with the Qur'an and the Sunnah, it cannot be forbidden to engage in it. Zarkashi has believed *ta'wil* to be the act of “referring a verse back to whatever meanings it can bear” (Ayoub,1984, p.20). Thus, for Khan (2013), “a mu'awwil (esoteric exegete:commentator) is a discoverer or deducer” (p.84). Yet, according to Jullundhry (2010), the extreme groups rejected the obvious literal meaning and “used *ta'wil* for their biased

allegorical expositions of the Qur'an”(p.07). Therefore, scholars objected too farfetched exegeses.

2.2.4.3. The Prohibition of Interpreting the Qur'an by *Ra'y*

There is no doubt among scholars about the prohibition of interpreting or explaining the Qur'an beyond the confines of traditional exegesis, i.e. according to individual opinion (*ra'y*). This forbidding of any attempt to offer a personal perspective on the Qur'an is due to the stern warning mentioned by the Prophet Muhammad: “Sa'd ibn Jubayr quotes a hadith attributed to the Prophet's cousin Ibn Abbas who recalls him saying “Whoever speaks concerning the Qur'an according to his own opinion, let him expect his seat in the Fire” ”(Sardar and Kassab,2012,p.67). The Sahabah knew well about this prohibition, and thus refrained from giving their own opinions and also expressed their great fear when asked about the meanings of some words or passages of the Qur'an. For example, Abu Bakr Al-Siddiq said: “What earth shall bear me, and what heaven shall shelter me if I speak what I do not know concerning the Qur'an?”(Ali,2017,p.124). Also, even though Ibn Abbas was named *tarjaman al-Qur'an* -according to Khan (2013), “Ibn Abbas was famous with the title of the Tarjaman al-Qur'an, the interpreter or broadly speaking the commentator of the Qur'an”(p.84)- he declined to comment on a Qur'anic verse. Therefore, it was then assumed that his refusal was because of the prohibition of recouring to *ra'y*, according to Ali (2017).

Nonetheless, there are few scholars who believe in the permissibility of the individual interpretation like Zarkashi (in Sardar and Kassab,2012). In the opinion of Ayoub (1984), of the reasons for accepting the individual interpretations “was the need to make the Qur'an relevant to every time and situation.” (p.24).

2.2.4.4. The Importance of Tadabbur Al-Qur'an

In many parts of the Book, the Qur'an strongly recommends and praises *tafakkur* and *taddabur* of the Qur'an, i.e. meditating, reflecting, contemplating and pondering over its Ayat (signs). Allah said: “كِتَابٌ أَنْزَلْنَاهُ إِلَيْكَ مُبَارَكٌ لِيَدَّبَّرُوا آيَاتِهِ وَلِيَتَذَكَّرَ أُولُوا الْأَلْبَابِ”; “(This is) a Book (the Qur'an) which We have sent down to you, full of blessings that they may ponder over its Verses, and that men of understanding may remember” (Sad:29). Halo (2016) in his book *Tadabbarul Quraana Tartiila* mentioned that Allah had ordered mankind to venture deeper into the Qur'an, to ponder over its meanings and contemplate them (*tadabbur*) because this task was seen as vital and was required to finally successfully achieve *furqan*. For him (2016), it is “an action to elaborate and deliberate the Al Quran by elaborating its verses through a specific method which leads to an interpretation and analysis” (p.06). As a matter of fact, there are people whose concern is seeking knowledge, science and truth. Thus, the scientific-related Ayat address and pertain to this kind of people. According to Daneshgar and Saleh (2017), “the Qur'an is not bound to the specific context of seventh century Arabia and that it is always open to multiple interpretations by readers with different intellectual inclinations or mindsets” (p.349). This means that new ways of understanding some verses might be provided to the present-day readers of the Qur'an.

In fact, concerning the importance of reflection, *taddabur* and *tafakkur*, as it is known the prophethood journey of Muḥammad and Abraham (peace and blessings of God be upon them) started not directly with revelation but after dates and nights of deep contemplation and meditation. Sultan (2007) noted that “Your spiritual devotion must begin with reflection, for it is in the reflection of divine signs that you will discover an intimate relationship with God's beautiful attributes.”(p.88). Then, he included a common saying among people of inward purification “reflection is the lamp of the heart; if it is abandoned the heart will have no light” (p.88). However, those who refuse to ponder over the Qur'an Allah described them as having

locked hearts: “أَفَلَا يَتَدَبَّرُونَ الْقُرْآنَ أَمْ عَلَى قُلُوبٍ أَقْفَالُهَا” ; “Do they not then think deeply in the Qur'an, or are their hearts locked up (from understanding it)?” (Muhammad:24).

We strongly emphasise that this work belongs to the category of reflections as it is not meant in any way to be as real interpretations of the Qur'anic words. That is to say it discusses how the Arabic reader may have the opportunity to reflect and discover new insights in the miraculous divine words through contemplating them in the light of the modern perspectives of science and technology, which is not available in the English translations. This is mainly due to the fact that they focus on providing only one meaning among some possible varieties.

2.2.5. Translation of the Qur'anic Words

Words are unique vehicles or containers of meanings. During the translation process, the translator should always locate in the TL the right equivalents. However, one of the major encountered problems is the lexical meaning that was described by Baker (1992) as the individual property that makes every word or lexical unit different from any other word. She (1992) used the word *personality* as a feature for portraying what characterized each word. So, it is unlikely to find the same personality in another language. For this reason, she has thought that it is necessary for translators to have knowledge about semantics, lexical sets and the value of the words in the SL. Neubert (in Anderman and Rogers, 1999), when discussing the translation of words semantically or communicatively, attributed the success of a translation to the right or adequate choice of words.

In fact, translators face a daunting task when it comes to the untranslatability or non-equivalence at the lexical level as in cases of lexical gaps, lack of exact equivalents, and even the implicit information embedded in the Arabic words. Abdul-Raof (2001) argued that if absolute synonymy between two lexical items in the same language was hard to find, equivalence in translation or achieving absolute symmetrical equivalence among languages whether at a micro-level or at a macro-level was impossible. He (2001) likened anyone who

aspires to achieve total lexical equivalence to someone who chases a mirage because total equivalence at any level, in contrast to relative equivalence, is impossible.

However, a more complicated kind of words is the Qur'anic words as they are of a miraculous nature, and this makes them unique, inimitable, and thus untranslatable. Behbudi and Turner (1997) stated that Qur'an had special metaphors and unique nuances of words. According to Nursi (2005), the last holy Book's words and phrases are miraculous and their meanings are comprehensive and "each letter of which brings from 10 to 1000 merits" (p.474); thus, no translation can replace it. In the opinion of Alhaj (2015), Muslim scholars agree on the impossibility to translate the original Qur'an word by word identically into another language. Similarly, for Elimam (2013),

a literal translation of the Qur'an is not possible due to linguistic problems, for example, non/semi/partial equivalence, polysemy, and synonymy, amongst other things.[...]it includes many words which have no exact equivalent in other languages, and a translator will therefore have to use semi-equivalent words which convey the meaning but with some variations (p.18).

Therefore, Alhaj (2015) concluded that the Qur'an was noted to have an extremely delicate fusion of its content and form that neither content-based nor form-based translation could reproduce the original neither in terms of the former nor the latter. Khan (2013) wrote that the translators often succeeded in interpreting just "one shade of meaning of a word out of a spectrum of its colours"(p.01). This is maybe what really characterizes the translations of the science-related Qur'anic words and makes them show many defects. Similarly stated by Abdel Haleem (2004), among the causes of misinterpretation is the unawareness of the various meanings of a given word in different contexts and also the highly concise style of the last divinely inspired Book, which makes interpretation very complicated. Therefore, Gandapur (2009, p.94) believed in the necessity of the updated and modern translations and exegeses of the science-related allegorical verses as "Quran reveals great realities in the form

of allegory, sign, symbols and similitude” and all mankind should have knowledge of the correct symbolic message of Allah.

Conclusion

Studying the glorious miraculous Qur’an is a complex field with many ramifications since it has dealt with many subjects. One of the aspects of its uniqueness and magnificence resides in its overwhelming scientific miraculousness that is included explicitly or implicitly in its science-related words and verses. For this reason, the Qur’an requires continuous pondering, with the help of contemporary science and technology, over this kind of Ayat to perceive their extraordinary implied meanings. Nevertheless, we should never lose sight of the fact that it is meant to be a guidance book and that these special ayat are among its various signs (miracles). In fact, the deep contemplation, which is specific to the Qur’an and not to the translations of its meanings, as a privilege and a never-ending discovery journey for Arabs-readers makes them appreciate the Qur’an’s value well. Hence, as it was sent in Arabic, the latter is quite indispensable for any non-Arab who would like to approach understanding the true message of Allah; for translation equivalence is never obtainable due to the absolute Qur’an’s commonly agreed untranslatability.

CHAPTER THREE:

Inimitability (Miraculousness) in Analogy

Introduction

This chapter and the two following ones constitute the practical part of this dissertation. This section that has been inserted here describes the methodology of the general review process and discussion that has been followed. In addition, it provides an overview (the characteristics or the unique features) of the five English translations of the meanings of the holy Qur'an that have been chosen in this study as well as their writers' backgrounds.

3.1. Methodology and Research Tools

The Qur'an is replete with scientific facts (scientific miraculousness) and assuredly it consists of innumerable branches of knowledge. The practical part of this study lays out and explains some Qur'anic words that might have a scientific dimension on topics ranging from astronomy, cosmology, astrophysics, geology, biology,...etc. The aim is to unveil the linguistic significances of these science-related divine words and expose their possible scientific implications, and, then, to critically analyse their translations and determine their shortcomings, incorrectness and unfaithfulness with reference to the linguistic meanings and the deduced or elicited scientific suggestions of the original words; i.e. the latter will be compared with their English counterparts so as to see whether the renditions can offer the same scientific data or not. These words have been classified into three chapters (the rationale behind this division of the groups of words is that the selected Qur'anic words and their renditions are reviewed based on where the i3jaz has been identified): *inimitability (miraculousness) in analogy*, *inimitability (miraculousness) in polysemy and broad sense*, and

inimitability (miraculousness) in denotative or literal meaning. Under each of these headings there are some sub-headings, and each chapter contains an introduction and a conclusion.

To ensure that the primary aim of this work is fulfilled, which involves the crucial importance of introducing the English reader to the fact that the holy Qur'an is inimitable and untranslatable (to raise awareness about the translations quality of the words of the Qur'an), the discussion of these divine words and their renditions conforms to the following procedure. First, each notion to be discussed has been written as a title or a descriptive heading so as to serve as identification; i.e. to be a clear-cut separation between the different words of the study. After that, a short introduction has been provided so as to create a setting for the topic, and at its end the Qur'anic verse containing the word (the co-text) has been written with underlining the lexical item under study. Just below it, some details about the verse(s) have been mentioned between brackets; like the Surah's name, its number, classification, Meccan or Madinan, and the verse(s) number(s). Then, we have thought it useful to use a table compiling the multiple translations (all the five selected translations) of the given verse(s) since even the co-texts of the translations of the concerned words (underlined too as done in the Arabic version) ought to be recognised. In short, the English-Arabic parallel corpora of these verses have been introduced.

The following step has been introducing the exegetical interpretations of the given verse(s) or part of the verse. For the sake of understanding the content of the verses and the words, as the exegetes explained them, and in order that the reader could have a variety of explanations and details and even sometimes different or opposite interpretations and views, it has been chosen the translations of two famous reliable exegeses: *Tafsir Al Jalalayn* and *Tafsir Ibn Kathir* (abridged). The former means Tafsir of the two Jalals: Jalal Din Al-Suyuti and Jalal Din Al-Mahalli. It is one of the most popular exegeses of the Qur'an today and is known by its simplicity and conciseness as it is of only one volume (it was translated in 2007

by Feras Hamza). According to Decasa (1999), it continues to capture the interest of Muslims up to the present, and it is even taught in many religious institutions (*madaris*) in the Muslim world. The latter is of Imad Dine Isma3il Ibn Amr Ibn Kathir, named *Tafsir Al-Qur'an Al3adhim* which is famous by the title *Tafsir Ibn Kathir*. The reason behind choosing it is that it is among the most accepted explanations of the Qur'an in the entire world in addition to reporting many scholars' reliable exegeses. Zarabozo (2009) stated that "One very important work available in English is the ten-volume Tafsir ibn Kathir (Abridged)." (p.24) and that the opinion of Muḥammed Hussein al-Dhahabi about this commentary is that it is one of the best of its kind. Denffer (2011) presented it as:

one of the better known books on *tafsir*, perhaps second to Tabari, with more emphasis on soundness of reports, in particular rejection of all foreign influences such as *isra'iliyat*, discussing the *sanad* of various reports often in detail, which makes it one of the more valuable books of *tafsir*. Makes much use of *tafsir al-Qur'an bi'l qur'an*, referring a reader to other relevant ayat on the topic discussed. This book has been printed on various occasions (in 8 volumes) and an abridged version (*mukhtasar*) has been edited by Sabuni. (p.108).

After achieving an exhaustive description and a clear understanding of the words and the verses through the exegetical elucidations, each selected word of this study has been given its linguistic meaning(s), including the morphology of the concept and its grammatical category. In spite of the fact that selection of words in the Qur'an is miraculous, it should be noted that one may not really appreciate and value a matter unless it is well understood. Thus, to have an idea about the miraculousness of these divine words, it is imperative to ponder on their linguistic significances and it is not, of course, without drawing attention to the linguistic designations of their neighbours when needed. In other words, the linguistic meaning(s) and a further dissection of the word under study and the adjacent key words have been offered (The denotations of the words are extracted from Lisan Al-Arab dictionary).

Next, because many Qur'anic verses can and are meant to explain each other, references to the most pertinent verses of the same words or those that have a very close relation to them have been presented. Sometimes, if there has been a need, the exegetical interpretations of these verses that support the same ideas or share the same words have also been included and given the translation of *Al-Hilali and Khan* as a choice based on the fact that it is a collaborative work of two professional translators instead of one. Additionally, in some examples, even their five translations have been presented as their related words have also been instances of mistranslation since they will likely have the same explanations, either linguistically or scientifically.

The next sub-heading is the scientific inferences. The most accepted scientific facts that have been spread among the Muslim community as possible modern interpretations of these words have been manifested and explained since they are which that would clarify the most the shortcomings of the translations besides the linguistic discrepancies. Using scientific books to bring authentic well-grounded information, many scientific details have been exhibited. So, well cited recent scientific discoveries have been reported when elucidating and unfolding the concepts. (Arabs' references, as mentioned previously, of these scientific subjects have been intentionally avoided to eliminate any bias). Figures, graphs, pictures, definitions and explanations have been included when necessary to support claims. For only the divine words are able to simulate science, it is no wonder and incontrovertible that the various translations inevitably exhibit many defects.

Consequently, on the basis of these presented data, it has been studied the faithfulness of the five renditions of each word. For the sake of facilitating reading, comparing and contrasting, a table exhibiting the different translation variations of the words in question has been a procedure. The table is followed by a comparative review, analysis and discussion of the five translations of the words compared with which have been captured as linguistic

meanings of the Arabic version of the words and the scientific findings showing conformity. Since these scientific implications are mere reflections and do not serve in any way as true interpretations of the Qur'an, whenever the renditions are criticised in this work as erroneous or the like, it is just because they are not compatible with the scientific suggestions and the denotative meanings, for they might well represent and transfer the exegetical interpretations of reliable exegetes as they might not.

In other words, it is worth emphasising that we will pursue the view that what will be done is a mere conjectural analysis on the basis of only common insightful hypotheses of the scientific meanings of some of the divine science-related words. As more is unknown than is known and as they have not been fully deciphered yet, Allah is the Only One Who knows best where and when the hidden stunning miracles of these words end, and how true these scientific implications are; for there are some well established facts while others are mere assumptions. Hence, for any inadequacies or mistakes, I am alone responsible as no one knows the Qur'an's hidden and true meanings but Allah. In fact, for some strongly established facts, many people have sound beliefs in them; yet, others go on in their stubbornness, denying any existence of scientific miracles in the Qur'an. Allah said: “ *وَفِي الْأَرْضِ آيَاتٌ* “ *لِلْمُؤْمِنِينَ*”; “*And on the earth are signs for those who have Faith with certainty*” (Athariyat:20). At last, the last part of the discussion of each word ends with a short conclusion.

Finally, there is a section for a general conclusion to say some last words on the issues that have been raised in the practical part and to propel the translations readers of the meanings of the Qur'an to have new perspective of the subject. Also, another section is about setting out some recommendations where some suggestions are given to translate the discussed words, or some better ways are proposed to reach the right understandings as the Arabic words do actually refer or implicate.

3.1.1. The Five Selected Translations

The basic reason for choosing these particular translations in the present study among many others, besides the fact that their writers are Muslims to steer clear of any intentional harm when translating, is their wide-spread popularity. The five selected translations, the professional translators and the publication years are summarized in the following table.

The Translator(s)	Publication Year	The Title of the Translation
Muhammad Marmaduke Pickthall	1930	<i>The Meaning of the Glorious Qur'an</i>
Abdullah Yusuf Ali	1938	<i>The Holy Qur'an: Text, Translation and Commentary</i>
Muhammad Taqi-ud Din Al-Hilali and Muhammad Muhsin Khan	1977	<i>Interpretation of the Meanings of the Noble Qur'an in the English Language</i>
Muhammad Asad	1980	<i>The Message of the Qur'an</i>
Muhammad Farooq-i-Azam Malik	1997	<i>English Translation of the Meaning of Al-Qur'an, the Guidance for Mankind</i>

Table 02: The five selected translations, the translators and the publication years

3.1.1.1. The Translators' Short Biographies and Overviews of their Translations

For appreciating their eligibilities as translators of the Qur'an's meanings, the following are their short biographies, other people's opinions about them and overviews about their translations.

3.1.1.1.1. Abdullah Yusuf Ali

Abdullah Yusuf Ali is an Indian Muslim man and a distinguished translator of the meanings of the Qur'an. In the opinion of Sherif (2008), he is "the man responsible for the most widely read English of the Qur'an" (p.01). According to Nassimi (2008), he was born on April 4th, 1872 in Surat, India and died on December 10th, 1953. He was educated at the Universities of Bombay, India, St. John's College, Cambridge, and Lincoln's Inn, London. His father was a learned scholar who taught him how to read the Qur'an and the Arabic language. It was between the ages four and five that he learned to read the Qur'an. Later, he approached and studied the Qur'an with serious reflection and understanding. As a brief introduction to his biography, Khan (2013) wrote: "As a child, Ali received religious education and eventually could recite the entire Qur'an from memory. He spoke both Arabic and English fluently." (p.314). So, it could be said that he was the result of a mixture between the eastern heritage of Islam and the western learning and thoughts.

About his translation, "*The Holy Qur'an: Text, Translation and Commentary*", it is universally circulated and one of the most widely used in the English speaking world. According to Khan (2013), he started his work in 1934 and published it in 1938. Sherif (2008) has written that despite the existence of numerous translations and explanations today, "it remains highly regarded and the doorway through which many have entered to discover and appreciate the message of Islam" (p.12) and that when a committee of scholars was appointed by the government of Saudi Arabia to choose one of the most suitable English translations, the choice went to the one of Yusuf Ali "for its distinguishing characteristics, such as highly elegant style, a choice of words close to the meaning of the original text, accompanied by scholarly notes and commentaries" (p.78). Yet, even though, according to him (2008), his work has had this massive impact on the understanding of Islam for millions of people, "it was also criticised for perceived 'inaccuracies' of translation or understanding" (p.01).

3.1.1.1.2. Muḥammad (William) Marmaduke Pickthall

According to Oldmeadow (2010), he was born in 1875 and died in 1936. He studied in good schools as he was raised in an atmosphere of comfortable middle-class English piety. At an early age, he was deeply interested in the ‘Orientalist’ scholarship and languages. Alḥaj (2015) mentioned that in 1917, he converted to Islam and changed his name from William into Moḥammad. He was famous as a foremost British convert to Islam and was even better known as a translator of the Qur’an into English. According to Khan (2013), “Pickthall, being one of the first English Muslims, really added a corner stone in the modern history of the Qur’anic translations.”(p.310). Although he was a novelist and a writer, as stated by Oldmeadow (2010) “he was the author of over thirty novels, most set in the “Orient”, and of travel books, journals and essays”(p.135), he is only remembered as a translator of Qur’an’s meanings. Pickthall was a man of discreet charity and his last greatest project in his opinion was being a headmaster to Muslim boys school in Hyderabad, according to Khan (2013) who added that his conversion was regarded as a self-discovery and that he was a great lover of Islam because he saw it as a radical freedom and a just religion, free of superstition.

Pickthall’s translation was entitled “*The Meaning of the Glorious Qur’an*” (1930). According to Nassimi (2008), his translation is widely used, faithfully represents the original meanings, and it is the first one done by a Muslim whose native language was English. In the opinion of Alḥaj (2015), “one cannot overlook his meritorious attempt in any discussion and research work on the translation of the Quran in English”(p.74). As Al-Azhar University authorized his translation, Oldmeadow (2010) stated that “This was the first time that a rendering of the Koran into a European language had received the imprimatur of the leading scholars of the Muslim world.”(p.139); however, in his belief, despite this great achievement, its English is considered now as archaic and, hence, hard for contemporary readers to understand. Similarly, for Nassimi (2008), in addition to the use of too brief necessary notes

which is not helpful for novice readers, “the use of the Biblical and Jacobean English tends to be a stumbling block for an average reader”(p.53).

3.1.1.1.3. Muḥammad Asad

Muḥammad Asad (former name was Leopold Weiss) was born in 1900 in Lvov, Poland, and due to his extraordinary gift of learning languages, besides Polish (his mother tongue), he had mastered Arabic, Hebrew, French, German, and English, according to Nassimi (2008). Khan (2013) mentioned that he was a Jew who converted to Islam and that he received a thorough religious education because of the fact that he was a descendant of a long line of rabbis; yet, “being a revert Muslim, his loyalty and sincerity towards Islam and the Qur’an earned him a remarkable status and identity in the field of the Qur’anic translations” (p.319). Nassimi (2008) reported that although his father wanted him to be a rabbi, he took up the profession of journalism, and after he visited Arab and African countries, he became interested in Islam and eventually became a Muslim in 1926, and in 1958 he went to Switzerland and started his translation of the message of the Qur’an into English. After about twenty-two years, the complete translation came out in 1980.

The title of his translation was “*The Message of The Qur’an*”. It is widely used and very popular in the academic circles and among those who prefer a liberal approach in the translation of the meanings of the last Holy Book, and he often refers to the exegesis of Zamakhshari, as stated by Nassimi (2008) who has also reported that Asad has opined that his translation is “perhaps the first attempt at a really idiomatic, explanatory rendition of the Qur’anic message into a European language” (p.80), and that the writer of a “cover story” of the *Arabia* has commented that he has full command of both Arabic and English with a style which is simple and lucid, and that “in his references and footnotes, he has used the Arabic exegesis and lexicons very carefully and intelligently” (p.81). In the opinion of Khan (2013), his style of translation has two salient features: “(i) consciously avoided unnecessary archaism

that would tend to obscure the meaning of the Qur'an; (ii) he did not render the Qur'anic phrases into a deliberately modern idiom which would conflict with the Arabic text" (p.16).

Nevertheless, his work is regarded by some as negatively distinctive. First, it is due to one feature of his translation which is, according to Khan (2013), his parenthetical additions that often based on his own opinion and have no supporting references that guarantee its reliability. Second, for Nassimi (2008), even though for some difficult verses, he writes very logical and convincing explanations, he uses the same approach to rationalize even the miracles of Allah, and he seems to be reluctant to accept the literal meaning of some verses in the Qur'an. All in all, however, in *The Quran: A New Interpretation*, Behbudi and Turner (1997) wrote that among the most illustrious translators in recent years were: Yucuf Ali, Marmaduke Pickthall and Muḥammad Asad who had produced workable translations of the meanings of the Qur'an in English, and "it is a measure of their success that countless Westerners have learned about, and in numerous cases submitted to, the religion of Islam largely on the strength of their English translations of Muhammad's Message" (p.xiii).

3.1.1.1.4. Moḥammad Farooq-i-Azam Malik

According to Khan (2013), Malik was born the year 1934 in Pakistan. When he was seven years old, he completed the Arabic reading of the Qur'an, and at the age of sixteen the meaning of the Holy Qur'an. "He completed his BA Honours in Islamic studies and Arabic language, winning the Punjab University Scholarship. Then he joined Government Law College at Lahore and got LLB degree, major in Islamic Law (Shari'ah) in 1965. During his internship as a junior lawyer, he completed his MA. Economics in 1966" (Khan, 2013, p.321).

The title of his translation is: "*English Translation of the Meaning of Al-Qur'an, The Guidance for Mankind*" (1997). This work is well accepted; for it is a modern English translation. Khan (2013) assured that Dr. Farooq-i-Azam Malik's translation had gained a lot of popularity and that it was in contemporary English. In the opinion of Nassimi (2008), his

English is modern and easy to understand, and his translation has a useful introduction while the method of translation is based on the theme and subject matter discussed in the Qur’anic verses instead of literal translation.

3.1.1.1.5. Taquiuddin Al-Hilali and Muḥammad Muḥsin Khan

According to Alḥaj (2015), Dr. Muḥammad Taquiuddin al-Hilali was born in 1311 AH in AI-Fidha, Morocco. When he was twelve years old, he memorized the Holy Qur’an. After that, he studied Arabic grammar, *Tajwid*, and *Hadith*. When finishing high school and for getting higher education, he went to Egypt; but, he got his doctorate from the University of Berlin. For the sake of knowledge, Al-Hilali travelled to many places in the world. He worked as a teacher in Morocco, India, Iraq, and Saudi Arabia. Lastly, he was a Professor of Islamic Faith and Teachings at the Islamic University of Madinah Al-Munawwarah.

Dr. Muḥammad Muḥsin Khan, according to Alḥaj (2015), was born in 1345 AH in a town called Qasur of Punjab, Pakistan, where he did his school studies. After that, he obtained his M.B.B.S. from Punjab University and went to Great Britain for a post-graduate diploma in chest diseases. Just after getting the diploma, he went to Saudi Arabia where he worked as a physician first in Taif and later in the Islamic University of Madinah al-Munawwarah where he mastered the Arabic language so well that he translated *Saḥiḥ* Al-Bukhari into English. Later, he returned to Great Britain to settle there. In 1969, he completed the translation of *Saḥiḥ* Al-Bukhari, which was examined, corrected, and revised by Al-Hilali.

Their work of translation was entitled: “*Interpretation of the Meanings of the Noble Qur’an in the English Language*” (1977). Alḥaj (2015) stated that it was widely used and preferred especially among Muslims who wanted the message of the Qur’an to be presented in a literal and traditional approach, in the same way early Muslims had received and understood it. In his opinion (2015), their translation is heavily interspersed with commentaries and notes of Ibn Kathir, Al-Qurtubi and others. It was approved and

recommended by the University of Medina and the Saudi Fatwa Department. The translators themselves in the introduction of their work have written that the meanings are “in accordance with the faith of Prophet’s [pbuh] companions and those [who] followed them without giving similarities or examples or distorting or refuting completely or transferring the meanings”, according to Nassimi (2008, p.84) who has also mentioned that a group of experts consisting of Dr. M. Amin al-Misri, Professor Abdul Raḥim, and Moḥiuddin H. Azami examined the translation when completed and greatly praised it in their preface. He (2008) argued that despite the fact that it was described as easy to understand, it was amplified because it often used parenthesis with long sentences to explain or clarify, and a lot of words were left in Arabic (not translated); as a result, the sentences became unequal.

To sum up, the conducted study falls under the comparative analytical category. The chosen science-related Qur’anic words have been elucidated firstly through the exegetical interpretations. Then, they have been analysed and deciphered linguistically and also scientifically (extracting possible scientific implications). After that, these explanations have served as major bases to compare and contrast the five English renderings of each word. So the study measures the faithfulness and correctness regarding the exact denotations and the extent to which the possible scientific implications have been kept and preserved in the different translation variations.

3.2. Inimitability (Miraculousness) in Analogy

Introduction

Rhetoric can be defined as the art of persuasive discourse in which a huge variety of rhetorical devices are used. These are linguistic tools helping to achieve some particular purposes as beauty, evoking emotions, spiritual significance, or most of the time persuasion; each of which is distinct and has its unique power of persuasiveness, expression and effect. Comparison, likeness, simile, metaphor, parallel, resemblance, similitude, allegory, parable, affinity and correspondence are all said to be synonyms of analogy. Drawing or delivering an analogy between two things is comparing them in significant respects, or pointing out shared characteristics. So, it is an agreement or correspondence in some way and between some aspects, features and attributes. In addition to its strong persuasive power, many people reason by way of analogy; thus, it is used a lot in the Qur'an; one example is the following.

3.2.1. Altitude Sickness: (حَرَجًا- يَصَدُّ)

Duality or ambivalence that manifests itself in everything in this world ('day-night', 'life-death', 'good-bad'...etc) also exists in Allah's 'the Guide' attitudes towards humans; either bestowing or preventing. On the one hand, bestowing in terms of guidance is mercy, grace and blessing from God. The Exalted is He said in the first surah of the Qur'an: "هُدًى / الصِّرَاطَ الْمُسْتَقِيمَ صِرَاطَ الَّذِينَ أَنْعَمْتَ عَلَيْهِمْ..." ; "Guide us to the Straight Way, the Way of those on whom You have bestowed Your Grace..." (Al-Fatiḥa:06-07). On the other hand, misguidance, aberration, misleading and disobedience are features of prevention and exclusion from God's mercy. An antithesis of these two contradictories and a miraculous similitude that clarifies one of these states of being are given in the following verse.

قال الله عز وجل: { فَمَنْ يُرِدِ اللَّهُ أَنْ يَهْدِيَهُ يَشْرَحْ صَدْرَهُ لِلْإِسْلَامِ وَمَنْ يُرِدْ أَنْ يُضِلَّهُ يَجْعَلْ صَدْرَهُ ضَيِّقًا

{ حَرَجًا كَأَنَّمَا يَصَّعَّدُ فِي السَّمَاءِ ... }

[Surah 06, Al-An3am, ‘Meccan’, Ayah: (125)]

3.2.1.1. The Five Translations of the Verse 125 of Surat Al-An3am (Table 03)

A	And whomsoever God wills to guide, his bosom He opens wide with willingness towards self-surrender [unto Him]; and whomsoever He wills to let go astray, his bosom He causes to be tight and <i>constricted</i> , as if he were <i>climbing</i> unto the skies...
M	Whomever Allah wills to guide, He opens his chest to Islam and whomever He intends to confound, He makes his chest narrow and <i>squeezes so tight</i> that, at the very idea of Islam, he feel as if his soul is going <i>to climb up</i> towards the sky...
P	And whomsoever it is Allah’s will to guide, He expandeth his bosom unto the Surrender, and whomsoever it is His will to send astray, He maketh his bosom close and <i>narrow</i> as if he were <i>engaged in sheer ascent</i> ...
Y A	Those whom Allah (in His Plan) willeth to guide He openeth their breast to Islam; those whom He willeth to leave straying He maketh their breast close and <i>constricted</i> as if they had <i>to climb up</i> to the skies...
H & K	And whomsoever Allah wills to guide, He opens his breast to Islam, and whomsoever He wills to send astray, He makes his breast closed and <i>constricted</i> , as if he is <i>climbing up</i> to the sky...

3.2.1.2. Exegetical Interpretations of the Verse 125 of Surat Al-An3am

❖ **Al Jalalayn:** Whomever God desires to guide He expands his breast to Islam, by casting into his heart a light which it (the heart) expands for and accepts, as reported in a hadith; and whomever He, God, desires to send astray, He makes his breast narrow (read dayqan or dayyiqan), (unable) to accept it and constricted, extremely tight (read harijan, ‘constricted’, as an adjective, or harajan as a verbal noun, by which it (the heart of the misguided one) is described hyperbolically) as if he were engaged in ascent (yassa‘‘ad, is also read as yassa‘ad: in both (forms) the original ta’ has been assimilated with the sad; a third (variant reading) has

yas'ad to the heaven, when he is charged with (the obligations of) the faith, because of the hardship for him therein. (p.151).

❖ **Ibn Kathir:** (And whomsoever Allah wills to guide, He opens his breast to Islam; He makes Islam easy for him and strengthens his resolve to embrace it, and these are good signs. Allah said in other Ayat, ﴿أَفَمَنْ شَرَحَ اللَّهُ صَدْرَهُ لِلْإِسْلَامِ فَهُوَ عَلَى نُورٍ مِّن رَّبِّهِ﴾ (Is he whose breast Allah has opened to Islam, so that he is in light from His Lord (as he who is a non-Muslim)) (39:22) and, ﴿وَلَكِنَّ اللَّهَ حَبَّبَ إِلَيْكُمُ الْإِيمَانَ وَزَيَّنَهُ فِي قُلُوبِكُمْ وَكَرَّهَ إِلَيْكُمُ الْكُفْرَ وَالْفُسُوقَ وَالْعِصْيَانَ أُولَئِكَ هُمُ الرَّشِدُونَ﴾ (But Allah has endeared the faith to you and has beautified it in your hearts, and has made disbelief, wickedness and disobedience hated by you. Such are they who are the rightly guided.) (49:7) Ibn Abbas commented on Allah's statement, ﴿فَمَنْ يُرِدِ اللَّهُ أَنْ يَهْدِيَهُ يَشْرَحْ صَدْرَهُ﴾ (And whomsoever Allah wills to guide, He opens his breast to Islam;), "Allah says that He will open his heart to Tawhid and faith in Him." This is the same as was reported from Abu Malik and several others, and it is sound. Allah's statement, ﴿وَمَنْ يُرِدْ أَنْ يُضِلَّهُ يَجْعَلْ صَدْرَهُ ضَيِّقًا حَرَجًا﴾ (and whomsoever He wills to send astray, He makes his breast closed and constricted,) refers to inability to accept guidance, thus being deprived of beneficial faith. ﴿كَأَنَّمَا يَصْعَدُ فِي السَّمَاءِ﴾ ..as if he is climbing up to the sky) because of the heaviness of faith on him. Sa'id bin Jubayr commented that in this case, "(Islam) finds every path in his heart impassable." Al-Hakam bin Aban said that Ikrimah narrated from Ibn Abbas that he commented on: ﴿كَأَنَّمَا يَصْعَدُ فِي السَّمَاءِ﴾ (...as if he is climbing up to the sky), "Just as the Son of Adam cannot climb up to the sky, Tawhid and faith will not be able to enter his heart, until Allah decides to allow it into his heart." Imam Abu Ja'far bin Jarir commented: "This is a parable that Allah has given for the heart of the disbeliever, which is completely impassable and closed to faith. Allah says, the example of the disbeliever's inability to accept faith in his heart and that it is too small to accommodate it, is the example of his inability to climb up to the sky, which is beyond his capability and power." (p. 1613-1614).

3.2.1.3. The Linguistic Meanings

People, regarding openness and innate receptiveness of the divine guidance and Islam, are divided into two categories. Allah in this verse contrasts between the states of these people's chests using an antithesis. Any eligible person to guidance and who shows willingness to understand and accept Islam, Allah expands and broadens his chest ﴿يَشْرَحْ صَدْرَهُ﴾ 'He opens his breast' and strengthens his resolve to embrace Islam and submit to its

commands promptly. However, due to the great heaviness of faith on the second kind, i.e. a person showing indisposition and reluctance to guidance, a hyperbole or imagery has been used. To approximate his terrible situation to the minds, Allah parallels his state of chest tightness with the physical state when a person is engaged in a climbing.

The two attributes that were used to modify this chest state are ‘ضَيِّقًا’ (*dayyiqan*) and ‘حَرَجًا’ (*haradja*). While the former denotes ‘tight’ or ‘narrow’ as a gradable adjective that can have different degrees of being narrow, the latter is an extreme adjective or a non-gradable adjective that implicitly contains an intensifying adverb like ‘extremely’ in its meaning to signify ‘extremely constricted’ as explained above in one of the exegetical interpretations. It could even refer to being impassable as stated by Quamhawi (1978, p.90) (translated by the author of this dissertation) that Omar Ibn Al-khattab asked a man from kinana about this word and he responded that it was a tree covered by other trees, making it unreachable; so, Omar replied that that was the case of the disbeliever’s heart that no good could reach it.

The letter ‘ك’ in ‘كَأَنَّمَا’ is a linguistic tool used in similes functioning as ‘as’ or ‘like’. ‘يَصْعَدُ’ ‘yassa33ad’ is a verb that is originated from ‘يَتَصَعَّدُ’ ‘yatassa33ad’ from the form ‘يَتَفَعَّلُ’ ‘yatafa33al’. The letter ‘ت’ was assimilated with the ‘ص’ resulting in stressing the latter: ‘صَّ’. So, what might this ‘ت’ add to the denotation of the word and to the whole meaning of the verse? Well, ‘يَصْعَدُ’ ‘yas3ad’ from ‘yaf3al’ conveys the meaning of climbing, going up, and ascending. However, ‘yatafa33al’ designates the hardship, malaise or discomfort when trying to do something hard or impossible to do; which is in this case ascending. This was exegeted by Attabari (923) saying: “من شدة ذلك عليه” (p.109) meaning ‘due to the intensity of that on him’. Al-Qurtobi (cited in Atturki, 2006, p.25) has described this process as: “يتكلف ما لا يطيق” to refer to a gradation in enduring what a person cannot bear. In the opinion of Abd Arrahim (2010), the explanation of ‘التفعل’ ‘Attafa33ul’ in general is the more the action grows, the more its effects grow too, and for the word ‘يَتَصَعَّدُ’ ‘yatassa33ad’, the more

ascending augments, the more constriction increases. This continuous increasing in tightness reaches the point when it becomes 'حرج' 'haradj', inhibiting any possible access. So, the question now is: what is, scientifically speaking, this difficulty or hurdle while ascending?

3.2.1.4. Possible Scientific Implications

Linking the linguistic aspect with the scientific one means interpreting the significance of the letter 'ت' in terms of the pathological effects occurring in the human body while ascending. Before that science clarified and explained it, this hardness had not been fairly intelligible. When people are exposed to high altitudes, they show many symptoms mainly because of the decrease in the Oxygen (O₂). In science, this is referred to as 'altitude sickness'. For Ferri (2009), it "refers to a spectrum of illnesses related to hypoxia occurring in people rapidly ascending to high altitudes includes acute mountain sickness, high-altitude pulmonary edema, and high-altitude cerebral edema."(p.552). According to Rehberg (2007), they are illnesses resulting from poor adjustments to the decrease in O₂ (hypoxia).

The symptoms related to acute exposure to high altitudes atmosphere usually occur at altitudes of 2500-3000 m and develop with the increasing height. They were listed by Kirch (2008) as: "headache, nausea, vomiting, fatigue, dizziness, insomnia, excitability, breathing difficulties, regurgitation, and peripheral edema (swelling of hands, feet, and face)" (p.36). As a process, altitude sickness or AMS can progress to HAPE and HACE. The former is an acronym formed from *High Altitude Pulmonary Edema* which is the formation of fluid in the lungs. According to Bezruchka (2005), "Individual affected by HAPE may also complain of chest tightness or congestion."(p.30). However, the latter refers to *High Altitude Cerebral Edema* which also means the accumulation of fluid, but in the brain. These two conditions could be potentially fatal. Eventually, with the persistent increase in altitudes, a zone where the amount of oxygen is insufficient to tolerate surviving is reached. It is called 'the dead zone' or 'the death zone' which is, according to Giannantonio et al. (2013), the area above

8000 meters on a mountain that due to the lack of oxygen, the human body quickly deteriorates. The following is a graph depicting the continuous decrease in oxygen saturation SaO₂ and oxygen pressure PaO₂ with reference to the increasing altitude.

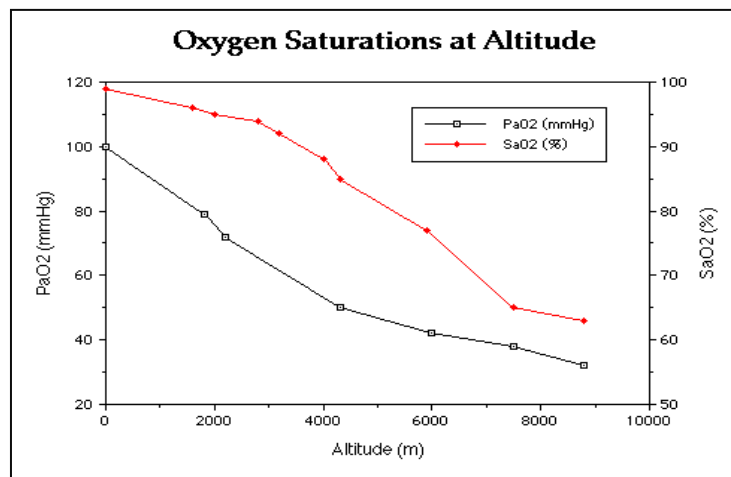


Figure 12: Dietz, T. (2000, May 08). *High Altitude Medicine Guide*. Retrieved from <http://www.high-altitude-medicine.com/SaO2-table.html>

However, the next figure in Warrell et al. (2005, p.979) shows that when suddenly expose people to altitudes of 10000 ft (3000 m) and above, they become physically weak and mentally unreliable. It exhibits a negative correlation between the increase of altitude and oxygen pressure (PO₂); i.e. the more elevation rises, the more oxygen decreases, and as a result, the more difficulty is experienced (the corresponding impairment as the deterioration in a variety of sensory and mental functions).

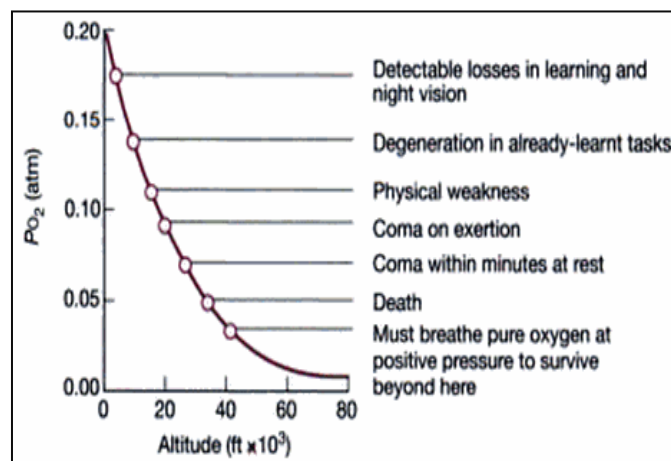


Figure 13: A summary of the functional consequences of altitude hypoxia

The next figure (in McArdle et al., 2010, p.597) manifests a comparison of oxygen cost and relative strenuousness of submaximal exercise at sea level and high altitude (4300 m).

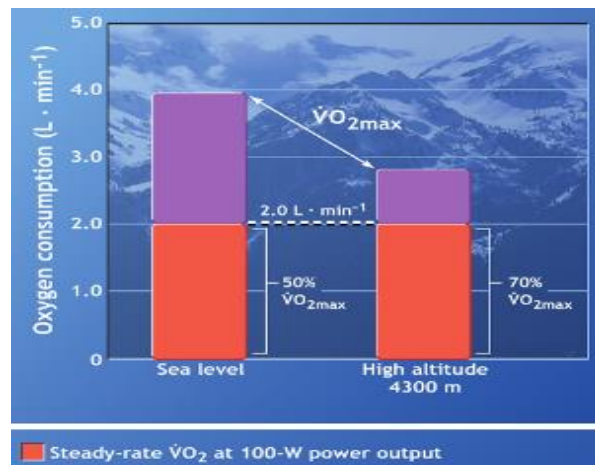


Figure 14: Comparison of oxygen cost and relative strenuousness of submaximal exercise at sea level and high altitude.

McArdle et al. (2010, p.597) provided the following explanation for the above figure:

the oxygen cost of submaximal exercise at 100 watts on a bicycle ergometer at sea level and high altitude remains unchanged at about 2.0 L · min⁻¹, but the relative strenuousness of effort increases dramatically at altitude. In this example, submaximal exercise representing 50% of sea-level $\dot{V}O_2$ max equals 70% $\dot{V}O_2$ max at 4300 m.

According to Rubin et al. (2008), contrary to sea level, where activity does not affect oxygen saturation, physical activity at high altitudes decreases partial pressure of arterial oxygen. Hence, the strenuous effort that induces chest tightness that is referred to in the verse above is the action of ascending itself that decreases oxygen besides its shortage in the elevations.

In response to hypoxia, the Hypoxic Pulmonary Vasoconstriction (HPV) is put in action. It is a critical physiological mechanism of the lung recognised only decades ago that is identified when directing or diverting the blood flow away from the regions of lung suffering from hypoxia (poorly ventilated or non-ventilated areas). According to Smith et al. (2016), it “is a protective mechanism that prevents deoxygenated blood from entering the circulation by preferentially constricting vascular supply to poorly ventilated lung regions”(p.181). Similarly, for Munjal and Sharm (2012), it is “an adaptive physiological response, shunting

blood away from hypoxic regions to better ventilated parts of the lung” (p.1798). The following graph (in Broaddus et al., 2016, p.56) shows the stimulus-response curves of HPV.

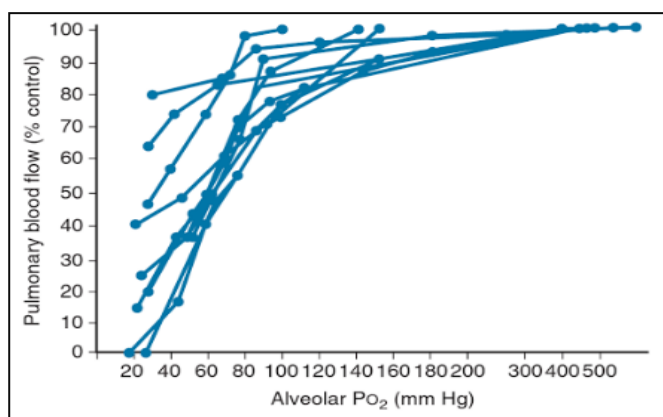


Figure 15: Stimulus-response curves of hypoxic pulmonary vasoconstriction. Pulmonary blood flow is shown in relation to alveolar PO₂ in feline lung preparations.

Broaddus et al. (2016) commented on the graph as: when the alveolar PO₂ is reduced to approximately 70 mm Hg, vasoconstriction begins, and at a very low PO₂ the local blood flow may be almost abolished. According to them (2016), to know the effect of hypoxia on subjects that have been exposed to it for only two weeks, they have been given 100% oxygen; as a result, the pulmonary arterial pressure does not immediately return to the normal level and “this suggests that hypoxia has already induced some structural change in the pulmonary vessels and new experiments show changes in ion channels controlling smooth muscle contraction in pulmonary vessels.”(p.56).

3.2.1.5. Comparative Review of the Five Translations of ‘ضَيْقًا حَرَجًا’ (dayyiqan haradja)

Here is how the word ‘حَرَجًا’ is translated (the word ‘ضَيْقًا’ is added to enable the reader to make a visual comparison between the two words since they are related in meaning).

A	M	P	Y A	H & K
<i>tight and constricted</i>	<i>narrow and squeezes so tight</i>	<i>close and narrow</i>	<i>closed and constricted</i>	<i>closed and constricted</i>

Table 04: The Five Translations of ‘ضَيْقًا حَرَجًا’ (dayyiqan haradja)

In the translated versions of these two words, it is noticed that only Malik, by his translation ‘*narrow and squeezes so tight*’, has distinguished between the two attributes in that he has added the degree adverb ‘so’ to refer that it is higher in intensity. However, Asad has transferred them as ‘*tight and constricted*’ which share almost the same meaning (narrow, tight, contracted or restricted). So, a degree adverb is needed to be contrasted with ‘*tight*’, for the two descriptive words have been handled here as synonymous and deliver the same message. This is, of course, evaluated as incorrect and unjustified since it is considered as a repetition that replaced only one of the intended meanings twice. Likewise, for ‘حَزَجًا’, Yusuf Ali and ‘Al-Hilali and Khan’ have used the word ‘*constricted*’, but to substitute for ‘ضَيْقًا’ they have employed the adjective ‘*closed*’ which designates ‘not open’ or blocked against entry. So, even though in juxtaposition they have explicitly emphasized the difference, they have reversed the gradation in meaning, and the primary meaning that is delivered by ‘حَزَجًا’, which is extremely tight, is missing. Unsuccessfully too, Pikhall has utilized the word ‘*narrow*’ preceded by the adjective ‘*close*’ that is dissimilar from ‘*closed*’. To sum up, except for the one of Malik, all the given translations are conceived as not being faithful to the original in that they do not express the progressing process of constriction. Now, let us see how the word ‘يَصْعَدُ’ is encountered in translation.

3.2.1.6. Comparative Review of the Five Translations of the Word ‘يَصْعَدُ’

(yassa33ad)

A	M	P	Y A	H & K
<i>climbing</i>	<i>to climb up</i>	<i>engaged in sheer ascent</i>	<i>to climb up</i>	<i>climbing up</i>

Table 05: The Five Translations of the Word ‘يَصْعَدُ’ (yassa33ad)

Obviously, all the English versions of the word ‘يَصْعَدُ’ ‘yassa33ad’ have demonstrated failure in conveying the real meaning because they have addressed the word ‘yas3ad’ instead

of 'yassa33ad'. All the translators have rendered the word very much like 'climb' which they have assumed to be the intended meaning; except Pikthall who has been different only in rephrasing and describing the ascent with the adjective 'sheer' giving it a sense of hardship; yet, also not quite holding the original meaning. As a result, the translations have lost the exact imagery because the needed information of the parable is supported by the use of that letter 'ت' which is absent in all the substitutions, and this has led to totally erroneous translations. In short, the outcomes exhibited a loss of what is meant or implied in the original discourse, which is that imagery that intensified the feeling of the increasing hardship and the growing sense of discomfort simultaneously with the increase of ascending.

To recapitulate, this verse has displayed a miraculous similitude (parable) that has only recently emerged and clearly understood. Because of his disapprobation, the disbeliever's chest tightness resembles its physical state while ascending. The continuous depletion of oxygen with the rise in elevation causes the increasing constriction of the chest which results in the growing hardships experienced by man in his body. This phenomenon of altitude sickness was best described centuries ago in the Qur'an by using the word 'ضَيْقًا' followed by 'حَرْجًا' for expressing the gradation of the chest's lack of spaciousness in relation with the ongoing increasing height. In fact, this condition of being 'ضَيْقًا' is at the same time the cause and the consequence of 'يَصْعَدُ' in that it is the direct and main result of ascending more and more and also the main reason of the further unbearable ascension and the continuous decrease of endurance until reaching the intolerance point 'حَرْجًا'. This state truly resembles the inner war-like or conflict state of the disbeliever regarding accepting Islam, for it is a struggle against the natural disposition of accepting guidance that Allah bestowed humans with. In short, this struggle is a miserable uncomfortable inability to accept faith, which is indeed quite analogous to ascension.

3.2.2. The Breaking of Ants: (يَحْطِمَنَّكُمْ)

Entomology does also exist in the divine Book. The twenty seventh surah of the Qur'an is named after a kind of insects, 'Annaml', the ants. Like human beings and as a community, ants have houses (architecture), a highly organised social life and even a way of communication. Allah said: “وَمَا مِنْ دَابَّةٍ فِي الْأَرْضِ وَلَا طَائِرٍ يَطِيرُ بِجَنَاحَيْهِ إِلَّا أُمَمٌ أَمْثَالُكُمْ...”; “*There is not a moving (living) creature on earth, nor a bird that flies with its two wings, but are communities like you...*”(Al-An3am:38). Out of the ordinary, one of the peculiarities of ants, which will continue to be recited until the day of judgement is a special address of a female ant to its companions for the sake of their safety.

قال الله عز وجل: { حَتَّىٰ إِذَا أَتَوْا عَلَىٰ وَادِ النَّمْلِ قَالَتْ نَمْلَةٌ يَا أَيُّهَا النَّمْلُ ادْخُلُوا مَسَاكِنَكُمْ لَا يَحْطِمَنَّكُمْ سُلَيْمَانُ وَجُنُودُهُ وَهُمْ لَا يَشْعُرُونَ }

[Surah 27, Annaml, 'Meccan', Ayah: (18)]

3.2.2.1. The Five Translations of the Verse 18 of Surat Annaml (Table 06)

A	till, when they came upon a valley [full] of ants, an ant exclaimed: “O you ants! Get into your dwellings, lest Solomon and his hosts crush you without [even] being aware [of you]!”
M	Once in an expedition he was marching with his army when they came across a valley of ants, one of the ants said: “O ants, get into your habitations lest Sulaiman and his army crush you under their feet without even noticing it.”
P	Till, when they reached the Valley of the Ants, an ant exclaimed: O ants! Enter your dwellings lest Solomon and his armies crush you, unperceiving.
Y A	At length when they came to a (lowly) valley of ants one of the ants said: “O ye ants get into your habitations lest Solomon and his hosts crush you (under foot) without knowing it.”
H & K	Till, when they came to the valley of the ants, one of the ants said: “O ants! Enter your dwellings, lest Sulaiman (Solomon) and his hosts crush you, while they perceive not.”

3.2.2.2. Exegetical Interpretations of the Verse 18 of Surat Annaml

❖ **Al Jalalayn:** When they came to the Valley of the Ants -which is located either in Ta'if or in Syria and whose ants are either small or large -an ant the queen ant, who had seen Solomon's hosts, said 'O ants, enter your dwellings, lest Solomon and his hosts crush you while they are unaware!' -the ants are likened to rational beings in their use of the latter's speech. (p.431).

❖ **Ibn Kathir:** (Till, when they came to the valley of the ants,) meaning, when Sulayman, the soldiers and the army with him crossed the valley of the ants, (one of the ants said: "O ants! Enter your dwellings, lest Sulayman and his armies should crush you, while they perceive not." (p.3682).

3.2.2.3. The Linguistic Meanings

This verse exhibits an address or an utterance of a female ant informing its companions about an impending danger. When the king Solomon approached with his soldiers the valley of the ants and for evading the imminent danger, an ant warned its community to escape into their dwellings. So, when seeing him approaching with his soldiers, the speaker ant alarmed its fellows first by attracting their attention saying: 'يَا أَيُّهَا النَّملُ'; 'O ants!'. Then, it addressed its people giving an order to urge them to enter their habitations: 'ادْخُلُوا مَسَاكِنَكُمْ'; 'Enter your dwellings'. After that, it revealed the reason behind its sudden order which is 'لَا يَحِطُّمَنَّكُمْ سُلَيْمَانُ'; 'lest Sulaiman (Solomon) and his hosts crush you'. Finally, it expressed its fear of being killed by the messenger Solomon and his soldiers as not because they were real enemies but because of their unintentional behaviour and unwillingness saying: 'وَهُمْ لَا يَشْعُرُونَ'; 'while they perceive not'.

'يَحِطُّمَنَّكُمْ' is from the verb 'حَطَّمَ' 'hattama' which signifies to break, smash, or shatter something rigid and stiff into fragments. So, the ants here have been likened to something that could break like glass. The Arabic versions of the above exegetical interpretations, unlike their translations, in addition to the exegesis of Al-Qurtobi (2006) and others have either used

the same Qur’anic word, i.e. ‘يُخْطِمُنْكُمْ’ or explained it using the words ‘التكسير’ ‘breaking’ or ‘التهشيم’ ‘smashing’. Similarly, it is noticed that the word ‘الْحَطْمَةَ’ ‘Alhutamā’ which is one of the names of the Hellfire, is named as such because it breaks and destroys whoever will be thrown or flung into it. As the most rigid thing in the human body is the skeleton, ‘الْحَطْمَةَ’ ‘Alhutamā’ breaks the bones of those who deserve God’s punishment. Allah said: “كَلَّا لَيُنْبَذَنَّ فِي ” الْحَطْمَةَ”; “Nay! Verily, he will be thrown into the crushing Fire” (Al-Humaza:04).

3.2.2.3.1. Exegetical Interpretations of the Verse 04 of Surat Al-Humaza

❖ **Al Jalalayn:** Nay! -a repudiation- He will surely be flung la-yunbadhanna is the response to an omitted oath that is he will be hurled down into the Crusher that crushes everything that is thrown into it. (p.762).

❖ **Ibn Kathir:** (But no!) meaning, the matter is not as he claims, nor as he reckons. Then Allah says, (Verily, he will be thrown into Al-Hutamah) meaning, the person who gathered wealth and counted it, will be thrown into Al-Hutamah, which is one of the descriptive names of the Hellfire. This is because it crushes whoever is in it. (p.5651)

3.2.2.3.2. Comparative Review of the Five Translations of the Word ‘الْحَطْمَةَ’

(Al-hutamā)

A	M	P	Y A	H & K
<i>crushing torment!</i>	<i>Hotamah</i>	<i>the Consuming One</i>	<i>that which breaks to pieces</i>	<i>the crushing Fire</i>

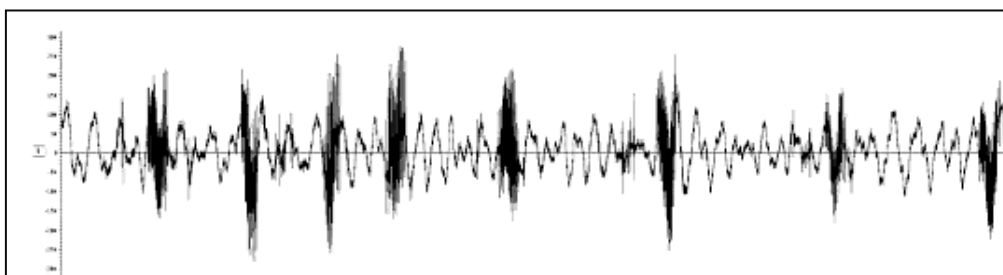
Table 07: The Five Translations of the Word ‘الْحَطْمَةَ’ (Al-hutamā)

Let us have a look at the English versions of this descriptive name of the Hellfire. The first thing to notice is the use of the transliteration ‘Hotamah’ by Malik. Although Asad and ‘Al-Hilali and Khan’, alike, have employed the adjective ‘crushing’ instead of the noun ‘the crusher’, the former use is for describing the torment and the latter for describing the Fire; so, both of them are not faithful to the genuine message. Even though the meaning of the word

‘*crushing*’ can be accepted here as a valid rendition, this judgement might not be the same for the word ‘يَحْطِمَنَّكُمْ’ as it will be discussed in detail afterwards. In contrast, Pikthall has named it ‘*the Consuming One*’ which is not even close to the intended basic meaning. In fact, regardless the change in the grammatical category and the addition of “*to pieces*”, the translation provided by Yusuf Ali ‘*that which breaks to pieces*’ is the one that is considered the most appropriate among the others, for he has used the verb ‘*breaks*’ which might be the closest English substitute for “الحطمة”.

3.2.2.4. Possible Scientific Implications

Except this verse that comprises an utterance of an ant to its community, previously, no one thought of a real communication between insects. Since they live in a colony, ants need to communicate, and this is what has been evidenced by science in a recent time. Reznikova (2017) confirmed the existence of a communication system even more complex than that of honey bees in highly social ant species and explained that that communication system “includes different sensory modalities such as acoustic, visual, odour and tactile signals”(p.19). According to Ursyn (2012), ants can produce and receive vibrations because of their resonating bodies made out of chitin. He then included the following graph (p.73) of one ant of the *Atta cephalotes* presenting its stridulation (a shrill creaking noise made by rubbing certain body parts together like of the crickets).



*Figure 16: Four seconds of stridulation: sample values of one major soldier of *Atta cephalotes* isolated in a polystyrene box; recorded at 44.1 kHz, 16-bits, using an amplified piezoelectric sensor connected to the computer.*

Calling attention to chitin, let us visualise some facts. Unlike endoskeletons, ants, like all arthropods, are equipped with strong armour-like external skeletons called 'exoskeletons'. So, what are their exoskeletons that encase their bodies made of? The answer is a substance named chitin which is shell-like. Here are some scholars' overviews of this substance. Dubeck et al. (2004) stated: "Exoskeletons are made of a polysaccharide material called chitin." (p.175). According to Petrie (2010), chitin is a stiff outer covering that protects the organs of ants since they do not have bones. DeYoung and Hobbs (2009) defined it and presented even its chemical formula like: "Chitin (KI-tin) is the common shell-like covering of many insects, and is also found on crustaceans such as lobsters. Chitin is a long-chain polymer with the chemical formula $(C_8H_{13}O_5N)_n$."(p.191). Concerning chitin's formation process, Lawlor (1993) has explained that the outer layer of skin of the young ant secretes this proteinaceous material that when hardening into jointed armour plates the ant's further growing is impossible.

In fact, chitin has many characteristics, like its fibrous structure and solidity; some of which resemble the ones of glass. According to Evans and Bellamy (1996), "Chitin, first identified in 1823, is fibrous and makes the exoskeleton tough, yet flexible -not unlike fibreglass"(p.34). In addition, Gupta (2011) wrote that chitin was crystalline and constituted a network of organized fibres. Moreover, owing to its special structure, rigidity and resistance are conferred to the organisms bestowed with it. This is expressed by Evans and Bellamy (1996) as: "The thickness and durability of the exoskeleton affords some protection from predators and other potentially life-threatening predicaments."(p.34). Thus, from the point of view of predators, digesting chitin is difficult and may strongly influence the profitability of preys, according to Hughes (1990); however, although it is rigid, it cannot support heavy bodies; thus, it is only found in relatively small creatures.

Nonetheless, for some predators, there is no problem even with the toughest chitin because they are well equipped. (Note the use of the words *break*, *breaking*, *crack* and *shatter* in the following quotes in this paragraph). According to Neuweiler (2000), “The teeth of bats function as a sort of mill with cutting and chopping surfaces that can break apart even the hardest chitin exoskeleton”(p.103). Likewise, Fuentes (2017) pointed out that insectivores have special dentition “for breaking chitin” (p.302). In the opinion of Plavcan et al. (2002), “Chitin is brittle, containing large amounts of stored energy, and is best broken down by short shearing crests that initiate self-propagating cracks that shatter the exoskeleton.”(p.30). Brittain (2011) illustrated with the following table (p.39) exhibiting the different elements in chitin with their percentages (the lion’s share is for Carbon that gives chitin its stiffness) and then with SEM images of α -chitin (p.48).

Element	Composition (%)
Carbon	47.29
Hydrogen	6.45
Nitrogen	6.89
Oxygen	39.37

Table 08: Elemental analysis of chitin

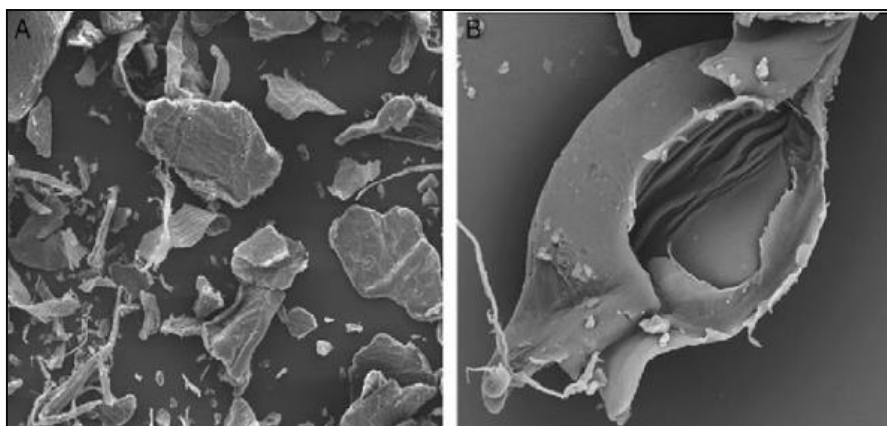


Figure 17: SEM images of α -chitin with magnification of (A) 1600

With magnification in picture A, it is clearly visible that the broken parts are in full resemblance with broken pieces of glass. Petrie (2010) attributed the crunching sound when squashing ants to their exoskeletons. As a point of fact, the sound when they are broken is much like the one heard when stepping on a snail's shell or breaking glass; with different degrees of strength of course. Owing to its stability, rigidity, mechanical characteristics and biodegradability, chitin is used in a wide variety of applications. Satyanarayana et al. (2012) assured that "chitin indeed is a highly versatile and promising biopolymer with numerous industrial, medical, agricultural and commercial uses" (p.137).

3.2.2.5. Comparative Review of the Five Translations of the Word 'يَحْطِمَنَّكُمْ' (yahtimannakum)

A	M	P	Y A	H & K
<i>crush</i>	<i>crush</i>	<i>crush</i>	<i>crush</i>	<i>crush</i>

Table:09: The Five Translations of the Word 'يَحْطِمَنَّكُمْ' (yahtimannakum)

Of the several possible alternatives that could replace the word 'يَحْطِمَنَّكُمْ', there is an agreement, as shown in the above table, on using the word 'crush' 'يسحق', for it is the common word often used to refer to killing insects. Nevertheless, it can be criticized that it is not completely faithful to the original in that 'يَحْطِمَنَّكُمْ' in Arabic is not the word that usually collocates with the word 'ants', or 'insects' in general, but rather it seems strange. So, the Arabic reader, contrary to the readers of the English versions, is invited to reflect on the divine choice of this word and of course to deduce that this word must carry and deliver something else more than just the act of killing ants.

In other words, from the scientific point of view, when pressed, the ant's exoskeleton gets broken just as a glass or a bone does. Unanimously, the same term 'crush' that refers to the deformation when compressing forcefully has been favoured by all the selected translators

(and even the translators of many ‘tafassir’ of this word -unlike their Arabic appropriate versions). The only reason behind this agreement of the usage of the word ‘*crush*’ as a substitution is that this word is the one generally used to refer to the action of killing insects. However, this rendition has merely expressed the ending result, for it has not communicated the meaning proposed by the original word, which is in perfect match with the scientific references that have used the word ‘*break*’ or the like, as noted previously. By doing so, the translators have winked at an important information about the exact way of ending the ants’ lives, i.e. breaking or smashing their bodies due to the special entity of their outer structures. Thus, it could be criticized that there is a problem of expressiveness due to the inappropriate selection among semantically close words, but of different nuances, in favour of a common collocation.

In conclusion, though, scientifically speaking, the manner of communication (whether it is verbally or not) on which ants rely to converse with one another is still a domain of research, a female ant is paid homage to because of its sequence of communication in the Qur’an. For fear of the prophet Solomon and his soldiers trampling over the group of ants unintentionally, the speaker ant used the word ‘يَحْطِمَنَّكُمْ’ which is not the word that is generally employed when referring to killing insects, but rather holds information about the material ants’ exoskeletons made of -‘chitin’ (which is also one means of communication as illustrated previously). This substance is as bones in function and when compressed, a breaking occurs just like glass does. Therefore, any reader of the English renditions of this word assumes only the ordinary final destiny of many insects which is to be crushed, i.e. without having any clue or hint about the real entity of matter of their exoskeleton that is originally stored in the Qur’anic word in the form of analogy.

3.2.3. The Deep-Rooted Mountains (رَوَاسِي)

Everyone knows that Earth is always vulnerable to important geological phenomena like quakes, faults, tectonic plates' shifts, either moving away or colliding with each other; therefore, it needs stabilizers to minimise their consequences and be habitable. These means of fixation are believed to be the mountains. Orogenesis is the process of mountains formation and upholding; first recorded in 1890. However, many centuries ago, the mountains have been mentioned in the holy Qur'an as shelters, settings of some events, geographical features, and also as 'رَوَاسِي' 'rawasi'. Their formation and shape as such contribute to their own stability as well as the Earth's and its crust.

قال الله عز وجل: { وَجَعَلْنَا فِي الْأَرْضِ رَوَاسِي أَنْ تُمِيدَ بِهِمْ ... }

[Surah 21, Al-Anbiya', 'Meccan', Ayah 31]

3.2.3.1. The Five Translations of the Verse 31 of Surat Al-Anbiya' (Table 10)

A	And [are they not aware that] We have set up <u><i>firm mountains</i></u> on earth, lest it sway with them.
M	And We have planted <u><i>mountains</i></u> on earth lest it should tilt to one side with them (the weight of people).
P	And We have placed in the earth <u><i>firm hills</i></u> lest it quake with them.
YA	And We have set on the earth <u><i>mountains standing firm</i></u> lest it should shake with them.
H & K	And We have placed on the earth <u><i>firm mountains</i></u> , lest it should shake with them.

3.2.3.2. Exegetical Interpretations of the Verse 31 of Surat Al-Anbiya'

❖ **Al Jalalayn:** And We set in the earth firm mountains lest it should shake with them. (p.357).

❖ **Ibn Kathir:** (And We have placed on the earth firm mountains,) means, mountains which stabilize the earth and keep it steady and lend it weight, lest it should shake with the people, i.e., move and tremble so that they would not be able to stand firm on it -because it is covered with water, apart from one-quarter of its surface. So the land is exposed to the air and sun, so that its people may see the sky with its dazzling signs and evidence. So Allah says, ﴿أَنْ تَمِيدَ بِهِمْ﴾ (lest it should shake with them) meaning, so that it will not shake with them. (p.3197).

3.2.3.3. The Linguistic Meanings

‘رَوَاسِي’ ‘rawasi’ is a plural word that is mentioned several times in the Qur’an to refer to mountains. ‘رَاسِي’ ‘rasi’ is its singular form and ‘رَسَا’ is its verb. According to Lisan Al-Arab, ‘رَسَا الْجَبَلُ يَرْسُو إِذَا تَبَّتْ أَصْلُهُ فِي الْأَرْضِ’. Of course, ‘أصل الجبل’ the root, origin or foundation of a mountain is not the apparent part. So, this signifies that it is rooted, anchored, embedded, implanted or entrenched in the ground. This alludes to the fact that mountains are fixed, stable, standing firmly and deeply and thus contribute to the stability of earth. In Arabic, ‘مرساة’ ‘a ship is anchored’ is when it is held in place in the water by an anchor ‘السفينة راسية’, which is defined in Oxford dictionary as: “A heavy object attached to a cable or chain and used to moor a ship to the sea bottom, typically having a metal shank with a pair of curved, barbed flukes at one end”(1998, p.57).

The word ‘تَمِيدَ’ is used to refer to the earth’s swaying and disturbance of its balance and stability. In fact, the expression ﴿أَنْ تَمِيدَ بِهِمْ﴾ functions as ﴿أَنْ لَا تَمِيدَ بِهِمْ﴾; i.e. it is written as ‘to sway with them’ but to mean ‘not to sway with them’. So, its use in Arabic like this means that the mountains perform the function of preventing or hindering the earth from swaying, being unstable or unsteady. So, Allah has laid out the mountains as anchors in order to avoid the earth’s staggering or tilting with its dwellers on it.

In other words, these notions lead us to a perception or visualization of a miraculous description and a foretold function of mountains which has only recently been discovered and totally grasped. In many instances in the holy Book, the mountains have been referred to as

‘رَوَاسِي’ ‘rawasi’ which is one of their main characteristics to refer to their role for the earth that resembles the anchors’ for the ships. This term ‘rawasi’ hints at the fact that mountains have greater portions stretching downwards for the sake of their own stability and firmness as well as contributing to the earth’s and its crust steadiness. Hence, this word clearly outlines the structure or the geological form and also the function of mountains. It came also in the form of a verb: “وَالْجِبَالِ أَرْسَاهَا”; “And the mountains He **has fixed firmly**” (Annazi3at:32).

3.2.3.3.1. The Five Translations of the Word ‘أَرْسَاهَا’ (arseha)

A	M	P	Y A	H & K
<i>has made firm</i>	<i>set</i>	<i>made fast</i>	<i>hath firmly fixed</i>	<i>has fixed firmly</i>

Table 11: The Five Translations of the Word ‘أَرْسَاهَا’ (arseha)

These renditions will be evaluated and discussed with the ones of ‘رَوَاسِي’ ‘rawasi’ after stating the scientific implications. In like manner, another passage reporting intelligibly the same message, i.e. emphasising clearly the same function and shape of mountains is shown in surat Annaba’, verse 07 when the Almighty said: “وَالْجِبَالِ أَوْتَادًا”; “And the mountains as **pegs**?”.

3.2.3.3.2. Exegetical Interpretations of the Verse 07 of Surat Annaba’

- ❖ **Al Jalalayn:** and the mountains pegs? with which the earth is tied down like tents are tied down with pegs the interrogative is meant as an affirmative.(p.716).
- ❖ **Ibn Kathir:** (And the mountains as pegs), meaning, He made them as pegs for the earth to hold it in place, make it stable and firm. This is so that it may be suitable for dwelling and not quake with those who are in it.(p.5441).

3.2.3.3.3. The Linguistic Meaning of the word ‘أَوْتَادًا’ (awtada)

‘أَوْتَادًا’ ‘awtada’ is the plural of ‘وتد’ ‘watad’ which means peg, stake, wedge or pin. As it is known, when there is a need for securing something in position, most of the pegs should be inserted. This is exactly the case of mountains either in figure or action. Hence, it is a perfect

miraculous simile which is well preserved when transmitted by using the word ‘pegs’ as in all the selected translations in the table below, except the one of Pikhthall.

3.2.3.3.4. The Five Translations of the Word ‘أَوْتَادًا’ (awtada)

A	M	P	YA	H & K
<i>pegs</i>	<i>pegs</i>	<i>bulwarks</i>	<i>pegs</i>	<i>pegs</i>

Table 12: The Five Translations of the Word ‘أَوْتَادًا’ (awtada)

3.2.3.4. Possible Scientific Implications

Geologically speaking, some new findings have refuted the wrong idea that mountains are just the prominences seen above the surface. In effect, modern earth sciences have proven that the crust is thicker beneath mountains because they extend under the ground, i.e. they are rooted inside the earth. According to Young (2007), the formation of a mountain range is the result of two massive plates’ collision. The stronger one (that forms the downward part of a mountain) dives beneath the other (the one that makes the elevation above the surface). So, it is an established fact now that mountains have projections beneath the surface of the earth. In the Qur’an, the whole structure of mountains referring to both the deeply embedded down parts and the upper lofty parts or protrusions is stated as: “... وَجَعَلْنَا فِيهَا رَوَاسِيَ شَامِخَاتٍ ...” (Al-Mursalat:27). Yet, this meaning is not clearly shown in its translation in English due to the use of the word ‘firm’: “*And have placed therein firm, and tall mountains; ...*”.

So as to establish equilibrium, mountains are supported and uplifted by the principle of *isostasy*. According to the Geological Society of America (1966), “these mountains are in isostatic equilibrium-they seem to have ‘roots’ ”(p.33). This hypothesis proposes that high surface elevations are compensated by roots which are deeply embedded in the ground correspondingly with their heights. It is reported by Garrison (2012) that “the mountains stand at great height, nearly in balance with their subterranean underpinnings” (p.56). Smith (2006)

asserted that it is necessary for mountain ranges to have roots proportional to their heights for isostatic equilibrium to occur; so, the highest mountains contain the deepest roots. For Price et al. (2013), the greatest thickness of the deep roots under the major mountain ranges could descend to as much as 70 km. The following figure (in Martin, 2013, p. 195) shows the greatest crustal thickness occurring beneath mountain belts and the thinnest under the ocean.

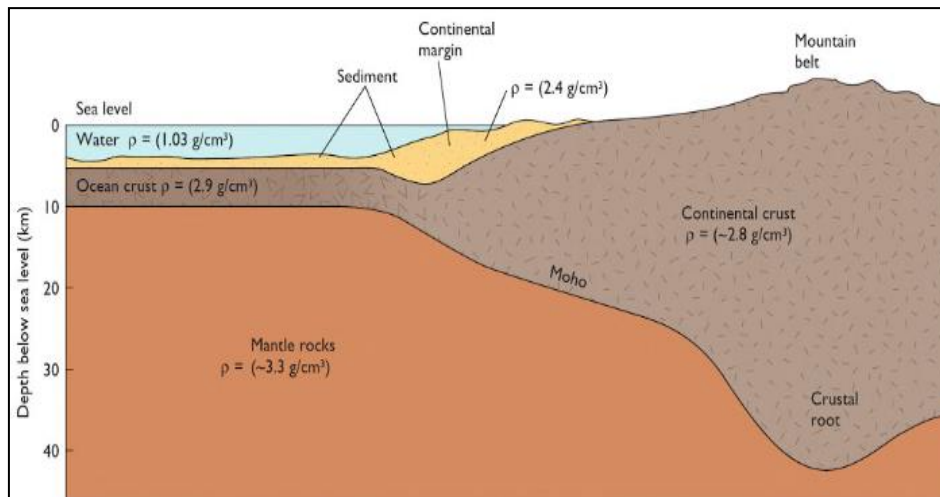


Figure 18: Oceanic crust versus continental crust

As a point of fact, below the ground, it rests a fluid-like dense mantle behaving like water. The crust and the mountains roots which are of lighter and less dense crustal materials are then floating on the underlying denser layer which is the asthenosphere. A valid analogy, but in a faster-motion version, to visualise what is happening to mountains to maintain equilibrium, is offered by icebergs in that they resemble the mountains in this mechanism. A revealed truth is that the downward parts of mountains which are driven into the ground are several times longer than their elevations; so, mountains could be likened to icebergs for they stand high because of their deep roots and the floatation principle -since isostasy is much like floatation. Le Grand (1988) summarised Airy's theory (1865) which in 1889 coined as 'isostasy' like: "(Airy) proposed that mountains and the continents themselves floated in a denser underlying substrate. Analogous to icebergs, mountains had lighter 'roots' extending much deeper into the substrate than plains" (p.22).

A scientific truth concerning icebergs as revealed by Gabler et al. (2007) is that due to the density of ice which is 90% that of water, the icebergs or ice cubes show only 10% of their volume above the surface and nine tenths stay below. So, in order to keep these same percentages, there is an unceasing process which they (2007) explained as: “A tall iceberg requires a massive amount of ice below the surface in order to expose ice so high above sea level, and as ice above the surface melts, ice from below will rise above sea level to replace it until the iceberg has completely melted.” (p.385). The following is a figure (in Monroe and Wicander,2015,p.253) illustrating the Isostasy Principle by comparing two icebergs of different sizes as well as by a detailed explanatory caption.

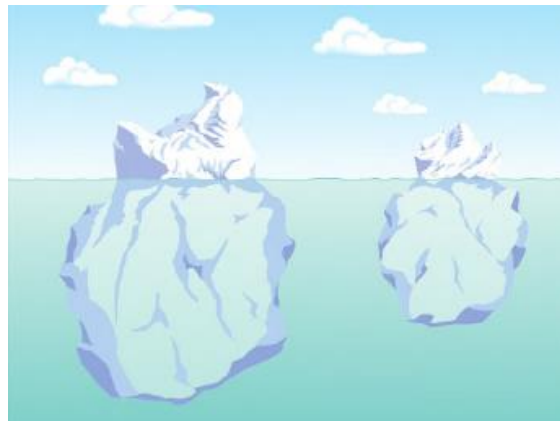


Figure 19: The principle of Isostasy

An iceberg sinks to an equilibrium level with 10% of its mass above water level. The larger iceberg sinks farther below and rises higher above the water surface than the smaller one. If some of the ice above water level melts, the icebergs will rise to maintain the same proportion of ice above and below water level.

Similarly, but more slowly, according to Monroe and Wicander (2015), mountains are susceptible either to elevate more or to depress responding to loading (glaciers or sediment accumulation) or unloading (melting of vast glaciers or erosion) accordingly. This phenomenon is known as ‘isostatic rebound’. The next diagram (in Monroe and Wicander, 2015, p.253) displays the response of Earth’s continental crust to loading and unloading. In other words, it is a diagrammatic representation simulating the isostatic response of the crust to erosion (unloading) and widespread deposition (loading).

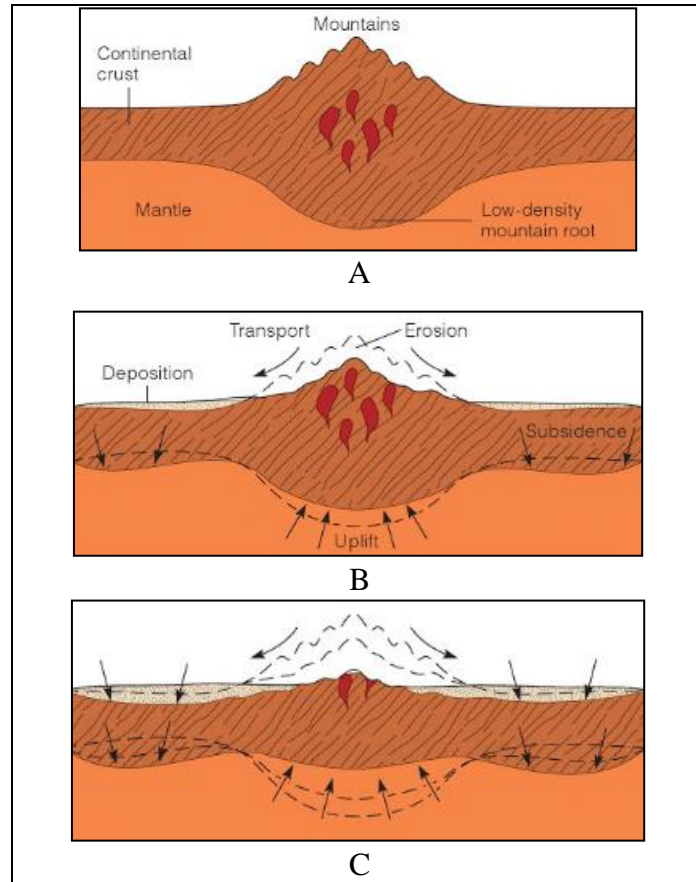


Figure 20: Isostatic Rebound

As a matter of fact, scientifically speaking, the terms ‘رؤاسي’ and ‘أوتاد’ which are used by the Glorious Qur’an to refer to mountains are more accurate than ‘roots’, used currently by geologists; for mountains are pegs-like in shape as well as in function. Like deep rooted pegs or stakes that allow a tent to be fixed in the ground, mountains with their hidden downward extensions function as a means of fixation or anchoring for the ground or the crust. They hinder the imbalances of the earth and its crust in that they prevent them from swaying. Leviton (2006) confirmed this by saying: “The mountains act like stakes or nails inserted into the crust to steady and stabilize it” (p.100).

Another fact about mountains is that they are not motionless, they are moving in unnoticeable way and this does not contradict the fact of being stable and stabilizers. As they vertically bob up and down, they have a horizontal movement too. Actually, they are in a constant motion as being parts of the plates. The following verse refers to that; but said to be

concerned with the day of judgement, contrary to the scientific i3jaz some researchers claim: “وَتَرَى الْجِبَالَ تَحْسَبُهَا جَامِدَةً وَهِيَ تَمُرُّ مَرَّ السَّحَابِ...”; “And you will see the mountains and think them solid, but they shall pass away as the passing away of the clouds...” (Annaml:88). In fact, we have to thank God for the actual slow speed of mountains which indicates also the speed of the plates as being parts of them. Actually, without mountains, the motion of plates would have been much faster and hence you can imagine the instability and the power of the collisions and their drastic effects. Now, let’s examine the equivalence in translation.

3.2.3.5. Comparative Review of the Five Translations of the Word ‘رَوَاسِي’

(rawasi)

A	M	P	YA	H & K
<i>firm mountains</i>	<i>mountains</i>	<i>firm hills</i>	<i>mountains standing firm</i>	<i>firm mountains</i>

Table 13: The Five Translations of the Word ‘رَوَاسِي’ (rawasi)

Examining the translations, the word ‘رَوَاسِي’ as well as its form as a verb ‘أرساها’ have been unfaithfully translated in almost a similar way as shown in the correspondent tables. Exploring the renderings of the word ‘رَوَاسِي’, with the exception of ‘Malik’ who has interpreted the word as ‘mountains’ which is not explicitly stated as such in the original version, all the rest have replaced the word by firm mountains (except for Pikhall who has referred to them as ‘hills’). Although the agreed upon interpretation means strongly fixed in place, it doesn’t refer to the penetration fact in the ground or any role of stabilisation. So, it is quite apparent that all the resultant interpretations have distorted the message conveyed by the genuine word. In other words, the translators have shown a gross misunderstanding of this word as their translations run contrary to what the original word denotes. Hence, it could be said that all the English renditions contain a factual error.

To sum up, as earth is vulnerable to swaying, the upper parts of mountains and more importantly their foundations ensure earth's steadiness. Contrary to the former belief that mountains are just the observable piles above the surface, a new insight into the vital role of mountains and their under parts is brought to light only recently. Nevertheless, it was presented to us centuries ago in the Qur'an by the word 'رواسي'. In view of the geological findings, the divine words like 'أوتادا' and 'رواسي' seem to be miraculous due to the fact that they refer to mountains as deeply implanted stakes anchoring the earth with a mechanism that stabilises themselves and the earth by preventing its swaying 'تميد'. Through impeding the plates' fast movements, the mountains act like anchors (analogy) for the ground which is like a ship. As discussed previously, the translators have absolutely discarded the most important parts of mountains which lie under ground and their significant roles.

Conclusion

In conclusion, analogy is extremely useful when used appropriately and employed successfully; for it makes arguments more compelling and understanding so much easier. As it is shown in the three examples given in this chapter, Allah, the Almighty, analogized the chest state of the disbeliever to accept Islam to a person enduring difficulties while climbing to show us the full extent of his stray, and the act of killing ants to a breaking act to direct our attention to a minute detail about their bodies, and finally the mountains to anchors (stabilisers) or pegs to reinforce the meaning of their role in the earth's equilibrium. So, besides having a strong persuasive power, the importance of this powerful tool in the understanding process and for the sake of cognition, perception, explanation and clarification is undeniable. Nonetheless, this important rhetorical device has been either missing in the English renditions or has not been transmitted as correctly as it should be.

CHAPTER FOUR

Inimitability (Miraculousness) in Polysemy and Broad Sense

Introduction

This chapter explores openness of translations to provide more than one interpretation of some divine words that have originally more than one possible reference or meaning. It is divided into two sections. The first one deals with miraculousness in broad sense of two Arabic concepts that are general and capable of offering many interpretation options; yet, they have been restricted in the English renditions to only alluding to specific references. By broad sense here we mean that the Qur'anic words that are free from any references limitations or meanings restrictions should be replaced with words of the same greatest possible latitude of the genuine words. However, as so many lexemes are polysemous, the second section discusses two potential cases of polysemy. The latter is the capacity of a word to express multiple meanings or senses. So, it is often referred to in case of the coexistence of several meanings and interpretations in a word.

4.1. Inimitability (Miraculousness) in Broad Sense

4.1.1. The Return: (الرَّجْع)

Life on Earth is sustained because Allah the All-Merciful has endowed it with an umbrella or a ceiling elevated above it -the sky. In spite of the great importance of this well protected roof, people are disregarding to reflect on its ayat (signs). Allah said in surat Al-Anbia', verse 32: “وَجَعَلْنَا السَّمَاءَ سَقْفًا مَّحْفُوظًا وَهُمْ عَنْ آيَاتِهَا مُعْرِضُونَ”; “*And We have made the heaven a roof, safe and well guarded. Yet they turn away from its signs (i.e. sun, moon, winds, clouds, etc.)*”. As for its magnitude significance, it is mainly attributed to its special property ‘الرَّجْع’ that serves different kinds of crucial functions explored only in the last century. Therefore, it is stated in the holy Qur'an as a divine oath as follows.

قال الله تعالى: { وَالسَّمَاءِ ذَاتِ الرَّجْعِ }

[Surah 86, Attariq, ‘Meccan’. Ayah: (11)]

4.1.1.1. The Five Translations of the Verse 11 of Surat Attariq (Table 14)

A	Consider the heavens, <i>ever-revolving</i> .
M	By the sky (having rain clouds) which <i>sends down rain</i> .
P	By the heaven which <i>giveth the returning rain</i> .
Y A	By the Firmament which <i>returns (in its round)</i> .
H&K	By the sky (having rain clouds) which <i>gives rain, again and again</i> .

4.1.1.2. Exegetical Interpretations of the Verse 11 of Surat Attariq

- ❖ **Al Jalalayn:** By the heaven of returns, (of) the rain that returns time and again.(p.740).
- ❖ **Ibn Kathir:** ibn ‘Abbas said, “Ar-raj’ means rain. It means the clouds that contain rain.” He also said, (By the sky (having rain clouds) which gives rain, again and again.) “This means that it rains and then it rains (again).” Qatadah said, “It returns the sustenance of the servants (creatures) every year. Were it not for this, they would all be destroyed and so would their cattle.”.(p.5540).

4.1.1.3. The Linguistic Meanings

In this verse Allah, the Almighty, made an oath by the sky which is of ‘الرَّجْعِ’ ‘arradj3’.

This implicates that this inherent attribute or function of the sky is of such significant value that Allah has sworn by it. So, it is a kind of manifestation of His majesty. First, ‘السَّمَاءِ’ ‘assama’ designates the sky, the heaven or the firmament. Second, ‘ذَاتِ’ ‘thati’ means ‘has the property or the quality of’. Third, this property or quality is ‘الرَّجْعِ’ ‘arradj3’. So, what is this ‘الرَّجْعِ’ ‘arradj3’? It is derived from the trilateral verb ‘رَجَعَ’ ‘radja3a’ and denotes ‘returning’, ‘turning back’, ‘reversing’, ‘sending back’ or ‘reflecting’. It exists in many verses in the Qur’an in different forms but with the same meaning (the returning). Here are two

examples. The first one is in surat Al-3alaq, verse 08: “إِنَّ إِلَىٰ رَبِّكَ الرُّجْعَىٰ”; “Surely! Unto your Lord is the return”.

4.1.1.3.1. Exegetical Interpretations of the Verse 08 of Surat Al-3alaq

- ❖ **Al Jalalayn:** Surely to your Lord O man is the return - meant as a threat for him -and so He will requite the rebellious one with what he deserves.(p.755).
- ❖ **Ibn Kathir:** (Surely, unto your Lord is the return.) meaning, ‘unto Allah is the final destination and return, and He will hold you accountable for your wealth, as to where you obtained it from and how did you spend it.’(p.5612).

4.1.1.3.2. The Five Translations of the Word الرُّجْعَىٰ (arrudj3a)

A	M	P	Y A	H & K
<i>must return</i>	<i>his return</i>	<i>the return</i>	<i>the return (of all)</i>	<i>the return</i>

Table 15: The Five Translations of the Word ‘الرُّجْعَىٰ’ (arrudj3a)

The second example is in surat Al-An3am, verse 108: “...ثُمَّ إِلَىٰ رَبِّهِمْ مَرْجِعُهُمْ...”; “...then to their Lord is their return ...”.

4.1.1.3.3. Exegetical Interpretations of the Verse 108 of Surat Al-An3am

- ❖ **Al Jalalayn:** then to their Lord they shall return in the Hereafter. (p.148).
- ❖ **Ibn Kathir:** (Then to their Lord is the return), gathering and final destination. (p.1586).

4.1.1.3.4. The Five Translations of the Word ‘مَرْجِعُهُمْ’ (mardji3uhum)

A	M	P	Y A	H & K
<i>they must return</i>	<i>they will all return</i>	<i>their return</i>	<i>will they return</i>	<i>their return</i>

Table 16: The Five Translations of the Word ‘مَرْجِعُهُمْ’ (mardji3uhum)

With one mind, as it is demonstrated by the two tables above, semantically speaking, both words have been successfully substituted using the noun ‘return’ or its verb form.

Surely, as shown above in the scholars' exegeses, the apparent meaning of the verse under study is that the sky brings rain repeatedly. It is indeed the one first obvious thing that comes into our minds when thinking about this returning function. However, the term 'الرَّجْع' 'arradj3' is used in the verse as a general sense without any specification. This leads us to question about what possibly the sky could return apart from rain. Differently expressed, does the sky send back only water (in the form of precipitation)?, or are there other matters that are being returned too?

4.1.1.4. Possible Scientific Implications

One of the major reasons that Earth is liveable is its sky. Allah praise and glory to Him said in surat Al-Baqarah, verse 22: "... بِنَاءٍ ..."; "Who has made the earth a resting place for you, and the sky as a canopy,...". About this, Newton (2011) reported: "The atmosphere offers a blanket of protection for animate life." (p.66). In fact, the atmosphere sustains the life of the planet's dwellers through warding off space threats like cosmic debris. Also, it serves as pollutants removal as well as an important medium for the movement of water and the different chemicals. Besides, it protects the Earth's life forms through acting as an insulation layer from harmful radiation and heat. Barnes and Svarney (1999) explained the importance of the weather in regulating the heat saying: "The atmosphere dampens extremes" (p.24), which are the following. According to them (1999), on the one hand, during the day, without the atmosphere the incoming solar radiation would increase the Earth's temperatures to high levels and this is not happening because clouds absorb and reflect back some of them. On the other hand, during the night, the temperatures would plummet to levels resembling the space. About this, Iqbal and Mido (1995) wrote:

Of the emission of longwave radiation from the earth’s surface, about two-fifth is trapped by natural concentration of gases and clouds and is radiated back towards the earth and lower troposphere, keeping global average temperature around 15 C (288K). Without this re-radiation, the global average temperature would be around-18C (255K) well below freezing. (p. 121).

As a matter of fact, science has only recently revealed that Earth is encircled by several different atmospheric layers. Yet, centuries ago, Allah the Creator revealed in surat Nuh, verse 15: “ سَبْعَ سَمَاوَاتٍ طِبَاقًا ”; “*See you not how Allah has created **the seven heavens one above another***”. Allah informs us here that there are seven skies and the word ‘طِبَاقًا’ is conceived as ‘superposed’ like layers; one above the other (the atmospheric stratification). The known atmospheric layers from bottom to top are: the troposphere, stratosphere including ozonosphere, mesosphere, thermosphere including ionosphere, and the exosphere. There is also the magnetosphere; but it is outside the atmosphere. As a matter of fact, some of these layers have not been discovered until the twentieth century. The following figure in (Mukherjee,2009,p.36) shows how the atmospheric layers are superposed.

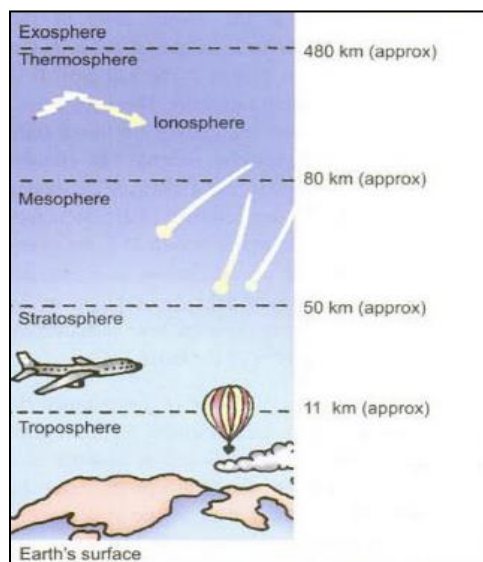


Figure 21: The Structure of the Atmosphere

Allah, praise and glory to Him said in surat Fussilat, verse 12 that each of the seven layers of the sky has a function: “... فَقَضَاهُنَّ سَبْعَ سَمَاوَاتٍ فِي يَوْمَيْنِ وَأَوْحَىٰ فِي كُلِّ سَمَاءٍ أَمْرَهَا ”; “*Then He completed and finished from their creation (as) seven heavens in two Days and **He made***

in each heaven its affair...”. So, each sky can also have its own mandate in sending back matters (like rays, meteors, heat...etc). For the sake of protecting the Earth and its inhabitants, it has been discovered that these matters are either sent back into space or back down to the Earth. The sky then is a kind of a protected and protecting ceiling to the Earth. Here are few examples of the returning property of some layers.

Firstly, starting with the lowest layer, we find the troposphere. “the prefix “tropo” comes from the Greek word for turning over” (Schneider et al.,2011,p.112). All of our weather occurs within this layer where the air is in constant motion upward and downward. According to Kovalev and Eichinger (2004), in just few days, air molecules can travel about 10 km up to the top of the troposphere and back down again, and this leads to changing weather. Other returning actions’ details have been given by Mackwell et al. (2013, p.189):

The troposphere receives 1.48 W m^{-2} solar flux, of which it reflects 0.37 W m^{-2} back to the stratosphere. It also receives 0.56 W m^{-2} of infrared from of $+8 \text{ mWm}^{-2} \text{ K}^{-1}$. The troposphere returns 1.67 W m^{-2} to space as outgoing longwave radiation that reduces entropy at a rate of $-20.8 \text{ mW m}^{-2} \text{ K}^{-1}$.

Besides insuring a good atmosphere, the troposphere serves the well-known returning function -the rain. Water is of a paramount significance because it was, is and always will be a vital source and a prerequisite for life and well being of every living creature. Allah said: “وَجَعَلْنَا مِنَ الْمَاءِ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ حَيٍّ...”; “And We have made from water every living thing...”(Al-Anbia’:30). This water moves in through a cycle called ‘*the water or the hydrological cycle*’. It is an endless circular process where water moves around our planet, changing its state, as: ice, liquid and vapour. It “plays a crucial role in the physical, biological, and chemical processes of the planet. The terrestrial water cycle is of paramount importance because it continuously renews water supply for societal and ecological well- being” (Tang, 2016, p.ix). Of its characteristics is that the majority of the water on Earth from its infancy to millions of years into the future is the same, as stated by Medina (2005). Allah said: “وَالَّذِي نَزَّلَ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ مَاءً... يَقْدَرُ” “And Who sends down water (rain) from the sky in **due measure** ...” (Azzukhruf:11).

Exploring the scientific explanation of the returning function regarding precipitation is that water moves on, above, and below the surface of the Earth, generally through these processes: evaporation, condensation and precipitation. Water from oceans or any waterway, vegetation and even creatures evaporates due to the heat from the sun and then condenses forming clouds. Next, it is sent back to earth again through precipitation, either in the form of rain or snow. This water reaches rivers and oceans directly or moving underground and some of it gets absorbed by plants, and hence the cycle goes on. Bickford (2013) argued that “Water evaporates from the oceans, lakes, and rivers and is returned to the Earth’s surface in the form of precipitation. Most (2/3) of the precipitation that falls on the continents is returned to the atmosphere as water vapor via evapotranspiration.” (p.433). According to Kahn (1973), they are the sulphate particles that are responsible for the evaporation and condensation of water; thus, he has defined a *sulphate ceiling* as a thin envelope that makes rain. Thanks to this ceiling, the water is unable to leave the earth and thus returns to its surface. The following are two figures in (Brainard, 2011, p.711) and (Bickford, 2013, p.436) respectively that serve as a good visual explanation to how this cycle system of the returning water really works.

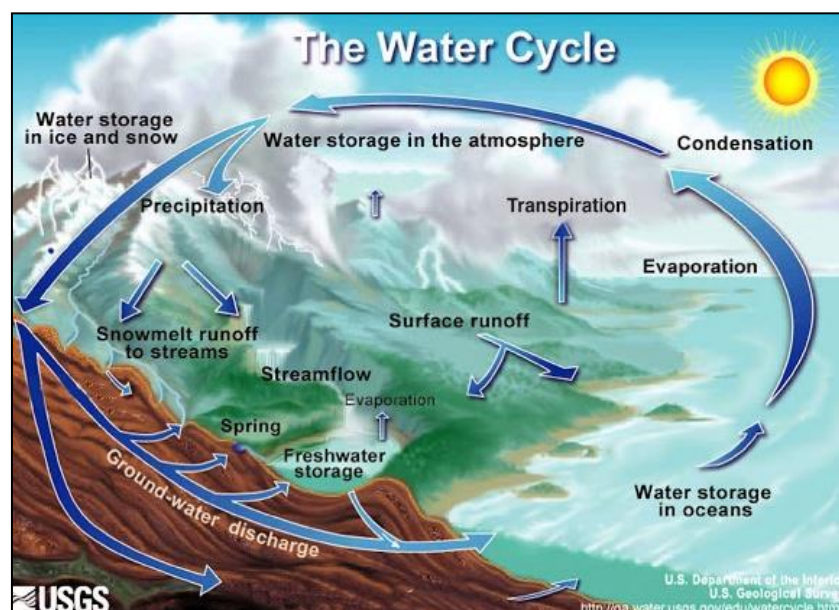


Figure 22: The Water Cycle

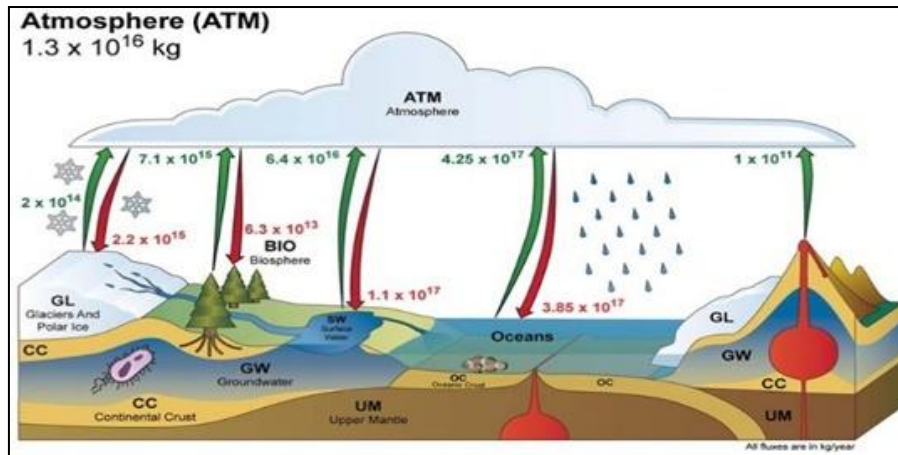


Figure 23: Summary of the fluxes of water between the atmosphere (ATM) and other reservoirs within the geohydrologic cycle. Green arrows represent fluxes into the reservoir, and red arrows represent fluxes out of the reservoir. All fluxes are in Kg/yr.

Secondly, the stratosphere is the atmospheric layer that is above the troposphere. It is in this layer that, due to its stability, jet aircrafts fly. It holds the word ‘strata’ which means many layers. Kovalev and Eichinger (2004) mentioned that it “is characterized as stratified layer (hence, stratosphere)” (p.04) and that it acts as a lid because it prevents large storms and other weather from extending above the tropopause (the ending of the troposphere). Yet, air is an exception. Mcelroy (2002) noted that air enters the stratosphere from the troposphere and it returns to it. In addition, among the matters that are being turned back are the chlorine atoms and the nitrous oxide N_2O . The Committee on Chemistry and Physics of Ozone Depletion et al. (1982) stated: “A chlorine atom can affect recombination of between 10^4 and 10^5 ozone molecules during its lifetime in the stratosphere (on the order of two years) before it returns to the troposphere, mainly as hydrochloric acid (HCL). A similar situation holds for N_2O .” (p.19). Another example in this layer is the sulphuric acid which returns the radiations of the sun. Gill (2000) has reported that “the sulphuric acid in the stratosphere reflects solar radiation” (p.199).

Contained in the stratosphere, the ozone layer is a famous layer; for it has been receiving much attention in recent years as it intercepts and reflects harmful ultraviolet rays. Gillespie (2006) said: “The ozone is our sole defence against the middle ultraviolet” (p.03).

Barnes and Svarney (1999) have beheld the view that the ozone gas acts as a shield for the Earth’s surface as it obstructs the Sun’s damaging ultraviolet rays, and thus protects all living creatures and permits life to exist on Earth. Lydolph (1985) was of a similar opinion, “It is obvious that the ozonosphere is very important to life at bottom of the atmosphere because it filters out much of the harmful short wave radiation that could destroy living tissue.” (p.12). Filho (2011, p.614) clarified its importance illustrating with the next figure and saying that some sunrays were being reflected back into space thanks to the ozone layer; but, CO₂ had caused a hole in it; so, sunrays had been capable to penetrate and warm the earth.

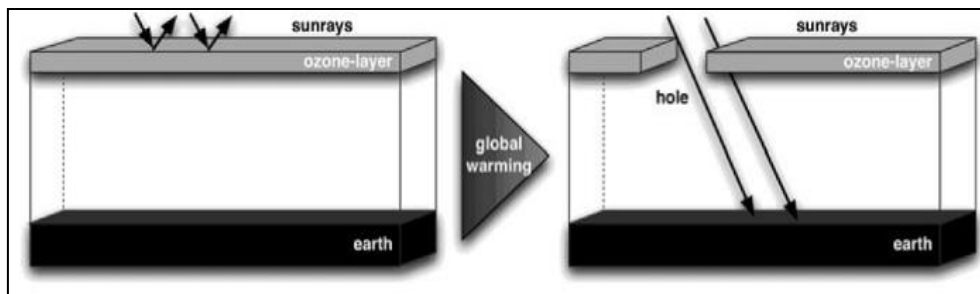


Figure 24: Warming by holes in the ozone layer

So, any weakening in this important layer or depletion of this gas, like the ozone layer hole, is considered a major danger and a gate to harmful matters from the space since it reduces or absents this returning protecting and filtrating function.

Next, the mesosphere is the layer that protects the Earth from the falling meteors (shooting stars) and rock fragments. Philander (2012) expressed that colliding with the gas particles contained in this layer, millions of meteors burn up daily. So, the falling objects are vaporized before they reach the ground resulting in a high concentration of iron and other metal atoms. Wang (2013) mentioned that there was a downward transport of meteoric aerosol from the mesosphere such as “Fe, Si, Mg, S, Ca, Ni, Al, Cr, Mu, Cl, K, Ti, and Co” (p.150). In fact, this goes well with the Qur’an’s reference to the sky as the origin of iron in surat Al-Hadid, verse 25: “...وَأَنْزَلْنَا الْحَدِيدَ...” which means that Allah sent down or brought down iron; yet, it is not appropriately translated in English as:“...And We brought forth iron..”.

Moreover, another layer to mention for the very same reason, the returning function, is the ionosphere which is very much like a satellite. The ionized particles reflect or make the radio waves from the Earth refract (bent) back toward it to different parts of the world just as a satellite. Pulinets and Boyarchuk (2004) confirmed that “the ionosphere has the ability to reflect radio waves”(p.24). Krebs (2003) explained that it acts “as a mirror ceiling that reflects radio and television waves back to Earth. A radio signal is first sent from Earth into the ionosphere, where it bounces back to Earth.”(p.212). So, thanks to it, the wireless communication, TV, and radio broadcasting are available.

Finally, there is the magnetosphere layer that extends beyond the atmosphere and which is formed by the magnetic field of the Earth. According to Barnes and Svarney (1999), Earth has a large magnetic field that is beneficial to humans as well as animals for determining the right direction for navigation. The best definition of this layer is likely to come from Van Allen, the discoverer of Earth’s radiation belts. He declared: “The magnetosphere is the region in which the earth’s magnetic field dominates space” (Cloud,1963,p.76). Through its magnetic forces, it is regarded as a true shield protecting the Earth. It excludes cosmic radiations, harmful radioactive particles and the solar wind. It reflects them back into the space before they scour the atmosphere and reach the Earth. Bertell (2001) has clarified that unless the Van Allen belts capture them, solar and cosmic particles can be hurled towards the Earth. Wolverton (2004) expressed his view as: “the magnetosphere serves to deflect the particles of the solar wind” (p.105). So as to appreciate the benefits of the existence of this magnetic field, Gilligan (2009) pointed out that its absence has some dreadful effects:

While the magnetosphere deflects most of the Sun’s plasma, some charged particles leak through it and become trapped. They also enter the magnetosphere through the funnel-like openings called ‘cusps’ over the north and south magnetic poles. When this happens, geomagnetic storms and substorms occur (the Aurora). Such solar storms would have a devastating impact on our planet if we were not shielded by the magnetic field. (p.206)

Here is a figure that displays the structure of the Earth's magnetosphere and shows the 'cusps' or the openings over the north and south magnetic poles.

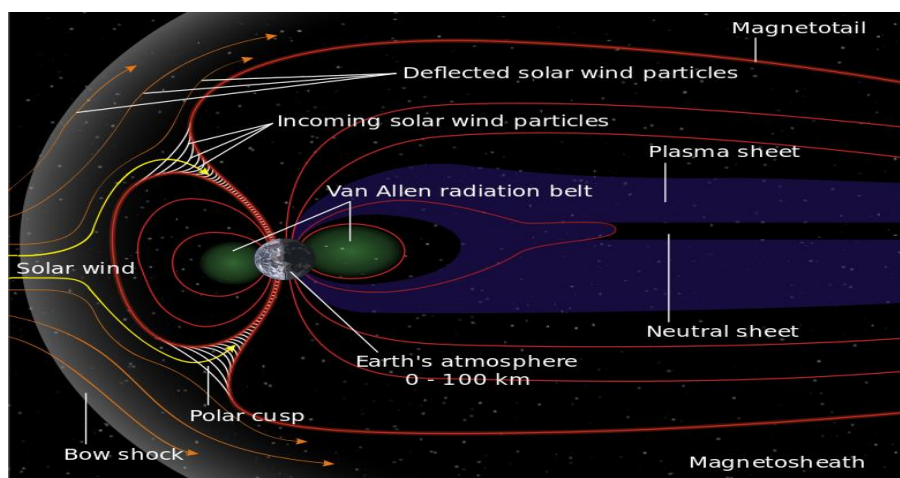


Figure 25: Structure of the Earth's Magnetosphere (Retrieved from: <http://www.physicscentral.org/buzz/blog/index.cfm?postid=2874827048706220762>)

To sum up, as discussed above, there is a variety of data and references that the word 'الرجع', in relation to the sky, may hold in its meaning; yet, this word has been underestimated in translation. Here is a table gathering its five translations.

4.1.1.5. Comparative Review of the Five Translations of the Word 'الرجع' (arradj3)

A	M	P	Y A	H & K
<i>ever-revolving</i>	<i>sends down rain</i>	<i>giveth the returning rain</i>	<i>returns (in its round)</i>	<i>gives rain, again and again</i>

Table 17: The Five Translations of the Word 'الرجع' (arradj3)

Investigating the translations, despite the fact that 'الرجع' 'arradj3' is a comprehensive term, it has been given a specific reference -rain. Three of the selected translations have shown a limited insight of their writers as they have reduced the meaning by introducing the word *rain*. In their English co-texts, Malik and 'Al-Hilali and Khan' have added after the word *sky* unneeded extra -parenthetical- information '(having rain clouds)'; while Malik has said that the sky *sends down rain*, Al-Hilali and Khan have transacted it as '*gives rain again*

and again'. Even though Pikthall and Yusuf Ali are the only ones who have mentioned the word 'return', the former has used archaic English 'giveth' -an inappropriate and unneeded use that might hinder understanding- and described rain as *returning*, and the latter has changed the grammatical category of the word to a verb and, for more clarification, for him, added just afterwards '*in its round*' which does more harm than benefit. However, a significant difference appeared in Asad's '*ever-revolving*' rendition which is very far from any of the provided explanations. Besides, he has written "*Consider the heavens...*" instead of "*By the heavens...*" which is not regarded as an oath, and thus faulty.

In short, all the translators have failed to provide the recommended rendition of the word 'الرجع' which is '*the return*' as a general term without any kind of reference specification. Most of them alike have restricted the designation of the word to refer only to *the rain*. While this was meant to make the matter clearer, it has limited the very broad scope of this term's meaning. Hence, these renditions are deemed to be inaccurate and unfaithful, for they have acknowledged only one choice of a wide range of possibilities.

All in all, it is a peerless system which is at work above us. It plays a crucial role in Earth's habitability. Allah the Exalted describes the seven skies as: "وَبَنَيْنَا فَوْقَكُمْ سَبْعًا شِدَادًا"; "*And We have built above you seven strong (heavens)*" (Annaba':12) and their creation as 'ayat', miracles, saying: "إِنَّ فِي خَلْقِ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَاخْتِلَافِ اللَّيْلِ وَالنَّهَارِ لَآيَاتٍ لِأُولِي الْأَلْبَابِ"; "*Verily! In the creation of the heavens and the earth, and in the alternation of night and day, there are indeed signs for men of understanding*"(Al-3imran:190). This system is a true miracle due to its multiple returning functions, for it serves as a shield or armour that protects Earth from the scorching sun, meteors, harmful rays...etc in addition to providing it with the suitable atmosphere, water, minerals...etc. Nonetheless, the English reader of the verse under discussion is deprived from all this variety of implied meanings due to reference restriction.

4.1.2. The Crack: (الصَّدْع)

Despite the fact that it is a short surah, the eighty-sixth chapter of the holy Qur'an, 'Surat Attariq', contains a number of scientific implications that are expressed in the sort of oaths so as to expose their great values. Exactly after the previously studied oath 'وَالسَّمَاءِ ذَاتِ الرَّجْعِ' "By the sky of the return", Allah, the Almighty, swore another oath 'وَالْأَرْضِ ذَاتِ الصَّدْعِ'. Here the earth has been mentioned with highlighting one of its properties, using a geological term, 'الصَّدْع', 'assad3'. The latter is a geological feature which is of a paramount significance and one of the signs (ayat) of the Creator.

قال الله عز وجل: { وَالْأَرْضِ ذَاتِ الصَّدْعِ }

[Surah 86, Attariq, 'Meccan', Ayah: 12]

4.1.2.1. The Five Translations of the Verse 12 of Surah 86 (Table 18)

A	and the earth, <i>bursting forth with plants!</i>
M	and by the earth which is <i>ever bursting with new growth.</i>
P	And the earth which <i>splitteth (with the growth of trees and plants).</i>
YA	And by the Earth which <i>opens out (for the gushing of springs or the sprouting of vegetation).</i>
H & K	And the earth which <i>splits (with the growth of trees and plants).</i>

4.1.2.2. Exegetical Interpretations of the Verse 12 of Surat Attariq

- ❖ **Al Jalalayn:** and (by) the earth of fissures, splitting with (the growth of) vegetation. (p.740).
- ❖ **Ibn Kathir:** (And the earth which splits) Ibn Abbas said, "Splitting to bring forth plant growths" This was also said by Sa'id bin Jubayr, Ikrimah, Abu Malik, Ad-Dahhak, Al-Hasan, Qatadah, As-Suddi and others. (p.5541).

4.1.2.3. The Linguistic Meanings

Allah made an oath, 'by the Earth of 'الصَّدْع' , referring to the splitting mechanism of the Earth. For it is not bound by time, this 'sad3' is characterized as being a persisting quality or an ongoing process. 'الأَرْض' 'al-ard' could hold the meaning of the soil, the ground or the Earth as a planet. 'ذَاتِ' 'thati' means 'having the property of'. 'الصَّدْع' 'assad3' refers to 'الشق' or 'الانفراج', which means any split, crack, rift, cleft, fissure or fault that occurs in solid objects without making a complete separation. However, it can also come with the meaning of separation or division like in Allah's saying: "يَوْمَئِذٍ يَصَّدَّعُونَ"; "...On that Day men shall be divided [(in two groups), a group in Paradise and a group in Hell" (Arrum:43).

4.1.2.3.1. Exegetical Interpretations of the Verse 43 of Surat Arrum

- ❖ **Al Jalalayn:** On that day they shall be sundered yassadda'una the original ta' (yatasadda'una) has been assimilated with the sad that is they will be split into separate groups after the Reckoning destined for Paradise or the Fire. (p.467).
- ❖ **Ibn Kathir:** (On that Day men shall be divided.) means, they will be separated, with one group in Paradise and another in Hell. (p.3903).

In the above exegeses, 'yassadda3un' has been explained in accordance with its denotation, but also with some implications, like the division into two and the final destination of each group, that have not been explicitly expressed in the genuine message. For the same reason, the word has been evaluated as being perfectly and more faithfully rendered in English in only Asad's and Pikhall's translations as it is shown in the following table.

4.1.2.3.2. The Five Translations of the Word 'يَصَّدَّعُونَ' (yassadda3un)

A	M	P	YA	H & K
<i>all will be sundered</i>	<i>they shall be divided in two groups</i>	<i>mankind will be sundered</i>	<i>shall men be divided (in two)</i>	<i>men shall be divided [(in two groups), a group in Paradise and a group in Hell</i>

Table 19: The Five Translations of the Word 'يَصَّدَّعُونَ' (yassadda3un)

Concerning the same meaning, the splitting, another designation has been used - 'الشق'.

The Ever Providing used a polyptoton saying: “*ثُمَّ شَقَقْنَا الْأَرْضَ شَقًّا*” (3abassa:26).

4.1.2.3.3. Exegetical Interpretations of the Verse 26 of Surat 3abassa

- ❖ **Al Jalalayn:** then We split the earth into fissures with vegetation. (p.726).
- ❖ **Ibn Kathir:** (And We split the earth in clefts.) meaning, ‘We cause it (the water) to settle in it (the earth), and it enters into its boundaries, and mingles with the parts of the seeds that are left in the earth. From this the seeds grow, rise up and appear on the surface of the earth (in the form of vegetation). (p.5447).

4.1.2.3.4. The Five Translations of “*ثُمَّ شَقَقْنَا الْأَرْضَ شَقًّا*” (thumma shaqaqna al-arda shaqqa)

A	M	P	Y A	H & K
<i>and then We cleave the earth [with new growth], cleaving it asunder</i>	<i>and cleave the soil asunder</i>	<i>Then split the earth in clefts</i>	<i>And We split the earth in fragments</i>	<i>And We Split the earth in clefts</i>

Table 20: The Five Translations of “*ثُمَّ شَقَقْنَا الْأَرْضَ شَقًّا*” (thumma shaqaqna al-arda shaqqa)

Taking into consideration the verses following the verse 26, which are about some kinds of vegetation and fruits, ‘الأرض’ is obviously having the meaning of the soil, but it is not explicitly mentioned in the verse itself. Asad has interpreted this ayah with relation to vegetation while Malik has selected the word ‘soil’ to serve as a substitute for ‘الأرض’. Dissimilar to these, the other translators have confined their renditions to the exact meaning provided by the verse without any additions or implications, which is regarded as more faithful to the original. Yet, the polyptoton as a rhetoric tool does not appear as such in all the English versions except for the one of Asad as it is shown in the table above.

Concerning the word under discussion, ‘الصَّدْع’, it is a geological general term including any kind of cracks without any precise explicit specification or detailing. So, as the small spaces reserved for plants to come to the surface while growing is one possible instance, the

huge splits affecting the shape of the crust is another. Regarding the word's definite singular form "الصدع", the question, then, is the following: is it possible for a giant split or crack that could be a qualitative trait describing the planet Earth to exist?

4.1.2.4. Possible Scientific Implications

In a recent time, science has discovered giant cracks or faults, formed throughout the years, splitting and cleaving the Earth. A definition of fault in the oxford dictionary is: "An extended break in a rock formation, marked by the relative displacement and discontinuity of strata on either side of a particular plane"(1998, p.637). At present, the Earth's crust is not a single piece. The surface of the Earth has been fractured or broken up into giant pieces or blocks, introduced only in 1960 under the name 'plate tectonics'. According to Price et al. (2013), the surface of the Earth is in fact broken into six large and many smaller rigid parts called plate tectonics, "like a huge cracked sphere" (p.16). Frisch et al. (2011) under the title *Plate tectonics- a change in the paradigm of the geosciences* have stated that: "Earth's tectonic system concerns the movement of the lithosphere, the relatively brittle outermost solid Earth, which consists of a mosaic of independent plates" (p.01).

The theory of plate tectonics was formulated by combining two pre-existing theories: *The Continental Drift* and *the Seafloor Spreading*. The former, was developed in the early twentieth century, states that over time the continents drifted apart. So, it refers to the displacement of continents relative to one another and to the sea, which is the case of the one land mass 'Pangaea' that has been divided into different parts, drifted apart to constitute the present-day continents. The overwhelming evidence to support this theory is the jigsaw fit of these continents. However, the latter refers to the splitting apart of the large slabs of Earth's lithosphere in the sea floor. So, it is the same mechanism as the former but related to ocean basins. In fact, studies revealed that Earth is virtually encircled by undersea mountain ranges or oceanic ridges called mid-ocean ridges; the best one known is the mid-Atlantic

ridge. According to Fullagar and West (2011), ridges occur on all the world's seafloors and along the crest of each of them there is a crack or series of cracks, called 'the rift valley' where the plates are being pulled apart. They (2011) mentioned that magma rises, even to Earth's surface, wherever there is weakness in Earth's crust, as at the rift valley. When cooling, this magma forms rocks that lead to a new addition in the lithosphere. This hypothesis of the new addition is evidenced by the increasing age of rocks when moving away in both directions from the ridges. The following sketch (in Fullagar and West,2011,p.193) shows a rift valley at the top of a mid-ocean ridge. Regarding the ages of the rocks, the ones that are directly below the rift valley are the youngest, then it comes the rocks of the category C, B and then A (the oldest).

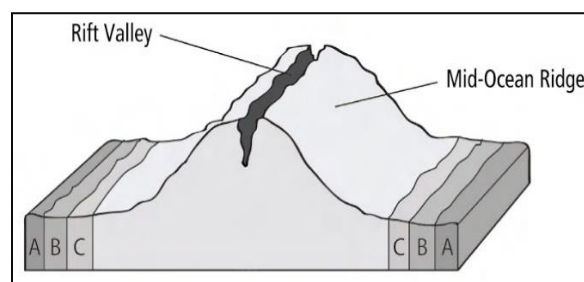


Figure 26: A cross-section of a mid-ocean ridge

The same source (p.195) has provided an overview figure of a cross-section of a mid-ocean ridge (e.g. Mid-Atlantic Ridge) showing oceanic and continental crust: lithospheric plates, two continents and the seafloor.

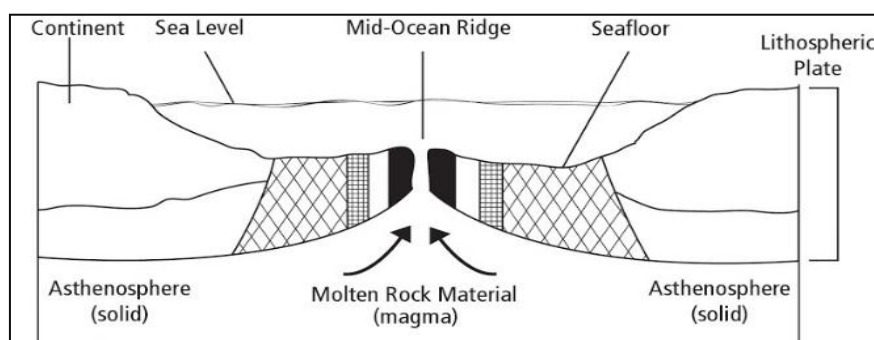


Figure 27: Cross-section of a mid-ocean ridge (e.g., Mid-Atlantic Ridge)

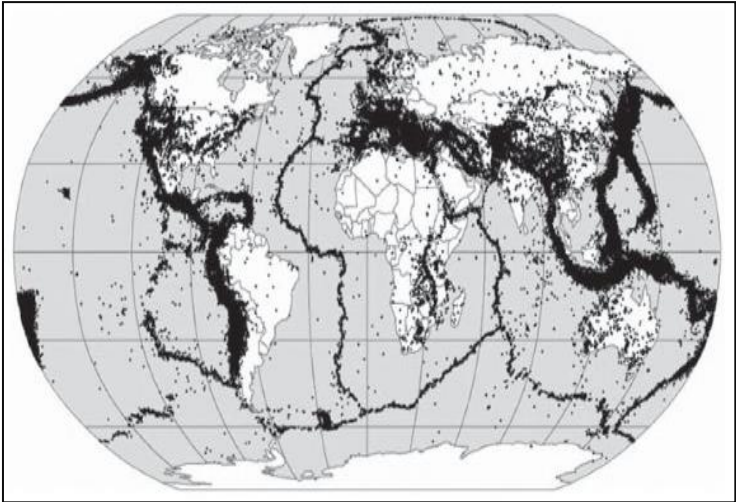
As a matter of fact, these plates slide over the underlying mantle of a speed of fingernails growing. According to Price et al. (2013), the thickness of plates is about 100 km and they include both continents and ocean basins and are moving in various directions at rates varying from ~1 to 10 cm per year, or about as fast as fingernails grow. Scientists believe that the movement of the tectonic plates and their interactions, diverging or converging, influence the formation of landforms and the occurrence of natural disasters. In the opinion of Fanchi (2010), there are forces that originate in the earth's interior that are the cause of the movement of the plates which in turn can cause, by pulling apart or colliding, the geologic activities as volcanic eruptions, earthquakes, and mountain range formation. Price et al. (2013) clarified that:

Where plates pull apart, new volcanic material fills the void, but where they come together, one oceanic plate dives beneath the other and is absorbed back into the Earth. If the second plate is a continent, its rocks are commonly squeezed and buckled up into mountains. (p.16)

So, cracks can form mountains which are the stabilizers of the earth as seen before; hence, they indirectly contribute to earth equilibrium. Also, to ensure the latter, sometimes some parts of the earth, over time, receive more heavy loads than it could hold; thus, the cracks happen and if not, the crust would dangerously bend towards those heavy parts. In addition to the balance effect, there are other consequences of cracks. According to Fanchi (2010), the movement and position of tectonic plates caused extensive environmental changes, including global sea level, atmospheric changes, and thus the biosphere is also affected in that plants and animals may thrive in one set of conditions, or the opposite.

In effect, the different cracks of the Earth are interconnected in a manner that resembles a net or a web. In other words, the Earth is a holder of one huge split that intersects with itself in many points. Since the boundaries of the tectonic plates are the most dynamic areas in the world, as stated by Frisch et al. (2011), to identify this huge crack, it is encouraged to trace

the locations of the geological disasters over the years. The following figure (in Chester, 2008, p.77) displays the global distribution of earthquakes between 1963 and 1998 showing the different splits throughout the world. So, if we keep track of the locations of these tectonic events or fissures, we notice that they are connected forming a net, or structuring one major split with branches. This global split is framing the crust and surrounding the globe.



*Figure 28: Preliminary Determination of Epicenters
358,214 Events, 1963-1998*

Consequently, over the years, the impact of the numerous geological events that are associated with the different kinds of fissures has as a result the presence or the formation of the tectonic plates. Here is a figure (in Schettino, 2015, p.47) showing the present day structure or the framework of the major fault system divided into plates. There are 23 major plates, 42 triple junctions (red circles), and 63 plate boundaries (green lines).

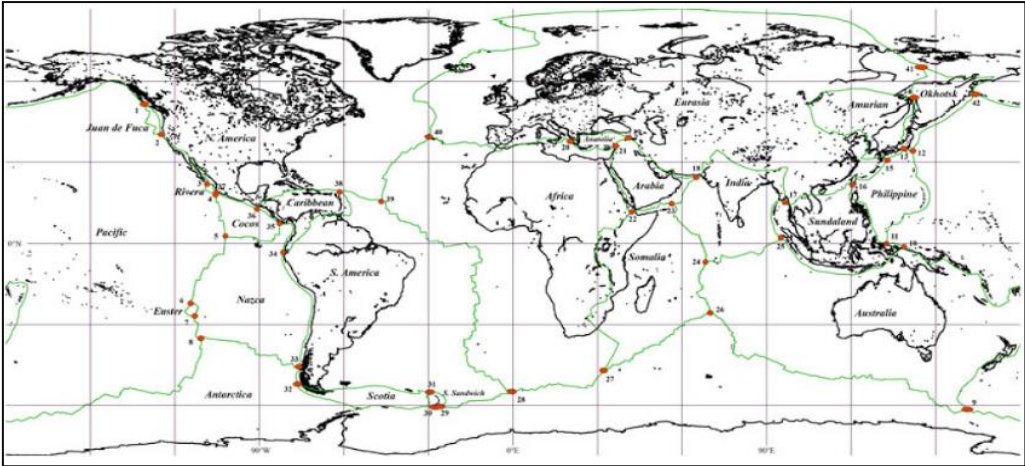


Figure 29: Modern plate tectonic configuration and triple junctions

For more visibility, the next figure is a simplified version, with more clarity, of the major tectonic plates.

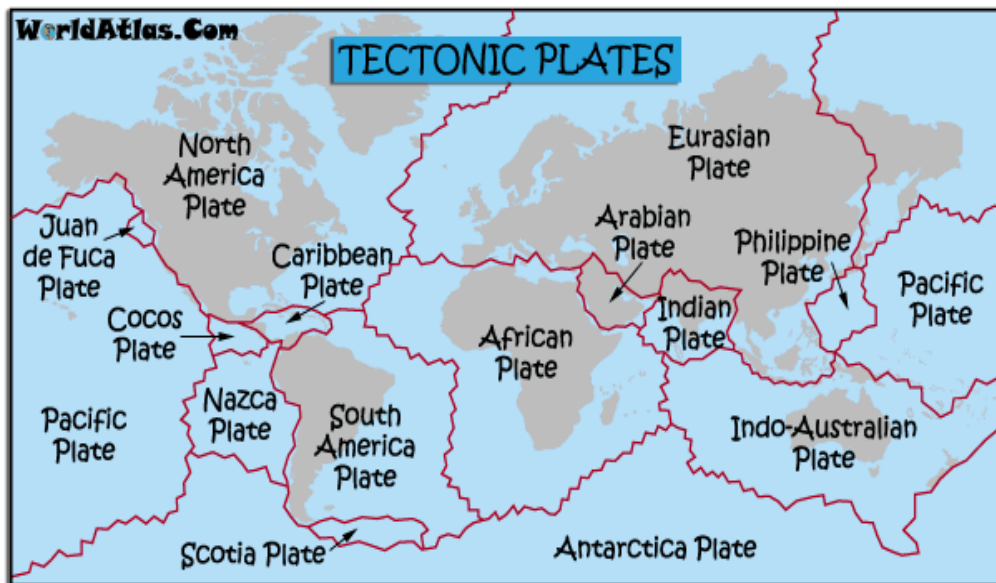


Figure 30: Tectonic Plates. Retrieved from: <http://coolgeography.co.uk/GCSE/Year11/Managing%20Hazards/Tectonics/tectonic.gif>

To sum up, as is visually evident, in the three figures, the result of the long term tectonic events (historical seismicity and volcanism), the geological figure of the crust is divided into giant plates (there are also micro plates) that form one gigantic ramified split infiltrating the globe crust.

4.1.2.5. Comparative Review of the Five Translations of the Word ‘الصَّدْعُ’

(assad3)

A	M	P	YA	H & K
<i>bursting forth with plants</i>	<i>ever bursting with new growth</i>	<i>splitteth (with the growth of trees and plants)</i>	<i>opens out (for the gushing of springs or the sprouting of vegetation)</i>	<i>splits (with the growth of trees and plants)</i>

Table 21: The Five Translations of the Word ‘الصَّدْعُ’ (assad3)

The table illustrates an unfortunate fact that when exploring the English versions, no trace or reference to the information that has been discussed has been found. Examining the accuracy of this word's different renditions, it is observed that all the translators, without exception, though with different word selections have mentioned -either directly or between parentheses- only one meaning. It is the one that is related to the area or the fissure made by plants to appear on the ground while growing; without pointing out to the previously mentioned reasonable possible significance. This translations' specification does not apply to the Qur'anic word, for the reason that no restriction whatsoever is welcomed here; i.e. considering this Arabic word which is a general term, any constriction or limitation of its meanings or references is not only redundant but also unfaithful.

Finally, Earth is a dynamic planet that has a mechanical behaviour resulting in different cracks. Considering their sizes, while the smallest fissures are the ones created for the emergence of plants at the level of the soil, the bigger ones form when the crust is torn open as a result of volcanoes or earthquakes (forming over the years a single crack that is a trait characterizing our planet). In fact, any sort of fissure can be included under the concept 'الصَّدْع' and is likely having great impacts on life on Earth, either positive or negative, to the extent deserving being a divine oath. Nevertheless, this concept in translation seems less valuable than the original in that its meaning has been deliberately constricted to vegetations' fissures which, by the way, should not be underestimated as they are fundamental to preserve life by providing food through plants. The reason behind this is that the exegetes, followed by the translators, have based their interpretations on the possible correlation between this verse and the one before, i.e. limiting the attribute 'arraj3' to only the returning rain and 'assad3' to only the meaning related to vegetation; but this is not explicitly expressed in the genuine discourse.

4.2. Inimitability (Miraculousness) in Polysemy

4.2.1. The Lowest Land: (أَدْنَى الْأَرْضِ)

The holly Qur'an contains a lot of miracles of various entities, and future predictions are one of them. As this wondrous Book provided a lot of information about previous peoples and many historical accounts, one aspect of its miraculoussness is also to reveal some important events beforehand. Among the prophecies that were predicted to happen before its occurrence is the one that is mentioned at the beginning of surat Arrum which included, regarding the time of these verses revelation, both past and future events. Allah, the All Knowing, said:

{الم (01) غَلَبَتِ الرُّومُ (02) فِي أَدْنَى الْأَرْضِ وَهُمْ مِنْ بَعْدِ غَلَبِهِمْ سَيَغْلِبُونَ (03) فِي بَضْعِ سِنِينَ... (04)}

[Surah 30, Arrum, 'Meccan', Ayah: (01-02-03-04)]

4.2.1.1. The Five Translations of the Verses 1,2,3 and 4 of Surat Arrum (Table 22)

A	Alif. Lam. Mim, defeated have been the Byzantines, in <u>the lands close-by</u> ; yet it is they who, notwithstanding this, their defeat, shall be victorious, within a few years...
M	Alif Lam M'im, the Romans have been defeated (by the Persians, in Syria -A.D.615; the Prophet Muhammad's sympathies were with the Romans who were Christians, while the pagan Arabs were on the side of the Persians who were idol worshippers), in <u>the neighboring land</u> , but they, after this defeat, will soon be victorious, within a few years.
P	Alif. Lam. Mim, the Romans have been defeated, in <u>the nearer land</u> , and they, after their defeat will be victorious, within ten years...
Y A	Alif Lam Mim, the Roman Empire has been defeated, in <u>a land close by</u> ; but they (even) after (this) defeat of theirs will soon be victorious. Within a few years.
H & K	Alif-Lam-Mim, [These letters are one of the miracles of the Qur'an, and none but Allah (Alone) knows their meanings], the Romans have been defeated, in <u>the nearer land (Syria, Iraq, Jordan, and Palestine)</u> , and they, after their defeat, will be victorious, within three to nine years.

4.2.1.2. Exegetical Interpretations of the Verses 1,2,3 and 4 of Surat Arrum

❖ **Al Jalalayn:** (30:01) Alif lam mim: God knows best what He means by these letters. (30:02) The Byzantines -who are among the People of the Scripture- have been vanquished; the Persians vanquished them and they are not people of a scripture but worship graven images. The Meccan disbelievers rejoiced in this defeat of the Byzantines and said to the Muslims ‘We shall vanquish you as the Persians vanquished the Byzantines’; (30:03) in the nearer part of the land, that is, in the Byzantine land that lies nearest to Persia in Mesopotamia (al-Jazira). There the two armies met and the Persians were the ones who had begun the invasion. But they that is the Byzantines after their vanquishing *ghalabihim* the verbal noun *ghalab* has been annexed to the direct object *hum* in other words *ghalabatu faris iyyahum* ‘the Persians’ vanquishing of them’ shall be the victors, over the Persians. (30:04) in a few years bid’ usually means between three and nine or ten years. So the two armies met again seven years after this former encounter and the Byzantines defeated the Persians. (p.461-462).

❖ **Ibn Kathir:** He said (Ibn Abbas): the idolators wanted the Persians to prevail over the Romans, because they were idol worshippers, and the Muslims wanted the Romans to prevail over the Persians, because they were People of the Book. This was mentioned to Abu Bakr, who mentioned it to the Messenger of Allah. The Messenger of Allah said: «أَمَّا إِنَّهُمْ سَيَغْلِبُونَ» (They will certainly prevail.) Abu Bakr mentioned this to the idolators, and they said, “Set a time limit for that, and if we prevail, we will get such and such; and if you prevail, you will get such and such.” So he set a limit of five years, and they (the Romans) did not prevail. Abu Bakr mentioned that to the Messenger of Allah and he said: «أَلَا جَعَلْتَهَا إِلَى دُونَ أَرَاهُ قَالَ: الْعَشْرُ» (Why do you not make it less than ten) }I (the narrator) think he meant less than ten(. Sa`id bin Jubayr said: “Bid’ means less than ten.” Then the Romans were victorious. (p.3873).

Note: The bet had been made before it was forbidden.

4.2.1.3. The Linguistic Meanings

While ‘غَلِبَتِ الرُّومُ’ ‘*the Romans have been defeated*’ was then a past event, the future desired prophecy was: ‘وَهُمْ مِنْ بَعْدِ غَلِبِهِمْ سَيَغْلِبُونَ’; ‘*and they, after their defeat, will be victorious*’. According to Assabuni in *Safwat Attafassir* (1981), (translated by the author of this dissertation), it was mentioned that there had been a war between the Persians and the Romans (the Byzantines) in which the Persians were defeaters; and unlike the disbelievers of

Mecca, when the news reached the Prophet (peace be upon him) and his companions, they felt sorrowful, for the Romans were people of a revealed scripture; yet, the Persians were Magians. In other words, the disbelievers of Quraysh wanted the Persians to defeat the Romans; however, Muslims were inclined towards the Christians to prevail over the Magians. When the people of Mecca, then, were mocking the Muslims who were seriously distressed and aggrieved by the result of that war, Allah, for consoling the Prophet and his companions, revealed the wished for prophecy (The Persians fleeing from the Romans swords).

‘في أدنى الأرض’: The word ‘أدنى’ ‘adna’ is an adjective for the noun ‘الدنو’ ‘addunuw’. The verb is ‘دنا - يدنو’ ‘dana-yadnu’ designating ‘to approach’ or ‘to be close or near’. Since the word ‘أدنى’ ‘adna’ is in the form of ‘af3al’ followed by the word ‘الأرض’ ‘al-ard’, it is a superlative adjective; hence, the resultant meaning is the closest or the nearest land. Ashawkani (2016) has stated: “ومعنى 'في أدنى الأرض' في أقرب أرضهم من أرض العرب' أو في أقرب أرض: ” (p.215). It means in the part of their land that is close to the Arabs land or in the part of the Arabs land that is close to them. Concerning the exact location of the battle, ‘أدنى الأرض’, Ibn Kathir (in Abdul-Rahman, 2009) has mentioned Syria, Iraq, Jordan, and Palestine and then has written:

until the Romans prevailed between Adhr’at (ash-Sham) and Busra, according to what was stated by Ibn Abbas, Ikrimah and others. This is a place on the edge of Ash-Sham, along the border with Al-Hijaz. Mujahid said, “That was a place in the Arabian Peninsula which is closer to the land of the Romans than to Persia”. And Allah knows best. (p. 36)

Connolly et al. (1998) in *The Hutchinson Dictionary of Ancient and Medieval Warfare* have mentioned the foretold victory’s exact time and place as: “in 622, in the successful Byzantine counterattack, led by Heraclius, against the Persians in Syria and Egypt” (p.162).

‘في بضع سنين’: the proclaimed prediction of the Romans victory indeed came true after only several years (‘بضع’ ‘bid3’ is said to mean from three to nine years) as exactly as Allah

had promised. The promise of Allah surely has to come to pass, and of course this is one of the proofs of the Qur'an's authenticity.

In spite of the fact that the exegetes were all of the same standpoint that 'أَدْنَى' 'adna' means the nearest, it has another meaning which they disregarded maybe for the sole reason that they were of no knowledge of the coming geological fact. So, it didn't come to their minds that this word can accept a second denotation in this context. Linguistically speaking, the term 'أَدْنَى' has also the meaning of 'being low' or 'being depressed'. Precisely, 'أَدْنَى' can also mean 'the lowest land' or 'the most depressed land'. Here are some instances where the word under study holds this meaning:

1- In Surat Al-A3raf, Ayah 169: “فَخَلَفَ مِنْ بَعْدِهِمْ خَلْفٌ وَرِثُوا الْكِتَابَ يَأْخُذُونَ عَرَضَ هَذَا الْأَدْنَى...”
 “Then after them succeeded an (evil) generation, which inherited the Book, but they chose (for themselves) the goods of this **low** life (evil pleasures of this world)...”.

4.2.1.3.1. Exegetical Interpretations of the Verse 169 of Surat Al-A3raf

The exegetical interpretations of 'يَأْخُذُونَ عَرَضَ هَذَا الْأَدْنَى' are:

- ❖ **Al Jalalayn:** choosing the transient things of this inferior life that is the ephemeral aspects of this lowly thing that the world is in the way of what is lawful and what is unlawful.(p.178).
- ❖ **Ibn Kathir:** Mujahid commented on Allah's statement, (يَأْخُذُونَ عَرَضَ هَذَا الْأَدْنَى) (They chose (for themselves) the goods of this low life) “They will consume anything they can consume in this life, whether legally or illegally...”. (p.1864).

4.2.1.3.2. The Five Translations of the Word 'الأدنى' (al-adna) (Table 23)

A	M	P	YA	H & K
<i>lower</i>	<i>nether</i>	<i>low</i>	/	<i>low</i>

2- In Surat Al-Baqara, Ayah 61: “...قَالَ أَسْتَبْدِلُونَ الَّذِي هُوَ أَدْنَىٰ بِالَّذِي هُوَ خَيْرٌ...”; “He said, “Would you exchange that which is better for that which is **lower**?...”.

4.2.1.3.3. Exegetical Interpretations of the Verse 61 of Surat Al-Baqara

❖ **Al Jalalayn:** he Moses said to them ‘Would you exchange what is better more noble that is do you substitute this with what is lowlier?’ (p.12).

❖ **Ibn Kathir:** (He said, “Would you exchange that which is better for that which is lower”) criticized the Jews for asking for inferior foods, although they were living an easy life, eating tasty, beneficial and pure food. (p.206).

4.2.1.3.4. The Five Translations of the Word ‘أَدْنَى’ (adna) (Table 24)

A	M	P	Y A	H & K
<i>lesser</i>	<i>the worse</i>	<i>lower</i>	<i>the worse</i>	<i>lower</i>

Obviously, both of the exegetes and the translators have dealt with the words ‘الأدنى’ and ‘أَدْنَى’ as having the basic meaning ‘low’ instead of the meaning ‘close or near’.

4.2.1.4. Possible Scientific Implications

As a point of geological fact, it has been discovered that the place in question is undoubtedly the lowest-lying land, i.e. the lowest point or the most depressed land on Earth. It is called the Dead Sea Depression and located along the borders of Palestine, Jordan and Syria. It has an elevation of approximately 420 meters below the sea level. Migon (2010) wrote that: “The Dead Sea is a hypersaline, dense terminal lake, lying 422 m below sea level in the lowest continental depression on the earth” (p.246). Recently, when answering a question about this subject, Tucci (2017) confirmed that the world’s lowest point was at the shore of the Dead Sea on the border of Palestine, Israel, and Jordan and it is 1378 feet (420 meters) below sea level. So as to emphasize the superiority of this area regarding its unsurpassed level of depression, the data provided in (Jha, 2016, p.74) (not in the form of a table) have been gathered and arranged in the following table to facilitate the comparison between the lowest points on the continents.

The Lowest Points on the Continents	The depression below sea level (feet / meters)
The World (and Asia): Dead Sea shore, Israel-Jordan	(1369 / 417,5)
Africa: Lake Assal, Djibouti	(512 / 156)
South America: Laguna del Carbon (located between Puerto San Julian and Comandante Luis Piedra Buena in the province of Santa Cruz)	(344 / 105)
North America: Death Valley, California	(282 / 86)
Europe: Caspian Sea shore, Russia-Iran-Turkmenistan,Azerbaijan	(92 / 28)
Australia: Lake Eyre	(52 / 12)
Western Europe: Tie: Lemmefjord, Denmark and Prins Alexander Polder, Netherlands	(23 / 07)
Antarctica: The Bentley Subglacial trench <i>BUT</i> it is covered with ice: if Antarctica’s ice were to melt, exposing the trench, it would be covered by sea so it is a quasi-lowest point and if one ignores the reality of the ice, it is the lowest point “on land” on the earth.	Approximately (8333 / 2540)

Table 25: The Lowest Points on the Continents

Well, the place under discussion has been illustrated with numbers as being the most depressed land on Earth. Now let’s see if this splendid piece of information exists in the renditions of the selected translators.

4.2.1.5. Comparative Review of the Five Translations of the Word ‘أَدْنَى’ (adna)

A	M	P	Y A	H & K
<i>close-by</i>	<i>the neighboring</i>	<i>the nearer</i>	<i>close by</i>	<i>the nearer land (Syria, Iraq, Jordan, and Palestine)</i>

Table 26: The Five Translations of the Word ‘أَدْنَى’ (adna)

Even though this word has been exegeted and translated in other contexts as having the sense ‘low’, no attention has been paid to this designation of the term in this verse, as shown in the table. As a matter of fact, both meanings can be accepted in this context; yet, all the translators have conveyed only one meaning with different wordings. To begin with, Pikhall and ‘Al-Hilali and Khan’ have opted for ‘*the nearer*’ as a comparative form, and the latter ones have specified the exact place to be *Syria, Iraq, Jordan, and Palestine*. Next, Asad and Yusuf Ali have provided the same adjective ‘*close by*’. Finally, Malik has paraphrased the same idea writing ‘*the neighbouring*’. So, as it is obvious, all the renditions are around the same denotation which is the closeness of the land; yet, no one has used the superlative form. According to historical accounts, this meaning of being the closest land is indeed correct. Besides, the second one ‘the lowest land’ that is a recent geological finding is also valid; yet, missing in all the selected translations. This is deemed to be incomprehensive and, thus, unfaithful to the genuine message as this signification should be subjoined in their renditions.

To sum up, the beginning of surat Arrum has carried, verily, not only one miracle but four: the event itself ‘the foretelling victory of the Romans’, its time within several years, the location that is, on the one hand, the closest land, and on the other hand, the most depressed point on Earth; for the Arabic word is a polysemous word. The proclaimed victory of this historical event finally came true though the triumph seemed to be impossible as the Roman kingdom was expected to fall let it to be victorious later and in just several years. This happened in ‘أَدْنَى الْأَرْضِ’, which one of its meanings is the most depressed spot on Earth -the Dead Sea shore- which is a surprising recent discovery. So, it is one of the many instances of the infinite knowledge of God, which without the modern techniques and equipment of measurements would not have been revealed. Though, particularly in this verse, neither of the two meanings can be ruled out, it is replaced by all the translators by only ‘a near-by’ place.

4.2.2. The Black Holes: (الْخُنَّسُ - الْجَوَارِ الْكُنَّسُ)

Though it was revealed centuries ago, the Qur'an has addressed the age of science and technology. It has referred to many recent scientific findings; one of which is one of the most astonishing celestial phenomena -the black holes (discovered only in 1967). The wondrous thing is that the employed concepts to describe the properties or the special behaviours of these astronomical entities are very much close to the subject matter related Qur'anic words; yet, the latter ones are more precise and more accurate. If the black holes are the intended reference, this can undeniably be one of the clear manifestations of Qur'an's miraculousness.

قال الله عز وجل: { فَلَا أُقْسِمُ بِالْخُنَّسِ (15) الْجَوَارِ الْكُنَّسِ (16) }

[Surah 81, Attakwir, 'Meccan', Ayahs: (15-16)]

4.2.2.1. The Five Translations of the Verses 15-16 of Surat Attakwir (Table 27)

A	But nay! I call to witness <i>the revolving stars</i> , the planets that run their course and <i>set</i> .
M	But no! I swear by <i>the retreating stars</i> ; that run their course and <i>hide</i> .
P	Oh, but I call to witness <i>the planets</i> , the stars which rise and <i>set</i> .
Y A	So verily I call to witness <i>the planets that recede</i> , Go straight or <i>hide</i> .
H & K	So verily, I swear by <i>the planets that recede (i.e. disappear during the day and appear during the night)</i> , And by the planets that move swiftly and <i>hide themselves</i> .

4.2.2.2. Exegetical Interpretations of the Verses 15 and 16 of Surat Attakwir

❖ **Al Jalalayn:** (81:15): So I swear (fa-la: la is extra) by the receding [planets]. (81:16): the movers, the setters, that is, the five planets: Saturn, Jupiter, Mars, Venus and Mercury (takhnusu means 'they sink away' during their orbit, whereas we see stars at the end of their zodiacal course return to the start; taknisu means that they enter their kinas 'hideaway' in other words they retreat into their setting-places).(p.728-729).

❖ **Ibn Kathir:** Ibn Jarir recorded from Khalid bin 'Ar 'arah that he heard Ali being asked about the Ayah; (لَا أُقْسِمُ بِالْخُنَّسِ الْجَوَارِ الْكُنَّسِ) (Nay! I swear by Al-Khunnas, Al-Jawar Al-

Kunnas) and he said, “These are the stars that withdraw (disappear) during the day and sweep across the sky (appear) at night.” (p.5487).

4.2.2.3. The Linguistic Meanings of ‘فَلَا أُقْسِمُ بِالْخُنَّسِ’

‘فَلَا أُقْسِمُ’ literally denotes “I don’t swear”; yet, this negative form implies ‘I swear’ and ‘لا’ is considered extra. Linguistically speaking, ‘الْخُنَّسِ’ ‘al-khunnas’ are the doers of the action ‘الخنس’ ‘alkhans’ that can hold the meaning of ‘withdrawing, hiding, disappearing, retreating, recoiling, vanishing and concealing’ and also ‘contracting, shrinking or becoming smaller’. On account of one of his repeated actions, ‘الخنس’ ‘al-khans’, Satan is described in Qur’an as being ‘الْخَنَّاسِ’: “مِنْ شَرِّ الْوَسْوَاسِ الْخَنَّاسِ”; “From the evil of the whisperer (devil who whispers evil in the hearts of men) who withdraws (from his whispering in one’s heart after one remembers Allah)” (Annas:04).

4.2.2.3.1. Exegetical Interpretations of the Verse 04 of Surat Annas

❖ **Al Jalalayn:** from the evil of the slinking whisperer, Satan - he is referred to by the name of the action (waswasa) on account of his repeated engaging in it -who slinks (away) and recoils from the heart whenever God is mentioned.(p.768).

❖ **Ibn Kathir:** (The whisperer (Al-Waswas) who withdraws.) “The devil who is squatting (perched) upon the heart of the Son of Adam. So when he becomes absentminded and heedless he whispers. Then, when he remembers Allah he withdraws.” Mujahid and Qatadah also said this. Al-Mu’tamir bin Sulayman reported that his father said, “It has been mentioned to me that Shaytan is Al-Waswas. He blows into the heart of the Son of Adam when he is sad and when he is happy. But when he (man) remembers Allah, Shaytan withdraws.” (p.5697).

4.2.2.3.2. Comparative Review of the Five Translations of the Word ‘الْخَنَّاسِ’

(Alkhannas)

A	M	P	Y A	H & K
<i>elusive</i>	<i>the slinking</i>	<i>the sneaking</i>	<i>who withdraws (after his whisper)</i>	<i>who withdraws(from his whispering in one’s heart after one remembers Allah)</i>

Table 28: The Five Translations of the Word ‘الْخَنَّاسِ’ (Alkhannas)

The above table exhibits the different translations of the word ‘الْخَنَّاسُ’ which is another instance that is not getting a fair translation. Unlike Asad, Malik, and Pikhall who have used for characterization ‘*elusive*’, ‘*the slinking*’ and ‘*the sneaking*’ respectively, it is brought to the attention of any reviewer that Yusuf Ali and ‘Al-Hilali and Khan’ have changed the word class of the original word to a verb -‘*withdraws*’. Regarding the meaning, all the translators and exegetes have designated Satan by the same attribute ‘the withdrawing’ or the like, while radically absenting the other one which is the ‘contraction’ in a context that could well deliver both meanings.

4.2.2.4. The Linguistic Meanings of ‘الْجَوَارِ الْكُنَّسُ’

‘الْجَوَارِ’ ‘aldjawari’ means those that run, i.e. the runners. ‘الْكُنَّسُ’ ‘alkunnas’ is derived from the verb ‘كنس’ ‘kanasa’ which signifies ‘to sweep’ or ‘to clean using a besom, a sweeper, a vacuum or a broom’. In Lissan Al-Arab, “كنست النجوم تكنس كنوسا: استمرت في مجاريها ثم انصرفت” “راجعة” means that the stars had kept going in their paths, and then returned back. This term is also used when speaking about animals returning to their shelters so as to hide.

4.2.2.5. Possible Scientific Implications

Astrophysics has revealed that as the stars age, they change their nature. At their last age and according to their mass, they are destined to be one of the three ultimate possible ending entities: black dwarfs, neutron stars, or black holes, as stated by Halpern (1995). We are interested here in black holes. So, what is a black hole? ‘A black hole’ is a name coined at a recent time to the strangest objects in the universe. It is “one of the ways a star may spend its old age, one possible ‘final state’ of a star” (Ferguson,1996,p.06). It is the result of a massive star’s collapse forming an object which has a fearful gravity. Frolov and Novikov (1998) defined black holes as “putative objects whose gravitational fields are so strong that no physical bodies or signals can break free of their pull and escape” (p.xviii). So, as even light cannot escape from their strong gravitational pull, black holes could not be seen; hence, they

have been described as ‘black’ (the possible Qur’anic counterpart is ‘الْحُنَّسُ’). They have been termed ‘holes’ since anything that comes near these regions falls or is swallowed with no escape possible (the potential Qur’anic equivalent is ‘الْكُنَّسُ’; for they act like cosmic vacuum cleaners).

The formation process of a black hole occurs when a giant star burns out and squeezes all of its matter into one tiny point called singularity. Zappa (2011) explained this as: “After a star runs out of fuel, it can no longer fight its gravity. This causes the star to cave in. A very large star can cave in to a singularity. This forms a black hole.”(p.10). About this, Meekins (2007) said that a big star keeps pulling and pulling towards its centre and collapses in on itself. Therefore, a black hole is a so compressed object that is even denser than a neutron star, according to Halpern (1995). The holy Qur’an might have pointed to this ending of stars or, scientifically, the total gravitational collapse of a star in on itself in the first verse of surat Annadjm: “وَالنَّجْمِ إِذَا هَوَىٰ” ; “By the star when it goes down, (or vanishes)”.

4.2.2.5.1. Exegetical Interpretations of the Verse 01 of Surat Annadjm

❖ **Al Jalalayn:** By the Star -the constellation Pleiades al-thurayya - when it sets when it disappears.(p.623).

❖ **Ibn Kathir:** (By the star when it goes down.) Ibn Abi Najih reported that Mujahid said, “The star refers to Pleiades when it sets at Fajr.” Ad-Dahhak said “When the Shayatin are shot with it.” And this Ayah is like Allah’s saying; (فَلَا أُفْسِئُ بِمَوَاقِعِ النُّجُومِ - وَإِنَّهُ لَفَسِيءٌ لِّوَيْتَعْلَمُونَ عَظِيمٍ -...) (So, I swear by the setting of the stars. And verily, that is indeed a great oath, if you but know...) (p.4888).

‘النَّجْمِ’ ‘annadjm’ literally means ‘the star’, and ‘هَوَىٰ’ ‘hawa’ is ‘to fall’. Science has discovered that stars really fall or burst inwards; i.e. there is an implosion as opposite to explosion. According to Geisler and Bocchino (2001), “A black hole is eventually formed as the imploding star’s gravitational momentum increases and the volume of the star decreases. The gravitational field of the black hole becomes so intense that nothing can evade it.” (p.99).

Maybe the best simulation to better grasp what could happen to stars has been given by Meekins. He (2007) said that when there was a need to destroy some old buildings, the only safe way so as not to harm their surroundings was that these buildings were imploded by placing explosives inside the buildings so that when the explosives were set off, the buildings collapsed in on themselves and fall to the ground in their spots. The buildings then would spew up dust and rubble. In fact, this is exactly what happens when black holes form, except that they don't spew up matters, but they suck them.

4.2.2.5.2. Comparative Review of the Five Translations of the Word 'هَوَى' (hawa)

A	M	P	Y A	H & K
<i>comes down from on high</i>	<i>set</i>	<i>setth</i>	<i>goes down</i>	<i>goes down, (or vanishes)</i>

Table 29: The Five Translations of the Word 'هَوَى' (hawa)

According to the above table, this word has been either translated as 'set' or 'goes down', while only Asad has rendered the whole verse as "Consider this unfolding [of God's message], as it comes down from on high!"; so, he has not pointed out to the star but to the revelation of the Qur'an. Regarding the literal meaning of 'hawa', 'to fall', it can be said that only Asad, Yusuf Ali and 'Al-Hilali and Khan', disregarding the latter's parenthetical addition, (or vanishes), have approached and communicated the intended literal denotation.

One can ask, if black holes are technically invisible because of their intense gravitational force that prevent even light from escaping, how can they be detected? The answer is that their positions can be inferred due to their essence as being cosmic vacuum cleaners 'الْكُنَّس'. According to Geisler and Bocchino (2001), "A black hole is like a gigantic vacuum cleaner, absorbing any-thing that gets within its grasp."(p.100). Thus, its existence could be identified by its gravitational effects on whatever surrounds it and also by the

presence of some radiations. They (2001) confirmed this saying: “astronomers must infer that black holes exist from the gravitational effects they have on other celestial bodies. Astronomers can also detect the emission of X-rays and gamma rays left behind by matter falling into black holes.”(p.100). A good example to puzzle out the behaviour of a black hole was offered by Phillip Corso (in Maras,2010) when saying that its existence can be guessed when light and gravity around it bend much like detecting the drain at the bottom of a sink by the way water circulates around it. The following two figures, which have been extracted from (Fredette and Lafleur,2007,p.56), show an illustrative imaginary figure of a black hole in the space and its effect on the light that comes near it (on the left), and a star’s matter being sucked in when close enough to a black hole(on the right). So, both figures demonstrate how black holes can be determined from the ways light and gravity behave around them.

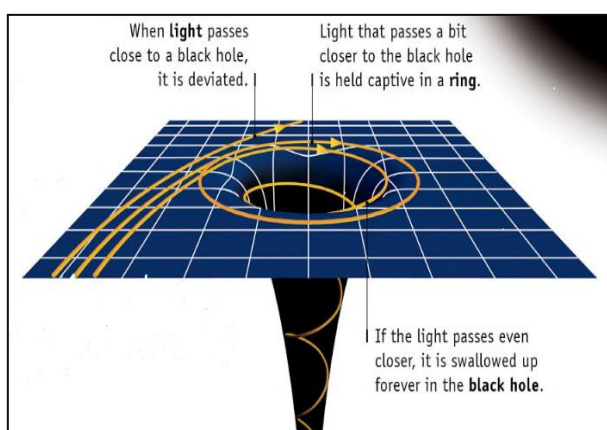


Figure 31: An illustrative imaginary figure of a black hole in the space

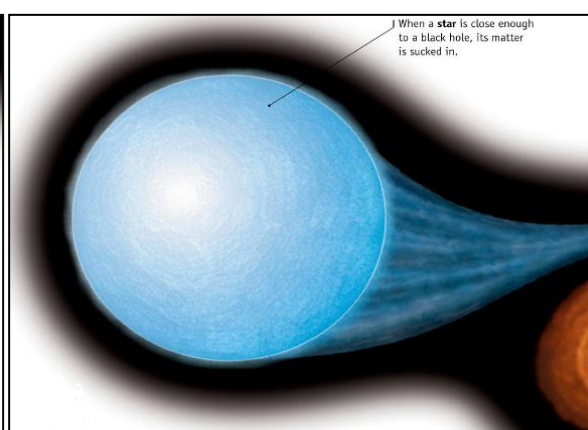


Figure 32: A figure showing a star when it is close to a black hole

This great impact of black holes’ positions or setting places might fit the following mighty oath (Ibn Kathir has related the previous verse with these verses): “**قَلَّا أُقْسِمُ بِمَوَاقِعِ النُّجُومِ**,” “**وَإِنَّهُ لَقَسَمٌ لَّوْ تَعْلَمُونَ عَظِيمٌ**”; “So I swear by **Mawaqi (setting or the mansions, etc.)** of the stars (they traverse), And verily, that is indeed a great oath, if you but know”(Al-Waki3a:75-76).

4.2.2.5.3. Exegetical Interpretations of the Verse 75 of Surat Al-Waki3a

❖ **Al Jalalayn:** Nay I swear (fa-la uqsimu: la is extra) by the setting-places of the stars! (p.648).

❖ **Ibn Kathir:** (Fala! I swear) is, ‘The matter is not as you people have claimed.’ Then He renews the oath again by saying, ‘I swear.’ {فَلَا أُقْسِمُ بِمَوَاقِعِ النُّجُومِ} (Fala! I swear by the Mawaqi` of the stars.) Mujahid said, “The setting positions of the stars in the sky,” and he said that it refers to the rising and setting positions. This was said by Al-Hasan, Qatadah and preferred by Ibn Jarir. Qatadah also said that it means their positions. (p.5007).

The word ‘مواقع’ ‘mawaqi3’ can bear many interpretations. Having the linguistic meaning ‘*places, sites, locations, positions or situations*’, first, it could implicate that the black holes’ locations are only known by their great impacts on their surroundings since they are visually undetectable. Second, it might refer to the fact that the shining places of stars the moment we see them are not their actual positions, but their previous ones, because they exist then in other far locations, and this is due to the huge distance between these stars and Earth and the phenomenon of light refraction. This word might also express ‘*fallings or droppings*’. Regarding the last possibility, it could refer, on the one hand, to the stars when they collapse and fall inwards or drop within themselves and then lose their lights, as interpreted by some exegetes in relation with the word ‘هوى’ ‘hawa’ (becoming black holes), and on the other hand, it could refer to the black holes as the places where other stars fall.

The black holes are then in a perfect conformity with most of this word’s potential interpretations. In terms of how this word has been transmitted to the English reader, there are some shortcomings as it is shown in the table below.

4.2.2.5.4. Comparative Review of the Five Translations of the Word ‘مواقع’ (mawaqi3)

A	M	P	Y A	H & K
<i>the coming-down in parts [of this Qur’an]</i>	<i>the setting</i>	<i>the places</i>	<i>the setting</i>	<i>Mawaqi (setting or the mansions, etc.)</i>

Table 30: The Five Translations of the Word ‘مواقع’ (mawaqi3)

It is a tremendous divine oath if we but know as Allah said. Nevertheless, the translators have focused on and revealed only one possible interpretation. An agreement of the use of the location meaning is exhibited in the above table, except for Asad who, similarly to his translation of “ وَالنَّجْمِ إِذَا هَوَىٰ ”, has not referred to the stars but to the Qur’an saying: ‘*the coming-down in parts [of this Qur’an]*’.

Another example invoking the stars’ death or their final state is when Allah mentioned some features of the day of judgement as in surat Almursalat, verse 08: “فَإِذَا النُّجُومُ طُمِسَتْ”; “*Then when the stars lose their lights*”.

4.2.2.5.5. Exegetical Interpretations of the Verse 08 of Surat Almursalat

- ❖ **Al Jalalayn:** So when the stars are obliterated when their light is extinguished.(p.712).
- ❖ **Ibn Kathir:** (فَإِذَا النُّجُومُ طُمِسَتْ) (Then when the stars lose their lights) meaning, their light will leave. This is similar to Allah’s statement, (وَإِذَا النُّجُومُ انكَدَرَتْ) (And when the stars fall) (p.5428).

4.2.2.5.6. The Linguistic Meaning of ‘طُمِسَتْ’, ‘tomisat’

The word ‘طُمِسَتْ’, ‘tomisat’ denotes being extinguished, obliterated, effaced, wiped out, blurred, obscured or blacked out. This state of stars could be attributed to the possibility of turning into black holes.

4.2.2.5.7. Comparative Review of the Five Translations of the Word ‘طُمِسَتْ’ (tomisat)

A	M	P	Y A	H & K
<i>are effaced</i>	<i>will lose their light</i>	<i>are put out</i>	<i>become dim</i>	<i>lose their lights</i>

Table 31: The Five Translations of the Word ‘طُمِسَتْ’ (tomisat)

Discounting missing the passive voice that appears only in Asad’s and Pikhall’s translations, the renditions of this word are deemed to be accurate since the translators have resorted to the exact meaning inferred by the original word.

Another similar instance to recall from the day of resurrection has been given in the first two verses of surat Attakwir. Allah said: “(1) وَإِذَا الشَّمْسُ كُوِّرَتْ (2) وَإِذَا النُّجُومُ انْكَدَرَتْ”; “When the sun Kuwwirat (wound round and lost its light and is overthrown). And when the stars shall fall”.

4.2.2.5.8. Exegetical Interpretations of the Verses 1 and 2 of Surat Attakwir

❖ **Al Jalalayn:** (81:01) When the sun is folded away: enfolded and stripped of its light. (81:02): and when the stars scatter when they are extinguished and hurtle down towards the earth.(p.727).

❖ **Ibn Kathir:** (When the sun is Kuwwirat.) “This means it will be darkened.” Al-`Awfi reported from Ibn Abbas; “It will go away.” Qatadah said, “Its light will go away.” Sa`id bin Jubayr said, “Kuwwirat means it will sink in.” Abu Salih said, “Kuwwirat means it will be thrown down.” At-Takwir means to gather one part of something with another part of it (i.e., folding). From it comes the folding of the turban (Imamah) and the folding of clothes together. Thus, the meaning of Allah’s statement, (كُوِّرَتْ) (Kuwwirat) is that part of it will be folded up into another part of it. Then it will be rolled up and thrown away. When this is done to it, its light will go away. (81:02): Dispersing the Stars: (وَإِذَا النُّجُومُ انْكَدَرَتْ) (And when the stars Inkadarat.) meaning, when they are scattered. This is as Allah says, (وَإِذَا الْكُوَاكِبُ انْتَثَرَتْ) (And when the stars have fallen and scattered.) (82:2). The basis of the word Inkidar is Insibab, which means to be poured out. (p.5480-5481).

4.2.2.5.9. The Linguistic Meanings of ‘كُوِّرَتْ’, ‘kuwwirat’ and ‘انْكَدَرَتْ’, ‘inkadarat’

The linguistic meaning of ‘كُوِّرَتْ’ ‘kuwwirat’ is ‘to be folded up to form a ball’. Undergoing this operation will make the giant fireball, the Sun, lose its shine and radiance. Likewise, ‘انْكَدَرَتْ’ ‘inkadarat’ holds an opposite meaning to *clarity* and *luminosity*; i.e. it means ‘to be dull or dim’. It has also the meaning of ‘to fall or to be scattered’. (The combination of this word’s two meanings may refer to black holes). It is noticed that the two notions, ‘كُوِّرَتْ’ and ‘انْكَدَرَتْ’, share the same result, lacking or losing brightness, though the former is an implicit effect that should not exist in the translations while the latter is a basic meaning. Yet, not all these semantic meanings have been covered by the translations; for the renditions are not as comprehensive as the Arabic words as shown in the following table.

4.2.2.5.10. The Five Translations of the Word 'كُوِّرَتْ' (kuwwirat) (Table 32)

A	M	P	Y A	H & K
<i>is shrouded in darkness</i>	<i>will cease to shine</i>	<i>is overthrown</i>	<i>(with its spacious light) is folded up</i>	<i>Kuwwirat (wound round and lost its light and is overthrown)</i>

4.2.2.5.11. The Five Translations of the Word 'انْكَدَرَتْ' (inkadarat) (Table 33)

A	M	P	Y A	H & K
<i>lose their light</i>	<i>will lose their luster</i>	<i>fall</i>	<i>fall losing their luster</i>	<i>shall fall</i>

The verses from both surahs are best explained scientifically as follows. According to Halpern (1995), the Solar engines will eventually run down, which is an unmistakable piece of evidence provided by the Second Law of Thermodynamics and stellar theory, to turn in the future into “a burnt-out carcass” (p.59). The enormously hot solar core will endure a gravitational collapse due to its own weight. “Like a hot air balloon gone cold and shrinking, the core will become smaller and smaller, folding up into itself with little hindrance” (p.59). This statement is a good scientific elucidation of “إِذَا الشَّمْسُ كُوِّرَتْ”. Maybe what made the Sun - as being a star too- to be stated separately from “وَإِذَا النُّجُومُ انْكَدَرَتْ” is that, according to him, the Sun would become a black hole only if its mass were two or three times its actual mass today. So, in contrast to the Sun, the other stars that will endure this ‘انكدار’ ‘inkidar’, might well turn into black holes.

Another fact to mention is that even though a black hole is named a hole, it is not a hole. Frolov and Zelnikov (2011) claimed that it is “‘plenty of nothing’, just self-supported empty curved spacetime” (02); yet, for it is considered one of the most compact astrophysical objects, as stated by Lee and Chang (2002), it could not be made of nothing. Meekins (2007) confirmed this, saying: “In fact, a black hole is not even a hole.” (p.01). The truth is that the latter is a property of the sky when pierced by a star (a black hole). ‘النَّجْمُ النَّاقِبُ’ ‘the piercing

star’, in the Qur’an, might be a reference to the black hole implicating that it is a star that makes a hole and not being a hole itself. Hence, the trait given by the Qur’an to these heavenly bodies, ‘الْكُنُوسُ’, is more accurate than the one provided by science -‘holes’.

To recapitulate, reviewing the features of ‘black holes’, it is a recent name coined to refer to a certain kind of stars. Firstly, at the end of their lives, they, on the one hand, contract or shrink, and on the other hand, they become invisible or veiled from observation after having been apparent -the reason why they have been termed black. These two properties together are the denotation of the word ‘الْكُنُوسُ’. After that, they contract and hide matters when they swallow them. Phillip Corso has noted, “black holes, the ultra dense remains of stars that have collapsed upon themselves, swallow up light and gravity and, compress them like a galactic compactor into something that only subatomic particle physicists can describe and that can’t actually be ‘seen’ ” (Maras, 2010, p.156). The following is a quote followed by a figure (in Fredette and Lafleur, 2007, p.57) that well explain and demonstrate the formation of a black hole. Both of them elucidate clearly the two sides of the denotation ‘الْكُنُوسُ’ which are the shrinkage and the invisibility and prove the inconsistent scientific labelling (black).

After a massive star (supernova) explodes, the remains of its core begin to contract, exerting a powerful gravitational force. At the surface of the star, light is still able to escape (1). Little by little, the rays are curved under the effect of constantly increasing gravity (2) until they can no longer escape (3). The star finally collapses on itself, becoming a zero volume of infinitely dense matter; this is a black hole (4) from which nothing, not even photons of light, escapes. It is therefore invisible.

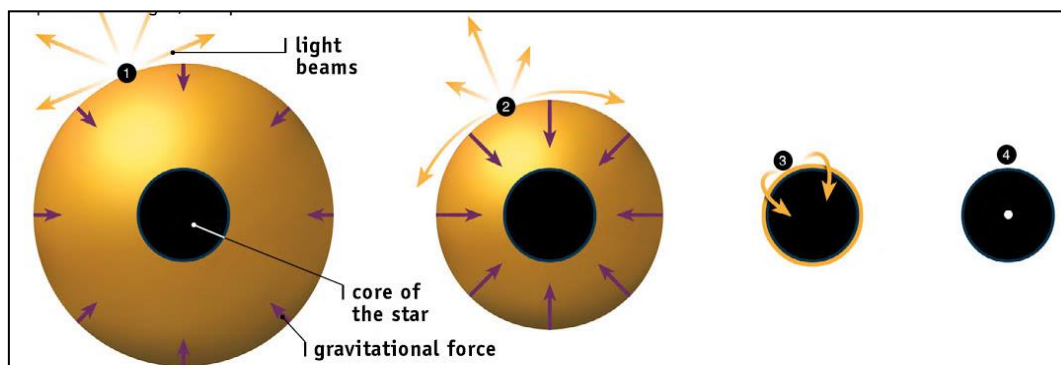
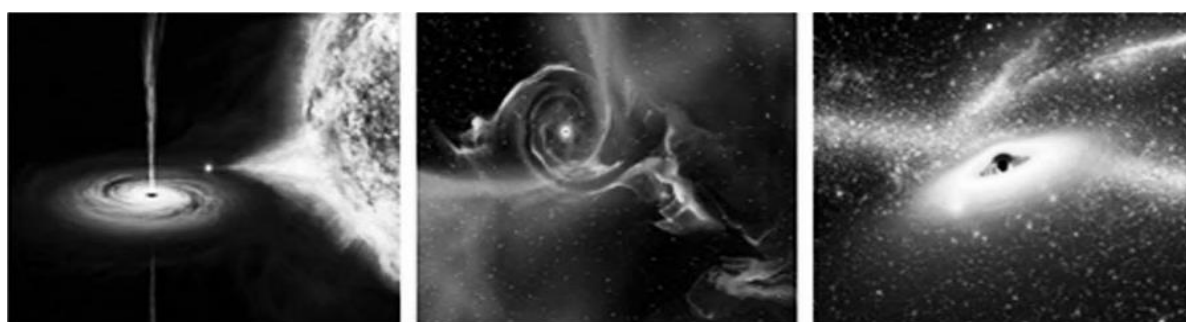


Figure 33: The formation of a black hole

Secondly, they were erroneously termed or referred to as 'holes'. Since they sweep or swallow anything in their vicinity, due to their enormous gravitations, they are like giant vacuum cleaners and this is more compatible with the divine word 'الْكُنَّس'. Describing the fearful nature of black holes, Halpern (1995) reported:

Lethal to any objects that might encounter them, they gobble up all matter or energy in their vicinity and grow larger in the process of accumulation, occasionally even cannibalizing each other. They truly represent the definitive cosmic "vacuum cleaners", eradicating all things unfortunate enough to be in their way. (p. 60).

Based on the mass, the following are three images of black holes (in Srikanta,2017,p.69).



a) *Stellar-mass Black hole* Image credit: NASA/CXC/ M.Weiss
 b) *Supermassive Black hole* Image credit: NASA/CfA/ HCfA
 c) *Miniature Black hole* Image credit: NASA/JPL- Caltech

Figure 34: The different types of black holes based on the mass

4.2.2.6. Comparative Review of the Five Translations of the Words 'الْكُنَّس'

(alkhunnas) and 'الْكُنَّس' (alkunnas)

In the light of the scientific explanations of the two characterisations 'الْكُنَّس' and 'الْكُنَّس', these are two tables summarizing their English versions.

A	M	P	Y A	H & K
<i>the revolving stars</i>	<i>the retreating stars</i>	<i>the planets</i>	<i>the planets that recede</i>	<i>the planets that recede (i.e. disappear during the day and appear during the night)</i>

Table 34: The Five Translations of the Word 'الْكُنَّس' (alkhunnas)

A	M	P	Y A	H & K
<i>set</i>	<i>hide</i>	<i>set</i>	<i>hide</i>	<i>hide themselves</i>

Table 35: The Five Translations of the Word 'الْكُنَّس' (alkunnas)

As it is apparent, both tables expose a great infidelity. Starting by the word ‘الْحُنَّسُ’, both of Asad and Pikhall have been far from approximating the aforementioned descriptions since they have given as renditions ‘*the revolving stars*’ and ‘*the planets*’ respectively. Also, going back to the first table where the translations of the whole verses are presented, both of them in addition to Yusuf Ali have used ‘*I call to witness*’ which is not synonymous to the ordinary way of expressing an oath ‘I swear by’ or merely ‘by’. In addition, Malik has been successful in rendering just one of the meanings of the word ‘الْحُنَّسُ’ which is ‘*retreating*’ (not coupled with ‘*hiding*’ as the Arabic word may also denote in this context). Furthermore, ‘Al-Hilali and Khan’ and Yusuf Ali have followed the same approach when describing them as planets -not stars- that only recede, and the former ones have, unfaithfully to the original, specified that they only hide during the night. However, for the word ‘الْكُنَّسُ’, three translators have departed the common clear literal meaning “the sweepers” and handled the word ‘الْكُنَّسُ’ as partly synonymous to ‘الْحُنَّسُ’ using the word ‘*hide*’, which is another accepted meaning of this word; but in this context it has led to repetition. ‘Set’ is another substitute which has been inadequately employed by the remaining two with Asad referring to the planets. Actually, only Pikhall and Malik have attributed this quality to the stars.

All in all, none of the translators has achieved success in rendering the exact meanings that bear a close similarity to the black holes and which show the miraculousness of these two divine words. In other words, the translators have not maintained the scientific implications of the Qur’anic words, i.e. the attributes of this strange kind of stars. So, basically, the renditions have not reflected accurately the particularization of these stars to the English reader, for the choice of words has been completely unsatisfactory.

To conclude with, the ever glorious Qur’an has referred to the same specific characteristics or features of the black holes (even better than science has done). Expressing this differently, these attributes by which Allah swore are tantamount to the black holes and

cannot apply to any other star but the black holes. Hence, this is one of the signs of Allah that has been only lately discovered and that makes anyone wonderstruck of such accuracy. However, when translated, they excellently proved their absolute inimitability. These bizarre sorts of corpses, the black holes, are proved to be devastatingly dangerous, and this is one reason, maybe, why Allah swore an oath by them. They exist in all galaxies and the Milky Way is not an exception. Meekins (2007) believed that our galaxy contains over 100 billion stars and over 100 million of them could become black holes. Maras (2010) has noted that astronomers in the last decade have discovered a massive black hole in the centre of our Milky Way. He (2010) wrote:

In the year 2000, conclusive evidence proved that there are rogue, renegade black holes right in our own cosmic backyard. This is like a predator coming into our campsite to feast on us without us being able to defend ourselves. There is no defence from a black hole. If it came down to it, the Earth would lose against a black hole...period. (p.155).

Conclusion

Contrary to some words that have fixed meanings, many Qur'anic words are either polysemous or of multiple possible references (broad sense). These terms are context sensitive; i.e. they require contextual input in order to fix their references or senses. Therefore, when the context does not offer any limitation, the word of this type can have as signification all its possible senses or references. This is the case of the words discussed in this chapter. However, when encountered in translation, in addition to other imperfections, a bias or favouring of only one meaning or reference, and rejecting of all the others, have been noticed. As a matter of fact, it is due to this multiplicity within the range of possible interpretations and references of the same lexeme that the Qur'anic miraculousness and new insights can be achieved. Nevertheless, sometimes *i3jaz* resides also in words of only one denotative or literal meaning, which is the case of the next chapter's words.

CHAPTER FIVE:

Inimitability (Miraculousness) in Denotative or Literal Meaning

Introduction

Denotation, denotative or literal meaning, is generally defined as the explicit direct meaning or set of meanings of a word. It is well known as the meaning(s) given by dictionaries. When translated, some Qur'anic words have been deviated as the translators have excluded their literal basic meanings in favour of some figurative or metaphorical ones; or they have not been so faithful in their literal renderings for they have not well represented the exact genuine words when giving substitutes that are not in strict accordance with the original. So, on account of the fact that these divine words' miraculousness (i3jaz) might well reside in their true denotative significations, literalness is key.

5.1. The Knocker: (الطَّارِق)

الطَّارِق 'Attariq' is a subtle word by which Allah has sworn at the beginning of the eighty sixth surah of the Qur'an that has also been entitled 'Attariq'. As a matter of fact, although it is short, this chapter of the Qur'an is replete with scientific implications. Initially, Allah calls our attention to a special kind of stars which has been encountered only lately (1967) with the development of science and technology. Surprisingly, modern science has named this kind of stars, which has enthralled astronomers, 'pulsating stars' or 'pulsars'.

قال الله عز وجل: { وَالسَّمَاءَ وَالطَّارِقِ (01) وَمَا أَدْرَاكَ مَا الطَّارِقِ (02) النَّجْمُ الثَّاقِبُ (03) }

[Surah 86, Attariq 'Meccan', Ayah: (01-02-03)]

5.1.1. The Five Translations of the Verses 1,2 and 3 of Surat Attariq (Table 36)

A	Consider the heavens and that which <u>comes in the night!</u> And what could make thee conceive what it is that comes in the night? It is the star that pierces through [life's] darkness.
M	By the heaven and by <u>the visitant by night</u> , and what will explain to you what the visitant by night is? It is the star of piercing brightness.
P	By the heaven and <u>the Morning Star</u> , Ah, what will tell thee what the Morning Star is! The piercing Star!
Y A	By the Sky and <u>the Night-Visitant</u> (therein), And what will explain to thee what the Night-Visitant is? (It is) the Star of piercing brightness.
H & K	By the heaven, and <u>At-Tariq (the night-comer, i.e. the bright star)</u> ; And what will make you to know what At-Tariq (night-comer) is? (It is) the star of piercing brightness.

5.1.2. Exegetical Interpretations of the Verse 01, 02 and 03 of Surat Attariq

❖ **Al Jalalayn:** (86:01) “By the heaven and the night-visitor! (al-tariq actually denotes anything that comes by night, including stars, because they come out at night)”. (86:02) And what will tell you what the night-visitor is? (ma'l-tariq is a subject and predicate, standing as the second object of (the verb) adra, ‘tell’; and what comes after the first ma, ‘what’, is the predicate thereof (of this first ma)) -this (statement) emphasises the magnificence of the ‘night-visitor’, which is explained in what follows. It is: (86:03) The piercing, the brilliant, because of its piercing the darkness with its light, star!, meaning (the constellation) Pleiades; or (it refers to) all stars. (p.739).

❖ **Ibn Kathir:** (By the heaven, and At-Tariq;) Then He says, (And what will make you to know what At-Tariq is) Then He explains it by His saying, (The star of Ath-Thaqib.) Qatadah and others have said, “The star has been named Tariq because it is only seen at night and it is hidden during the day.” His view is supported by what has been mentioned in the authentic Hadith that prohibits a man to come to his family Taruq. This means that he comes to them unexpectedly at night-time. Concerning Allah’s statement, (Ath-Thaqib.) Ibn Abbas said, “The illuminating” ‘Ikrimah said, “It is illuminating and it burns the Shaytan”. (p.5537-5538).

5.1.3. The Linguistic Meanings

The verse “وَالسَّمَاءِ وَالطَّارِقِ” contains an astonishing piece of revelation. ‘Attariq’ is derived from the Arabic root ‘طرق’ ‘taraqa’ which literally means to knock, pound, hammer, beat repeatedly, or strike hard rhythmically. ‘Attariq’ is the doer of this action. The tool used for pounding, the hammer, is named ‘مطرقة’ ‘mitraqa’ in Arabic. The latter generally uses the term ‘attariq’ to refer to any knocker including a night knocker; i.e. anyone who comes by night. After wondering about comprehending this word ‘attariq’ or expressing its greatness by using ‘وَمَا أَدْرَاكَ مَا الطَّارِقُ’, the Qur’anic elucidation of this term is ‘النَّجْمُ النَّاقِبُ’. So, ‘Attariq’ is a star described as being ‘النَّاقِبُ’ that has the literal designation of ‘piercing’, or opening a hole (drilling). It is also used to refer to something being luminous and shining. Thus, the matches in Arabic are named ‘أعواد الثقاب’; for they are used to light fire. This word is also employed in surat Assaffat, verse 10: “إِلَّا مَنْ خَطِفَ الْخَطْفَةَ فَأَتْبَعَهُ شِهَابٌ ثَاقِبٌ”; “*Except such as snatch away something by stealing and they are pursued by a flaming fire of piercing brightness*”.

5.1.3.1. Exegetical Interpretations of the Verse 10 of Surat Assaffat

These are the exegetical interpretations of “فَأَتْبَعَهُ شِهَابٌ ثَاقِبٌ”.

- ❖ **Al Jalalayn:** and who is then pursued by a piercing flame shihab is a meteor that pierces him or burns him or robs him of his senses. (p.511).
- ❖ **Ibn Kathir:** meaning, shining brightly. (p.4238).

5.1.3.2. Comparative Review of the Five Translations of the Word ‘ثَاقِبٌ’ (thaqib)

A	M	P	Y A	H & K
<i>piercing</i>	<i>of piercing brightness</i>	<i>piercing</i>	<i>of piercing brightness</i>	<i>of piercing brightness</i>

Table 37: The Five Translations of the Word ‘ثَاقِبٌ’ (thaqib)

As it is apparent, both of the translators and the exegetes have chosen one of the two possible denotations of the word, i.e. either extremely bright or piercing. Now, apart being ‘النَّجْمُ النَّاقِبُ’, what does science inform us about this Attariq?

5.1.4. Possible Scientific Implications

In 1967, the astronomers Anthony Hewish and Jocelyn Bell were puzzled when they accidentally received for the first time radio signals emitted by one of the most exotic celestial objects that have been named afterwards ‘pulsars’. It is a one word contraction for ‘pulsating stars’ or ‘pulsating radio stars’ which are the source of the “cosmic beat”(Cusick, 2013, p.72). Arnold’s (2014) clarification about the reason behind this denomination was that it is due to “the pulses that they produced on a chart recorder” (p.28). Pulsars are highly magnetized, rapidly rotating or spinning neutron stars (formed when massive stars run out of fuel and collapse), which emit periodic or rhythmic pulses (knocks) of short intervals of typically one second or less. Sengupta (2015) defined a pulsar as a rotating neutron star which was the end product of any star that was heavier than about one and a half times the Sun.

When hearing a pulsar it is reminiscent of a knocker at a door or heart beats. In fact, not all stars’ pulses are alike. According to Arnold (2014), some resemble the speeded up ticking of a clock while “the millisecond pulsars sounds like a hammer drill boring a hole in a wall and is quite ear-piercing”(p.28). The sounds of pulsars have been recorded by NASA. So, if wishing to hear an audio clip from a pulsar, there are many links on the internet. They (their light beams) can be observable when they swing or point directly towards the Earth during their rotations. To see some pulses, the next figure (in Lorimer and Kramer,2005,p.08) displays a 22 seconds time series from the Arecibo radio telescope showing single pulses from PSR B0301+19, and insets show expanded views of some selected pulses.

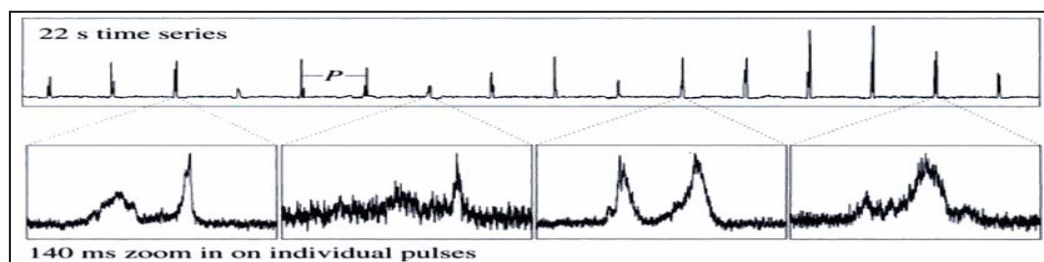


Figure 35: A 22 seconds time series from the Arecibo radio telescope showing single pulses from PSR B0301+19 and expanded views of selected pulses.

In order to grasp the mechanism, the following figure (in Fredette and Lafleur,2007, p.55) reveals a representation of a pulsar showing its axis of rotation, magnetic field and two poles. Each pole produces electromagnetic beams.

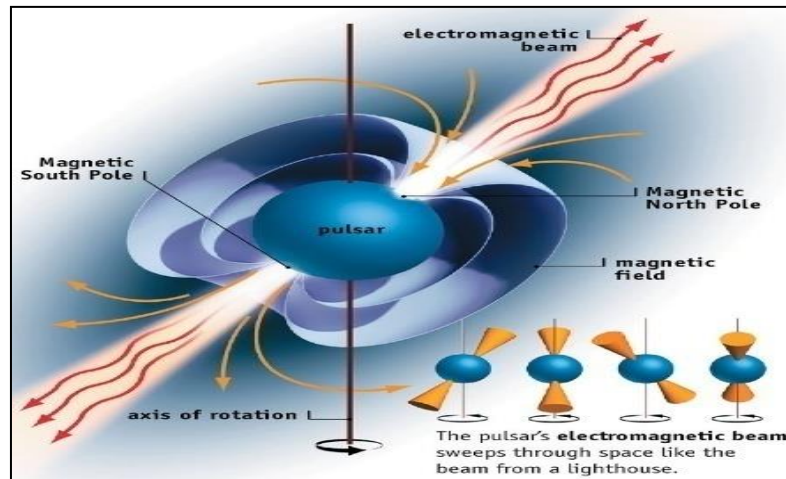


Figure 36: A representation of a pulsar showing its axis of rotation, magnetic field and two poles

In addition to pulses of radiation (radio waves or signals of high degree of regularity), pulsars, as shown above, also emit very powerful pulses or beams of light -‘optical pulsations’. Seeing the pulsars from the earth blinking on and then off seem “much like a rotating lighthouse beacon” (Jacoby, 2005, p.01). In the opinion of Weintraub (2014), the appearance of the beams of light turning on and off is the reason that neutron stars are also called pulsars. He (2014) then described them as: “Amazingly, the rapid spins of pulsars make them extremely precise astrophysical clocks, with the regularity of the flashes of light from pulsars comparable to the dependability of the ticking of terrestrial atomic clocks” (p.58). Lyne and Smith (2006) have stated that the discovery of the optical pulses was done by Cocke and his colleagues in 1969 and shortly afterwards a stroboscopic photograph of a pulsar was obtained. (Stroboscope is an instrument used to observe fast-moving objects by making them appear stationary. So, it helps in the analysis of the periodic movement of an object). They (2006, p.10) included a figure showing clearly the Crab pulsar ‘on’ and ‘off’ in addition to an explanatory caption.

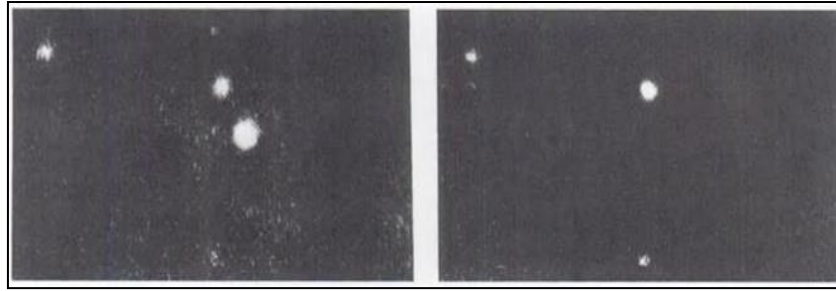


Figure 37: The Crab Pulsar

This pair of photographs was taken by a stroboscopic television technique, showing the pulsar ‘on’ (left) and ‘off’ (right). The removal of background features in the right-hand photograph was an artefact of the photographic process. (Lick Observatory, reproduced by kind permission of the Royal Astronomical Society.)

In conformity with science, the Qur’an itself defines this star as being ‘النَّجْمُ الثَّاقِبُ’ which most of exegetes have explained it to be ‘the bright star’. In fact, in addition to the large majority of pulsars that have only been detected by the sounds they produce, there are others that were identified by their optical frequencies. The following figure shows discernible up-down (nearly vertical) changes in a pulsar’s brightness.

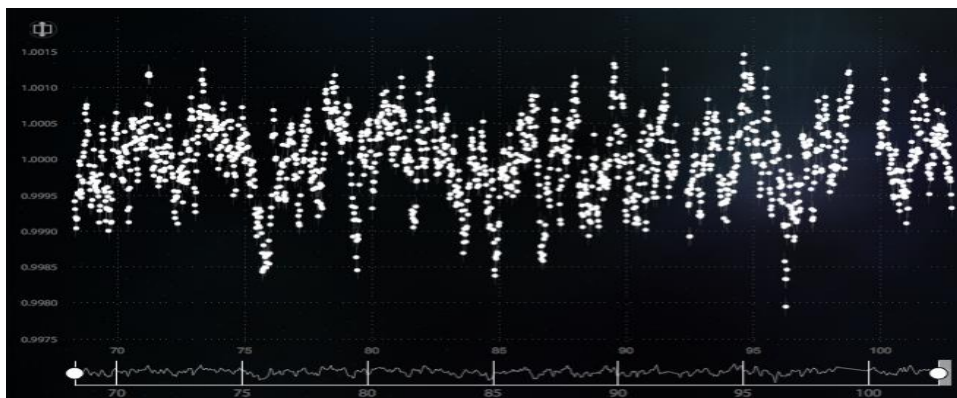


Figure 38: It is SPH10074728, which is a pulsar, its brightness is rapidly oscillating up and down over the 30 day period with many cycles in the span of 5 days. Retrieved from: <https://blog.planethunters.org/2011/07/31/example-of-pulsators/>

Besides, the word ‘الثَّاقِبُ’ ‘athaqib’ refers basically to something that pierces or makes a hole. In point of fact, the pulsar is of such a great mass that if a tiny quantity of it were put on the ground (the Earth), it would make a hole and penetrate it. According to Haensel et al. (2007), “By all means neutron stars are the most compact stars in the Universe”(p.01). This is because they are the result of massive stars’ collapse. In addition, science has also revealed

that pulsars are able to pierce the universe and its various objects through their different kinds of emissions from jets, rays,...etc, which could reach very far distances. In like manner, 'النَّاقِب' might also refer to a black hole as all pulsars are slowing down and can end as black holes if they have the right mass, and since both of space and black holes are not empty entities, a black hole pierces the space around it and tears a hole in it in a way resembling hammering a nail. So, despite the fact that the common idea is that this kind of stars is a hole, Novikov (1990) confirmed that it was a hole in space and time. The following is a figure (in Geisler and Bocchino, 2001, p.100) illustrating this perception.

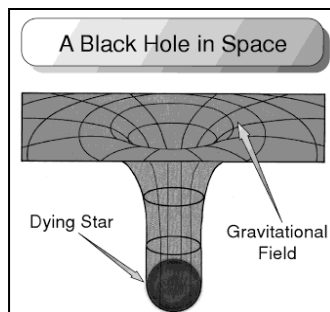


Figure 39: A Black Hole in Space

So, of the possible interpretations, 'النَّجْمُ النَّاقِبُ' might tolerate two opposites; i.e. a bright luminous star, a pulsar, or its potential final state as a black hole which is invisible. Reaching this point, let's see how the word under study 'الطَّارِقُ' is transferred into English.

5.1.5. Comparative Review of the Five Translations of the Word 'الطَّارِقُ' (Attariq)

A	M	P	Y A	H & K
<i>comes in the night</i>	<i>the visitant by night</i>	<i>the Morning Star</i>	<i>the Night-Visitant</i>	<i>At-Tariq (the night-comer, i.e. the bright star)</i>

Table 38: The Five Translations of the Word 'الطَّارِقُ' (Attariq)

This word has been conceived unanimously, with the opposition of Pikhall, as having the meaning of *the night-visitant* (with similar or different expressions). Analyzing the translations of Malik and Yusuf Ali, they have replaced it in a similar manner as *'the visitant*

by night’ and *‘the Night-Visitant*’. Likewise, Asad has written *‘comes in the night*’; but, regarding the oath, he has used the word *‘consider*’ instead of *‘by*’. So, these three translators have opted for these renditions considering a common Arabic use of this term which is the night knocker. However, Al-Hilali and Khan have used its transliteration, *‘At-Tariq*’, and have added the enclosed explanatory information -between parentheses- (*the night-comer, i.e. the bright star*). So, they have believed in the same meaning as the others and further added *the bright star* which is their supposed Qur’anic clarification or definition of this term. Contrary to all the others, Pikhall has employed *‘the Morning Star*’; for a visitor might also knock during the day. As a conclusion, none of the translators has referred explicitly to the rhythmic recurrence of strokes or knocks; for they have used an allegorical metaphorical approach rather than the literal one. The reason is that they were not conversant with the scientific possible reasonable meaning of this term, and, hence, this has brought about mistranslations.

In short, due to the semantic closeness between the Qur’anic term *‘الطَّارِقُ*’ and the scientific denomination ‘pulsar’ or *‘النجم النابض*’, one can hardly believe in the mere coincidence when the discoverers named it after one of its main features to resemble miraculously the divine word. Yet, in spite of this closeness in expressiveness that, probably, one can think of it as someone’s translation attempt of this divine word into English, this scientific description is not very accurate. Currently, scientists know of over 2000 pulsars, and concerning the utmost number of the precise repetition or the periodic knocks that are generated by these cosmic hammers when they rotate, it is over 700 times per second. In fact, anyone who hears the rhythmic recurrence of strokes of these fascinating celestial objects, he will liken them more to hammer-like sounds rather than pulses. Hence, it is wildly unreasonable to deny the accuracy of the Creator’s words describing one of its creatures. Nevertheless, no translation has referred that it is most likely that it has a possibility of literal interpretation.

5.2. The Expanding Universe: (لُمُوسِعُونَ)

Is the universe finite or infinite? What is its age, size, structure, content,...? Has it always existed; or was there a beginning? Is it really a space -a void? All these questions and more are pieces of a big puzzle which modern astronomy has recently come with some logic answers to it. Formerly, it was unimaginable that the universe is not static. Yet, in the 1920s, the astronomer Edwin Hubble discovered that it has been expanding since its beginning. This was one of the outstanding discoveries of the twentieth century. In this section we are going to address some of the above questions so as to try to have some logical explanations to the stunning cosmological data contained in the Qur'an.

قال الله عز وجل: { وَالسَّمَاءَ بَنَيْنَاهَا بِأَيْدٍ وَإِنَّا لَمُوسِعُونَ }

[Surah 51, Adhariyat, 'Meccan', Ayah: (47)]

5.2.1. The Five Translations of the Verse 47 of Surat Adhariyat (Table 39)

A	And it is We who have built the universe with [Our creative] power; and, verily, it is We who <u>are steadily expanding</u> it.
M	We have built the heavens with Our hands, for We <u>have the power to do so</u> .
P	We have built the heaven with might, and We it is Who <u>make the vast extent (thereof)</u> .
YA	With the power and skill did We construct the Firmament: for it is We Who <u>create the vastness of Space</u> .
H&K	With power did We construct the heaven. Verily, We are <u>able to extend the vastness of space thereof</u> .

5.2.2. Exegetical Interpretations of the Verse 47 of Surat Adhariyat

❖ **Al Jalalayn:** And the heaven, We built it with might, and indeed We are powerful (one says ada'l-rajulu or ya'idu, to mean, 'he is strong'; and awsa'a'l-rajulu, to mean, 'he has become capable (dhu sa'a) and strong) (p.617).

❖ **Ibn Kathir:** Proofs of Allah’s Oneness abound in the Creation of the Heavens and the Earth: Allah reminds us of the creating of the higher and lower worlds, ‘وَالسَّمَاءَ بَنَيْنَاهَا’ ‘We constructed the heaven’ meaning, ‘We made it as a high roof, protected from falling, ‘بِأَيْدٍ’ ‘with Hands’, meaning, with strength, according to Abdullah ibn Abbas, Mujahid, Qatadah, Ath-Thawri and several others, ‘وَإِنَّا لَمُوسِعُونَ’ Verily, We are able to extend the vastness of space thereof, means, ‘We made it vast and We brought its roof higher without pillars to support it, and thus it is hanging independently.’(p.4862).

5.2.3. The Linguistic Meanings

Allah, the Knower of the visible and the unseen, speaks about the cosmic formation, structure and dynamics. First, He said: ‘وَالسَّمَاءَ بَنَيْنَاهَا’. ‘السَّمَاءُ’ refers to the sky, the heaven or the outer extraterrestrial space (the cosmos or the universe). It is deduced from the use of the word ‘بَنَيْنَاهَا’ ‘banaynaha’ that there was a building process, a construction, or a design. Consequently, the final product, definitely, has not been an empty space and this is exactly what has been discovered later by science about the real entity of the so called ‘space’. Then, describing the manner or the firmly structured sky, the Almighty used the word ‘بِأَيْدٍ’ ‘*bi-aydin*’ denoting ‘with hands or with strength/power’. It is also mentioned in surat Sad, verse 17: “...وَأَذْكُرْ عَبْدَنَا دَاوُودَ ذَا الْأَيْدِ...” “...and remember Our slave Dawud (David), endued **with power**...”.

After that Allah mentioned the word ‘مُوسِعُونَ’ which is a plural active participle form ‘اسم الفاعل’ that is used generally to mean the continuity of the action by the doer at all times like in Allah’s saying about himself: “...عَافِرِ الذَّنْبِ وَقَابِلِ التَّوْبِ...”; “**The Forgiver of sin, the Acceptor of repentance**,...”(Ghafir:03); or “...أَقْتَرَبَ لِلنَّاسِ حِسَابُهُمْ وَهُمْ فِي غَفْلَةٍ مُّعْرِضُونَ...”; “**Draws near for mankind their reckoning, while they turn away in heedlessness**” (Al-Anbia’:01). Unlike the first example where the translation serves as a good example for ‘اسم الفاعل’ as the original, the translated version of the second ayah does not. The word ‘مُوسِعُونَ’ semantically signifies ‘widening, stretching, spreading, expanding, or extending’. Hence, it implies ‘not being held static’. The prefix ‘لَ’ ‘la’ in ‘للموسِعُونَ’ is used for emphasis. Grammatically speaking, ‘the

heaven' is the object of this expanding action in this verse. So, the universe is in a constant motion. More accurately, it is in a continuous expansion or stretching since its formation.

Similarly, another cosmological verse that advocates the same idea of stretching and offers other details is revealed in surat Al-Anbiya', verse 30. Allah said: “*أَوَلَمْ يَرَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا أَنَّ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ كَانَتَا رَتْقًا فَفَتَقْنَاهُمَا...* ”; “*Have not those who disbelieve known that the heavens and the earth were joined together as one united piece, then We parted them?... ”.*

5.2.3.1. Exegetical Interpretations of the Verse 30 of Surat Al-Anbiya'

❖ **Al Jalalayn:** Have they not ((one may) read a-wa-lam or a-lam) realised, (have they not) come to know, those who disbelieve, that the heavens and the earth were closed together and then We parted them, We made seven heavens and seven earths-or (it is meant) that the heaven was parted and began to rain, when it did not use to do so, and that the earth was parted and began to produce plants, when it did not use to do so. (p.357).

❖ **Ibn Kathir:** (Have not those who disbelieve known) means, those who deny His Divine nature and worship others instead of Him, do they not realize that Allah is the One Who is Independent in His powers of creation and is running the affairs of all things with absolute power So how can it be appropriate to worship anything else beside Him or to associate others in worship with Him Do they not see that the heavens and the earth were joined together, i.e. in the beginning they were all one piece, attached to one another and piled up on top of one another, then He separated them from one another, and made the heavens seven and the earth seven, placing the air between the earth and the lowest heaven. Then He caused rain to fall from the sky and vegetation to grow from the earth.(p.3196).

5.2.3.2. The Linguistic Meanings

On the one hand, ‘رَتْقًا’ (*ratqan*) is from ‘الرتق’ ‘*arratq*’ which is the place in an item of clothing that has been darned. For describing how the sky and Earth were once united, joined, or combined altogether to make one single piece, the used Qur’anic word is ‘sewed’ or ‘darned’ together. On the other hand, ‘فَفَتَقْنَاهُمَا’ ‘*fataqnahuma*’ is from ‘الفتق’ ‘*alfatq*’ which denotes unseaming, tearing or ripping apart. It means pulling the sky and the Earth apart like

two articles of clothing that had been ‘sewed’ together then ripped or torn apart. The letter ‘ف’ ‘fa’ in ‘فَفَتَقْنَاهُمَا’ is used to refer to the immediate happening of the afterward action (الفتق).

As provided by the exegetes, the likely course of events is the following. The sky and the Earth were once joined together to form one single mass ‘رتق’. Then, Allah has separated them ‘فتق’ into two pieces; each of which has been split into seven parts -seven skies and seven Earths. The Almighty said: “اللَّهُ الَّذِي خَلَقَ سَبْعَ سَمَاوَاتٍ وَمِنَ الْأَرْضِ مِثْلَهُنَّ...”; “It is Allah Who has created seven heavens and of the earth the like thereof (i.e. seven)...” (Attalaq: 12). All these have made it possible for rain to drop and consequently for vegetation to grow.

Having known the linguistic meanings of these two concepts that show a complete opposition (antonyms) and a consonance ‘رتق’ and ‘فتق’, and for examining if their exact literal designations are revealed in the renditions, here are these two tables.

5.2.3.3. Comparative Review of the Five Translations of the Word ‘رَتَقًا’ (ratqan) and ‘فَفَتَقْنَاهُمَا’ (fataqnahuma)

A	M	P	Y A	H & K
<i>one single entity</i>	<i>one mass</i>	<i>one piece</i>	<i>joined together (as one unit of Creation)</i>	<i>joined together as one united piece</i>

Table 40: The Five Translations of the Word ‘رَتَقًا’ (ratqan)

A	M	P	YA	H & K
<i>parted asunder</i>	<i>split them asunder</i>	<i>parted them</i>	<i>clove them asunder</i>	<i>parted them</i>

Table 41: The Five Translations of the Word ‘فَفَتَقْنَاهُمَا’ (fataqnahuma)

As clearly visible, all attempts to render the precise meanings of the two adjacent words ‘رَتَقًا فَفَتَقْنَاهُمَا’ concerning the sky and the Earth that often co-occur in many instances in the Qur’an have failed. These words that are commonly used in the sewing profession had been

thought of, previously, as being cases of metaphor; but it has turned out that this might well be a false claim as it is going to be explained afterwards. Maybe at the first glance, one might say it seems that the translators have provided effective renditions; however, they, in addition to the exegetes, have discarded the meanings that hold information about the real entity of matters (related to clothes and textile) in favour of the resultant actions or outcomes (the singular mass then the splitting apart). So, for showing extreme unlikeness as being unsuccessful reproductions of the meanings inferred by the original terms, these renditions are deemed to be inaccurate, and when contemplating the following verse, this judgement is going to seem more incorrigible. Allah said: “وَالسَّمَاءِ ذَاتِ الْحُبُوكِ”; “By the heaven full of paths” (Adharyat:07).

5.2.3.4. Exegetical Interpretations of the Verse 07 of Surat Adharyat

❖ **Al Jalalayn:** And by the heaven with all its tracks. hubuk is the plural of habika similar in pattern and meaning to turuq tariqa ‘paths’ that is to say by the heaven that is created with tracks similar to tracks made in the sand.(p.613).

❖ **Ibn Kathir:** (By the heaven full of Hubuk,) Ibn Abbas said; “Full of beauty, grace, magnificence and perfection.” Mujahid, Ikrimah, Sa’id bin Jubayr, Abu Malik, Abu Salih, As-Suddi, Qatadah, ‘Atiyah Al-‘Awfi, Ar-Rabi’ bin Anas and others said similarly. Ad-Dahhak, Al-Minhal bin ‘Amr and others said, “The meandering of the water, sand and plants when the wind passes over them; carving paths out of them, that is the Hubuk.” All of these sayings return to the same meaning, that of beauty and complexity. The sky is high above us, clear yet thick, firmly structured, spacious and graceful, beautified with stars such as the sun and orbiting planets such as the moon and the planets of the solar system.(p.4846).

5.2.3.5. The Linguistic Meanings

The possible meanings provided by the exegetes for the word ‘الْحُبُوكِ’ ‘*alhubuk*’ are ‘*the many wavy paths or tracks*’ and ‘*the beauty and perfection*’. However, this term can have also other significance. ‘الْحُبُوكِ’ ‘*alhubuk*’ is the plural noun of ‘الحبيكة’ ‘*alhabika*’ which is derived from the trilateral verb ‘حَبَكَ’ ‘*habaka*’ that has the meaning of ‘to weave’, ‘spin’, ‘sew’ or

‘knit’. Thus, ‘وَالسَّمَاءِ ذَاتِ الْحُبُكِ’ implies ‘the sky which is full of many wavy paths that are structured beautifully forming a piece of weaving or textile’.

5.2.3.6. Comparative Review of the Five Translations of the Word ‘الْحُبُكِ’

(Alhubuk)

A	M	P	Y A	H & K
<i>full of starry paths</i>	<i>full of orbits</i>	<i>full of paths</i>	<i>numerous Paths</i>	<i>full of paths</i>

Table 42: The Five Translations of the Word ‘الْحُبُكِ’ (Alhubuk)

All the translators have agreed upon the use of the same mismatch as a rendition of this linguistic element. Here we can see that all the versions are in accordance; displaying the meaning of plenty of paths or ways. Yet, when comparing the previous couple of words and this one, one can notice that the common meaning is as if there is a reference to a texture, textile, web or something that was spun, and this is exactly what has been abandoned by the translators and the exegetes as well. So, the concept is lost in the renditions since they don’t involve any traits of the real entity of the term. As a result of this lack of conformity with the genuine message, the recipients of these translations do not have the opportunity to see the i3jaz because what is available to them is just a part of the real truth of the matter.

5.2.4. Possible Scientific Implications

All the preceding verses exhibited a quite good congruence with some scientific facts. Science expresses clearly that the universe is not static but has been expanding ever since its existence. Halpern (1995) clearly confirmed this saying: “the entire universe is expanding” (p.95). Logically speaking, this expansion implies that there is a point back in time when there was a beginning or a singularity ‘ratq’, named scientifically ‘The Big Bang’. About this, Zee (1989) stated that mathematicians described the big bang, about ten billion years ago, as the

singularity because the distance between any two points in the universe was zero.

Equivalently, Greenstein (2013, p.547) wrote:

Since galaxies are expanding away from one another, they used to be closer together. The farther back in time we project our minds, the closer they had been, which means that the more compressed the Universe had been. Indeed, the scale of the Universe was zero at some point in the past. This state of infinite compression is the Big Bang.

The Big Bang as its name indicates is believed to be an initial explosion. Halpern (1995) asserted that the astronomer Georges Lemaitre had published an article describing his theory of how the cosmos began as a *primeval atom* which was exploded billions of years ago and the fiery products of the blast had eventually coalesced into the nowadays existing galaxies. Speaking about the beginnings, according to Seeds and Backman (2016), a hot gas filled the Universe long ago before the formation of stars and galaxies, just right after the big bang. In fact, anticipating science, the Qur'an described this gaseous state of the sky as smoke in surat *Fussilat*, verse 11: “...ثُمَّ اسْتَوَىٰ إِلَى السَّمَاءِ وَهِيَ دُخَانٌ...”; “Then He Istawa (rose over) towards the heaven when it was smoke,”.

The supposedly initial explosion has given as a result, in addition to the space-time beginning, the continuous expansion. So, the matter of the fact is that the different elements of the universe are flying apart from each other. In other words, the entire universe has been expanding since its beginning -a cosmic repulsion. This was the announced critical discovery of the astronomer Edwin Hubble in 1929 when he made an observation, through improved telescopes, that the galaxies are moving away from Earth. Peebles (1993) noted: “The expansion of the universe means that the proper physical distance between a pair of well-separated galaxies is increasing with time, that is, the galaxies are receding from each other” (p.71). The next figure (in Peebles, 1993, p.72) shows the cosmological expansion law.

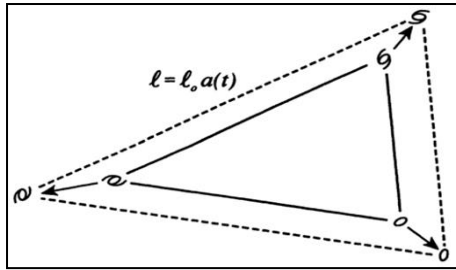


Figure 40: The Cosmological Expansion Law

The following figures (in Greenstein, 2013, p.547-549) sketch and summarize the history of the universe, beginning shortly after the Big Bang and continuing growing and expanding from that point.

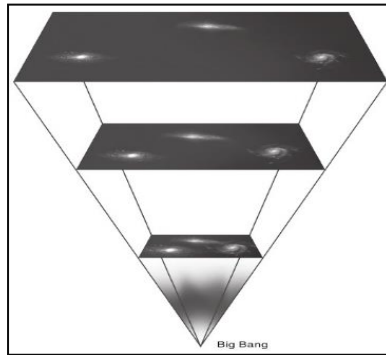


Figure 41: History of the Cosmos

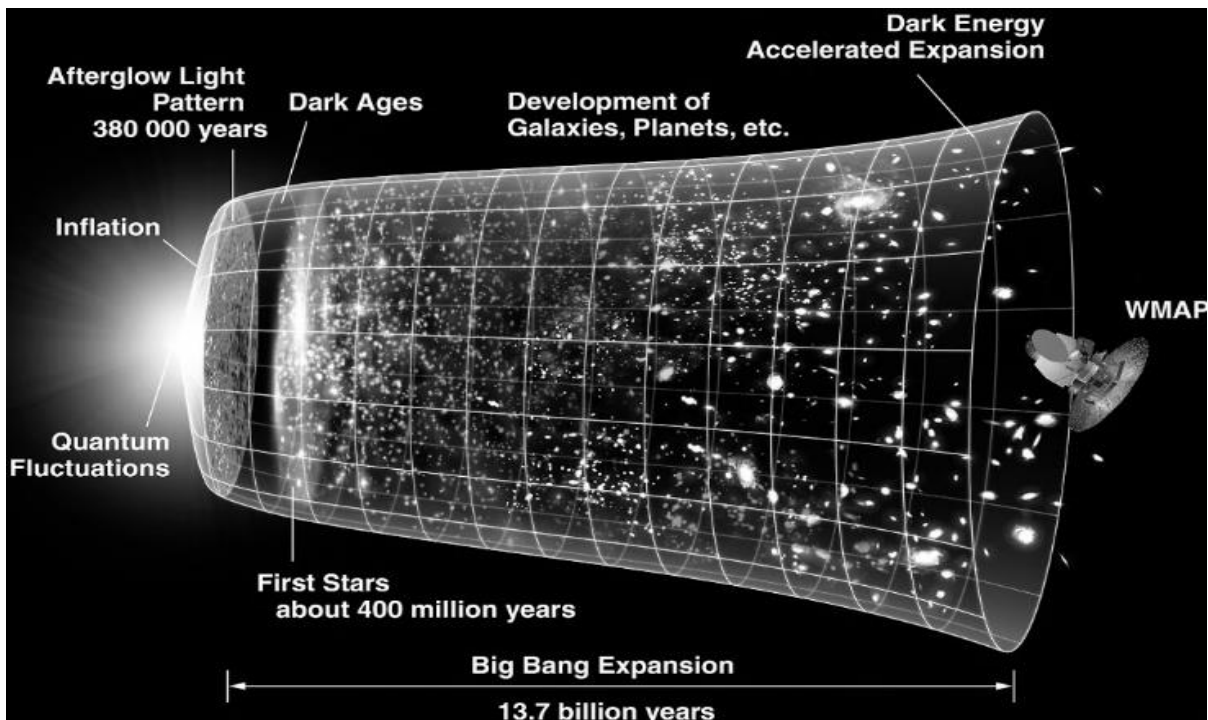


Figure 42: History of the Universe

As a matter of fact, the movement of the galaxies is not through space; for the latter is not a space. It is rather an extraordinary masterpiece owing to its geometry and morphology which is of a web-like structure or precisely of ‘الْحُبُكُ’ ‘alhubuk’. Stephen and Frary (2007) said that some theorists likened the universe lattice-like structure and interconnectedness to some gigantic web. More accurately, ‘الْحُبُكُ’ depicts or draws an analogy of the sky to a final product of weaving with the paths as filaments. Plionis et al. (2008) wrote: “filaments are basic elements of the cosmic web. Most matter assembles along the filaments, providing channels along which mass is transported towards the highest density knots within the network, the clusters of galaxies” (p.337).

Additionally, cosmologists suppose the existence of a strange material that does not emit light and constitutes most of the universe’s mass, ‘the dark matter’, and which was believed before to be a space -a void. Leviton (2006) explained:

an invisible filament of dark matter (dark matter by definition is currently invisible to us yet comprises an estimated 75% or more of the galaxy’s mass) can form a cosmic web of filaments along which galaxies flow. Recent maps of the universe compiled by astronomers show “thousands of galaxies lining up along intersecting streams” (p.260).

The following is a figure (in Walker, 2016, p.91) showing the web-like structure of the universe. Intriguingly, it is indeed so much more like a woven fabric than anything else.

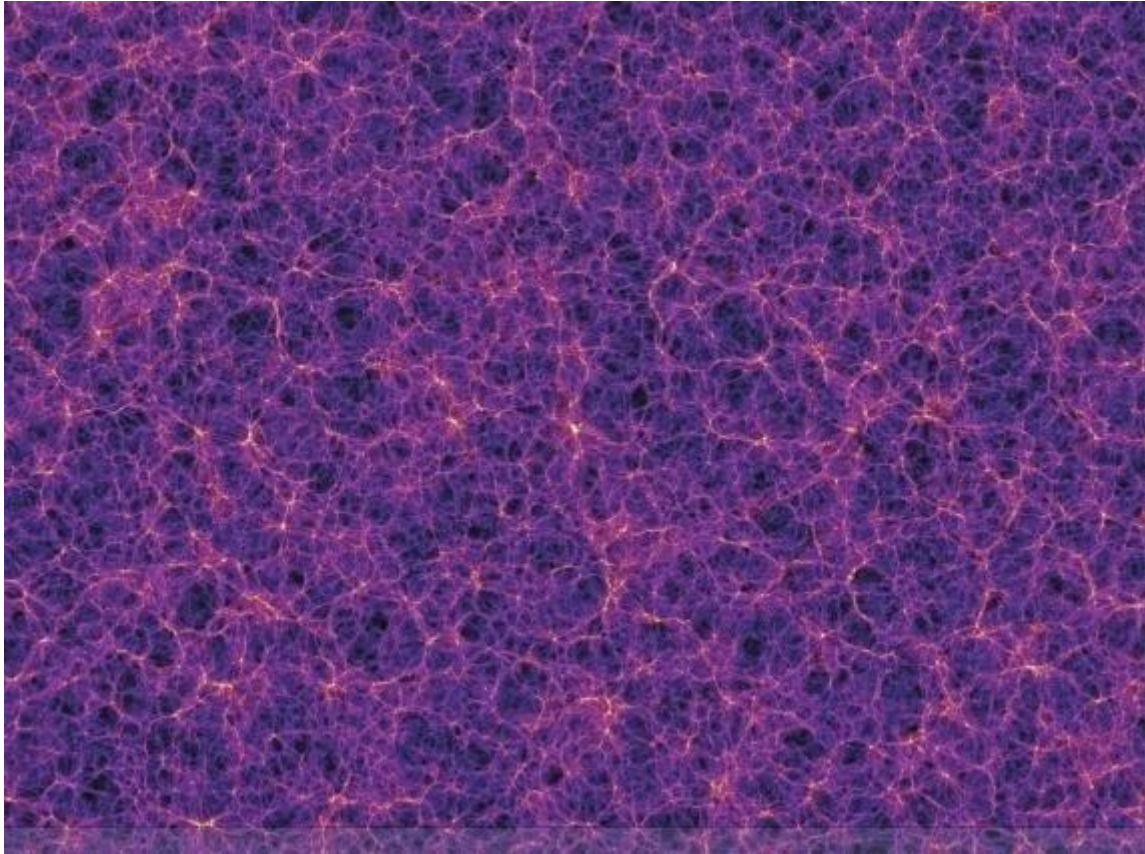


Figure 43: Simulated Large Scale Structure, depicting a portion of the Universe, 4.9 billion light-years across. (The diameter of the Observable Universe is thought to be 93 billion light-years). Credit: Courtesy V. Springel and the Virgo Consortium

Considering the nature of its structure and morphology -الْحُبُك-، the Qur'an was more fact-based in describing the beginning of the universe by using miraculously the words 'رتقا' and 'فتقا'; in contrast to science with its designation -the Big Bang. If it had been an expansion in a void that followed an explosion, the matter would have been flown with such a speed that the galaxies would not have been able to form; but, it is a kind of a continuous stretching. Seeds and Backman (2016) explained that the name *Big Bang* gave a misimpression and was a common misconception that it was an explosion which had as a result the galaxies flying away from the explosion centre. This was because it did not occur at one place but filled the entire volume of the universe. Instead, they proposed, to be more exact, *the big stretch* as a name; for everything is moving away from everything. Despite the fact that this recommended denomination is more convenient, it is not as effective as the divine word 'فتق'.

A closely resembling argument has been given by Geisler and Bocchino. According to them (2001), the theoretical physicist Jihn Polkinghorne has greatly valued the correctness of the following statement: “In the early expansion of the universe there has to be a close balance between the expansive energy (driving things apart) and the force of gravity (pulling things together). If expansion dominated then matter would fly apart too rapidly for condensation into galaxies and stars to take place.” (p.102). Due to the fact that creations lead us to the Creator, a beautiful reference to Him as a conclusion to a deep contemplation about the cosmos has been provided by them (religiously disbelievers). They (2001) stated that it (Allah) is an infinite uncaused cause that must also be eternal (outside of time) and caused the initial creation event with precisely the right balance of forces that brought the space-time universe into existence.

Whether our universe is finite or infinite has been discussed by many great minds to reject at the end the possibility of being infinite. They gave the name of ‘The Big Crunch’ to its collapsing phase or ending which is, in action, the Big-Bang in reverse. Willis and Willis (2006, p.82) clarified:

“Big Crunch” refers to the possibility that gravity will inexorably pull the universe back together until it “crunches” in on itself, possibly even duplicating the original point of almost infinite density, mass, and heat but no volume that is thought to have existed at the immediate point of the Big Bang. The theory proposes that tens of billions of years from now the cosmos will cease to expand, run out of energy, give way to the inexorable pull of gravity, and simply deflate like a popped balloon.

Drees (1990, p.246) mentioned that some cosmologists speculated that the Big Crunch for one cosmic epoch might be the Big Bang for another one. For Pafumi (2010), the universe could then consist of an infinite sequence of finite universes, each finite universe with a Big Crunch that is also the Big Bang of the next universe. This might well serve as an elucidation of the concept ‘رتق’ which means that things were attached together after being separate.

Another fact about the universe is stated by McDowell (2010) saying that science now has determined that it is flat and not curved with only a 2% margin error because it is the only answer, according to him, to the following question: since the universe is expanding at an accelerating rate, where does it all go? He (2010) wrote, “If the two-dimensional space were shaped like a flat sheet of paper, an expanding universe in that flat space would simply have to be infinitely large” (p.96). So, a universe that resembles a flat sheet of paper, and which is finite starting with a Big-Bang and ending with a Big Crunch which is the Big-Bang of another universe are all best expressed and summarized in the verse 104 of surat Al-Anbiya’ when Allah said: “ *يَوْمَ نَطْوِي السَّمَاءَ كَطَيِّ السِّجِلِّ الْكُتُبِ كَمَا بَدَأْنَا أَوَّلَ خَلْقٍ نُعِيدُهُ وَعَدَا عَلَيْنَا إِنَّا كُنَّا فَاعِلِينَ* ”; “*And (remember) the Day when We shall roll up the heavens like a scroll rolled up for books, as We began the first creation, We shall repeat it, (it is) a promise binding upon Us. Truly, We shall do it*”. Hence, on the day of judgement, there will be a new beginning which implies a new earth as well as new skies or heavens. Allah, the Almighty, mentioned in surat Ibrahim, verse 48: “ *يَوْمَ نُبَدِّلُ الْأَرْضَ غَيْرَ الْأَرْضِ وَغَيْرَ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَبَرَزُوا لِلَّهِ الْوَاحِدِ الْقَهَّارِ* ”; “*On the Day when the earth will be changed to another earth and so will be the heavens, and they (all creatures) will appear before Allah, the One, the Irresistible*”.

5.2.5. Comparative Review of the Five Translations of the Word ‘مُوسِعُونَ’ (musi3un)

A	M	P	YA	H & K
<i>are steadily expanding</i>	<i>have the power to do so</i>	<i>make the vast extent (thereof)</i>	<i>create the vastness of space</i>	<i>able to extend the vastness of space thereof</i>

Table 43: The Five Translations of the Word ‘مُوسِعُونَ’ (musi3un)

The peer review of the renditions seems to point out to the conclusion that even though ‘steadily’ is extra since it does not exist in the genuine message, only Asad has approached

the exact meaning by its rendition “*are steadily expanding*”; for he has retained the continuous form of the verb which is in agreement, linguistically and scientifically, with the original word. However, this meaning has not been reflected in the same way neither by the other translators nor by the exegetes (as it has been communicated previously). Pikhall with “*make the vast extent (thereof)*” has used the simple present; so, the process for him is limited in time. By the same token, another finite action has been given by Yusuf Ali “*create the vastness of space*”. However, from the point of view of Al-Hilali and Khan, it is merely a supposed ability to extend and not a real action; for they have written ‘*We are Able to extend the vastness of space thereof*’. For the same reason, Malik has provided the translation ‘*We have the power to do so*’, but without any reference to any expansion. Hence, the recipients of the translations of Malik, Pikhall, Yusuf Ali, and Al-Hilali and Khan grasp something that is quite different from what is being denoted by the original word.

All in all, many cosmological facts have been established with the rise of modern astronomy and which are in full agreement with the Qur’an. Firstly, space is not considered a void any more as it is not empty but rather like a fascinating woven fabric ‘الحبك’ ‘alhubuk’. Secondly, the universe was once one assembled entity ‘رتق’ ‘ratq’. After that, an opposite action has taken place ‘فتق’ ‘fatq’. As a result, the galaxies in relation to each other are observed to be in continuous fleeing from each other ‘موسعون’ ‘musi3un’. Hence, the cosmological expansion means that the universe has been continuously expanding ever since its inception. Moreover, the universe destiny is now believed to be finite with the possibility of another cycle or cycles. So, who would have been able to explore the space and describe it as of ‘الحبك’ and refer to its beginning as ‘رتق’ followed by ‘الفتق’ and make all these discoveries at the seventh century if it hadn’t been a revelation from Allah? Nevertheless, all these extraordinary miraculous notions have been distorted when translated.

5.3. The Sphericity of Earth: (يَكْوَرُ)

What geometrical shape is the Earth? Throughout history, this question was a subject arousing the curiosity and interest of humans and was the basis for elaborating a significant branch of science called Geodesy (a branch that studies the Earth's shape and size). Trying to figure this mystery out, many suppositions have been established. In early times, one hypothesis that was strongly believed in was that the Earth is a flat plane. While this idea has always been controversial, some Muslims argue that the following ayah which was revealed fourteen centuries ago might provide a clear indication about the Earth's true shape.

قال تعالى: {خَلَقَ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ بِالْحَقِّ يُكْوَرُ اللَّيْلُ عَلَى النَّهَارِ وَيُكْوَرُ النَّهَارُ عَلَى اللَّيْلِ...}

[Surah 39. Azzumar, 'Meccan', Ayah: (05)]

5.3.1. The Five Translations of the Verse 05 of Surat Azzumar (Table 44)

A	He it is who has created the heavens and the earth in accordance with [an inner] truth. He causes the night <u>to flow into</u> the day, and causes the day <u>to flow into</u> the night...
M	He created the heavens and the earth to manifest the Truth. He causes the night <u>to succeed</u> the day and the day <u>to overtake</u> the night...
P	He hath created the heavens and the earth with truth. He maketh night <u>to succeed</u> day, and He maketh day <u>to succeed</u> night, ...
YA	He created the heavens and the earth in true (proportions): He makes the Night <u>overlap</u> the Day and the Day <u>overlap</u> the Night...
H & K	He has created the heavens and the earth with truth. He makes the night <u>to go in</u> the day and makes the day <u>to go in</u> the night...

5.3.2. Exegetical Interpretations of the Verse 05 of Surat Azzumar

❖ **Al Jalalayn:** He created the heavens and the earth with the truth (bi'l-haqqi is semantically connected to khalafa 'He created'). He turns the night into day, so that it grows, and turns the day into night, so that it grows.(p.537).

❖ **Ibn Kathir:** (He makes the night to go in the day and makes the day to go in the night.) means, He has subjugated them and He causes them to alternate without ceasing, each seeking the other rapidly, as He says: (يَغْشَى اللَّيْلَ النَّهَارَ يَطْلُبُهُ حَثِيثًا) (He brings the night as a cover over the day, seeking it rapidly) (7:54). (p.4342).

5.3.3. The Linguistic Meaning

The verse under discussion contains a chiasmus, in that the word 'يُكَوِّرُ' 'yukawwir', a verb in the present tense, has been repeated twice. Its past form is 'كَوَّرَ' 'kawwara' from 'التكوير' 'attakwir', which means making something as round as a sphere or a ball 'كرة' 'kura'. In Arabic, due to the spherical shape of the human head, the sentence 'كورالعمامة' 'kawwara al3imama' is used to describe coiling or wrapping a 'turban' 'عمامة' around the head. This example has been stated previously by Ibn Kathir when explaining 'إذا الشمس كورت'. Therefore, using 'the night' and 'the day' as objects of the verb 'يُكَوِّرُ' 'yukawwir' as in the ayah under study implicates that the Earth is globe-shaped. Hence, this might be a clear hint about the sphericity of our planet.

Another verse that alludes to the same idea reads: "يَا مَعْشَرَ الْجِنِّ وَالْإِنْسِ إِنِ اسْتَطَعْتُمْ أَنْ تَنْفُذُوا مِنْ أَفْطَارِ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ..." "O assembly of jinns and men! If you have power to pass beyond the zones of the heavens and the earth,..." (Arrahman:33).

5.3.3.1. Exegetical Interpretations of the Verse 33 of Surat Arrahman

❖ **Al Jalalayn:** O company of jinn and humans, if you are able to pass through, to exit from, the confines, the regions, of the heavens and the earth, ...(p.638).

❖ **Ibn Kathir:** meaning, 'you will never be able to escape Allah's orders and decrees, because it encompasses you. You will never be able to avoid or avert His rule and judgement

over you, you are surrounded by it wherever you may be.’ This is also about the Gathering when the angels, comprising seven lines in every direction, will surround the creatures. (p.4957).

5.3.3.2. The Linguistic Meanings

Besides having the meaning of regions, zones, or lands, the word ‘أَقْطَارُ’ ‘aqṭar’ in geometry refers to ‘diameters’ which are, particularly, traits of circular and spherical objects. As a matter of fact, even with this meaning the same idea is conveyed which is the inability to reach spaces beyond the extremities or the final frontiers of the diameters of the Earth and the skies (a very recent discovery shows that the Earth’s atmosphere, exactly the geocorona (at the outer limit of the exosphere), stretches out to the Moon and even beyond).

5.3.3.3. The Five Translations of the Word ‘أَقْطَارُ’ (aqṭar) (Table 45)

A	M	P	YA	H & K
<i>the regions</i>	<i>the boundaries</i>	<i>(all) regions</i>	<i>the zones</i>	<i>the zones</i>

In addition to the exegetes, it is clear from the above table that the translators too have not suggested the geometrical potential sense.

Scientists proclaim that the fact that there is no sudden change regarding the alteration of day and night, which would be the case if the Earth were flat, is one of the supporting arguments of the Earth’s spherical figure. The process is rather of gradual steady transition with an overlap. According to Quiroga and Panzeri (2013), “Dawn and dusk provide a gradual change in luminance between day and night, limiting the degree of variation encountered over a short time span”(p.358). Allah said in surat Faṭir, verse 13 which also contains a chiasmus: “يُولِجُ اللَّيْلَ فِي النَّهَارِ وَيُولِجُ النَّهَارَ فِي اللَّيْلِ...”; “He merges the night into the day (i.e. the decrease in the hours of the night are added to the hours of the day), and He merges the day into the night (i.e. the decrease in the hours of the day are added to the hours of the night)...”.

5.3.3.4. Exegetical Interpretations of the Verse 13 of Surat Faṭir

❖ **Al Jalalayn:** He God makes the night pass enter into the day so that it becomes longer and He makes the day pass into the night so that it becomes longer... (p.496).

❖ **Ibn Kathir:** (He merges the night into the day, and He merges the day into the night.) Another aspect of His perfect power and might is that He has subjugated the night with its darkness and the day with its light. He takes from the length of the one and adds it to the shortness of the other, until they become equal. Then He takes from the latter and adds to the former, so one becomes long and the other becomes short, so they take from one another in summer and in winter.(p.4149-4150).

5.3.3.5. The Linguistic Meaning

‘يُولِجُ’ ‘yulidju’ is from the verb ‘أُولِجُ’ ‘awladja’ which means to make someone or something to ‘enter’ or to ‘get/go in’. The doer of this action in this verse is of course the Creator of everything -Allah. An example from the Qur’an that illustrates this meaning is the antithesis in the second verse of surat Saba’: “يَعْلَمُ مَا يُلِجُ فِي الْأَرْضِ وَمَا يَخْرُجُ مِنْهَا...”; “He knows that which goes into the earth and that which comes forth from it,...”.

5.3.3.6. Comparative Review of the Five Translations of ‘يُولِجُ اللَّيْلَ فِي النَّهَارِ’

(yulidju allaila fi nahar)

A	M	P	Y A	H & K
<i>He makes the night grow longer by shortening the day</i>	<i>He causes the night to pass into the day</i>	<i>He maketh the night to pass into the day</i>	<i>He merges Night into Day</i>	<i>He merges the night into the day (i.e. the decrease in the hours of the night are added to the hours of the day)</i>

Table 46: The Five Translations of ‘يُولِجُ اللَّيْلَ فِي النَّهَارِ’ (yulidju allaila fi nahar)

As it is seen, the translators have dealt with this part of the verse by giving interpretations or explanations that do not exist explicitly in the original message, though they, excluding the one of Asad, are of approximate meanings.

A similar message exhibiting the alteration of the day and night and that the vanishing of one of them brings the other to come rapidly, which, of course, is claimed to promote the spherical shape of the Earth is in surat Al-A3raf, verse 54. It shows the night as a cover over the day which is in haste to follow or pursuit it, and vice versa as explained by the exegetes. Allah, the Almighty, said: “...يُعْشِي اللَّيْلَ النَّهَارَ يَطْلُبُهُ حَثِيثًا...”; “...*He brings the night as a cover over the day, seeking it rapidly...*”. As a matter of fact, at any time, one half of the Earth has day, and the other half has night. Hence, there are many rising and setting points; i.e. many Easts and Wests, and this alludes too to the actual figure of the Earth. Perhaps this is what Allah refers to when making the following oath: “...بِرَبِّ الْمَشَارِقِ وَالْمَغَارِبِ...”; “*So I swear by the Lord of all [the three hundred and sixty (360)] points of sunrise and sunset in the east and the west ...*”(Alma3aridj:40).

5.3.4. Possible Scientific Implications

Now, it is established as a scientific fact that the Earth’s figure is nearly a perfect sphere or appears perfectly round -a globe. Round and spherical are two terms that are used interchangeably regarding this matter. Clavius (in Grant,1996) insisted that the inequalities or deformities of the globe were too small (negligible) to be considered when compared to the whole size of it, and thus it was described as round and spherical. However, an oblate spheroid is more accurate to depict the Earth’s actual shape. According to Edward et al. (2006), “Earth’s spherical shape “bulges” very slightly at the Equator and is very slightly “flattened” at the poles; this shape is called an oblate (flattened) spheroid” (p.67). A contemporary claim about the following verse is that it might indicate the Earth’s flatness at its poles. Allah said: “...تَنْقُصُهَا مِنْ أَطْرَافِهَا...”; “*See they not that We gradually reduce the land (of disbelievers, by giving it to the believers, in war victories) from its outlying borders*” (Arra3d:41).

5.3.4.1. Exegetical Interpretations of the Verse 41 of Surat Arra3d

❖ **Al Jalalayn:** Or is it that they the people of Mecca have not seen how We visit the land how We target their land diminishing it at its outlying regions? by giving victory to the Prophet(s). (p.262).

❖ **Ibn Kathir:** Ibn Abbas commented, "See they not that We are granting land after land to Muhammad!" Al-Hasan and Ad-Dahhak commented that; this Ayah refers to Muslims gaining the upper hand over idolators, just as Allah said in الْقُرَىٰ “And indeed We have destroyed towns round about you”(46:27). (p.2542).

5.3.4.2. Comparative Review of the Five Translations of نَنْقُصُهَا مِنْ أَطْرَافِهَا

(nanqusuha min atrafiha)

A	M	P	Y A	H & K
<i>gradually depriving it of all that is best thereon</i>	<i>gradually reducing the land in their control through curtailing its borders</i>	<i>reducing it of its outlying parts</i>	<i>gradually reduce the land (in their control) from its outlying borders</i>	<i>gradually reduce the land (of disbelievers, by giving it to the believers, in war victories) from its outlying borders</i>

Table 47: The Five Translations of ‘ نَنْقُصُهَا مِنْ أَطْرَافِهَا ’ (nanqusuha min atrafiha)

Literally, this expression means reducing it from its borders or extremities. Neither the exegetes nor the translators, excluding Pikhthall, have paid attention to the literal sense that might also be of significance supporting the flatness of Earth at its poles.

The Earth’s roundness of form has been illustrated, according to scientists, by many proofs and insightful observations that only some of which are going to be mentioned here. First, the circumnavigation; i.e. the voyages of some navigators who have sailed round the globe is a real piece of evidence. They departed from a point following one direction, and when they arrived or returned to the same spot, they discovered that they have made a perfect

round. According to Wall (2009), “Cristopher Columbus believed Earth was round. So he sailed west from Spain to try to reach the trade routes in the Far East. Instead, he found the Americas. Almost 30 years later, Magellan’s crew proved Earth was round by circumnavigating Earth.”(p.09).

Second, another proof is the disappearing of ships from the sight as if they are gradually sinking. Burns (2007) mentioned that if there were no other proof but to stand on the shore and see a ship gradually disappearing at the horizon, it was enough for illustrating the spherical shape of Earth. In like manner, it is also proved by the order in which objects or parts of ships disappear successively. According to Hiley (1848), “when a ship goes out to sea, we first lose sight of the hull, then of the sails and lower rigging, and lastly, of the upper part of the masts” (p.16). So, when receding, the highest point is always the last thing observed of ships no matter in which direction they go, and this definitely implies the spherical nature of the planet.

Third, in fact, Earth is of a globular form because it always casts a curved, round or circular shadow on the Moon’s surface. No geometrical shape but a sphere can reflect in all directions that shadow’s outline, and this decisively fits and confirms the spheroid figure of our planet. This is observed during partial lunar eclipses and some stages of total ones. Schiller (2009) wrote that “during every lunar eclipse (when the Earth passes between the Sun and Moon and its shadow falls on the Moon’s face), the Earth’s shadow appears round. Only a spherical Earth would always give rise to a circular shadow.”(p.32). The following diagram (in Maini et al., 2010, p.158) displays the positions of the Sun, Earth and Moon during a lunar eclipse. The Moon passes through different areas of the shadow when it moves around the Earth, immersing in the penumbra and the umbra.

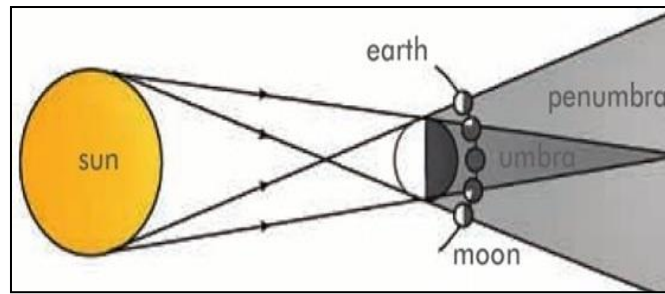


Figure 44: Lunar Eclipse

For a clear representation of what happens to the Moon during a lunar eclipse, here is a total lunar eclipse at different stages (in Seeds and Backman, 2010, p.36).

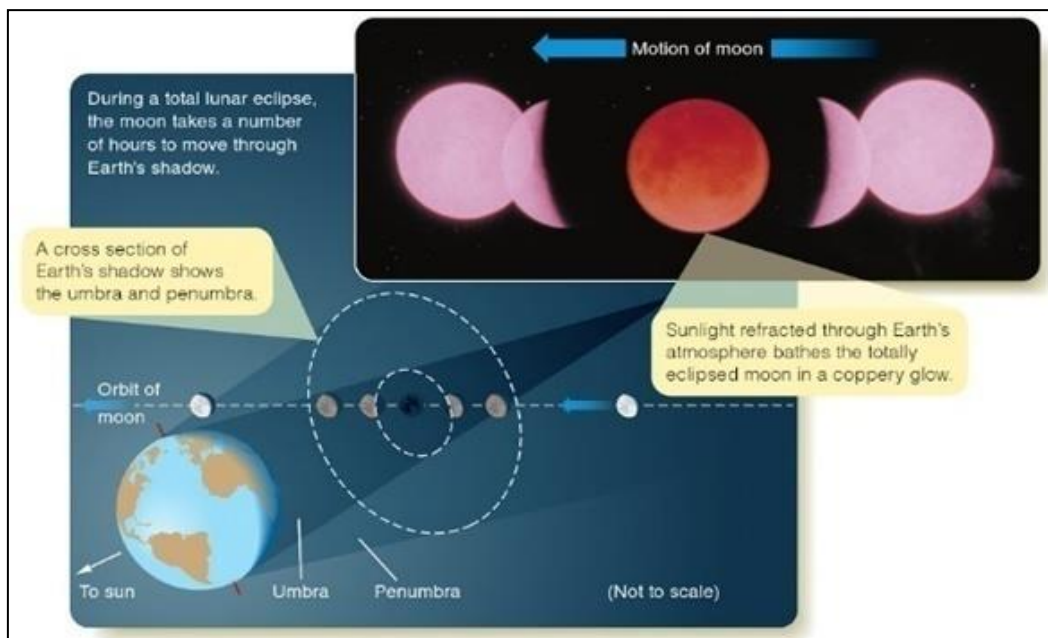


Figure 45: A total lunar eclipse at different stages

During a total lunar eclipse, the moon passes from right to left through Earth's shadow. The multiple-exposure photograph shows the moon at different stages of the eclipse with a longer exposure used to record the moon while it was totally eclipsed. The moon's path appears curved in the photo because of photographic effects. (1982 Dr. Jack B. Marling)

The following is a sequential view of a lunar eclipse (in Reddy, 2012, p.122) where the Earth's circular shadow is clearly visible and looks almost black in contrast with the part of the Moon that is still in sunlight. Reddy (2012) stated: "When the Moon begins its passage through the umbra, a dark circular shadow slowly creeps across its face for the next hour" (p.122).



Figure 46: Earth's circular umbra is revealed in this nine-image composite of the Aug.2008 partial lunar eclipse (Anthony Ayiomamitis).

Finally, not different from the other planets which are round, the Earth is proved by astronauts to be so as is clearly apparent from the photographs taken from space by satellites at great heights. Here is a photograph (in Vázquez et al, 2010, p.12) showing the whole Earth from 36,000 km where South America and West Africa are clearly visible -*Courtesy: NASA.*



Figure 47: The whole Earth from 36,000 km

5.3.5. Comparative Review of the Five Translations of the Word ‘يُكَوِّرُ’ (yukawwir)

A	M	P	Y A	H & K
<i>to flow</i>	<i>to succeed /to overtake</i>	<i>to succeed</i>	<i>overlap</i>	<i>to go in</i>

Table 48: The Five Translations of the Word ‘يُكَوِّرُ’ (yukawwir)

This word has been repeated twice in the same verse (a chiasmus), and all the translators referred to it with the same term in the second occurrence except for Malik who has given ‘*to succeed*’ in the first instance, and ‘*to overtake*’ in the second. Asad has provided the word ‘*to flow*’, Pikhall ‘*to succeed*’, Yusuf Ali ‘*overlap*’, and Al-Hilali and Khan ‘*to go in*’. Here, it is easily perceived that all these translations are showing a common neglect or an overlook to the literal denotation of the original word whose basic meaning exhibits the spherical shape. So, improperly selected their choices, the translators have distorted the meaning of the genuine message because of the complete absence of any reference to the roundness of Earth.

To wrap up this discussion, the correctness of the assumption of the spheroid shape of the Earth has been scientifically proved, verified and fully established through plentiful pieces of evidence such as the gradual alteration of day and night, mathematical explanations and even visual proofs like real photographs. Yet, it seems to us as flat, and it is comfortable and useful to its inhabitants as such. The scientific argument is that this flatness is the ordinary view of small creatures like us being on an immense size globe, enormous sphere, like the Earth. The first direct reference which fits perfectly the scientific notion given to this discovery -the sphericity of Earth- and which even anticipated it is attributed to the Qur’an with its use of the word ‘يُكَوِّرُ’ ‘yukawwir’. Yet, one can never have a clue about this fact from reading this word’s different renditions even though it is clearly disclosed in the divine one.

5.4. The Heart's Brain: (يَعْقُلُونَ)

Despite the fact that it is ingrained in our belief that the brain is the master organ of the human body; i.e. the one in control, and that the heart's role is mystical in nature, who we are, our emotions, split-second decisions, reactions, attitudes...etc are all reflections or interpretations of what have been stored in our hearts, as reported in many instances in the Qur'an. Our perception of the heart regarding its true value should drastically change due to the growing and the verified evidence that suggests that it is able to remember, think and process information. So, it is not a metaphor when saying that when the heart loses its sight, the person enters in heedlessness (ghafila), and thus commits sins.

قال الله عز وجل: {أَفَلَمْ يَسِيرُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ فَتَكُونَ لَهُمْ قُلُوبٌ يَعْقِلُونَ بِهَا ...}

[Surah 22, Al-Hadj, 'Madinan', Ayah: (46)]

5.4.1. The Five Translations of the Verse 46 of Surat Al-Hadj (Table 49)

A	Have they, then, never journeyed about the earth, letting their hearts <u>gain wisdom</u> , ...
M	Have they not traveled through the land? Have they no hearts <u>to learn wisdom</u> , ...
P	Have they not travelled in the land, and have they hearts wherewith <u>to feel</u> ...
Y A	Do they not travel through the land so that their hearts <u>(and mind) may thus learn wisdom</u> ...
H & K	Have they not travelled through the land, and have they hearts wherewith <u>to understand</u> ...

5.4.2. Exegetical Interpretations of the Verse 46 of Surat Al-Hadj

❖ **Al Jalalayn:** Have they, namely, the disbelievers of Mecca, not travelled in the land so that they may have hearts with which to comprehend, what befell deniers before them ... (p.373).

❖ **Ibn Kathir:** (Have they not traveled through the land,) means, have they not traveled in the physical sense and also used their minds to ponder That is sufficient, as Ibn Abi Ad-Dunya said in his book *At-Tafakkur wal-Ṭibār*, "Some of the wise people said, 'Give life to your heart with lessons, illuminate it with thought, kill it with asceticism, strengthen it with certain faith, remind it of its mortality, make it aware of the calamities of this world, warn it of the disasters that life may bring, show it how things may suddenly change with the passing of days, tell it the stories of the people of the past, and remind it what happened to those who came before.'" Walk through their ruins, see what they did and what became of them, meaning, look at the punishments and divine wrath that struck the nations of the past who belied, (فَتَكُونُ لَهُمْ قُلُوبٌ يَعْقِلُونَ بِهَا أَوْ آذَانٌ يَسْمَعُونَ بِهَا) (and have they hearts wherewith to understand and ears wherewith to hear) meaning, let them learn a lesson from that. (p.3328-3329).

5.4.3. The Linguistic Meaning

It is universally taken for granted that the brain is the master organ regarding decisions and cognition; yet, mysteriously, the above Ayah, the ones below and many more give that status to the heart 'القلب' 'Al-qalb'. The latter is a very important word in Islam and Qur'an. It has the denotation of 'تقلب' 'taqallub', which means turning over from one state or side to another. Therefore, Allah said: "... وَقَلَّبُوا لَكَ الْأُمُورَ..."; "...and had upset matters for you..." (Attawba:48). Though it refers physically to the organ that pumps blood, it has been described in the Qur'an as the one responsible for thinking, analyzing, cognition, apprehending, perception, feeling...etc. However, these functions have been disregarded and rejected as real functions governed by the heart because little or no attention has been paid to how much of these are real, and to what degree they might well be more than simply metaphorical. Here are some ayahs that clearly state that the heart is the one in control.

The Verses	The Translations
<p>“...لَهُمْ قُلُوبٌ لَا يَفْقَهُونَ بِهَا... ” (الأعراف: 179)</p>	<p>“...They have hearts wherewith they understand not, ...” (Al-A3raf: 179).</p>
<p>” أَفَلَا يَتَدَبَّرُونَ الْقُرْآنَ أَمْ عَلَى قُلُوبٍ أَقْفَالُهَا “ (محمد: 24)</p>	<p>“Do they not then think deeply in the Qur'an, or are their hearts locked up (from understanding it)?” (Muhammad:24)</p>
<p>“...وَلَكِنْ مَا تَعَمَّدَتْ قُلُوبُكُمْ...” (الأحزاب: 05)</p>	<p>“...except in regard to what your hearts deliberately intend...” (Al-ahzab: 05).</p>
<p>” إِنْ تَتُوبَا إِلَى اللَّهِ فَقَدْ صَغَتْ قُلُوبُكُمَا.. “ (التحریم: 04)</p>	<p>“If you two (wives of the Prophet, namely 'Aishah and Hafsah) turn in repentance to Allah, (it will be better for you), your hearts are indeed so inclined...” (Attahrim: 04).</p>
<p>” ... وَلَا تَجْعَلْ فِي قُلُوبِنَا غِلًّا لِلَّذِينَ آمَنُوا ... “ (الحشر: 10)</p>	<p>“...and put not in our hearts any hatred against those who have believed...” (Alhashr: 10).</p>
<p>“...وَقَذَفَ فِي قُلُوبِهِمُ الرُّعْبَ...” (الأحزاب: 26)</p>	<p>“...and cast terror into their hearts, ...” (Al-ahzab: 26).</p>
<p>“...وَالْقَاسِيَةَ قُلُوبُهُمْ...” (الحج: 53)</p>	<p>“...and whose hearts are hardened...” (Al-hadj: 53).</p>
<p>“...وَأَرْتَابَ قُلُوبِهِمْ...” (التوبة: 45)</p>	<p>“...and whose hearts are in doubt ...” (Attawba:45).</p>
<p>”...وَلَوْ كُنْتَ فَظًّا غَلِيظَ الْقَلْبِ لَانْفَضُّوا مِنْ حَوْلِكَ...” (آل عمران: 159)</p>	<p>“...And had you been severe and harsh-hearted, they would have broken away from about you;...” (Al-3imran: 159)</p>
<p>”...أَلَا يَذْكُرُ اللَّهُ تَطْمَئِنُّ الْقُلُوبُ” (الرعد: 28)</p>	<p>“... Verily, in the remembrance of Allah do hearts find rest.” (Ara3d: 28).</p>
<p>”...وَجَعَلْنَا فِي قُلُوبِ الَّذِينَ اتَّبَعُوهُ رَأْفَةً وَرَحْمَةً...” (الحديد: 27)</p>	<p>“...And We ordained in the hearts of those who followed him, compassion and mercy. ...” (Alhadid: 27).</p>
<p>”...أُولَئِكَ كَتَبَ فِي قُلُوبِهِمُ الْإِيمَانَ...” (المجادلة: 22)</p>	<p>“...For such He has written Faith in their hearts,...” (Almujadilah: 22).</p>
<p>”أَلَمْ يَأْنِ لِلَّذِينَ آمَنُوا أَنْ تَخْشَعَ قُلُوبُهُمْ لِذِكْرِ اللَّهِ...” (الحديد: 16)</p>	<p>“Has not the time come for the hearts of those who believe (in the Oneness of Allah - Islamic Monotheism) to be affected by Allah's Reminder (this Qur'an),...” (Alhadid: 16).</p>
<p>”...وَاللَّهُ يَعْلَمُ مَا فِي قُلُوبِكُمْ...” (الأحزاب: 51)</p>	<p>“...Allah knows what is in your hearts...” (Al-ahzab: 51).</p>
<p>”...وَلَكِنْ يُؤَاخِذُكُمْ بِمَا كَسَبَتْ قُلُوبُكُمْ...” (البقرة: 225)</p>	<p>“... but He will call you to account for that which your hearts have earned...” (Al-baqarah: 225).</p>

<p>”... وَلَا تَكْتُمُوا الشَّهَادَةَ وَمَنْ يَكْتُمْهَا فَإِنَّهُ آتِمٌ قَلْبُهُ...” (البقرة: 283)</p>	<p>“...And conceal not the evidence for he, who hides it, surely his heart is sinful...” (Al-baqarah: 283).</p>
<p>”...إِذْ كُنْتُمْ أَعْدَاءَ فَأَلَّفَ بَيْنَ قُلُوبِكُمْ فَأَصْبَحْتُمْ بِنِعْمَتِهِ إِخْوَانًا...” (آل عمران: 103)</p>	<p>“...for you were enemies one to another but He joined your hearts together, so that, by His Grace, you became brethren (in Islamic Faith)...” (Al-3imran: 103).</p>
<p>”... كَذَلِكَ قَالَ الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ مِثْلَ قَوْلِهِمْ تَشَابَهَتْ قُلُوبُهُمْ...” (البقرة: 118)</p>	<p>“... So said the people before them words of similar import. Their hearts are alike, ...” (Al-baqarah: 118).</p>

Table 50: Some Verses Containing the Word ‘قلب’ ‘Qalb’ and their Translations

5.4.4. Possible Scientific Implications

So, can we really think with what has been historically thought of as merely the blood’s pump? Is it possible that the latter is not the only function of the heart? Well, the Qur’an always refers to the fact that the heart has an intelligence of its own and that it is the origin of intentional activities. Very recently, modern research discovers that it truly does have a mind of its own and matches the brain in some of its functions; for it has a neural network which resembles the one commonly found in the brain. According to Braden (2015), in 1991, it was published an article, entitled “Neurocardiology”, that presented the discovery of Dr. J. Andrew Armour, a heart specialist, revealing that about 40000 specialized neurons, called sensory neurites, form a communication network within the heart, duplicating many of the same functions found in the brain. Due to the fact that these special cells that have been found in the heart were once thought to be exclusive to the brain, it was chosen *the little brain in the heart* as a description. So, the above ayahs and the like with the related scientific discoveries make a perfect match regarding this perception of the heart.

Put simply, by the presence of a sophisticated collection of neurons in the heart, it has been established in the field of neurocardiology that the heart is very intelligent. Perus (2013) quoted a comment of the publisher of a pamphlet called *Anatomical and Functional Principles*, written by Dr. Armour, saying that “the heart is a sensory organ and a sophisticated information encoding and processing center, with an extensive intrinsic nervous

system sufficiently sophisticated to qualify as a “heart brain” ” (p.188) and that, independent of the central nervous system, it can make decisions. Similarly, Shimoff (2010) argued that “the heart brain’s complex of circuitry gives it the ability to act independently from the larger brain -to learn, remember, and even feel and sense.”(p.160). Dr. Armour claimed that the heart is veritably sending more information to the brain than the other way around, according to Hanks (2013). Likewise, Pearsall, a neuropsychologist, is convinced that the heart has intelligence that “we are only rarely aware of in modern life” (Perus, 2013, p.189).

In fact, the heart generates an electromagnetic field. This was confirmed by Buhner (2004) who stated that it was precisely 60 times greater in amplitude and five thousand times more powerful, compared to the brain, (extending out further than human measuring devices can detect), and it involved in the protein synthesis and regulation of DNA and RNA. According to DaCosta (2013), “The heart generates the body’s most powerful and most extensive rhythmic electromagnetic field [...] and it infiltrates every cell in the body.” (p.149). It was asserted by Walker and Walker (2003) that we can not only detect in our brainwaves the same electrical patterns generated by the heart, but its message also travels throughout the body through the electromagnetic field that permeates every cell in the body.

So, the heart’s communications do not reach only the brain; for it is now known to have intriguingly a multifaceted role in the human system. The newly emerging view is that the heart is, according to Perus (2013), “a complex, self-organized system that maintains a continuous two-way dialogue with the brain and the rest of the body” (p.188). Donleavy and Shearer (2008) pointed out that according to researches the heart is capable of sending information and signals throughout the body’s systems, and this influences cognitive perception, cognition, and emotional processing and that “Many of these processes operate at a much higher speed than thoughts, and frequently bypass the mind’s linear reasoning process entirely.” (p.55). In the opinion of Pearsall, the heart processes information about the body

and the outside world through an *info-energetic code*, according to Perus (2013). Consequently, if the heart communicates appreciation or distress, this is felt throughout the body at its very deepest levels, according to Walker and Walker, (2003). So, the different cells of the human body are simultaneously influenced with every beat of the heart. Much more, it has been reported that individuals existing in the same environment have literally real impacts on each other, and one can deeply influence the state of another. Donleavy and Shearer (2008) claimed that affects such as distress or joy might be communicated from one individual to another as this field was actually felt in another person.

The complexity of cardiovascular events and the proposed relationship with behaviour is simplified in the following figure (in Rentel et al., 1985, p.100). Without going deeper into details, it exhibits the existence of a relationship between the heart and the facilitation of cognitive processes and enhanced attention to the environment.

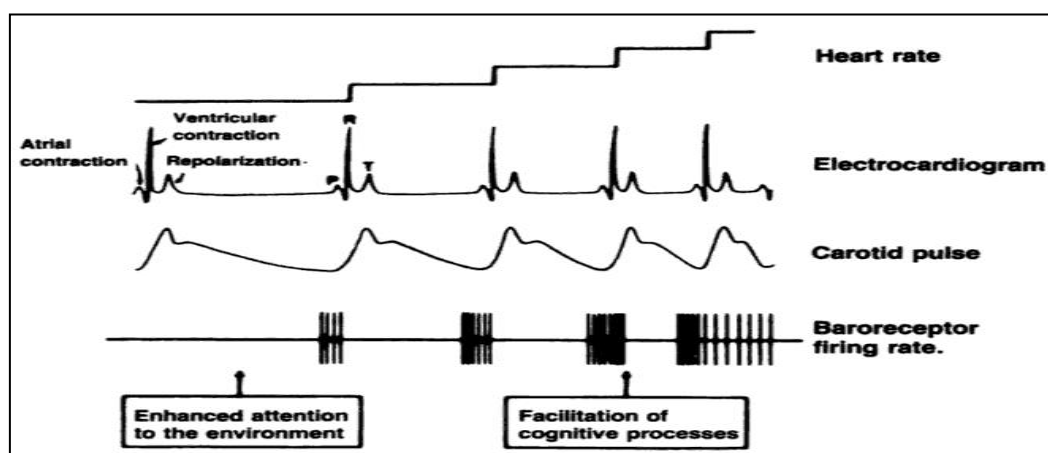


Figure 48: Cardiovascular Relationships to Attention and Thinking

Rentel et al. (1985) proclaimed that “The Laceys were the first to recognize the significance of these neurophysiological relationships for the study of behaviour. In a series of elegant studies they have demonstrated clearly that the heart influences the mind.” (p.101). About the influence of the heart on cognitive activity, they (1985) mentioned that it was found that the heart rate increased whenever there was a task that required mental concentration or cognitive elaboration.

As a matter of fact, heart rhythm patterns differ also according to different emotions. When a person experiences a negative emotion like frustration, the pattern is described as irregular, random and highly variable compared to when s/he experiences a positive emotion like appreciation, ordered and stable. The following figure and explanation have been included (in McCraty et al. 2001, p.19) to illustrate this.

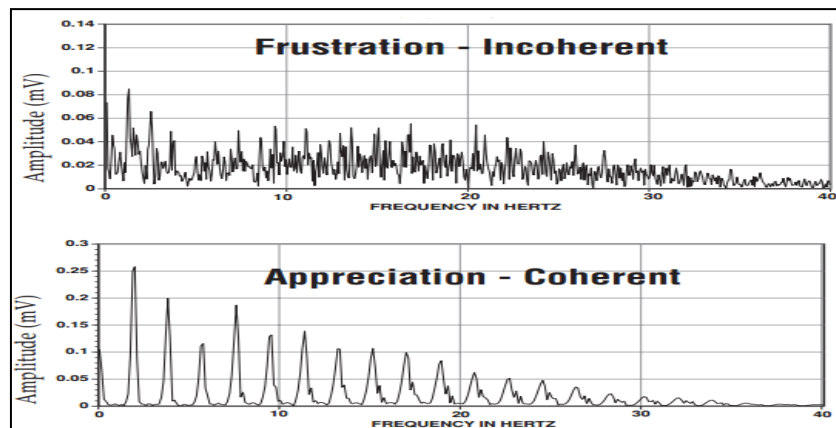


Figure 49: Electrical heart frequencies (frustration and appreciation)

The top graph is a typical spectrum analysis of the electrocardiogram (ECG) showing the electrical frequencies generated by the heart when a person experiences *frustration*. This is called an **incoherent spectrum** because the frequencies are scattered and disordered. The bottom graph shows the frequency analysis of the ECG during a period when the person is experiencing deep, sincere *appreciation*. This is called a **coherent spectrum** because the power is ordered and harmonious.

What is considered as magic in science is that since the advent of successful heart transplantation operations, new evidence shocked heart specialists when they received strange claims from heart recipients inheriting many life aspects of the deceased heart donors that were not having them before the transplantation, such as the same passions, interests, habits...etc. In the opinion of Roosevelt (2011), the heart does really have a mind, and this has been proven through heart transplants because “Heart transplant recipients take on many characteristics, connections, habits, and hobbies of their donors” (p.93). He (2011) argued that there were many reported instances of new characteristics similar to those of the deceased donors and gave the following two examples. First, a woman who had never cared about

ballroom dancing began to take lessons six weeks after her transplant and became quite good at it. It turned out that the donor had been a ballroom dancer. Second, one child when seeing the dead child's mother (the donor's mother) cried out calling her *mommy* and saying that he had missed her.

These are not isolated examples, but only some of many similar cases that have led to the discovery of new extraordinary facts about the heart. One of the accounts, stated by Gonzalez-Arnal et al. (2012), is the story of a man who has received the heart of a young man who committed suicide. The old man then married the donor's widow and committed suicide twelve years later the same way the donor's did "a self-inflicted gunshot wound" (p.197). So, the same heart, the same wife and also the same death. In fact, many personality changes of the person with the new heart have been reported. According to Snyder (2008), Peter Houghton has become more 'cold-hearted' and 'less sympathetic' as "He reported that he is unable to connect with those close to him and about his twin grandsons he says: "They're 8, and I don't want to be bothered to have a reasonable relationship with them and I don't know". He adds: "My emotions have changed. Somehow I can't help that." " (p.15).

However, one of the accounts is extraordinary unbelievable as it has led to the actual arrest of the murderer. According to Braden (2015), this was mentioned in 1999, in a pioneering book, *The Heart's Code*, that documented case histories of the heart's memory which was published by Dr. Paul Pearsall, a neuropsychologist. The case involved a heart receiver, an eight-year-old girl, who had the heart of a ten year-old girl. Immediately after a successful surgery, she started suffering from frightening nightmares of being chased, attacked, and killed. When referred to a psychiatrist, she felt that these clear consistent detailed descriptions are the memory of a real-life experience. After that, it was discovered that the girl was recounting an unsolved murder's details: the specific of where, when, and

how the murder had happened and even the name of the murderer who was eventually arrested (based on the details she had provided) and convicted of the assault.

Pointing out to receiving more than just the organ, Dr. Paul Pearsall (in Perus, 2013, p.189) used the terminology “cellular memories” because he had the belief that cells remember and “the implications of his theories -that the heart “thinks” , cells remember , and communication can therefore transcend the boundaries of time and space- are too important for him to dismiss”. Regarding the same matter, Allah said: “ *يَوْمَ تَشْهَدُ عَلَيْهِمْ أَلْسِنُهُمْ وَأَيْدِيهِمْ وَأَرْجُلُهُمْ* ”; “*On the Day when their tongues, their hands, and their legs or feet will bear witness against them as to what they used to do.*” (Annur:24).

5.4.5. Comparative Review of the Five Translations of the Word ‘يَعْقِلُونَ’ (ya3qilun)

A	M	P	YA	H & K
<i>gain wisdom</i>	<i>to learn wisdom</i>	<i>to feel</i>	<i>(and mind) may thus learn wisdom</i>	<i>to understand</i>

Table 51: The Five Translations of the Word ‘يَعْقِلُونَ’ (ya3qilun)

With the exception of Al-Hilali and Khan, all the translators have supposed that the sentence *لَهُمْ قُلُوبٌ يَعْقِلُونَ بِهَا*, particularly the word ‘يَعْقِلُونَ’ (ya3qilun), carries a specific connotation or a figurative meaning related either to feelings or wisdom. Asad, Malik and Yusuf Ali have all agreed upon opting for the idea of acquiring wisdom. Following approximately the same approach, Pikhall has given the word ‘to feel’. The reason is maybe that when thinking of an action that could possibly fit the heart, apart from pumping blood, it would be the one familiar in poetry, which is feeling or sometimes wisdom. The latter is historically believed to sit within the heart; for supposing that it is not knowledge, but a certain intuitiveness or insight. Yet, Yusuf Ali has inserted additionally between parentheses

(and mind); for he has perhaps assumed that the action is also related to the mind, or for supposedly fitting the action. In contrast, since they have abided by the literal translation, Al-Hilali and Khan's rendition is the only one that seems to be accurate *-to understand*.

To conclude, the heart has always been unanimously referred to as merely the centre of emotions and sometimes wisdom, only by instinct or mere poetic language, without any proof or even real belief. While many functions have been attributed to the brain, the roles of the heart and its central vital importance for our being, regardless pumping blood, have been discounted. Thus, the way we think about the heart ought to be completely changed, especially with the now verified evidence about its entity and significant functions. Also, we should continue to explore and learn to what extent these abilities and functions can reach. In other words, for a long time we have readily dismissed its great capacities; but now we can literally admit and strongly stress the various new functions attributed to the heart, and we ought to continue unlocking its secrets, which were explicitly and once exclusively referred to in the Qur'an and totally missed in the renditions in favour of wrong metaphorical or connotative assumptions.

Conclusion

Absence of miraculousness due to the distortion of the real true denotative meanings is what characterises the renditions of the divine words presented in this chapter. In fact, the different translation outcomes have excluded the too literal transfer when they should have exhibited exact accordance with the original words' explicit meanings. In other words, the renditions have rather shown no adherence to the primary meanings and most basic senses of these terms as they have altered these most obvious and non figurative senses. The reason behind this attitude is that the selected translators have mistakenly thought that the literal meanings are inconsistent whereas processing literalness is what should have been proceeded and resorted to if some of the extraordinary features of the Qur'an's *i3jaz* are to be delivered.

GENERAL CONCLUSION

The last sole divine guide for humanity until the day of resurrection, the Qur'an, is the speech of Almighty Allah, the most eloquent speech of all speeches, who has bestowed it upon the Prophet Muḥammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) as a proof of his prophethood and to guide mankind to the truth. It is a revelation that is very specifically in Arabic. It is an eternal miracle (linguistically, scientifically,...etc); for its i3jaz resides too in the knowledge some of its words contain, which is everlasting and renewable as an Arabic text. As a matter of fact, there is an undefeatable great challenge proposed in the holy Qur'an to produce something like it so as to prove its authenticity, superiority over any work and inimitability, and this assumes of course its untranslatability.

The latter has been illustrated through the many miraculous attributes and peculiarities that the Qur'an enjoys, some of which have been proved by contemporary science and technology. One of the aspects of its miraculous nature resides in its terseness, which is eloquence in a concise manner, in the field of lexicosemantics of words related to science; for despite the fact that it was revealed centuries ago, the Qur'an has addressed the age of science and technology through these science-related words. Continued studies of the Qur'anic texts and words have provided new incredible insights. However, these new modern readings or insights differ in that some are well established views while others are just claims as they are not of such degree of certainty. In short, the last Holy Book is indeed a treasury of truths expressed in the most eloquent possible language with the meanings that grow deeper with reflection and scientific advances that prove each time its i3jaz and untranslatability.

In order to spread the great message of the Qur'an beyond the Arab nations and to allow its content to be made widely accessible, translating its meanings into different languages has been a must, and the English versions are becoming amongst the most read books in the

world. However, if it is impossible to acquire full equivalence for an ordinary ST, then success is obviously much more difficult to achieve in the translation of a sensitive and complex text such as the Qur'an. When encountered in translation, absolute non-equivalence is always an expected result of any act of translation of the message of the Qur'an. In fact, since Muslims have been wrestling with the meanings of some of the Qur'anic vocabulary since the inception of Islam, translating its meanings compared to other literary genres is such a challenging task (at both the lexical and semantic (scientific) levels) that no one can ensure that each and every word is fully comprehended and faithfully translated and communicated.

So, presenting the Qur'an to non-Arabic speaking people with the same variety of meanings, scientific implications and possible future insights is definitely beyond the bounds of human possibility. The contemporary reader, as shown in this work, is still not exposed to many sides of the Qur'an's *i3jaz*. The basic reason is that it is a divine speech that has been rephrased by humans. Any translation of the Qur'an's meanings has always been and will still be an issue for translators in terms of translatability, faithfulness and accuracy. Owing to the miraculous nature of the language of revelation and its dissimilarity with English, any translation is fated to suffer a considerable loss at the rhetorical and scientific level. In this study, the renditions of five well known translations have been reviewed and compared with the original words, and while studying them, other related words have been briefly discussed.

The translated words have been tested linguistically and scientifically against the Qur'anic words to show that it is impossible to match the latter. This research has practically proved the accepted fact of the inimitability (*i3jaz*) and untranslatability characteristics of some of the divine Qur'anic words. In other words, after scrutinizing the latter alongside their counterparts in English, many incorrect equivalents have been discovered. The results have shown a lot of defects and a loss of the scientific data contained in the genuine words; i.e.

almost none of the renditions were in line with the original because they have not quite properly suggested the possible scientific inferences, and this has led to miraculousness loss.

The selected renditions have been classified, according to where the i3jaz has been identified, into three categories: inimitability (miraculousness) in '*analogy*', '*polysemy and broad sense*' and '*denotative or literal meaning*'. The common problem is either the alteration of the one sole literal meaning or ignoring the other literal meanings in case of more than one. As a result, in general, they suffer from serious shortcomings, mistranslations as well as lack of accuracy and faithfulness. They are deficient and inadequate to convey the original meanings, especially the possible scientific inferences due to failing to measure up to the depth of the Qur'anic message (the scientific suppositions, the referential and denotative shades of meanings,...etc). The truth is that they obscure the subtleties of words and some words are even ignored, favour clarity at the expense of accuracy and also suffer from a bias towards one shade of meaning and missing others. In addition, sometimes some of the nuances that are implicit in the original version are made explicit in the translations; yet, this sort of renditions can have also serious drawbacks.

So, seeking conveyance runs the risk of disguising or even distorting the meanings of the original words, and subtle linguistic and complex rhetorical problems that relate to science remain translation resistant. Even if some translations approach consistency, there are some packages of meanings; i.e. words, which remain problematic. In many cases the translators have agreed upon some apparent meanings; yet, some words have disputed designations or are of challenging obscurities due to the different senses rooted and carried by these words. Catching all the possible nuances of these words has been proved to be unattainable and infeasible as it is not always possible to identify a consistent term in English that fully corresponds with the range of meanings of the original. Also, some previously excluded literal meanings have proved their appropriateness in the age of science and technology while no

attention has been paid to them in translation. So, sometimes, it has been impossible to evade some difficulties of the Qur'anic vocabulary.

Consequently, all these have affected maintaining the standards of fidelity that a religious message should meet and diluted its authenticity and misrepresented its true content. The matter of the fact is that no matter how precise a translation can be, it can never make a second original, neither in form nor in content and/or effect. Even choosing befitting language can never replace the glorious Qur'an. This is because the amount of damage done -wittingly or otherwise- by these translators or others to the holy Qur'an's miraculousness, depth and sublimity means a faithful translation is virtually impossible. Another fact to mention is that the different translations entail different interpretations, and this undermines the unity of the Muslim community that the original Qur'an provides. Therefore, this research has explored some translational problems and provided an account of the uniqueness of the words of the Qur'an that proves its inimitability. So, as the criterion is the correctness and faithfulness to the divine words, and the translations have missed many points of the Qur'an's i3jaz especially for problematic science-related vocabulary, the question then is how much legitimate, accurate and communicative these translations are?

As translations have been distributed on a massive scale and have been the main conduit to the Qur'an for non-Arabs, in any process of translation the task of interpretation will never cease and when reading a translation, one can never sense i3jaz nor find that challenge to produce the like, rather there is only the exegetical interpretations and the understanding of the translators that are present. So, this research has brought some illustrations and arguments against considering any translation as a substitute for the Qur'an; for none of the renditions have so far brought the Qur'an's miraculousness nearer to the hearts and minds of people of other languages. The science-related Qur'anic words' real depths have never yet been presented in any translation in a manner which would show them as truly miraculous. Thus,

we argue that we are not in favour of any kind of translation, not even the scientific interpretations, but in favour of the original Arabic Qur'an.

Nevertheless, regarding the impossibility to produce anything like the Qur'an, these translators' works are significant and appreciable and one cannot deny their meritorious attempts in the field of the translation of the meanings of a miraculous Book as it is a highly delicate task to undertake. We appreciate the great efforts and the magnitude of the achievements of the selected translators as their productions and rival interpretations are faithful to some extent to the exegetical traditions that did not draw out any scientific details. (We strongly defend the exegetical interpretations as they are the only religiously legitimate way to understand the Qur'an; but we have shed light on a significant side, that goes under mere personal reflections of the ayat of Allah, that is only available in Arabic). In general, we cannot say that these translations are blasphemous and unlawful, but due to the Qur'an's divine nature and inimitability, any translation into another language certainly fails to give the same impression, ideas, the different ranges of possible meanings, and the least thing is the impressive and emotional power of the Qur'anic sounds that moves man to tears. So, enjoying the force and expressiveness of the divine words, the precision of the word choice and the effects of its messages, and discovering new insights cannot be felt unless the Qur'an is read in Arabic.

About pinpointing some limitations of this study that should be overcome in further studies and that call for more robust methodology, which might address the research problems more effectively, we mention the following. The first to state is that the translators when relying on exegetical elucidations, they sometimes mistranslate them, and this has not been checked here. Also, some translators may rely on the interpretations of the same exegetes, leading to similar renditions. Besides, some translations are of considerable faithfulness to the different exegeses that did not allude to any scientific details. In addition, we mention the

limited time of the assignment (qualitative inquiry) compared with the vocabulary richness and the great number of the Qur'an's words, leading to a few number of the words of analysis compared with the many science-related divine words that actually exist. Furthermore, no matter how accurate a translation could be, there is always a perpetuating positive bias towards the Arabic Qur'an. In conclusion, the true meanings of the eloquent Qur'anic words are only known by Allah and no one but Allah. Therefore, if there are faults or mistakes, I seek Allah's forgiveness.

To sum up, the primary aim of this work is raising awareness that this holy Book's main goal is guidance and this could be reached through scientific data that are contained in some of its words, especially in this era of science and technology, and that this is exactly what is lost (i.e. the Qur'an itself) when translated. So, the Qur'an also addresses the contemporary reader (the everlasting characteristic of the Qur'an) as the things that were tantalising before have recently been wonder-struck facts extracted only from the Arabic version words. Unfortunately, the miraculousness that resides in analogy, polysemy, broad sense, denotative or literal meaning is absent in the selected translations or not presented faithfully from the linguistic perspective and hence the scientific one. So, people depending totally on the translations are deprived of the opportunity to directly reflect on the Qur'an and sense its possible new insights. All in all, despite the fact that it is inevitable to translate its meanings into other languages, in order to truly appreciate the depths of the Qur'an, one should reflect upon its ayat in Arabic due to the fact that it is untranslatable.

As a conclusion to this work, we establish and confirm the truth and the correctness of the assumptions (hypotheses) of this research as they have been checked, verified and justified. Besides, all the research questions have been answered. These are summarized as follows. Transferring every shade of meaning (particularly scientific implications) is impossible; for a steadfast accurate version or an absolute equivalence is never obtainable; so,

there are only approximations as appeared in most of the selected words renditions. In other words, a perfect accurate translation can never be attained; for it is a human endeavour, which is a mere interpretation of only some of the underlying meanings of the Qur'an rather than a substitution for the original -the most eloquent speech of all speeches. So, a Qur'an which is relevant to all time and place (the scientific dimension) also means no translation of its meanings can be eternal and the ongoing contemplation can only be achieved through the Arabic Qur'an. That is to say, even though the Qur'an is the companion of the Muslim, its true inner meanings and exegeses are only known by Allah; yet, tadabbur the Qur'an is necessary, especially possible scientific inferences. Hence, the conclusion that this research has confirmed is that the Qur'anic discourse is inimitable and untranslatable as it cannot be reproduced into English (or any target language). Due to the fact that translation means rephrasing and restating in another language, any translation of the Qur'an's meanings is just an explanatory work. So, the study concludes that the existing problems are attributed to the miraculous nature of the Qur'anic words, its untranslatability and the absence of the too literal transfer; thus, it determinedly draws upon the literal translation and more importantly learning the Arabic Qur'an.

Recommendations

The belief in the untranslatability of the Qur'an does not mean that it should never be translated. For a vast circulation of the treasure of the last holy Book's message, it is necessary to transfer it into many languages especially English, the world's lingua franca. However, it is recommended that translations' readers must rigorously bear in mind that what is lost in translation is the Qur'an itself as a great deal of its meanings is missing; thus, they should perceive them as imperfect equivalents as they are not meant to replace the Glorious Qur'an. There is no doubt that the translators are trying their best through all possible means to translate the message of the Qur'an accurately, but we recommend to pay attention to the fact that the general view of an exegete (mufassir) is that his job is to explain the verses the way he has understood them, but when reading a work of translation, the idea is that this is what the verses actually mean, and the least thing to say about this is that it is religiously seriously dangerous. Yet, despite their great importance for non-Arab Muslims, evaluating and assessing the quality, the accuracy and reliability of the different translations of the meanings of the Qur'an receive very little attention.

As a matter of fact, the Qur'an should not be regarded as an ordinary sacred book. Owing to its everlasting characteristic, a meticulous reading and a contemporary approach in translating and understanding some of its science-related words are needed. Thus, we recommend modern readings or reflecting on the Qur'an in the light of the scientific findings which have developed in the course of time. If asking about an authority for the modern comments on these science-related verses, the answer is that they are mere insights and rational reflections that are really significant to contemporary seeking truth readers who are eager to have exhaustive reliable information and which translations are incapable to provide for the sole reason (besides the miraculous nature of the Qur'an and its untranslatability) of being far from proceeding literalness; and thus deceiving the target language reader.

Therefore, we must be particularly aware and concerned about the faithfulness and accuracy matters, and the outcomes of the translation tasks should always and regularly be perceived.

To produce a target text that approaches the divine information given in the Qur'an, an awareness of and a conscious reflection on the linguistic and scientific level is necessary. Hence, extrapolation and the pursuit of knowledge of some subfields is something which should be done actively by everyone embarking on translating the divine book so as to integrate modern insights. So, many competencies are needed, namely: linguistic, scientific or subject-specific and many others. This is because understanding the source text does not come by merely looking at it; but one should study different meanings, exegeses, interpretations, grammatical rules and structures in different ways and even scientific insights before translating the Qur'anic text. Yet, this does not guarantee a full control over all the possible meanings; for it is possible for new alternative theories related to scientific implications to emerge and this confirms its miraculousness, inimitability and untranslatability.

To narrow down the Qur'anic meanings to specific equivalents in English means missing out other important meanings and dimensions; for the presentation of Qur'an in any target language means confusion and misguidance. The translators should not confine their attention to one particular meaning; but rather to illicit the full range of all possible meanings and interpretations, even the ones that have become possible with the development of science and technology. So, as the divine words have sometimes more than one literal meaning, not to mention their figurative meanings, and many others contain subtle shades of meanings, which cannot be expressed in English by just one word, it is legitimate to draw out the full meanings and to make them plainer. So, it is recommended to condense all the possible meanings in explanatory commentaries; yet, the readers of such works should be fully aware of their limitations compared with the vastness of Qur'an's words. There is no problem to write reflections that are modernized and conveyed in line with traditional exegesis because

the Qur'an addresses also contemporary readers. To ensure an effective communication of the message of the Qur'an, much more is needed to be done to the present translations or the coming ones. So, in order to illuminate the fog of language and demist any ambiguity, it is suggested to include marginal notes and additional clarification footnotes commentaries.

In fact, all that is mentoined above could be achieved or at least approximated by offering hyper-literal translations for these words; i.e. the recommened translations should be confined to literal or word-for-word substitutions. Adhering more cautiously to the basic meaning of the words should have prevented these mistakes and shortcomings. However, even the literal translation conveying the same meaning is not always beneficial as some words can have more than one meaning in arabic; so in English more than one substitute is needed. As the translations have put narrower limits over the possible interpretations of the original words, we say that interpretations built upon the literal rendering are more faithful to the original and certainly exercise greater control over the miraculousness of these linguistic and science-related elements. So, literalness is key.

This study is then a contribution towards a greater understanding of the meanings of some divine words that have a relation with science and which are considered among the signs 'ayat' of the Qur'an that share a non/semi/partial equivalence with their English counterparts. The divine words that have been discussed in this work are of variety in terms of the scientific fields, and they also differ in their grammatical categories; among them we find verbs or phrasal verbs like 'يَصْعَدُ', adjectives as 'حَزَجًا', or nouns like 'الطَّارِق'. This research aims to contribute to overcoming some shortcomings of some of the existing renditions as almost all of them have not been successfully translated due to the existence of many inaccuracies, erroneous transactions and oversimplification of the complexities and nuances of the divine words. Since the English target reader of the Qur'an struggles to find i3jaz in these words, 'literalness' in translating them is highly recommended as considered the most

workable methodology for these words. Here are some recommendations or better equivalents to preserve faithfulness and truthfulness and maintain the scientific dimension. For the related words that have been included in the discussion of the main words under study, their literal definitions are pretty good choices as recommended substitutes.

First, the renditions of the two adjectives that describe, analogously, the disbeliever's chest state, 'ضَيْقًا حَرَجًا' 'dayyiqan_haraja', should not have been dealt with as synonyms but should present an increase in the intensity of restriction. Possible renditions for the word 'ضَيْقًا' could be *narrow* or *tight*. Yet, for the word 'حَرَجًا' it is better to use *severely tight, extremely narrow, very restricted* or *too close*. It is also recommended to insert between parentheses the possibility of reaching complete closeness or lock; for the Arabic word might also denote so. Regarding the word 'يَصْعَدُ' 'yassa33ad' which has been addressed as 'ya33ad' that absented the sense of the difficulty and the hardship while ascending, it is suggested to add the following detail that is originally included in the assimilated 'ت': '*enduring hardship or acute discomfort while ascending, or struggling while climbing up*'.

Second, the word 'يَحْطِمَنَّكُمْ' 'yahtimannakum', which has been unanimously translated as 'crush' which is not completely wrong; but can be regarded as defective in that it does not communicate a scientific detail about the structure of ants bodies as the original word does when resembling it, implicitly, to something like glass. This is because from the scientific perspective, the ant's exoskeleton when pressed gets broken just as a glass or a bone does. Therefore, it is recommended to use a verb that does not usually collocate with ants when referring to their killings so as to duplicate the same effect, match the same message and give more information than just the killing fact as the Arabic word provides. Hence, the potential and more accurate substitutions could be words of a strange combination with the word under study such as '*break, crack, smash, shatter...etc*'.

Third, accordingly, despite the fact that the word 'أوتادا' 'awtada' has been successfully transacted as 'pegs', the word 'رَوَاسِي' 'rawassi' is another analogy instance that has also received unfair translation as the selected translators discarded the downward parts of mountains. As it means mountains that are fixed, stable and standing firmly and deeply for the sake of preventing the earth's swaying, all these attributes ought to exist in the target language equivalent. In fact, in addition to the word 'Anchors', which is a literal equivalent that can possibly transmit many features, but not all of them, of the original intended message, any other equivalent with additional explanatory notes for more clarification about mountains' geological shapes penetrating the ground, their stabilities and functions is also encouraged to sever as a substitute and can be evaluated as more faithful than just the word 'mountains'.

Fourth, 'الرَّجْع' 'arradj3' is the returning function that is attributed to the sky without any kind of specification within the verse (a broad sense). This word is rich of possible correct references due to the fact that the sky is composed of many layers, and each of which has its returning function that is different from the others. Unfortunately, this word which is included in a divine oath has been mistranslated as its meaning has been reduced to refer only to the rain. Thus, the word should be translated literally as 'the returning' without any restriction so as to permit a great range of possible interpretations or references as the genuine message.

Fifth, similarly 'الصَّدْع' 'assad3' is a geological general term that refers to any split or crack occurring in the earth. When examining the different renditions, it has been revealed that even this word has been transacted unfaithfully because it has been reduced to address only the meaning related to plants; i.e. the breaking of the soil to enable plants to emerge. So, the accurate translation of this word is 'the split' or 'the crack' or any other word that is synonymous to them, and no meaning or reference restriction is needed or permissible.

Sixth, the word 'أَدْنَى' 'adna' that is describing a particular place on earth has received a translation of only one side of its designation. As a polysemous word, it refers, on the one

hand, to being the nearest, and on the other hand, the most depressed. Yet, the latter has been withdrawn from all the selected translations. What is considered faithful to the divine word is to add the second meaning when translating as there is no English equivalent that simultaneously fulfils both of the intended meanings.

Seventh, ‘الْخُنَّسُ’ ‘alkhunnas’ and ‘الْكُنَّسُ’ ‘alkunnas’ can probably refer to astonishing celestial bodies called ‘black holes’ as they bear a close similarity with their characteristics. The former can have the meaning of both *the withdrawers* and also *the shrinkers*, i.e. *the retreaters and contractors while hiding*. Yet, the latter signifies *the sweepers or the returners to their shelters for hiding*. In fact, as a great infidelity has been shown in their translations, the recommended renditions of these two words should be exactly as their definitions suggest.

Eighth, ‘الطَّارِقُ’ ‘Attariq’ is a Qur’anic word that could have a relation with a special kind of stars named ‘pulsar’. Its literal meaning is ‘*the knocker*’ or ‘*the hammerer*’. Its sound has been likened to a persistent knocking. The Qur’an explains that ‘Attariq’ is a star; yet, the translators have replaced this word metaphorically and not literally. The results have been delivering a message that is dissimilar or in disagreement with the original. Therefore, maybe the most accurate rendition is the literal meaning of the word, which is ‘*the knocker*’.

Ninth, of the outstanding discoveries of the twentieth century is the expanding universe, which has been referred to in the Qur’an by the divine word ‘لَمْوسِعُونَ’ ‘lamusi3un’. Nevertheless, the selected renditions have failed to convey the exact meaning which is an ongoing process or a persistent expansion started in the past and is continuing in the present. Hence, it should be translated with the use of the progressive form so that at any time a person reads, s/he can understand that there is an ongoing expansion.

Tenth, the Earth’s figure as nearly a perfect sphere is an established scientific fact according to science, and maybe one of the clear indications about the Earth’s true shape or its sphericity in the Qur’an is the word ‘يُكَوِّرُ’ ‘yukawwir’. However, none of the translators have

approached the basic meaning of this word. Hence, so as not to deviate or distort the real designation of the word, we recommend the use of the verb ‘to sphere’ as an alternative.

Eleventh, ostensibly, regarding the word ‘يعقلون’ ‘ya3qilun’, while the translators should have been more conservative in their translation decisions handling this word, they have not confined themselves to the literal content. They have dropped the true meaning in favour of metaphorical ones because of the supposedly unusual use of this word accompanying the word ‘heart’. To avoid the notable inconsistency, the recommended replacement is retaining the same idea which is *thinking* or *understanding* as revealed by science.

To wrap this up, testing the truth, as accuracy is a serious issue when translating a miraculous book such as the Qur’an, these renditions have substantially altered the authentic words’ meanings, by their non-core substitutes. This is not a bolt from the blue because it is beyond human perception to produce something like it; for it is miraculous and the Qur’anic words do not have one-to-one correspondence with English in terms of their extraordinary meanings. So, the spread of the many translations worldwide should never detract us from the fact that they are explanatory attempts as it is untranslatable. Even though its meaning should be communicated to some extent and the existing translations cannot be of no value as they convey somehow the meanings to non-Arabic speaking people, it is highly recommended to realize that learning Arabic is the only way to dutifully perceive the divine words as they were revealed and intended. In other words, to comprehend the Qur’an in the most correct way, the knowledge of the Arabic language became a matter of the utmost seriousness as some data are hidden deep and need deep contemplation and contemporary science and technology to be revealed and thus, improve the comprehensibility of both Muslims and non-Muslims.

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Résumé

Le Coran est la parole miraculeuse verbatim d'Allah, qui s'adresse à l'humanité entière avec son temps et son espace transcendants, et avec la diversité et l'exactitude de ses connaissances. Sa formulation est si concise et précise qu'aucun élément linguistique n'est à sa place, redondant ou utilisé au hasard. En raison de toutes ses particularités, c'est un miracle inimitable sans précédent. Bien que les nombreuses traductions de ses significations aient été des contributions majeures à la diffusion de l'islam, seul le lecteur arabe peut profiter de la grâce du miraculeux 'i3jaz' de certains de ses éléments lexicaux éloquents qui contiennent et transmettent des implicites scientifiques possibles, récemment découvertes avec les progrès de la science et de la technologie. Cette thèse tente de mettre en évidence le fait que ce qui est perdu lorsque le Coran est traduit est le Coran lui-même car un grand nombre de ses caractéristiques miraculeuses sont exclusivement accordées à sa langue authentique (l'arabe). Ainsi, cette recherche explore l'équivalence et la fidélité et étudie la possibilité de préserver les significations, en particulier les inférences scientifiques possibles comme l'une des caractéristiques de i3jaz, de certains mots liés à la science à travers une étude analytique comparative de ces mots divins et de leurs homologues anglais dans cinq traductions répandues. L'analyse a révélé que les restitutions souffrent linguistiquement de graves lacunes, d'une non-équivalence, d'une mauvaise traduction, d'un manque d'exactitude ; conduisant par conséquent à une absence partielle ou totale de la dimension scientifique. Par la suite, l'étude a tiré la conclusion que le Saint Coran est définitivement intraduisible (mais, s'il doit être traduit du tout, la littéralité est la clé pour approcher la plupart de véritables significations de ces mots) car toute traduction est certainement vouée à l'échec et ne pourra jamais servir, en aucune façon, de substitut au message d'Allah puisqu'il ne s'agit que d'une simple tentative désespérée d'approcher le discours le plus éloquent et inimitable de tous les discours (le Coran).

الملخص

القرآن هو كلام الله الحرفي المعجز الذي يخاطب البشرية جمعاء ' بتجاوزه الزمان والمكان و بتنوع ودقة علومه. إن صياغته جد موجزة ودقيقة لدرجة أنه لا يوجد عنصر لغوي في غير محله أو زائد عن الحاجة أو موضوع بشكل عشوائي. نظرا لكل ميزاته الخاصة ' فهو يعتبر معجزة غير مسبوقه ' لا تضاهي. بالرغم من أن الترجمات العديدة لمعانيه ساهمت مساهمة كبيرة في انتشار الإسلام إلا أن القارئ العربي هو وحده الذي بإمكانه أن يتمتع بنعمة الإعجاز الموجود في بعض مفرداته البليغة التي تحمل وتضفي مضامين علمية محتملة لم يتم اكتشافها إلا مؤخرا بفضل تطور العلم والتكنولوجيا. تحاول هذه الأطروحة تسليط الضوء على حقيقة أن ما يضيع من القرآن عند ترجمته هو القرآن نفسه' إذ أن العديد من سماته الإعجازية تتجلى حصريا في لغته الأصلية (العربية). لهذا يستكشف هذا البحث التكافؤ والوفاء ويبحث في إمكانية الحفاظ على المعاني ' ولا سيما الاستنباطات العلمية الممكنة كأحد مظاهر الإعجاز ' لبعض الكلمات ذات الصلة بالعلوم من خلال دراسة تحليلية ومقارنة لهذه الكلمات الإلهية ونظيراتها باللغة الإنجليزية في خمسة تراجم واسعة الانتشار. كشفت المراجعة أن الكلمات المترجمة تعاني لغويا من نقائص معتبرة وعدم التكافؤ وسوء الترجمة وقلة الدقة ' مما أدى بالتالي إلى الغياب الجزئي أو التام للبعد العلمي. بعد ذلك توصلت الدراسة إلى استنتاج مفاده أن القرآن -حقيقة- غير قابل للترجمة (إلا أنه إذا كان لابد من ترجمته فالترجمة الحرفية هي الحل للتقرب من المعاني الحقيقية لمعظم هذه المفردات) ذلك لأن أي ترجمة محكوم عليها قطعاً بالفشل ولا يمكن أن تكون أبداً و بأي شكل من الأشكال بديلاً لخطاب الله لأنها مجرد محاولة يائسة للاقتراب من أفصح كلام معجز على الإطلاق (القرآن).