A Critical Study for the Proper Methodology of Translating Islamic Terms in the Holy Qur’ān into English with Special Reference to Some Qur’ānic Terms

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ABSTRACT

The main theme of this article deals with the methodologies of translating religious terms in the Holy Qur’ān. This article is divided into four chapters. The first chapter deals with the definition of translation and the opinions of Muslim scholars and jurists about the translatability of the Qur’ānic scripture. The second chapter deals with the relationship between the universality of Islam and the importance of translating the meanings of the Holy Qur’ān into other languages especially into English. The third and the forth chapters are the core of this article and they firstly, discuss the methodologies of translating religious terms in general, and secondly they discuss in particular special religious terms used in the Qur’ān and the standards that the translator of the Holy Qur’ān has to acquire. Furthermore, two main approaches and methodologies have been presented: on one hand Eugene Nida’s methodology which is called ‘dynamic equivalence’ related to translating religious terms has been presented. On the other hand, Lawrence Venuti has criticized Eugene Nida’s methodology and regarded it as a continuation to imposing Anglo-American norms and culture upon any translation and regarded this as an act of imperialism and ethnocentric violence in translation because the culture of the main language is not well presented in the target language. Venuti, instead, preferred ‘foreignizing translation’ methodology to ‘domesticating’ translation methodology accepted by Nida, because the former methodology preserves the culture of the main language in the translation process, while the latter does not regard this issue as an important one. The present article adopts ‘foreignizing translation’ methodology and apply it in translating the religious terminologies found in the Holy Qur’ān such as Allah, ṣalāt, ṣawm, zakaḥ, ḥajj plus the names of the Qur’ānic Surah. Finally, the conclusion comes.

Keywords: Translating Islamic Terms, Qur’ānic Terms, Methodology.

INTRODUCTION

The translation of the meanings of the Holy Qur’ān has become one of the main concerns for Muslims as it helps to convey the message of Islam to other languages of the world. The translation of meanings of the holy Qur’ān into English language has also been considered highly important as English, nowadays is regarded as one of the most important languages of the world. From the twelfth century until this day, there have been various translations of the Qur’ān into European languages and many difficulties have faced those who have endeavored to translate this highly sacred text. One of the most difficult problems which faced the translators is translating the religious terminologies in the Qur’ān.

The scope of this article is not to discuss every variety of technical terminology; my prime concern is rather with the special religious terminology of the Holy Qur’ān and with the proper methodologies that are followed in translating such terminology.

The examples presented in this article are related to the exalted names of Allah, some terminologies related to Islamic law such as ṣalāt, ṣawm, zakāh, and ḥajj, and the names of the Qur’ānic Surahs. Furthermore, the present article adopts ‘foreignizing translation’ methodology which could be applied in translating all...
the Qur’anic terminologies found in the Holy Qur’an. In addition, the objective of this study is three folds: firstly, it proposes an appropriate solution for translating the Qur’anic terminology. Secondly, it paves the way for adopting a unified methodology amongst the translators of the Holy Qur’an. Thirdly, it helps in conveying the true message of the Holy Qur’an for non-Arabic speakers and for those who want to know about the religion of Islam through the Holy Qur’an. Finally, to achieve the above-mentioned goals, a descriptive as well as an analytical methodology has been applied in order to choose the proper methodology for translating religious terms in the Holy Qur’an.

Chapter One
The Meaning of Translation and the Stance of Islamic Law with Regards to the Permissibility of Translating the Meanings of Holy Qur’an into Other Languages

1. Translation defined
1.1 Translation as a Technical Term
The translation of written texts may be divided into two categories or approaches: the first category is a word-for-word translation and the second category is semantic translation. Word-for-word translation is the type of translation where “SL (source language) word-order is preserved, and the words translated singly by their most common meanings, out of context. Cultural words are translated literally.” Semantic translation, however, as defined by Doster Belyalyev and P. Newmark: “attempts to produce the precise contextual meaning of the original within the constrains of the TL (target language) grammatical structure…in addition to the aesthetic value of the SL text which is taken into consideration”. It also means the transfer of ideas and meanings from one language into another without being bound by the order of words in the source text or having to respect their syntax.

According to Eugene Nida, translation is essentially the business of making the closest natural correspondence or equivalence to the source language in the target language, first in terms of sense and meaning and then in terms of style. This kind of translation is the ultimate product of modern linguistics: it is a process with a relative type of success and is variable in terms of the levels of communication it achieves. Furthermore, translation has been defined by a large number of scholars and translation theorists, such as Prochazka, Nida, etc... Newmark, one of the most distinguished scholars in this field, has defined this discipline as: “It is rendering the meaning of a text into another language in the way that the author intended the text”. A similar definition has been given by Roger T. Bell which reads: “The expression in another language (or target language) of what has been expressed in another, source language, preserving semantic and stylistic equivalences.”

Several modern linguists, such as Saussure, Harris, Bloomfield, Hjelmslev and others, have argued that language is not simply a bag of words from which we may extract words one by one as we do with letters from a box to set up type for printing. Rather it is a series of systems, on the basis of which we have to reconsider matches and correspondences in each particular case. These linguists regard the translation of meanings from one language to another as problematical, because meaning itself, as Catford tells us, is the property of the source language and can only partially be translated into another one.

Indeed, the criticism leveled by these linguists against semantic translation provides us with a reasonable explanation of the reasons why word-for-word translation always produces unsatisfactory results: for words cannot necessarily bridge the actual communicative gaps that exist between different languages. Most people, therefore, acknowledge the difficulty of translating literary works; and indeed there are those who say that translating poetry, for example, is an impossibility (and how much more so, then, in the case of the Holy Qur’an?). Such difficulties arise not because of the special linguistic quality of literary writing, but rather because of the fact that a literary work translated from one language into another loses several features: it loses those personal and social touches, those special shades of meaning that are embodied in an expression in a particular language. This fact demonstrates the close connection between language and thought and the overall cultural context: it would be foolhardy to regard such expressions merely as symbols given their very close connection with human ways of thinking – and it becomes hard for us to imagine any sort of thinking process happening without such words, because mankind does its thinking by means of these words. Therefore, Goldenberg “wonders, if it is difficult to translate the human word, then how can one possibly translate the divine word? He also wonders how one translates words which have distinct connotations in
one language, that do not exist in another.\textsuperscript{12}

\section*{1.2 Does Islamic Law Permit the Translation of the Holy Qur‘an into Other Languages?}

It is thus clear to us that it is impossible to provide a word-for-word translation of the Holy Qur‘an in terms of language usage. This involves transferring words and expressions from one language into corresponding ones in other languages, in such a way that syntax and the ordering of ideas remains essentially the same; and such an aim is unachievable, given that languages do not correspond to one another in their vocabulary, their formulas and their modes of expression. A word-for-word translation of the Qur‘an has therefore been unanimously judged to be forbidden in Islamic Law on the grounds of not being possible. Most translators of the meanings of the Holy Qur‘an have acknowledged this, one such being the orientalist Arthur Arberry, who has written in the Introduction to his translation: “I have called my version an interpretation, conceding the orthodox claim that the Qur‘an (like all other literary masterpieces) is untranslatable.”\textsuperscript{13} In a similar way the British Muslim translator Muḥammad Marmaduke Pickthall affirmed in the Introduction to his translation of the Holy Qur‘an his belief that the Qur‘an could not be translated: for it was the miraculous Message of Alla’h, which affected the hearts of those who heard it and brought tears to their eyes, whenever its high rhetorical themes were slowly recited - and how could such effects be replicated in any translation?\textsuperscript{14} W.G. Shellabear furthermore (in 1969) declared that it was not possible to translate the Qur‘an, since no translation would be able to do justice to the source text.

Translating the Holy Qur‘an in a semantic fashion is also a very difficult undertaking. Even though there are some people who have forbidden it since they regard it as impossible,\textsuperscript{15} most Muslim scholars - particularly those of Al-Azhar - have nonetheless permitted it (albeit on very stringent and narrow conditions).\textsuperscript{16} Those scholars who were for banning such semantic translation took that line only out of their concern for the Holy Qur‘an, on account of those bad or false translations that had been produced by Europeans in either earlier or more modern times, whether deliberately or through insufficient understanding of the Arabic text of the Qur‘an.

Now when we talk of the permissibility of semantic translation (that is, the transfer of ideas and meanings from one language into another), we base this on a certain powerful argument. This is that semantic translation is something that reveals meaning, and is therefore in this context synonymous with interpretation (exegesis); for exegesis involves explanation, and it is a science through which one is able - as much as humanly possible - to discover what the Holy Qur‘an shows us of the will of Alla’h. Such interpretation is valid even if it only presents a single meaning.\textsuperscript{17}

Just as interpreting or commenting on the Qur‘an in Arabic is both necessary and permissible, so also is it both necessary and permissible to translate such interpreted meanings into another language.\textsuperscript{18} This is indeed an important part of the means available for communicating and disseminating the message of Islam throughout the rest of the world. We take the view, then, that translations of the Holy Qur‘an should be designated as translations “of the Meanings of the Qur‘an” in English (or in whatever other language) rather than being called “a translation of the Qur‘an”: this is because calling such a product “a translation of the Qur‘an” implies that most of the possible meanings of the text are being presented to the reader, while this is not in fact the case. The other advantage in adding the word “meanings” to the title of any Qur‘an translation is that it keeps in the minds of those reading this translation the fact that what they are being offered is not the inimitable text of the Qur‘an itself, but only an interpretation of its meaning - a human rendering of the divine, inimitable original text. What an amazing difference there is between the two! While the original text can move souls to the point of tears, other renderings are greatly inferior in terms of their affective power. While the former is laden with different shades of meaning, interpretation can convey only limited meanings. The introduction to any translation should alert the reader to these points, and also state that a Muslim needs to learn the original text.

In closing this discussion of the permissibility of semantic translation of the Qur‘an, I take the following view regarding some of the conditions circumscribing the translator. He should be a Muslim; non-Muslims are prohibited under Islamic Law from doing it, for we have ample evidence from experience that every non-Muslim who has embarked on this task has fallen into error, whether through lack of understanding of the original or plain willfully, as in the case of the Jew N. J. Dawood, with his distorted version of the Holy Qur‘an.
Before we commence our discussion of the methodologies required for the translation of special Islamic terms, we shall review in the following part the need for Qur’anic translation into other languages and the connection that has with the universality of Islam.

Chapter Two
Holy Qur’anic Translation and the Universal Nature of The Message of Islam

Islam is a universal religion for all mankind, regardless of language and colour, as set forth in the Holy Qur’anic: “We have not sent you but as a universal (Messenger) to men...” (Surah 34 Saba’ v. 28). The People of the Islamic Message cover all of mankind throughout the world, and the Muslim religion is a universal one that is valid for every time and place, as declared by Allah the Almighty Himself: “Say: ‘O Men! I am sent unto you all, as the Apostle of God...” (Surah 7 ‘A’raf v. 158). Promulgating Islam is a duty for every Muslim, again as declared by Allah the Almighty: “Say: ‘This is my way: I do invite unto Allah, - on evidence clear as the seeing with one’s eyes, - I and whoever follows me. Glory to Allah! And never will I join gods with Him!’ (Surah 12 Yusuf v. 108). Non-Muslims who are also not Arabs cannot nowadays be attracted to Islam other than through their own languages, in order that they be won over by argument; for Allah again says this in the Qur’anic: “And We sent out not any Messenger except with the tongue of his people that he might clarify to them” (Surah 14 Ibrahim v. 4). Given that, as we have already pointed out - this is a duty, and it cannot be fulfilled by any other means, it is essential these days to have translations that interpret the meanings of the Holy Qur’anic into the various languages of the world so that non-Arabic speakers may be in a position to read it and grasp its meanings as revealed by Allah the Almighty. We therefore see it as an essential task today to assist in the translation of the meanings of Qur’anic text into all the world’s languages - but especially into English, which has nowadays gained the status of a world language.

From the early days of Islam and its diffusion amongst non-Arab peoples, Muslim scholars felt that it was necessary to explain some of the more obscure and enigmatic concepts in their religion. They, therefore, composed the so-called special dictionaries with names like Gharib al- Qur’anic “Lexical Peculiarities of the Qur’anic” and Mufradaat al- Qur’anic “Vocabulary of the Qur’anic” that were in tune with those times. Other scholars, from Persia, Turkey, India and elsewhere, wrote commentaries on the Holy Qur’anic in their own languages so as to help those from their nations who had no knowledge of Arabic.

When we consider the efforts made by Muslim scholars in earlier times to produce interpretative translations of the Holy Qur’anic into - for example - Persian and Turkish, we see that they did sterling service. However, translations of this kind into European languages in particular (languages such as English, French and German) have not been accorded with the necessary degree of care, as had been the case with the previously-mentioned languages.

Consequently, an accurate translation is an absolute essential. For the first thing about Islam that the non-Muslim gets acquainted with is its revealed Book, the Holy Qur’anic; therefore, he must grasp what it is saying accurately and without distortion just as Muslim scholars do. There are many people who have embraced Islam because they have got to know a sound translation of what the Qur’anic has to say. The opposite has also happened. Some people have received a bad image of Islam and of its Prophet (PBUH) because of certain unsound translations, such as that of the Jew N. J. Dawood, more than one million copies of which have been printed and distributed. Muslims must, then, be sure to supervise translations of the meanings of the Holy Qur’anic and prohibit any bad translation, stopping it from getting into circulation. Recently, in fact, the Egyptian Board of Censors stopped the circulation of N. J. Dawood’s translation on the grounds that it was a bad one that carried material malicious towards Islam and its Prophet (PBUH).

Allah be praised, then, for preserving His Book from all changes and distortion, and for exposing those who would distort it by their translations. Therefore, great research efforts must be undertaken to uncover such acts of distortion.

Chapter Three

3.1 Definition of Terminology

M. Teresa Cabre said about the definition of
terminology: “As a discipline, terminology is a subject which is concerned with specialized terms; as a practice it is the set of principles oriented toward term compilation; finally, as a product, it is the set of terms from a given subject field. Diversity can, therefore, be traced from the beginning. In this first meaning, terminology is conceived as the discipline concerned with specialized terms.” In addition, she states in this context: “Terminology is an interdisciplinary subject which is composed of elements that are at the root of linguistics, ontology, and the subject fields and it is necessarily linked to the documentary science on which it depends and which it serves.”

3.2 Methodology for Translating Technical Terminology in General, with Particular Reference to Religious Terminology in the Holy Qur’an

Translating religious terminology is a matter of extreme importance, not least with the Holy Qur’an, which brought into the Arabic language novel terms and expressions which it endowed with rich new conceptual dimensions unheard of prior to the Qur’anic revelation. Examples of these are the word rahman (and the other most beautiful names of Allah), plus words like salah, sawm, zakah and hajj, and other religious terms.

When translating such special vocabulary from one language into another there are conventions and methodologies that must be adhered to. After all, this is not ordinary language, but rather terminology that carries cultural and religious connotations: in order to understand it we have to have an understanding of the religious and cultural framework that gave rise to it. If we attempt to transfer such terminology into another target language, it will lose those connotations and those special substrata of cultural meaning that it contains deep within itself. For there cannot be any corresponding term or expression in the target language of translation, since terms in the source and target language will have different cultural and environmental roots, and because it is just not possible for two languages to exhibit total correspondence.

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Words or expressions that have this cultural dimension are known as “culture-specific words”. The translation of such terminology is a part of the discipline of lexicology, and there is an array of methodologies for handling them in translation. I do not propose here to discuss every variety of technical terminology; my prime concern is rather with the special religious terminology of the Holy Qur’an and with the methodologies that are followed in translating such terminology.

When it comes to the translation of special terminology and religious translation in general, we may benefit from the experience of researchers who have developed well-known theories of translation, and in particular Eugene Nida, the author of “Toward a Science of Translating”, which he wrote in 1964. Eugene Nida divides technical terms into three types, and then postulates the idea of two principal methodologies or approaches for the translation of such terms. Despite the criticisms that have been leveled against them (as we shall see), these divisions and approaches may be applied to the translation of Qur’anic special religious terminology.

In the eleventh chapter of his book in question – a chapter on Translation Procedures – Nida deals with important matters relating to the steps to be followed whether in individual or team-based translation, and we may derive great benefit from these in translating any text from another language, including translating the texts of the Holy Qur’an.

Nida identifies three lexical levels for consideration: “(1) terms for which there are readily available parallels, e.g. river, tree, stone, knife, etc.; (2) terms which identify culturally different objects, but with somewhat similar functions, e.g. book, which in English means an object with pages bound together into a unit, but which, in New Testament times, meant a long parchment or papyrus rolled up in the form of a scroll; and (3) terms which identify cultural specialties, e.g. synagogue, homer, ephah, cherubim, and jubilee, to cite only a few from the Bible.” As regards coping with such terms, Nida continues: “Usually the first set of terms involves no problem. In the second set of terms several confusions can arise; hence one must either use another term which reflects the form of the referent, though not the equivalent function, or which identifies the equivalent function at the expense of formal identity...”

What we are concerned with in this study is the third set of terms, and how to cope with them. As Nida goes on to say: “In translating terms of the third class certain ‘foreign associations’ can rarely be avoided. No translation that attempts to bridge a wide cultural gap can hope to eliminate all traces of the foreign setting. For example, in Bible translating, it is quite impossible to remove such foreign ‘objects’ as Pharisees, Sadducees, Solomon’s temple, cities of refuge, or such
Biblical themes as anointing, adulterous generation, living sacrifice and Lamb of God, for these expressions are deeply embedded in the very thought structure of the message. It is inevitable also that when source and receptor languages represent very different cultures there should be many basic themes and accounts which cannot be ‘naturalized’ by the process of translating. Nida, a professional translator of the Old and New Testaments, provides plenty of examples of expressions whose meanings depend so largely upon the total cultural context of the language in which they are used, and cannot therefore be easily transferred to other linguistic and cultural contexts.

It is, therefore, absolutely essential before embarking on the translation of such terms to understand their cultural context in the source language and in the message given in that language; for these terms only have distinct meanings when used within the total cultural setting. So before we can translate the terminology of the Holy Qur’an we have to be aware of several things, for example the pillars of Islam, Islamic beliefs, the life of the Prophet (PBUH) etc., in order that the true import of all terms such tawhīd, shahādah, assāla[t, sāwm, zakāt, and hājj, may be understood so that they can then be translated correctly.

How, though, can translators know what degree of equivalence there is in their translations between the original or source language and the receptor language?

Obviously, Nida explains, the process by which one is able to determine equivalence between source and receptive languages is a highly complex one. “However,” he tells us, “it may be reduced to two quite simple procedures: (1) “decomposition” of the message into the simplest semantic structure, with the most explicit statement of relationships; and (2) “recomposition” of the message into the receptor language, in such a way as to employ those correspondences which (a) conform to an F-E [Formal Equivalence] translation, a D-E [Dynamic Equivalence] translation, or a compromise translation, and (b) provide the most appropriate communication load for the intended receptors.”

Whilst there is no complete equivalence of terms between languages, the translator must endeavor to find the closest equivalent possible. There are two types of equivalence: the first is Formal Equivalence and the second is Dynamic Equivalence. Formal Equivalence translation “is basically source-oriented; that is, it is designed to reveal as much as possible of the form and content of the original message... In doing so, an F-E translation attempts to reproduce several formal elements, including: (1) grammatical units, (2) consistency in word usage, and (3) meanings in terms of the source context.”

When translating some expressions by the Formal Equivalence method, the translator replaces a particular expression in the source language document with a similar expression in the receptor language document... However, if he is unable to come up with an equivalent term or expression he may then employ a number of synonyms in order correctly to explain the meaning of the original term, and then clarify that with a footnote, lest the receptor be confused. Such translation is also known as gloss translation, in which the translator tries to reproduce as literally and meaningfully as possible the form and content of the original; which means that the message in the receptor culture is constantly compared with the message in the source culture to determine standards of accuracy and correctness.

Dynamic Equivalence translation - adopted by Nida himself and reckoned by him to be the most suitable method of translation - is based upon the principle of equivalent effect. In this kind of translation we are not so concerned with matching the receptor-language message with the source-language message, but with the dynamic relationship, that the relationship between recipient and message should be substantially the same as that which existed between the original recipients and the message. Dynamic Equivalence translation aims at achieving the closest possible natural equivalent to the source-language message, and such a natural rendering must fit (1) the receptor language and culture as a whole, (2) the context of the particular message, and (3) the recipient-language audience.

The degree to which a translation conforms to the receptor language and culture as a whole is felt to be an essential element of any stylistically acceptable rendering. J.H. Frere has explained this by stating: “The language of translation ought, we think, ... to be a pure, impalpable and invisible element, the medium of thought and feeling and nothing more; it ought never to attract
attention to itself... All importations from foreign languages... are... to be avoided." Such an adjustment to the recipient language and culture must result in a translation that bears no obvious trace of foreign origin, says Nida.

3.3 Criticism of Nida’s Theory of Dynamic Equivalence by L. Venuti

Nida’s theory of Dynamic Equivalence has come under much criticism, most significantly from Lawrence Venuti, who regards it at the outset as one of the manifestations of ‘ethnocentric violence’ in translation, on the grounds that it imposes Anglophone culture upon other cultures. This is because this theory believes in the need to remove the foreign elements, or traces, in a translation – as explained above – and focuses on the receptor culture, even if that involves some loss from the culture of the original language that is being translated. In Nida’s words: “A translation of dynamic equivalence aims at complete naturalness of expression, and tries to relate the recipient to modes of behavior relevant within the context of his own culture; it does not insist that he understand the cultural patterns of the source-language context in order to comprehend the message.”

Venuti directs criticism at Nida on the grounds that the latter concentrates on fluency in translation, which actually means ‘domesticating’ translation, whereas Venuti is a supporter of ‘foreignizing’ translation – the approach that preserves the cultural dimensions of the original text. The principle of ‘domestication’ in translation means this, in the words of Nida: “the translator must be a person who can draw aside the curtains of linguistic and cultural differences so that people may see clearly the relevance of the original message.” This relevance fits in with the culture of the receptor or target language. However, the flaw in this approach – as Venuti points out – is that the translator’s concern for relevance in terms of the receptor language will be at the expense of some of the linguistic and cultural features of the source text; for those who wrote the original texts would not in the first place have taken into consideration the second or receptor language.

Nida affirms his above-mentioned theory, which focuses upon a smooth and easy style, when he writes: “An easy and natural style in translating, despite the extreme difficulties of producing it - especially when translating an original of high quality -is nevertheless essential to producing in the ultimate receptors a response similar to that of the original receptors.”

In writing these words Nida is imposing the criteria of Anglophone culture regarding a fluent, easy style – at the expense of translating texts from any culture that is different from the Anglophone one; and in doing so he is “masking a basic disjunction between the source- and target-language texts which puts into question the possibility of eliciting a ‘similar’ response.”

Lawrence Venuti reaches the conclusion that Nida’s theory of Dynamic Equivalence translation is simply a clear expression of Nida’s Christian missionary zeal, and of the zeal of Anglo-American culture to use ‘domesticating’ theories to impose on translations, such theories give no consideration to the linguistic and cultural differences that are inherent in original texts. By focusing on the receptors and on how to bring the message to them when translating an alien text, Nida has dismissed the cultures of other languages and, in the name of fluency and transparency, has eliminated the cultural divergences and the real meanings that are there in the source text.

Consequently, Venuti – like his precursor the German philosopher and theologian Friedrich Schleiermacher – issues a call for the ‘foreignizing’ approach to translation. This is a methodology which delivers the act of translating the source text from the straitjacket of Anglophone culture by not subjugating the translated text to the demands of that culture, but instead preserving certain of the linguistic and cultural elements of the source text. It means in fact exposing the target readership in the English-speaking world to the new cultural ambience of a different language. Venuti sees this ‘foreignizing’ strategy as aiming to curb ethnocentric violence, racism and the comprehensive bias of the hegemonic Anglophone culture and to incorporate other cultural settings into the translation process. Venuti also regards ‘foreignization’ as one means of resisting ethnocentrism, racism and imperialism in the interests of ‘democratic geopolitical’ relations.

3.4 The Proper Methodology for Translating Religious Terminologies

Now the question that concerns us at this point, regarding the translation of the Holy Qur’an, is: which approach should we follow when translating its religious terms? and how can the translator use the methodology...
selected practically in his work (translation)? The answer is that the ‘foreignizing’ method is preferable, because this contains deep within itself the culture of the source text – something highly desirable and important in the case of a text such as the Qur’a’an, with its inimitable characteristics. The target language reader will not however, be completely satisfied, for he will be endeavoring to comprehend the strange words that appear in the translation, and again will have to get used to reading a new kind of style that may use forms of expression that he is not accustomed to, all in the cause of making the translation fit the cultural setting of the source text.46

Furthermore, as the aim of translation is to convey the correct meaning of the original text and any translation that fails to meet this end is not a successful translation, therefore, the best strategy which should be adopted when translating the holy text is communicative translation in order to “relay to the target audience the meanings of the Qur’a’an rather than providing an archaic diction that can alienate the target reader. Literal translation of the Qur’a’an have produced ponderous and laboured styles in an attempt to optimize Qur’anic linguistic architectural charm, yet with minimal response from and effect on the target language audience”,47 and “if we want to capture in the target language what is obvious in the Qur’a’an and the intentionality (i.e. its intended message) involved in it, we suggest the use of footnotes or commentaries in order to illuminate the target text and avoid alienating target language audience”.48 The translator resorts to footnotes as a concession to communicative requirements as Hatim and Mason suggest.49 In addition, the translator could resort to transliteration for the untranslatability of cultural voids especially when dealing with religious concepts voids which exist in the Holy Qur’a’an.50

While communicative translation is regarded as a proper methodology for translating the Qur’anic text as a whole, on the other hand, it is also preferable to choose the ‘foreignizing’ method as a strategy when translating Qur’anic terminologies. And if so, then the ‘foreignizing’ method is to be the chosen one when translating the Holy Qur’anic terms, it should be put into practice in the following way: (1) special terms should be transliterated into English using italics; (2) such terms may be explained using brackets where a brief explanation is possible, otherwise, the term should be inserted into the main text and then given a detailed explanation in a footnote. The kind of terminology and vocabulary that we are having to deal with in this way belongs, of course, to that third category or lexical level mentioned above. These are the culture-specific words, or – to put it in another way – culture-bound words.

Such terms have to be ones for which there is no ready equivalent in the culture of the target language. They include words with a specific cultural dimension which can give rise to anxieties when they are translated by using words that are thought to be their equivalents in another language; for the receptor can only understand them within the context of his own cultural background, rather than in terms of what they actually mean in the source language. Terms that we shall now go on to discuss include the following: first that word expressing divine majesty, Allah, and then terms used in Islamic law such as salat, sawm, zakat, and hajj, plus the names of the Qur’anic Suwar.

3.5 Standards and Conditions Required for the Translator of the Holy Qur’an and the Importance of Committee Translation

There are two questions which deserve to be raised here about the translation of the Holy Qur’an, the first one is: what are exactly the standards and conditions required for the translator of the Holy Qur’an to be able to apply the above chosen methodology? Secondly, how exactly can committee and group research be the solution of the Qur’anic terms translation from Arabic into English?

For answering the first question one can suggest the followings: a translator of the holy Qur’an should have the following qualifications:

1. He should have a native like command of the SL (source language) and TL (target language).
2. He should be knowledgeable about the subject of the text he translates.
3. He should be aware of the syntactic, stylistic, lexical and other features of the two languages.
4. He should view translation not as a mechanical process but as a creative one.
5. A translator is also a reader, a thinker, and a critique.
6. Translation consists the full understanding of the message of the SL text which should be conveyed as accurately and as objectively as possible in the TL text.51
7. Serving the cause of the Holy Qur’an – providing exegesis, translating it and disseminating the light of
its sublime teachings in all the world’s languages remains a monumental task and a sacred trust that is fit to be undertaken only by religious people who are both scholarly and devout.

 Furthermore, for answering the second question, one can say that translation of a holy book like the Qur’an requires that a group of people of different specializations (language, exegeses, phonetics, history, etc...) collaborate to be able to give a comprehensive picture of the Qur’an both from the point of view of its content as well as its form. This kind of translation is called committee translation which is likely to produce a TL text that is accurate and precise as a result of the collaborative effort of the people involved, furthermore, this kind of translation is able to produce the appropriate terminologies which should be used in translating the Qur’an for the knowledge possessed by the committee whose skills complement each other. In addition, in committee translation, scholars can unify their efforts to produce a dictionary which includes the proper translation of all the Qur’anic terminologies. This dictionary will be a great help for all translators of the Holy Qur’an and for those who want to write about Islam or study its scripture.

3.6 Similarities and Differences between the Translation of both the Holy Qur’an and the Bible:

There are many similarities between the translation of both the Holy Qur’an and the translation of the Bible in relation to translating religious terms as well as to methodologies which should be followed.

The translators of the Bible have adopted a clear methodology in translating religious terms which have various meanings in the SL, as Morgechai Cogan put it "A key aspect of the new approach to translating "Biblical Hebrew into English" is the recognition that "a Hebrew term may have several nuances, depending on the context, and it is incorrect, if not misleading, to reproduce that term by a single term throughout. Thus in the drive to free the ancient text from perceived "mechanical translations," the modern versions have chosen clarity over consistency, doing away with the ambiguous turn of phrase." This same approach has been adopted when translating Qur’anic terms which have several meanings into TL language. Furthermore, many scholars have preferred the method of footnotes for explaining obscure terms in the Bible and the Qur’an to the method of paraphrasing or over-translation, "as a concession to communicative requirements."

On the other hand, the translation of the Holy Qur’an could not be regarded as a substitute for the Arabic Qur’an because "the divine Word assumed a specific, Arabic form, and that form is as essential as the meanings that the words convey". Furthermore, since there are sharp cross-linguistic, rhetorical and sociocultural variations between Qur’anic Arabic and English, to strike a balance between freedom and faithfulness to the original text, is very difficult to maintain, thus our translation can only provide an approximate natural linguistic and rhetorical equivalence to Qur’anic discourse with regard to form, content and response. In contrast, the Bible, in Christian view, is the Bible no matter what language it may be written in.

Another major difference between the translation of the Bible and the Holy Qur’an is that in Christianity they have faced the problem of translating the Bible text. For them textual variation had big influence on theology as Kenneth W. Clark put it: "Let us no longer implant the belief that doctrine is unaffected by textual emendation, whether for better or worse. The textual tradition of the Greek New Testament, he said, had always been characterized by a great variety of variants, some of them quite doctrinally consequential", and these variants have been the product of translation. On the other hand, in the translation of the Holy Qur’an we are not encountered with such problem because there is only one Qur’anic version of the Arabic text which has no variants that have theological affects.

Chapter Four
Translating Qur’anic Terms: Some Practical Examples

4.1 The Term Used to Express the Divine Deity: Allaah

The English language has no term that corresponds to the Arabic word for expressing the divine Deity, that is Allaah. Usually the word Allaah is translated into English as ‘God’. “The name Allaah is for Muslims the supreme name. Allaah is the eternal and uncreated Creator of the universe and all mankind” He is “the unique one”. This Arabic word Allaah is a proper noun meaning the very highest divine nature, and Arab philologists have been divided on the question whether it is a derivative proper noun (mushtaqq) or formed spontaneously (murtajal). In the view of some Arab philologists who claim that it is not a derivative and it is indeed like
those proper nouns that are not derivatives – the word is not translatable into English, since proper nouns are untranslatable. On the other hand, most Arab philologists “regarded the proper name Allaḥ as a derivative (mushtaq, manquḥa) a contraction of ‘ilāḥ, and endeavored to attach ‘ilāḥ to a triliteral root… Some ten derivations were suggested, from the following “roots”: 1) ‘ilḥ “to adore”, but as al-Zamakhshari pointed out that the verb ‘alaha is derived from the noun ‘aliha, “to be perplexed, confounded”, for the mind is confounded in the experience of knowing Allaḥ (waliha has the same meaning); ‘aliha ‘ilax “to turn to for protection, or to seek peace; 2) lyḥ, whence laḥa “to be lofty” and “to be hidden” (opinion from the Basān); 3) lwh whence lāḥa “to create”; 4) ‘awl and ‘ayl, roots conveying the idea of “priority”…”. 61 Arab philologists have advanced several other opinions as to the origin of this word; however, there is no need to review all of them here and now 63.

Going according to the viewpoint of those who maintain that the word Allaḥ is a derivative, the word conveys – as we have noted – several meanings. These meanings cannot be conveyed in the same way by the corresponding English God or the Spanish Dios. Therefore it seems best when we are translating for this word to be kept as it is and simply transliterated into English as Allaḥ, while its meaning is explained either between brackets or in a footnote. This is the translation method known as ‘foreignizing’.

There is a further sound reason why we should keep this word in its original form. This is that the target reader who sees the English word God understands that word according to the traditional assumptions of his own culture and religion as to the concept of the Deity, which is that of the Trinity or some other doctrine that is incompatible with the Islamic concept of the indivisible oneness of Allaḥ. If on the other hand, we keep the word Allaḥ as it is, then the reader or receptor in the target language will be forced to come to terms with the true and correct signification of the word – something that is desirable and important in Qur’ānic translation.

Certain translators who prefer to stay with the word God rather than use the term Allaḥ may raise the following objection. They may say that the target reader in English may suppose that the word Allaḥ signifies one who is the Lord of Muslims and Arabs only, and that this is in contrast to the sense of the word God, which to that reader means the one who is Lord of all mankind. This sort of pleading is, however, unacceptable; for we can provide an explanation of the word in question at the outset and draw the reader’s attention to the real meaning of Allaḥ either by using brackets or in a footnote. We should not forget that our concern is the translation of the Qur’ān, which is an inimitable text, and that it is essential as far as possible to preserve its special terms and vocabulary as we seek to translate it properly, for fear of committing errors that would distort its message. When we are talking to an audience of English or Spanish speakers or others we can use God or Dios to avoid confusing them; however, if we are translating the Qur’ān in written form we must keep the word Allaḥ, and so should say “In the Name of Allaḥ”.

On pursuing this question by examining some English translations of the Qur’ān, the researcher have found that the translators fall into two groups: one that has used the word God (with a capital G) in their translation, and one that has preferred to keep the word Allaḥ. It may be a useful exercise to go through the names of some of those who have translated the word Allaḥ in Bismillaḥ-rāḥmanir-raḥim and in other Qur’ānic ‘Ayaṭ. The ones who translated it as God include Ross, Sale, Rodwell, Arberry, A. Yusuf ‘Ali> and others. Those who opted to keep the Arabic term for the divine majesty include Abdul Hakim, Pickthall, Bell, Dawood, Khan, amongst others. In the Rodwell translation that has been given a commentary by Alan Jones, I have found that the latter was inclined to translate the word as Allaḥ (as also was Edward Lane); however, Alan Jones fails to give any justification for so doing 64. Nor have I noted any explanation offered for the choice made by any of the above-mentioned translators – whether those who used God or those who adhered to the original term.

Possibly those who translated Allaḥ as God supposed that the latter was an exact equivalent in English 63. We have shown above, however, that this is not a sound proposition.

4.2 Legal Terminology

Legal terms such as sālab, sāwm, zakaṭ and hāji, which have a particular meaning in Islamic Law took on those specific Islamic meanings after having had a certain linguistic value prior to the advent of Islam. Consequently, when dealing with these and similar terms, we have to take that same approach to the rendering of terms with cultural and religious
connotations that we have already taken in translating the term for the divine majesty, Allâh. This is the ‘foreignizing’ translation method; and here again we must distinguish between the linguistic meaning and the technical meaning of the same expression as used in the setting of the Qur’ânic text.

4.2.1 The Term sâliht

In order to translate this term into English or any other language we first of all need to consider how the word has developed and whether in fact the English word prayer is equivalent to the Arabic as}sâliht which is the second pillar of Islam.

In Arabic dictionaries, as}sâliht has the meanings of supplicatory prayer (du‘â‘), benediction, the remembrance of the Divine Names65, and exaltation66. One can say “I prayed for him”, meaning “I interceded for him and commended him”. For the Almighty One said: “...And pray for them. Verily your prayers are a source of security for them” (Surah 9 Tawbah v. 103),67 and also: “He it is Who sends as}sâliht (His blessings) on you...” (Surah 33 Al-Ahzâb v. 43). So the as}sâliht of Allâh and the Prophet upon Muslims is in fact a way of commending them, and thus the Prophet (PBUH) himself said, “O Allâh, send Your mercy down upon the House of Abu> ‘Awfa>!” (Surah 3 Al-Baqarah v. 43). Therefore understanding the sense of mercy is something that can only come from Allâh, the Almighty. Kha>n and Al-Hîlali> have shown care in translating this verse as follows: “...And perform as}sâliht...” (Surah 2 Al-Baqarah v. 3).68

Given that as}sâliht is used in several senses in the Qur’ân, translators should pay careful attention to these distinctions in meaning so as not to make mistakes; for this word is sometimes used in the Qur’ân in its linguistic sense and sometimes in its legal sense. One thing that is noticeable is how most translators have, when rendering Surah 33 Al-Ahzâb v. 43, made a mistake in translating the as}sâliht coming from the angels as meaning mercy, when in fact the correct rendering should be ‘asking for forgiveness’; for as}sâliht in the sense of mercy is something that can only come from Allâh the Almighty. Kha>n and Al-Hîlali> have shown care in translating this verse as follows: “...And perform as}sâliht...” (Surah 2 Al-Baqarah v. 3).68

4.2.2 The Term zakâht

When translating the word zakâht we need to understand how it has developed etymologically and how it has come to acquire both its linguistic and its technical or legal meaning.

According to Ibn Fa‘îs, the letters za>and ka>plus the weak final consonant ya>form a root that denotes the ideas of growth, increase and also purification. In the words of the Almighty: “...And be steadfast in prayer; practice regular charity; and bow down your heads with those who bow down (in worship)” (Surah 2 Al-Baqarah v. 43).

Thus the word as}sâliht has, as already noted, several meanings in the Holy Qur’ân, such as supplication or petition, showing mercy, asking for forgiveness together with the Islamic legal application of the word. When used in its technical sense, however, as}sâliht cannot be equated with the English word prayer; for these reasons: 1) the word sâliht conveys the aforementioned linguistic meanings, where as prayer can never mean showing mercy; and 2) as}sâliht is a word with a specific religious connotation and is a special concept in Islamic Law, and the word prayer cannot convey all these meanings - in fact the opposite is true; the target reader in the English language, on hearing the word prayer, will take it to mean the traditional religious rites of prayer in his own Christian or other faith. All of this tells us clearly that we must retain the word as}sâliht as it is, and must not allow it to be translated as prayer69.

Hans Wehr gives the meaning of as}sâliht as ‘the official Islamic prayer’70. So when we are translating the word we should in the first place render it in transliteration71, and then explain the term using either brackets or a footnote, as appropriate. Most Qur’ân translators - apart from Kha>n and Al-Hîlali> have translated as}sâliht as prayer72; Kha>n and Al-Hîlali> however, have given the word in its transliterated form in English and then explained the word in a footnote. See their translation of the first verse in which as}sâliht is mentioned, which is where the Almighty says: “...And perform as}sâliht...” (Surah 2 Al-Baqarah v. 3).73

...
so you might purify and sanctify them” (Surah 9 Tawbah v. 103). In other words, zakāt is something that purifies wealth and property.

In its technical, legal sense zakāt is a special financial obligation paid at a specified time for specified people, and as the third pillar of Islam is a duty incumbent upon any Muslim who is able to discharge it. Its name arises from the notions it contains of the hope of future blessing or of purification of the soul, that is developing the soul through acts of charity and other blessings.

For Allāh Almighty has said: “And be steadfast in prayer; practice regular charity…” (Surah 2 Al-Baqarah v. 43). Furthermore, “Purification” is accomplished by contributing to the treasury of the community, and the distribution of these henceforward compulsory alms Sadaqaat.

When translating the word it is best to put it in its transliterated form in English (i.e. as zakāt) and to elucidate its meaning in brackets or in a footnote. Because the word has a cultural and religious sense, Qur’aan translators have had a number of different views as to how to render zakāt and so we see the following offerings with regard to this verse (Surah 2 Al-Baqarah v. 43):

Arberry: pay the alms.
Rodwell: pay the legal impost.
Irving: pay the welfare tax.
Ali: practice regular charity.
Fakhri: give the alms tax.
Dawood: render the alms levy.
Khaan and Al-Hila>li>: give zakāt.

As I see it, all these translations are correct; nonetheless it is impossible to come up with a word that conveys the essence of the term zakāt in Islam - that is, one which makes sure that as well as the technical meaning we also get the idea of purifying and developing one’s soul and one’s worldly goods. None of the foregoing expressions are able to cover this range of meaning, and therefore it is preferable to retain the original word and to provide a detailed explanation of what zakāt means in a footnote. The Hans Wehr dictionary gives several meanings for zakāt: alms-giving, alms, charity, alms tax (Isl. Law) etc.

Thus most have done the right thing in their translations of the word tazakkaan the verse where Allāh says: “But those will prosper who purify themselves” (Surah 87 Al-‘A’la‘ v. 14). For here the word tazakkaa means ‘purify oneself’ - one of the linguistic meanings of zakāt. Pickthall almost went astray when he rendered it as ‘growth’, because the nearest meaning in this particular context is that of purity. Arberry was on the right lines when he translated the word as ‘cleansed’; “Prosperous is he who has cleansed himself”.

4.2.3 The Term Sāwm

In order to translate this term, again we need in the first instance to be aware of how it evolved linguistically into its technical, religious meaning. Ibn Fāris tells us that the consonants sād, waw and miim form a root that denotes abstinence and keeping still in one place, and that abstinence from doing things like eating, speaking and walking is called sāwm. In the Holy Qur’ān the Almighty says: “Behold, abstinence from speech have I vowed to the Most Gracious” (Surah 19 Maryam v. 26); thus abstinence from speech and keeping silence is called sāwm, as proven by the words from the very same verse: “…and hence I may not speak to any mortal”. Horses are also said to be practicing sāwm if they are not moving around and eating their fodder, and in the words of the poet, “Khaylun sāyamun wa khaylun ghayru sā’imatin” (“Some steeds are abstaining, while others are not”).

In Islamic Law sāwm, which is the fourth pillar of Islam observed during the month of Ramadaan, means the obligation one has to abstain intentionally, from dawn to sunset, from eating, drinking and sexual intercourse.

Now when we are translating this term in the Qur’ān we must differentiate between the linguistic sense of abstaining or refraining from something such as speaking (as in verse 26 of the Surat Maryam which we cited above) and the technical, legal meaning that it has in the verses about the imposition of fasting in the Surat Al-Baqarah (vv. 183-187).

While investigating to see how this term has been translated, I have found that most translators render it with the word fasting, with some adding an explanation of the word amongst the footnotes, as Ayusuf ‘Ali and Muhammad Asad have done. Khaan and Al-Hila>li> however, have retained the word in transliteration, providing an explanation of its technical meaning in a footnote with the words: “As- sāwm means fasting i.e.
not to eat or drink or have sexual relations etc. from the 'Aza>n of the Fajr (early morning) prayer till the sunset". Nonetheless Kha>n and Al-Hila>li> failed, when translating the word, to pay sufficient attention to its linguistic meaning, i.e. refraining from speaking and keeping silence, in the Qur'a>nic words: " Behold, abstinence from speech have I vowed to the Most Gracious, hence I may not speak to any mortal" (Su>rah 19 Maryam v. 26). Here sawm means abstaining from speaking, not just abstaining in general: in other words, it means, “ I have made it obligatory for myself to keep silent before Alla>h, so I shall not speak to anybody” - for being silent was an expression of piety in their form of religion, but not so under the Shari>'a given by our Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). So Kha>n and Al-Hila>li> ought not to have rendered sawm by using the word fast; they should have translated it simply as ‘abstinence from speech’, as did Muhammad Asad, who translated that verse as follows: “ And if thou shouldst see any human being, convey this unto him: Behold, abstinence from speech have I vowed unto the Most Gracious”.

Muhammad Asad was correct in translating it so, whereas other translators made a mistake when they translated the word sawm as fast. For if we render the word sawm in this verse as fast when it means abstinence from speech, that will be erroneous since the English word fast never has the meaning of abstinence in general.

Kha>n and Al-Hila>li>, following most other translators, have put: “…I have vowed a fast unto the Most Beneficent…” They should have translated the word as “abstinence from speech”, as did Muhammad Asad, who translated that verse as follows: “ And if thou shouldst see any human being, convey this unto him: Behold, abstinence from speech have I vowed unto the Most Gracious”. Muhammad Asad was correct in translating it so, whereas other translators made a mistake when they translated the word sawm as fast. For if we render the word sawm in this verse as fast when it means abstinence from speech, that will be erroneous since the English word fast never has the meaning of abstinence in general.

Kha>n and Al-Hila>li> following most other translators, have put: “....I have vowed a fast unto the Most Beneficent...” Irving has: “....I have vowed to keep a fast to the Mercy-giving whereby I’l never speak to any person today”. Arberry, A. Yusuf ‘Ali> and Pickthall and others have done likewise.

As it had been discussed above in chapter three, it is believed that the proper way of translating the technical sense of sawm is to retain the original word in a transliterated form and to insert an explanation of its meaning in a footnote or between brackets.

4.2.4 The Term Hajj

To translate the word hajj we need once again to understand the etymological development of the word. According to Ibn Fa>ris, the basic root meaning is that of journeying to a place, and all such journeying is hajj. Later the word acquired the more specific sense in Islamic Law of journeying to the Sacred Haram of Mecca in order to perform certain special ceremonies.

Hajj is the fifth of the five pillars (‘arkan) of Islam. This expression is not translatable into English since it carries specific cultural and Islamic religious meanings that are not matched by the English word pilgrimage. In English the word pilgrimage denotes a person who travels a lot or who journeys to visit a holy site such as Canterbury Cathedral; or it can mean one of those English emigrants who founded the first settlement in New England (in what was later to be the U.S.A.) in 1620. When the target reader in English sees the word pilgrimage, he thinks of it in terms of the meaning it has in Anglophone culture and in the Christian religion; moreover this word does not carry the same sense of being bound for a specific place as the word hajj does. These two considerations oblige us to keep the term in question as hajj and to discuss its meaning in brackets or with a footnote. This is what has been done by Kha>n and Al-Hila>li> in their translation; Muhammad Asad has done the same, adding an explanation of the word in English using a footnote. Hans Wehr, meanwhile, explains the word hajj as “the official Muslim pilgrimage to Mecca”.

The translation method I have applied in the case of the above-mentioned legal terms is that of ‘foreignization’. This is an approach that does justice to a term, in the sense of respecting its true meaning within its own cultural and religious setting, and also one that obliges the target reader to make some effort to read and understand explanations that accompany the translation of the source text.

Although the above method is generally preferable, we have to acknowledge that the translator or translators may see fit to follow new approaches that are a blend or hybrid of several methodologies when it comes to translating technical terms. Some have indeed suggested that the best way to deal with special terminology and concepts in translation is for two persons to take on the translation process: one an expert in the source language and the other an expert in the target language. In this way both translators can make the necessary effort to come up with the closest and most appropriate equivalent terms and so avoid having to include a plethora of explanatory footnotes.

4.3 Translating the Names of the Qur’a>nic Suwar

Now that we have learned about the fundamental principles and preferred methodology governing the translation of Islamic legal and other terms, how should
translators deal with the names of the Qur'anic Suwar? The maxim to follow is this: these names should be kept as they are and not be translated, but rather rendered phonetically, in other words transliterated, in the Roman alphabet; and there is no reason why translators should not, in an introduction to each Suarah, write about what the name means, using any available equivalents in English. In cases where the names lack any equivalent in the target language - for example in the case of the ‘abbreviated letters’ (or mysterious letters at the beginnings of some Suwar) such as Tathaɣ - the translator should offer the necessary explanation as to why these letters come at the beginning of the Suarah and say why the Suarah is named after them. It is not correct to translate them, as some have done with Tathaɣ by saying, “O Man” - for this is certainly not the name of the Suarah.105

The reason why we do not permit the names of the Suwar to be translated, rather than kept in their original form, is that these names are proper nouns and as such must be treated properly in a translation; just as we would not allow the proper name ‘Abdullaɣ to be rendered as ‘Servant of God’, but rather keep it as it is, so the same rule applies to the names of the Suwar. Qur'anic translators have varied in their approaches to this, but most have translated these names and then put their translations as titles in front of the names of the Suwar rather than using the original names: so for example we have “The Cow (Al-Baqarah)” and “The Cave (Al-Kahf)”, etc. However Khaɣ and Al-Hilaɣ and Hashim ‘Amiɣ ‘Aliɣ have retained the original names transliterated into English, and have at the start of each Suarah supplied a translation of the meaning of its name. Some translators, for example Rodwell, have discussed the meaning of the name of a particular Suarah at the beginning of that Suarah and have then given just the serial number of the Suarah, minus its name, at the top of each related page of the translation.

Almost all translators, then, have discussed the meanings of the names of the Suwar; however, they have varied widely in the way they have presented them. A comparative study of how the names of the Suwar have been rendered in the numerous translations of the meanings of the Qur'anic terminologies is bound to reveal a considerable disparity between them. This confirms our need to stick to the original names. For example, some people have translated the Surah Al-'Ikhlas as ‘The Purity’, Sincerity or Faith’, ‘The Unity’, ‘The Declaration of God’s Perfection’ and ‘Sincere Religion’; the Surah Al-Falaq has been translated as ‘the Day Break’, ‘The Dawn’, ‘Dawn’, ‘The Rising Dawn’ and ‘Day Break’; and Surah An-Nas has become either ‘Mankind’ or ‘Men’.

CONCLUSION

The study of terminology is an academic discipline in itself, and a very important subject whose every aspect and methodology cannot possibly be covered by a study such as the present one. It has, however, been the objective of this study to present to translators of the meanings of the Holy Qur'anic two main approaches of translation in general and to the translation of technical terms in particular, namely the ‘domesticating’ and the ‘foreignizing’ methods. It is the second of these methods that has been deemed preferable by the present researcher, especially when it comes to terms that have special cultural and religious meanings and connotations.

In presenting this study I have offered practical instances that have arisen in the rendering of the word Allaɣ and of such technical and legal terms assalaɣ, sawm, zakat and hajj, along with the names of the Qur'anic Suwar. I have also shown just how necessary it is to retain each term as it is in the source text (i.e. the Qur'anic) and to render it phonetically by means of transliteration, additionally providing explanations either between brackets in the text itself or in footnotes. By so doing a translator will have achieved the desirable aim of preserving the original term together with its special cultural and religious significance by means of providing detailed commentaries.

Furthermore, this article has suggested committee translation as a practical solution for the problems that encounter the translator of the Holy Qur'anic. Committee translation could produce a unified dictionary for all the Qur'anic terminologies which will help all those who are involved in the process of translating this holy text or those who are writing about Islam. Therefore, the standards which every translator of the Holy Qur'anic must acquire has been outlined.

In conclusion, the ‘foreignizing’ methodology that has been chosen in this article could be applied to all terminologies in the Holy Qur'anic through transliteration.
especially when the translation is done by a committee translation whose members acquire the above mentioned standards. And this article, it is hoped, could be a candle lightened on this road for future and deeper studies in this discipline.

NOTES


Ibid.


(7) Roger T. Bell, *Translation and Translating: Theory and Practice*, (London and New York: Long man, 1998), p.5. There is no perfect definition for translation in the sense that any definition will arise from theoretical position e.g. a preference for either, therefore, we find many definitions for it such as: “Translation is the replacement of a representation of a text in one language by a representation of an equivalent text in a second language”, Ibid, p. 6, in addition, translation was also defined as: “The interpretation of linguistic/verbal text in a language different from its own”, Omar Sheikh al-Shabab, *Interpretation and the Language of Translation, Creativity and Convention in Translation*, (London: Janus Publishing Company, 1996), 2nd ed., p.8.


(11) Compare with Omar Sheikh al-Shabab’s previous definition of translation. See Omar Sheikh al-Shabab’s previous definition of translation. See Omar Sheikh al-
Shabab, *Interpretation and the Language of Translation*, p.8, see also *ibid.*, pp.39 where Sheikh al-Shabab says; “Interpretation in a new language is defined as transforming a linguistic/verbal text, or part of it, after interpreting it to a language other than its own”.

(18) The well known exegete al-Zamakhshari> has allowed the translation of the meanings of the Holy Qur’an depending on the following verse: (And We sent out not any Messenger except with the tongue of his people that he might clarify to them) (Su>rah 14 Ibrahim v. 4), al-Zamakhshari> commented on this verse by saying: “The Prophet was sent to all mankind, but that there was no need to reveal the Qur’an in all the languages of mankind, since the message could be conveyed in all languages through translation”. see Mah}mu>d b. ‘Umar al-Zamakhshari>, *al-Kashsha>f*, ed. ‘Abd al-Razzaq al-Mahdi@ (Beirut: Da>ar ‘Ih{ya’ al-Tura>th al-'Arabi>, n.d.), vol.2, p.507. See also Ismat Binark and Halet Eren, *World Bibliography of Translations of the Meanings of the Holy Qur’an Printed Translations-1515-1980*, (Istanbul: Research Centre for Islamic History, Art and Culture, Renkler Matbaasi, 1406/1989), p.xxv.


(20) See Al-Khaleej newspaper, no. 7237 of Saturday, 25 Dhu> al-Qi ‘dah 1419 (13 March 1999), p. 34, column 3.


(22) *ibid.*, p.20.


(29) Nida states: “There are four principal means of dealing with problems arising out of conflicts between formal and functional equivalents. First, one may place a term for the formal equivalent in the text of the translation and describe the function in a footnote - a characteristic procedure in an F-E translation...” For more on these methods, see *ibid.*, p.172.


(31) Nida says: “In the New Testament, for example, the word tapeinos, usually translated as ‘humble’ or ‘lowly’ in English, had very definite emotive connotations in the Greek world, where it carried the pejorative meanings of ‘low’, ‘humiliated’, ‘degraded’, ‘mean’, and ‘base’. However, the Christians, who came principally from the lower strata of society, adopted as a symbol of an important Christian virtue this very term, which had been used derisively of the lower classes.
Translations of the New Testament into English cannot expect to carry all the latent emotive meanings in the Greek word. Similarly, such translations as ‘anointed’, ‘Messiah’, and ‘Christ’ cannot do full justice to the Greek Christos, which had associations intimately linked with the hopes and aspirations of the early Judaeo-Christian community. Such emotive elements of meaning need not be related solely to terms of theological import. They apply to all levels of vocabulary...

Ibid., p.171.
(32) Ibid., p.245.
(33) Ibid., pp.245.
(35) Ibid., pp.159, 165. The following example is given of this type of translation: “in translating the Hebrew text of Genesis 2:23, in which the Hebrew word isshah ‘woman’ is derived from ish ‘man’, we can use a corresponding English pair, woman and man”. Ibid., p. 165.
(36) Ibid., p.167, and compare with p.159.
(37) Ibid., p.167.
(39) Eugene Nida, Toward a Science of Translating, p.159.
(40) Lawrence Venuti, The Translator’s Invisibility, p. 21.
(41) Ibid.
(42) Ibid.
(43) Eugene Nida, Toward a Science of Translating, p.163.
(44) Lawrence Venuti, The Translator’s Invisibility, p. 21.
(45) Ibid., pp. 20-21. Venuti has given the ‘foreignization’ method the name ‘resistancy’ since it avoids the domineering fluency approach and challenges the target-language culture by showing a greater concern for that of the source language.
(46) The German philosopher Friedrich Schleiermacher, in a lecture he gave in 1813 on the different methods of translating, stated: “There are only two [methods]. Either the translator leaves the author in peace, as much as possible, and moves the reader towards him [this being the method we have chosen and referred to as the ‘foreignizing’ method]; or he leaves the reader in peace, as much as possible, and moves the author towards him [this being what we have referred to as the ‘domesticating’ method]”.

Hussein Abdul-Raof, Qur ’an Translation, Discourse, Texture And Exegesis, p.182.
(47) Ibid., p.140.
(48) Ibid., p.140.
(49) Ibid., p.47.
(50) Ibid., p.140.
(52) ‘Abdul Sāḥib Mehdi > A Dictionary of Translation and Interpreting, (Sharjah: the University of Sharjah, 2002), 1st ed., p.32.
(54) Hussein Abdul-Raof, Qur ’an Translation, Discourse, Texture And Exegesis, p.140-141.
(55) Ibid., p.179.
(56) Ibid., pp.182-3
(57) Ibid., p.179.
(62) Al-Husayn bin Mūhammad Al-Rāghib al-Islahānī>
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(70) Transliteration in Arabic means: al-naqatharah.


(74) Arberry, The Qur'an Interpreted, p.432.


(82) Khan and Ali-Hilal, Interpretation of the Meaning of the Noble Qur'an, p. 16, footnote No 2.


(85) We find in the Encyclopedia of Islam that "the original meaning of the word is "to be at rest". Ibid.


(87) Compare Ibn 'Abdun, Radd al-Muhaddith al-Mukhtar Durr

(88) A. Yusuf 'Ali>, The Holy Qur’a>n, p.72, footnote No 188.


(90) Khan and al-Hilali> Interpretation of the Meaning of the Noble Qur’an, p. 65, footnote No 1.


(93) Khan and al-Hilali> Interpretation of the Meaning of the Noble Qur’an, p. 564.


(95) Arberry, The Qur’an Interpreted, p. 305.

(96) A. Yusuf ‘Ali> The Holy Qur’an, p. 773. A. Yusuf ‘Ali makes an erroneous comment on this verse in his footnote no. 2479 when he says that what sjan means here is abstinence from certain kinds of food and from sexual intercourse, p.773.


(102) Hans Wehr, Arabic-English Dictionary, p. 156.


(106) Compare with M.A.S. Abdel Haleem’s new translation of the Qur’an cited above.

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