

## The Translation of the Denotative and Connotative Meaning of (Sakinah) in the Holy Qur'an: An Empirical Study

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### ABSTRACT

This paper discusses the meaning of (*Sakinah*), an Islamic-bound term appeared in six verses of the Holy Qur'an, in the light of the two interpretations (tafsir) of Ibn Kathir and Al-Qurtubi. By analyzing and the five translations of Yousef Ali (1938), Shakir (1980), Pickthall (1930), Khan and Hilali (1999), and Itani (2012) and the different translation strategies used. The framework of strategies suggested by Peter Newmark (1988) is used in order to come up with the right strategy to translate any cultural-bound terms between Arabic and English. The discrepancies among the five translators in rendering (*Sakinah*) into English show that transliteration plus definition or explanation is the best strategy to render such concepts from Arabic into English.

**Keywords:** (Sakinah), Denotative; Connotative Meaning; Translation; Translation Strategies; Translation Evaluation.

### 1. Introduction

The growing of Muslim communities in English-speaking countries, the great academic interest in Islam, the spreading of the so-called Islamists groups, the September Eleven attacks and their consequences on Islam and Muslims in the West, the spreading of terrorist groups and attacks who use Qur'an and Islam as a cover for their brutal attacks all initiated the need for adequate translation of the Holy Qur'an and adequate explanatory about Islam principles. Currently there are so many translations of the Holy Qur'an in several languages; these translations vary between bad to good ones because translating Qur'an is a very thorny task due to its unique discourse and the various problems which might encounter any translator during the process of its translation. A fact asserted by Abdul-Raof Hussein:

Qur'an limits of translatability have been thoroughly discussed with numerous examples; these include: style, stylistic mechanism of stress, word order, cultural voids, problems of literal translation, syntactic and semantic ambiguity problems, emotive Qur'anic expressions, disagreement among Qur'an translators, different

exegetical analyses, morphological patterns, semantic-syntactic interrelation, semantic functions of conjunctives, semantic-stylistic effects, prosodic and acoustic features, and most importantly the shackles imposed by the thorny problem of linguistic and rhetorical Qur'an-specific texture. (2013: 2).

Ruqyah is commonly translated in English as "incantation" which carries a negative meaning since the word incantation is usually associated with magic, spells, and witchcraft. However, Ruqyah in Islam is the recitation of Qur'an, seeking of refuge, remembrance and supplications that are used as a means of treating sicknesses and other problems. (Ruqyah).

Therefore, this paper will discuss the meaning of (Sakinah) and the different interpretations given to it in the light of the two interpretations (tafsir) of Ibn Kathir and Al-Qurtubi of the Holy Qur'an and the translations of Yousef Ali (1938), Mohammed Ali Shakir (1980), Muhammad Marmaduke Pickthall (1930), Muhammad Muhsin Khan and Muhammad Taqi-ud-Din Hilali(1999), and Talal Itani (2012). There are several translations for the Holy Qur'an, the above translations have been selected because the first four ones are of the most widely known and used in the English-speaking world, and the last one of Talal Itani represents the most recent translation of the Holy Qur'an (2012).

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**Questions of the study:**

This study aims at answering the following questions;

1. What is the meaning of (Sakinah) in Arabic and is it translatable or not?
2. What is the right equivalent of (Sakinah) in English, does it convey the same meaning?
3. Is Qur'an translatable or not?

**Statement of the Problem**

The present study aims at studying the translation of the connotative and denotative meanings of the concept of (Sakinah); a religious- cultural-bound term by drawing evidence from selected translation of Qur'anic verses. Also, by comparing how the concept of (Sakinah) has been rendered into English in the five translations of; Yousef Ali(1938), Shakir (1980), Pickthall(1930), Khan and Hilali(1999), and Itani (2012). The main interest is to figure out the translator's strategies in rendering (Sakinah), and to see which of them could convey the intended meaning as explicated in the verses, and if the culture difference is reflected in the translation of religious expression of (Sakinah).

**Literature Review****Language and Meaning**

Language includes three major branches: syntax, pragmatics and semantics. The branch which is related to our study is semantics, the science which studies the relationship between the signs and the objects to which they refer, as well as the study of the meaning of words and sentences in human language.

Catford (1965) defines meaning as "the total network of relations entered into by any linguistic form-text, item-in-text, structure, element of structure, class term in system, or whatever it may be" (p.35). In his book *Translation and Translating*, Bell (1991) distinguishes between denotative and connotative meanings; the first refers to referential, objective and cognitive meaning which is shared by any speech community. The second refers to associated, subjective, and emotive meaning, which is personal and may or may not be shared by the speech community; accordingly, most of the words have both types of meaning. However, according to Bell, the second type of meaning is difficult to translate: "For each of us, the words we choose have associations which mean something particular to us as individual users. They have meanings which are emotional or effective; the result of our individual experiences which are, presumably, unique

and may not form part of any kind of social convention" (p.100).

Similarly, Guralnik (1958) defines connotative meaning as follows: "What the word suggests, that is its connotation, can be fully important as what it denotes, the words are not only grammatical tools and symbols, but that they embody as well as ensemble of notions, concepts, and psychological reactions" (p. 91).

Bell (1991) considers the translation of connotative meaning as somehow problematic, and defines translation as "The transformation of a text originality in one language into an equivalent text in a different language, retaining as far as it is possible, the content of the message, the formal features, and the functional roles of the original text" (p. XV).

**Lexical non-equivalence, Culture-bound terms, and Untranslatability**

Equivalence is a very important concept in translation, and it has been discussed from different angles and by many linguists (Nida 1964, Catford 1965, Ward & Nida 1986, Perez 1993). To mention some of the equivalent types, we are listing to the ones identified by Farghal and Shunnaq (1999): Formal equivalent seeks to capture the form of the Source Language expression, the form is related to the image employed in the Source Language expression. Functional equivalent seeks to capture the function of the SL expression independently of the image utilized, by translating it into a Target Language expression that performs the same function, and the ideational equivalent which aims at conveying the communicative sense of the SL expression independently of its function and form.

To explain this difficulty, an important concept will be introduced here; it is the concept of untranslatability which represents the area in which intercultural equivalence does not exist. Intercultural non-equivalence can cause untranslatability. It arises when a situational feature is functionally relevant to the source language text but fully absent from the target language text, in which the target language culture is rooted (Bahameed, 2008). Moreover, the translator may find some lexical items in Arabic which have no equivalent in English because the concepts which they refer to do not exist in English-speaking culture. According to Baker (1992), "The source-language word may express a concept which is totally unknown in the target culture. The concept in question may be abstract or concrete, it may relate to a

religious belief, a social custom, or even a type of food, such concepts referred to as culture-specific" (p.21).

From the above discussion, the researcher can conclude that cultural-bound terms especially religious terms might constitute a problem when translating between two remote languages like English and Arabic. This is due to their connotative overtone meaning which might not be shared between the two languages in question. In this study, (Sakinah) is a religious – bound term with high emotive overtone.

### **Religious Translation**

Translation is conveying the meaning of a certain text from one language into another by using the closest possible equivalent. In reality, there is no complete or full equivalence between any two pairs of languages. Moreover, religious translation is even more difficult than any other translation especially for the Qur'anic discourse because it is full of religiously denoted cultural-bound non-equivalent terms. As Arberry (1973) states, "The Qur'an is neither prose nor poetry but a unique fusion of both. So, it is clear that a translator cannot imitate its form as it is a Qur'anic-specific form having both the features of prose and poetry and utilizing beautifully the peculiar properties of the original language" (p. x).

Translation is basically finding the closest lexical equivalents between any two languages or at least finding an approximate counterpart at the lexical level in the target language. But in translating the Holy Qur'an some lexical items are difficult to translate because they are cultural or/ and religious bound terms. The Qur'anic word might have a referential versatility, and they carry some connotative over tones which can be only understandable in Arabic.

A problem related to the translation of the Qur'an appears when the source-language word may express a concept which is totally unknown in the target culture. The concept in question may be abstract or concrete; it may relate to a religious belief, a social custom, or even a type of food. Such concepts are often referred to as "culture-specific" (Arberry, 1973, p. 44). In this paper, the focus is on the concept of (Sakinah) which is at least partially missing in the target language (English). A solution to this problem is suggested by Al-Azab, & Al-Misned (2012) which is to use partial synonymy although the pragmatic overtone will be lost.

The major problem encountered by the translator

of the Qur'an is the difficulty in rendering some lexical items. One of lexical problems in translating the Holy Qur'an is the lack of equivalence or the absence of the equivalent of some Islamic terms. These terms have no direct counterpart in English, compelling the translator to convey them in a communicative manner. (Abo baker, et al 2012p. 588).

Furthermore, the Holy Qur'an is a unique genre which is hard to be translated especially to a target language that is far remote from the original text (in this study the English Language). Moreover, Qur'an is concerned with one of the sacred texture which speaks about God and religious life because it contains several layers of meaning (Al-Azab, & Al-Misned 2012).

Another problem related to the translation of the Qur'an is the referential versatility of a Qur'anic word which "refers to the fact that a word may embrace a large number of sense-components. The meaning of a word, in this case, is usually extended to include various aspects and multi-dimensions. It is not easy for the translator to resolve this problem of multiplicity (Al-Azab, & Al-Misned, 2012, p.43).

A third problem is that some lexical items in the religious texts might carry connotative overtones a fact asserted in other religions. Furthermore, religious lexical items are classified into seven categories in the Christian context, one of them is the vocabulary requiring explicit historical elucidation. They usually carry considerable emotional overtones, depending on the intensity of the user's belief, e.g., 'Calvary' [a hill outside ancient Jerusalem where Jesus was said to be crucified], 'Bethlehem', 'crucifix', 'martyr' "Our Lady", 'the Jews', 'the Apostles', etc. (Crystal 1964,p.154–155).

To conclude, the researcher can state that the translation of the Qur'an cannot be taken as a replacement of the Arabic source regardless of the accuracy and professionalism of rendering. The Qur'anic message will always be inflicted with inaccuracies that can only be accounted for by the inclusion of informative exegetical footnotes.

### **The Concept of Al (Sakinah) in Islam, Judaism, and Christianity**

(Sakinah) in Arabic has two meanings, literal one which means; dwelling, stability, rationality, and dignity. The other is an idiomatic one which means an inner

peaceful feeling and serenity sent down by Allah on the hearts of believers when scared or stressed to increase faith and steadily (almany.com). Moreover, (Sakinah) is a word derived from sukun meaning "peace", "serenity" or "tranquility". It is mentioned in the Qur'an as having descended upon the Islamic prophet Muhammad and the believers in four events.

According to Salah Alldien Saleem (2012), (Sakinah) is an angel who reassures Believers and make them feel peace. It is also being calm in cases of stress, fear and anger. It is peaceful inner feeling initiated by Allah inside the hearts of Believers when sacred or angry stimulates stronger faith, persistence and steadiness (p. 5). Relationship between Faith and (Sakinah) is positive, for the more faith you have the more (Sakinah) you get. While the relationship between Faith, stress and anxiety is reversed, and the less faith you have the more stressed you are.

Furthermore, (Sakinah) has been linked with the verb anzala sent down by Allah either to the Prophet, the believers or to both the Prophet and the Believers. Saleem (2012) also stated that (Sakinah) is tangible and intangible concept, and it is a gift from Allah sent down to the Prophet and the Believers. Therefore, it co-occurred with the verb (Anzala)

Allah uses different words with (Sakinah) depending on the situation. Even though the difference in the wording is by adding a different preposition each time, the meaning is completely different sometimes.

By the same token, the use of different prepositions to follow (Sakinah) is a quiet important thing in these verses. Two prepositions are used with it, "fee: in/ or into" or "ala" which means "on", and maybe it is related with the source of (Sakinah) whether external or internal. It was sent down in three occasions; The Treaty of Hudaibiyah, [Battle of Hunayn](#), and immigration of the Prophet and his companion.

Shekhineh is the equivalent for (Sakinah) in Hebrew which denotes God's presence in the world. It is also associated with "indwelling and settlement" which is similar to that of the root of the word sa-ka-nah which also means "dwelled" or "remained in place". It is an abstract concept which means peace and tranquility. Shekinah in Christianity a Chaldee word means resting in a place, and it denotes the visible symbol of God's presence and glory.

To summarize, one can say that the concept of (Sakinah) is a known concept in the three Monotheistic

religions; Islam, Christianity, and Judaism. But its use in the Arabic language and culture is somehow particular because it carries a highly connotative overtone related to events which occurred with the Prophet at the rise of Islam.

### Methodology

This section describes the theoretical framework used to discuss the verses in question; the Translation Strategies of Peter Newmark, the four events where (Sakinah) was introduced in the Holy Qur'an, the interpretation of the meaning, and the translation of the six verses where the word (Sakinah) has been mentioned in the Holy Qur'an. A transliteration of the verses is also provided which was taken from Truth.com.

### Translation Strategies

Many scholars have discussed translation strategies and gave them different labels ranging between, strategies, procedures, approaches, and methodologies depending on whether they are applied to the whole text or only part of it. In this study, the researcher will discuss strategies suggested by Newmark regarding the translation of culture-specific items.

In A Text Book of Translation, Peter Newmark (1988) suggests the use of the following strategies when translating culture-specific items especially religious:

Transference; is a strategy when a Source Language word is transferred into the Target Language text in its original form (transcription/ transliteration). Naturalization; adapts a SL item first to the normal pronunciation of the TL, then to its normal morphology. Cultural equivalent; a SL item is translated by an equivalent TL item while maintaining the same connotations. Functional equivalent; this procedure requires the use of a religion-neutral item. It involves neutralization or generalization of the SL word. Descriptive equivalent; in this procedure the translator paraphrases the religious item. Synonym; to use a synonym is to use a near TL equivalent to an SL word in a context where a precise equivalent may or may not exist. This procedure is used for a SL word where there is no clear one-to-one equivalent, and the word in question is not the most important component of the sentence. Through-translation; is also called a calque or loan-translation. It is a literal translation of a phrase or compound from another language. Modulation; refers to a variation of the form of the message through a change in

the point of view. It occurs when the translator reproduces the message of the original text in conformity with the current norms of the TL, since the SL and the TL may appear with different perspectives. Modulation as suggested by Vinay and Darbelnet (1958, 1995) might include negated contrary, abstract for concrete, cause for effect, means for result, a part for the whole and geographical change. Recognized translation; is a generally-recognized or officially-sanctioned translation of any important term. Compensation; It is to compensate for the loss of meaning in the TT. Componential analysis; this is the splitting up of a lexical unit into its sense components. Paraphrase; in this procedure the meaning of a religion-specific term is explained in more detail, and longer than what we do with descriptive equivalent. Notes, additions, gloss are techniques which can be employed to add extra information about a religion-specific word/expression in the translated text. Translators often use transliteration when they fail to find an equivalent. This conversion of SL alphabets into the RL text can be employed when the translator fails to find a partial or full equivalent of a given SL term and any attempt to translate such words into a close counterpart in the RL will be inadequate. However, it is inappropriate to leave such transliterated terms without giving a plausible explanation to the reader. Therefore, we can do one of the following procedures: add a glossary at the end of the book, use footnotes or endnotes, and insert a partial or full explanation either parenthesized or free in the text next to the italicized term (Newmark, 1988, p.81–93).

### **Reasons of Revelations**

(Sakinah) is mentioned in six verses in Holy Qur'an; in Surratt Al-Baqarah (The Cow) in verse (248), in Surratt At-Tawbah (The Repentance) in two verses; (26) and (40), and in Surratt AlFath (The Victory) in three verses; (4), (18), and (26). Moreover, the context of the revelation of the aforementioned verses wherein (Sakinah) was mentioned is associated with certain events which should be taken into consideration when translating these verses as illustrated below.

### **(Sakinah) in Surratt Al-Baqarah (The Cow: 2:248),**

In Ibn Kathir interpretation of the Holy Qur'an, he stated that in the event in which (Sakinah) descended down from Allah after appointing Talut (Saul) a king on the Israelites, who saw that he does not deserve to be a king since. He was a poor and an ordinary man then

Allah gave Talut a sign of blessing by giving back the Tabut (wooden box) that had been taken from the Israelites. Wherein is (Sakinah) means peace, grace, and reassurance. Moreover, Ibn Jurayj stated that Ibn Abbas said, "The angels came down while carrying the Tabut between the sky and the earth, until they placed it before Talut while the people were watching." As-Suddi said, "The Tabut was brought to Talut's house, so people believed in the Prophethood of Sham'un (Simeon) and obeyed Talut" (Ibn Kathir interpretation online).

### **(Sakinah) in Surratt At-Tawbah (The Repentance in two verses; (26) and (40))**

(Sakinah) was sent down on the Prophet and the believers on the battle of Hunayn (verse 26). The battle of Hunayn occurred after the victory of Makkah. After news came to the Messenger of Allah, the tribes of Hawazin were gathering their forces to fight him. The Messenger of Allah marched to meet them with the army that brought to conquer Makkah, ten thousand from the Muhajirin, the Ansar and various Arab tribes. The two armies met in Humayn, a valley between Makkah and At-Ta'if. The battle started in the early part of the morning when the Huwazin forces were lying in ambush and descended on the valley when the Muslims entered. Muslims were suddenly struck by the ambush, and the arrows descended on them, and the swords struck them. The Huwazin commander ordered them to descend and attack the Muslims as one block, and when they did that, the Muslims retreated in haste just as Allah described them. The Messenger of Allah remained firm in his position. Meanwhile, the Messenger of Allah was declaring his name aloud and saying; (I am the Prophet, not lying, I am the son of Abdul- Muttalib). This shows the great courage on behalf of the Prophet in the midst of confusion when his army ran away and left him behind. Yet, the Messenger remained on his mule, which is a slow, animal, and not suitable for fast battle moves or even escape. Yet, the Messenger of Allah was encouraging his mule to move forward towards the enemy announcing who he was, so that those among them who did not know who he was came to know him. This indicates the tremendous trust in Allah and reliance upon Him, as well as, sure knowledge that He will give him victory. Then Allah did send down His (Sakinah) on His Messenger). He sent down tranquillity and reassurance to His Messenger, and on the believers, who remained with him, (and sent down forces which you saw

not). This refers to angels according to Ibn Kathir interpretation online.

The Third event wherein (Sakinah) was introduced in the Holy Qur'an was when the immigration of the prophet Muhammad -May peace be upon him- from Mecca to Medina with his companion Abu Bakr -may Allah be pleased with him was mentioned in (verse 40). The unbelievers wanted to kill the prophet, so they started to pursue him and promised a tempting offer for the one who will bring him dead or alive. When the unbelievers arrived at the Thur cave where the prophet and his companion hid, Abu Bakr feared for the prophet Muhammad -may peace be upon him. He said to the prophet: "If one of them looks at his feet, he surely sees us". The prophet said: «O Abu Bakr, what you think of two (persons) Allah is their third, do not distress, indeed Allah is with us». The prophet Muhammad -May peace be upon him- was certain that the Almighty Allah will protect them and will never abandon them. Then, the Almighty Allah descended on them tranquility and peace (Islamic stories).

#### **(Sakinah) in Surratt AlFath (The Victory in three verses; (4), (18), and (26) Verse (4):**

This honorable Surah was revealed after the Messenger of Allah returned from the area of Al-Hudaybiyyah. This is when the idolaters prevented him from reaching Al-Masjid Al-Haram to perform the `Umrah he intended. They stopped the Prophet from reaching Makkah at that time, but then were prone to peace negotiations. A peace treaty was conducted stipulating that the Messenger would return this year and then come back for `Umrah the following year. The Messenger agreed. However, some of the companions disliked these terms. Then Allah sent down as-(Sakinah); tranquility and grace into the hearts of the believers". Those believers are the prophet companions who accepted the call of Allah and His Messenger and obeyed the decisions of Allah and His Messenger. Their hearts felt content with acceptance and were at peace, then Allah increased their faith and joining it to the faith they already had. Al-Bukhari and other Imams relied on this Ayah as proof that faith increases and decreases in the hearts of believers. (Ibn Kathir interpretation online).

#### **Verse (18):**

Allah declares that he is pleased with the believers who gave the pledge to the Messenger of Allah under the

tree located in the area of Hudaybiyyah. Allah said, (He knew what was in their hearts,) of truthfulness, trustworthiness, obedience and adherence, (and He sent down As-(Sakinah)), calmness and tranquillity, (upon them, and He rewarded them with a near victory.) This was in reference to the goodness that Allah the Exalted and Most Honored caused blessed the Companions with in the occasion of the peace treaty between them and their disbelieving enemies. Ever after that, the Companions gained abundant, general and continuous benefits and accomplishments, leading to the conquest of Khaybar and Makkah and then the various surrounding provinces and areas. They earned tremendous glory, triumphs and an elevated and honorable status in this life and in the Hereafter (Ibn Kathir interpretation online).

#### **Verse (26):**

When those who disbelieve had put in their hearts pride and haughtiness (the pride and haughtiness of the time of ignorance) and when they refused to write (in the treaty document), In the Name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful. And, These are the terms agreed on by Muhammad, Allah's Messenger, then Allah sent down His calmness and tranquillity upon His Messenger and upon the believers and made them stick to the word of Taqwa. The word of Taqwa refers to sincerity, La ilaha illallah, alone without partners (Ibn Kathir interpretation online).

#### **Discussion of the interpretation and the Translation of (Sakinah) six Verses**

**The First verse** wherein (Sakinah) was mentioned in the Holy Qur'an is in Surratt Al-Baqarah (The Cow: 2:248):

وَقَالَ لَهُمْ نَبِيُّهُمْ إِنَّ آيَةَ مُلْكِهِ أَنْ يَأْتِيَكُمُ التَّابُوتُ فِيهِ سَكِينَةٌ مِّنْ رَبِّكُمْ وَبَقِيَّةٌ مِّمَّا تَرَكَ آلُ مُوسَىٰ وَآلُ هَارُونَ تَحْمِلُهُ الْمَلَائِكَةُ ۚ إِنَّ فِي ذَٰلِكَ لَآيَةً لِّكُمْ إِن كُنْتُمْ مُؤْمِنِينَ (248)

Waqala lahum nabiyyuhum inna ayata mulkihi an yatiyakumu alttabootu feehi **sakeenaton** min rabbikum wabaqiiyyatun mimma taraka alu moosa waalu haroona tahmiluhu almalaikatu inna fee thalika laayatan lakum in kuntum mumineena

(Sakinah) in this verse means peace, grace, reassurance and mercy according to the interpretation of both Ibn Kathir and AlQurtubi. Moreover, AlQurtubi added that Al (Sakinah) here is the reason behind calming the hearts of Bni Yisrael "Israelites" of their conflicts with Talut and Saul. To AlQurtubi Al (Sakinah) is a spirit

or something with spirit which creates a sense of calmness and peace inside human beings. The intended meaning explained earlier by AlQurtubi is not conveyed explicitly by any of the translations. In this regard, we have to take into consideration that in translating the Holy Qur'an we render only the interpretation of the meanings of Qur'an, we do not provide word-for-word or literal translation as in other texts. Hence, all translations for the word (Sakinah) in the above verse are literal except that of Hilali and Khan.

**The Second verse** wherein (Sakinah) was mentioned in the Holy Qur'an is in Surratt At Tawbah (The Repentance: 9: 26):

ثُمَّ أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ سَكِينَتَهُ عَلَى رَسُولِهِ وَعَلَى الْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَأَنْزَلَ جُنُودًا لَمْ تَرَوْهَا وَعَذَّبَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا ۚ وَذَلِكَ جِزَاءَ الْكَافِرِينَ ﴿26﴾

Thumma anzala Allahu sakeenatahu AAala rasoolihi waAAala almunineena waanzala junoodan lam tarawha waAAathhaba allatheena kafaroo wathalika jazao alkafireena.

(Sakinah) in here means tranquility, reassurance, and serenity according to the interpretation of both Ibn Kathir and AlQurtubi. Furthermore, AlQurtubi added that Al (Sakinah) here is sent down on the believers to make them feel less afraid, so they can get stronger and courageous to fight against the disbelievers. The intended meaning for (Sakinah) in this particular verse which was explained earlier by both Ibn Kathir and AlQurtubi has been conveyed in all translations but with some loss in the meaning. The strategy of addition could be employed here to give some information about the context of the revelation of this verse.

**The Third verse** wherein (Sakinah) was mentioned in the Holy Qur'an is in Surratt At Tawbah (The Repentance: 9: 40):

إِلَّا تَنْصُرُوهُ فَقَدْ نَصَرَهُ اللَّهُ إِذْ أَخْرَجَهُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا ثَانِي اثْنَيْنِ إِذْ هُمَا فِي الْغَارِ إِذْ يَقُولُ لِصَاحِبِهِ لَا تَحْزَنْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ مَعَنَا ۗ فَأَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ سَكِينَتَهُ عَلَيْهِ وَأَيَّدَهُ بِجُنُودٍ لَمْ تَرَوْهَا وَجَعَلَ كَلِمَةَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا السُّفْلَى ۗ وَكَلِمَةُ اللَّهِ هِيَ الْعُلْيَا ۗ وَاللَّهُ عَزِيزٌ حَكِيمٌ ﴿40﴾

Illa tansuroohu faqad nasarahu Allahu ith akhrajahu allatheena kafaroo thaniya ithnayni ith huma fee alghari ith yaqoolu lisahibihi la tazhan inna Allaha maAAana faanzala Allahu **sakeenatahu** AAalayhi waayyadahu bijunoodin lam tarawha wajaAAala kalimata allatheena kafaroo alssuffla wakalimatu Allahi hiya alAAulya waAllahu AAazeezun hakeemun

(Sakinah) in this verse means tranquility, reassurance,

and serenity according to the interpretation of both Ibn Kathir and AlQurtubi. AlQurtubi added that Al (Sakinah) here is sent down on the Messenger to reassure him of Allah help, to calm him down, and to make him feel safe, secure, and strong when he was hidden for three days in the Cave outside Mecca with his companion Abu Baker, they fled from the disbelievers who planned to kill the Prophet. The intended meaning for (Sakinah) in this particular verse which was explained earlier by both Ibn Kathir and AlQurtubi has been conveyed in all translations but with some loss in the meaning. The strategy of addition could be employed here to give some information about the context of the revelation of this verse.

**The Fourth verse** wherein (Sakinah) was mentioned in the Holy Qur'an is in Surratt AlFath (The Victory: 48: 4):

"هُوَ الَّذِي أَنْزَلَ السَّكِينَةَ فِي قُلُوبِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ لِيَزْدَادُوا إِيمَانًا مَعَ إِيمَانِهِمْ وَلِلَّهِ جُنُودُ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَكَانَ اللَّهُ عَلِيمًا حَكِيمًا"

Huwa allathee anzala **alssakeenata** fee quloobi almunineena liyazdadoo eemanan maAAa eemanihim walillahi junoodu alssamawati waalardi wakana Allahu AAaleeman hakeeman

(Sakinah) in this verse means tranquility, grace, and reassurance according to the interpretation of both Ibn Kathir and AlQurtubi. Besides, Ibn Kathir added that Al (Sakinah) here is sent down into the hearts of the believers who were content with acceptance and were at peace to increase their faith, joining it to the faith they already had. The intended meaning for (Sakinah) in this particular verse which was explained earlier by both Ibn Kathir and AlQurtubi as that the feeling of reassurance and tranquility sent down into the hearts of the believers in order to increase their existent has been conveyed in all translations but with slight difference in the lexical choices made by the translators.

**The Fifth verse** wherein (Sakinah) was mentioned in the Holy Qur'an is in Surratt AlFath (The Victory: 48: 18):

"لَقَدْ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ إِذْ يُبَايِعُونَكَ تَحْتَ الشَّجَرَةِ فَعَلِمَ مَا فِي قُلُوبِهِمْ فَأَنْزَلَ السَّكِينَةَ عَلَيْهِمْ وَأَثَابَهُمْ فَتْحًا قَرِيبًا"

Laqad radiya Allahu AAani almunineena ith yubayiAAoonaka tahta alshshajarati faAAalima ma fee quloobihim faanzala **alsakeenata** AAalayhim waathabahum fathan qareeban

(Sakinah) in this verse means tranquility, calmness,

and reassurance according to the interpretation of both Ibn Kathir and AlQurtubi. Further, AlQurtubi states that Al (Sakinah) here is sent down to the believers to ask them to be patient and to assure them of Allah's promise of victory over the disbelievers. The intended meaning for (Sakinah) in this particular verse which was explained earlier by both Ibn Kathir and AlQurtubi has not been conveyed completely in all translations but the main focus was only on the peace of reassurance with different lexical choices by the translators. The strategy of explanation could be used in order to convey the intended meaning in the context of this particular verse.

**The Sixth verse** wherein (Sakinah) was mentioned in the Holy Qur'an is in Surratt AlFath (The Victory: 48: 26):

"إِذْ جَعَلَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا فِي قُلُوبِهِمُ الْحَمِيَّةَ الْجَاهِلِيَّةَ فَأَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ سَكِينَتَهُ عَلَى رَسُولِهِ وَعَلَى الْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَالزَّمِيمَةَ الْتَقْوَى وَكَانُوا أَحَقَّ بِهَا وَأَهْلَهَا وَكَانَ اللَّهُ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيمًا"

Ith jaAAala allatheena kafaroo fee quloobihimu alhamiyyata hamiyyata aljahiliyyati faanzala Allahu sakeenatahu AAala rasoolihi waAAala almunineena waalmazamum kalimata altaqwa wakanoo ahaqqa biha

waahlaha wakana Allahu bikulli shayin AAaleeman

(Sakinah) in this verse means tranquility, calmness, and reassurance according to the interpretation of both Ibn Kathir and AlQurtubi. Further, AlQurtubi states that Al (Sakinah) here means satisfaction and acceptance of the new faith which was sent down to the Messenger and to the believers to ask them to observe their faith and to accept it. The intended meaning for (Sakinah) in this particular verse which was explained earlier by both Ibn Kathir and AlQurtubi has not been conveyed completely in all translations, but the main focus was only on the peace of reassurance with different lexical choices by the translators as in the previous verse. Again the strategy of explanation could be used in order to convey the intended meaning in the context of this particular verse.

As we have seen in the discussion of the six verses wherein (Sakinah) was mentioned in the Holy Qur'an, it has been rendered in different ways by the five translations selected for this study. In all cases, the context of the (Sakinah) was not explained or mentioned to illustrate the reason behind the translation. All the translators opted for different lexical choices to convey (Sakinah)'s meaning as we see in table (1):

**Table (1) Different translations of (Sakinah) by the five translators**

No.	Yousef Ali	Shakir	Pickthall	Khan & Hilali	Itani
1.	An assurance therein of security	Tranquillity	Peace of reassurance	(Sakinah) (peace and reassurance)	Tranquility
2.	Calm	Tranquillity	Peace of reassurance	(Sakinah) (calmness, tranquillity, reassurance, etc)	Serenity
3.	Peace	Tranquillity	Peace of reassurance	(Sakinah) (calmness, tranquillity, peace, etc)	Tranquility
4.	Tranquillity	Tranquillity	Peace of reassurance	(Sakinah) (calmness and tranquillity)	Tranquility
5.	Tranquillity	Tranquillity	Peace of reassurance	As-(Sakinah) (calmness and tranquillity)	Serenity
6.	Tranquillity	Tranquillity	Peace of reassurance	(Sakinah) (calmness and tranquillity)	Serenity

Studying the table above, the researcher can notice that Yousef Ali opted for the use of the compensation strategy (An assurance therein of security) to convey the loss of meaning in the Target Text and he used different synonymy as in; calm, peace, and tranquility respectively. While Shakir (1980) used synonymy (Tranquility to render (Sakinah) in all the verses) which is a strategy used in a context where a precise equivalent may or may

not exist. This procedure is used for a SL word where there is no clear one-to-one equivalent. Pickthall as well used the compensation strategy; Peace of reassurance to convey the meaning of (Sakinah) in all the verses. By the same token, Kahn and Hilali used Transference to transferred a SL word into the Target Language text in its original form by transcription or transliteration; (Sakinah), then they used the strategy of additions which

is a technique employed to add extra information about a religion-specific word/expression in the translated text, peace and reassurance, calmness, tranquillity, reassurance, etc, calmness, tranquillity, peace, etc, calmness, tranquillity between brackets respectively. By doing these terms, they are only adding several synonyms not extra information about (Sakinah). Finally, Itani used the strategy of synonyms by using Tranquility and Serenity interchangeably. What is worth mentioning and studying here, is the fact that all the lexical choices made by the translators by using either- tranquillity, peace of reassurance, peace, calm, serenity, security, calmness- has no big difference in meaning according to the Merriam-Webster dictionary as shown in table (2):

**Table (2) Words and Meaning**

<b>Word</b>	<b>Definition</b>
<b>Calmness</b>	Is a quiet and peaceful state or condition or a peaceful mental or emotional state.
<b>Serenity</b>	calm and peaceful
<b>Reassurance</b>	Something that is said or done to make someone feel less afraid, upset, or doubtful.
<b>Tranquility</b>	The quality of tranquil which is quiet and peaceful.
<b>Assurance</b>	The state of being sure or certain about something, a strong feeling of confidence about you or about being right, a strong and definite statement that something will happen or that something is true.
<b>Security</b>	the state of being protected or safe from harm, things done to make people or places safe, the area in a place (such as an airport) where people are checked to make sure they are not carrying weapons or other illegal materials.
<b>Peace</b>	a state in which there is no war or fighting, an agreement to end a war, a period of time when there is no war or fighting.

All the above lexemes share the qualities of being; calm, quiet, peaceful, less afraid and certain. Therefore, there is no obvious reason behind using one of them other than personal preferences by the translators. From our

point of view, the interchange between them by some translators is not justified as their meaning is almost the same or maybe with a slight difference. The most appropriate use of vocabulary was that of Kahn and Hilali who opted for the strategy of transliteration plus addition of the Arabic word (Sakinah) followed by two or three of the aforementioned lexemes due to the fact that (Sakinah) in Arabic actually has no complete or near equivalent in English. It is a cultural/religious-bound term related to a spiritual quality associated with the Islamic faith inspired in the hearts of Muslims by Allah.

From the discussion above, there is no logical reason behind the different use of these terms except the fact that (Sakinah) as a religious bound term in Arabic and Islamic culture is a cultural bound term which has no direct and no static complete equivalent in the English Language. The different equivalents, i.e. discrepancies given to the concept of (Sakinah) by the five translators show that there is no consensus among them on a standard or direct equivalent for the term of (Sakinah) in English, which makes it a problematic concept to render in the target language and culture.

#### **Discussion of the study questions**

(Sakinah) is a religious-bound term which denotes "peace", "serenity" or "tranquility" and which connotes an inner peaceful feeling and a serenity sent down by Allah on the hearts of believers when they were scared or stressed to increase their faith and steadfastness. It was mentioned in six verses the Holy Qur'an, and has descended upon the Islamic prophet Muhammad and the believers in three different events. The concept is partially known in both Christianity and Judaism but without any specific religious connotation as in Islam. Consequently, it has no direct or complete equivalent in the English language but still could be translated and conveyed in English by using different strategies such as transference (transliteration) and addition of related explanation. Furthermore, Hatim and Mason (1990, p.8) warn the translator of the use of the term equivalence in translation and because complete equivalence is not an achievable goal. They, instead, opt for the relative sense of the term which is the closest possible approximation to the source text meaning. On the same line, Simms (1997, p.6) states that Interlingua translation is impossible in a pure form, since there is no such thing as pure synonymy within a language and there is no such thing as pure lexical equivalence between languages.

Moreover, the five translations given by Yousef Ali (1938), Shakir (1980), Pickthall (1930), Khan and Hilali (1999), and Itani (2012) are readable and acceptable in the English language but with some loss of the connotative and the emotive meaning of the concept of (Sakinah) in Arabic, which is something inevitable in translation between two different cultures and languages such as Arabic and English. The most appropriate translation could be that of Khan and Hilali with some modification, a fact which explains why this translation was sponsored by the Saudi government to be provided for free because this translation has been reported to be the most popular as well as it follows the commentaries of Tabari, Qurtubi, and Ibn Kathir.

Based on the results of the study, the researcher can conclude that the meaning of the Holy Qur'an's is translatable but with some difficulties. One of the major problems in translating the Holy Qur'an is the religious cultural bound terms which consist of layers of meaning lexicalized in one linguistic term. Another main problem is the distortion of the emotive and connotative overtones and expressive effects that the original terms trigger to the source language readers due to large cultural and structural difference between Arabic and English. Consequently, it is very clear that finding an equivalent for an Arabic word in English can hardly maintain the specific emotive overtones of the original item especially

in the Qur'anic discourse.

### Recommendations

After conducting this study and based on the above results, we recommend the following:

1- The translator of the Holy Qur'an should have a good background in the commentaries (tafsir) of the Holy Qur'an such as Tabari, Qurtubi, and Ibn Kathir.

2- The translator of the Holy Qur'an should read some books about the discourse of the Holy Qur'an such as that of Hussein.

There is no book available to the reader, Arab or non-Arab, which provides a linguistic and rhetorical insight into Qur'anic discourse. For this reason, there is an urgent need for a book on Qur'anic discourse which does not only explain Qur'an translational problems but also provides a thorough account of its unique syntactic, semantic, phonetic, prosodic, pragmatic, and rhetorical features; also, such a book is needed to show the reader what is so special about Qur'anic discourse that makes it different from other types of discourse. The present book is intended to meet this urgent need. (Hussein 2013: xiii)

3- The translator of the Holy Qur'an should always notify his target reader that his translation is only an approximation of the Qur'an. It is merely a tool which enables them to read and understand the meanings of the Qur'an but not a substitution of the sacred book.

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## ترجمة المعاني الدلالية والتضمينية لمصطلح "السكينة" في القرآن الكريم: دراسة تجريبية

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### ملخص

تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى مناقشة معنى "السكينة" وهي مصطلح اسلامي ذكر في ست آيات في القرآن الكريم ، وذلك في ضوء تفسير ابن كثير والقرطبي ومقارنة خمس ترجمات للقرآن الكريم ومناقشة الاستراتيجيات المستخدمة في هذه الترجمات ضمن الاطار النظري المقدم من قبل "بيتر نيومارك" من أجل التوصل إلى أفضل استراتيجية لترجمة مثل هذه المصطلحات بين اللغتين العربية والإنجليزية. ويظهر اختلاف هذه الترجمات أن أفضل استراتيجية لترجمة المصطلحات الدينية الخاصة هو نسخ كتابة الحروف الأصلية بحروف اللغة الانجليزية او مايعرف بـ "Transliteration" مع إضافة شرح او تعريف للمصطلح. الكلمات الدالة: سكينة، ترجمة، معاني دلالية، معاني تضمينية، تقييم الترجمة، ترجمة.

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