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Comparative Methodology of the English Translations by George Sale, Arberry, and Qarai of Selected Verses from *Sūrat al-Fātiḥa*

Babak Mashhadi[1] / Mahmoud Karimi[2]

Abstract

Research Article

Translating the Quran into English is a crucial responsibility for scholars proficient in both the English language and Islamic culture. It is essential for these scholars to accurately convey the profound teachings of this divine text to those seeking truth, in light of the guidance provided by the Quran and the *Ahl al-Bayt* (a). Recognizing and utilizing an appropriate translation to convey the pure teachings of the Quran is of utmost importance. Therefore, this study aims to critically and comparatively analyze three famous English translations of the Quran by George Sale, Arberry, and Qarai, focusing on methodology, vocabulary, *tafsīr*, grammar, and rhetoric, particularly regarding the initial verses of *Sūrat al-Fātiḥa*. The goal is to reveal the strengths and weaknesses of each translation, providing the reader with deeper insights for selecting a preferred translation. This research demonstrates that, in addition to existing weaknesses in methodology, vocabulary, and phrases, Sale's translation exhibits shortcomings in various literary, exegetical, and translational layers. Arberry's translation also shows weaknesses in grammatical structure, vocabulary, and meaning transfer. In comparison, Qarai's phrase-by-phrase translation is considered the most accurate and the best among the three in terms of style, structure, vocabulary, and meaning transfer. The author believes that the best translation style is one that aligns with the norms and language of the general public, and the most effective translation method is a phrase-by-phrase approach. Additionally, the exegetical foundations of the Shiʿi school of Islam, centered on the teachings of the Infallibles (a), should be taken into account for understanding the meanings of words and phrases in the Quran. All exegetical, grammatical, and rhetorical points must be considered in a suitable translation to provide an optimal rendering of the Quran.

Keywords: Quran Translation, George Sale, Arberry, Qarai, *Sūrat al-Fātiḥa*, Comparative Analysis.

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Introduction

The translation of the Quran into English is a significant duty of scholars who are proficient in both the English language and Islamic culture. They are tasked with conveying the unparalleled teachings of this divine miracle to seekers of truth, guided by the Quran and the *Ahl al-Bayt* (a). Numerous translations of the Quran into English have been produced, each with its strengths and weaknesses. A comparative analysis of some well-known and important English translations of the Quran is a crucial step toward understanding their content accuracy and structural integrity, as well as identifying their shortcomings. This process also paves the way for finding a superior and more suitable translation for reference and, if necessary, motivates the production of a better translation.

In this study, three prominent translations have been selected: the translations by George Sale and Arberry, both of whom are Christian Orientalists, and the translation by Qarai, who is a Muslim. All of these translators have endeavored to provide an optimal translation of the Quranic verses and have sought to draw upon *tafsīrs* and knowledge related to the Arabic language. However, a detailed examination of lexical nuances, considering Arabic lexicons and English dictionaries, as well as grammatical subtleties and exegetical points, reveals the strengths and weaknesses of each translation. This research aims to critically analyze these three translations so that the audience becomes familiar with the distinctive features and shortcomings of each.

Numerous articles, books, and theses have been written regarding the comparative study of translations of the Quran. The article "The Comparative Study of Three English Translations of Quran by Arberry, Shaker, and Qaraei - selected verses of Surat al-Raʿd" (2016) by Khadījah ʿĀmirī and Zaynab al-Sādāt Ḥusaynī, published in the *Journal of Quranic Interpretation and Language* [in Persian], considers Qarai's translation to be the most faithful to the original text of the Quran after comparison and

analysis. The article "A Comparative Study of the Translations of the Holy Quran by Shakir and Arberry" (2002) by Dāriyūsh Nizhād-Anṣārī, published in the *Research Journal of Humanities* at Isfahan University [in Persian], identifies both translations as having shortcomings and failing to provide an adequate rendering. The article "Critique and Evaluation of English Translations of the Holy Quran from *Sūrat al-Insān*" (2009) by Maḥmūd Vāʿiẓī, published in the *Religious Research Journal* [in Persian], compares four translations: Pickthall, Arberry, Shakir, and Yusuf Abdullah Ali. The thesis "A Comparative Study of *Sūrat al-Raḥmān* in Three English Translations" (2016) by Dānyāl Mihrānrād, compares the translations of Shakir, Arberry, and Irving, highlighting the strengths and weaknesses of each. The author initially refers to the foundations of the translations and then selects the appropriate translation based on the perspectives of linguists and commentators, considering terminology, equivalence, and alignment with the context of revelation and the opinions of commentators.

What distinguishes this research from other studies is the comparative examination of the translations of the Quran by two Orientalists and one Muslim, a comparison that has not been conducted in a single study before. In addition, the author presents several important points regarding the methods employed by each translator, as outlined in their respective prefaces to the Quran, which are not typically addressed in other research. Furthermore, this study not only evaluates each translation overall based on their translation methods but also pays special attention to the lexical, grammatical, rhetorical, and exegetical layers involved in the accurate translation of the verses. It references multiple reputable English dictionaries to find suitable equivalents. It consults Arabic lexicons, as well as books related to morphology, syntax, rhetoric, and both Shiʿi and Sunni Quranic exegeses, to provide a relatively comprehensive analysis of the discussed verses. This approach aims to reveal the strengths and weaknesses of each mentioned translation and highlight the selected

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translation's distinct features. Most importantly, the author strives to present a comprehensive framework of the style, method, and exegetical and literary foundations of an ideal translation of the Quran, which can serve as a thorough basis for translating the Quran and other religious texts, such as the hadiths and supplications of the Infallibles (a).

In the first section of this research, the main concepts, biographies, and translation methods used by each translator, are discussed:

Conceptual Analysis

1. *Tarjumih* (Translation)

A) Lexical Meaning

Translation refers to the verbal expression of transferring words from one language to another. To translate means to convey spoken or written content from one language into another (Dihkhudā 2011, 2:722). The Arabic root "*tarjama kalāmahū*" means to express his speech in another language. Similarly, "*tarjama ʿan kalāmihī*" refers to the act of translating his words; the noun form in Arabic denotes the verbal expression from one language to another. The term "*tarājim*" is the plural form (Nafīsī Dictionary, 2:847). "*Tarjama fulānun kalāmahū*" means that he has explained and clarified his words. "*Tarjama kalāma ghayrihī*" means that he has expressed it in a language other than that of the speaker; the active participle of this action is "*tarjumān*" (Ṭurayḥī 1996, 6:21). A translator is someone who translates words from one language to another and is used with verbs such as "*tarjamahū*" or "*tarjama ʿanhu*" in the Arabic language (Ibn Manẓūr 1993, 12:66).

B) Technical Meaning

Translation is the process of transferring a message from the source language to the target language. In other words, it involves rendering the

words of a text from one language into another to convey meanings. Some consider this process a "science," others an "art," and still others a "skill" (Riḍāʾī Iṣfahānī 2012, pp. 255-256).

2. *Ravish* (Method)

A) Lexical Meaning

The term "*Ravish*" (method), pronounced with an open first vowel and a closed second vowel, refers to walking, surpassing, passing, and moving gracefully. It also denotes manner, habit, rule, law, example, and similar concepts, as well as pathways and corridors in gardens (Burhān 2001, 435). In the Nafīsī Dictionary, "*Ravish*" is described as a gerund meaning going, manner, habit, rule, law, order and system, example, behavior, way of movement, manner of walking, movement, and transition, surpassing and passing, path and way, progress, and more (Nafīsī Dictionary, 3:1707).

B) Technical Meaning

In the context of translation, "*Ravish*" (method) refers to the components that influence the translation process, such as the selection and arrangement of words and sentences, which result in a specific type of translation (Riḍāʾī Iṣfahānī 2012, 256). Among the well-known methods of Quran translation are literal translation, sentence-by-sentence translation, and free or exegetical translation (ibid, pp. 264-274).

1. George Sale

1.1. Biography

George Sale (1697–1736) was a British Orientalist scholar and practicing solicitor, best known for his 1734 translation of the Quran into English. He received his education at the King's School, Canterbury. He is said to have

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quitted his legal pursuits, to apply himself to the study of the Eastern and other languages, both ancient and modern. His guide through the labyrinth of the oriental dialects was Mr. Dadichi, the king's interpreter. Sale became seriously ill with fever for eight days before his death. George Sale died at Surrey Street, The Strand, London, on 13 November 1736. Sale was buried at St Clement Danes in London. His family consisted of a wife and five children (Sale 1844, pp. x-xii).

1.2. Translation Method

George Sale is committed to translating the Quran in a manner that reflects the original Arabic text, neither better nor worse. Accordingly, he feels compelled to employ a literal translation approach, although not predominantly. However, he considers such a translation necessary for an extraordinary text like the Quran, even at the cost of deviating from fluent English. Sale has made efforts to utilize the most reputable commentators to clarify difficult and ambiguous phrases in his notes, presenting their explanations fairly, with minimal additions from himself or European authors, which are easily recognizable. The introductory discourse familiarizes the reader with details essential for engaging with the Quran but cannot be easily included in the notes. The *Tafsīr al-Bayḍāwī* is one of Sale's primary sources for explaining the verses (Sale, 1844: viii). In Sale's footnotes, the following points are noted: 1. Literal translation where it differs from the terminology of the original text; 2. Different readings; 3. Supplementary historical and textual information. "Sir Edward Denison Ross" added the introduction to the reprint of the 1922 translation (Bevilacqua 2013, pp.110-112)

2. Arberry

2.1. Biography

Arthur John Arberry (1905–1969) was a British Orientalist and scholar of Arabic literature, and Persian and Islamic studies. He was educated at Portsmouth Grammar School and Pembroke College, Cambridge. His English translation of the Quran, *The Koran Interpreted*, is popular amongst academics worldwide. He went to Cambridge University in 1924 with a scholarship in classics and subsequently studied Persian and Arabic under R. A. Nicholson and other noted scholars. After graduating and spending a year studying in Cairo, during which he also visited Palestine, Lebanon, and Syria, he was appointed head of the Classics Department at Cairo University in 1932. In 1944, he was appointed to succeed V. M. Minorsky in the chair of Persian at the School of Oriental and African Studies, London University; two years later he transferred to the chair of Arabic. In 1947 he was appointed to the Sir Thomas Adams professorship of Arabic at Cambridge, where he remained until his death on 2 October 1969 (Ardistānī 2001, pp. 85-86).

2.2 .Translation Method

In the preface to his translation of the Quran, Arberry refers to the belief among Muslims that the Quran, as divine revelation, is untranslatable. He identifies the first English translation of the Quran as dating back to 1657 and considers the most valuable English translations to be those by Sale (1734), Rodwell (1861), Palmer (1880), and Pickthall (1930). Arberry has made an effort to convey not only the message of the Quran but also its eloquence, rhetorical beauty, and the complex and varied rhythm. After discussing different meters in relation to the content and sūras, he notes his attempt to create rhythmic forms that correspond to the Arabic meter. He refers to his translation as "The Koran Interpreted" to affirm the idea of the Quran's untranslatability. Arberry believes that Arabic versions of the Quran printed in prose format have obscured the passionate nature of the verses from the reader's perception; thus, he has endeavored to address this issue even in appearance. He has utilized the opinions of various commentators and, where they disagreed, he has tried to select the best

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opinion, striving to write in a fluent and natural style. Arberry distances himself from the old style of translators before him, which was influenced by the Bible, yet he retains one characteristic of that style: the distinction between the second person singular and plural in Old English. Additionally, since there are no footnotes or margins in the Arabic versions of the Quran that interrupt the natural flow of the verses, Arberry has also avoided including footnotes or margins in his translation (Arberry 1964, x-xii).

3. Qarai

3.1. Biography

Professor Sayyid Ali Quli Qarai, born in 1947 in Hyderabad, India, is an Iranian-born graduate of the Osmania University in Hyderabad and the University of Wisconsin in the United States. He has resided in Iran for many years. Among Qarai's cultural activities are his roles as the editor of the monthly magazine, "The Message of Peace" in English, and as the editor and managing director of the English-language religious-cultural quarterly, "Al-Tawhid: A Quarterly Journal of Islamic Thought and Culture." Since 1997, Professor Qarai has served as a translation advisor and head of international affairs at the Cultural Institute of *Tarjumān-i Vaḥy* (the Center for the Translation of the Holy Quran) in Qom (Khurramshāhī 2003, pp. 64-65).

3.2. Translation Method

Qarai believes that the translation of a literary text is expected to meet the following four requirements: it should (1) be able to convey the meanings of the source text in an intelligible manner; (2) have a natural and easy form of expression; (3) convey the spirit and the manner of the original; (4) produce a similar response in the reader. While a translation of the Quran may succeed to varying degrees in fulfilling the first two

requirements, which depend on the translator's competence, there seem to be insurmountable obstacles to meeting even partially the last two requirements.

First, there are visible limits to the extent the translator can convey fully the meanings of the source text. Here the primary problem encountered by the translator is absence in the English language of semantically equivalent terms for certain Arabic words, some of which play a key role in the Qur'anic message, such as *taqwā, kufr, īmān, shirk, ḥaqq, bāṭil, maʿrūf, munkar, fitnah, ghayb, sunnah, tawbah, walī,* and *ẓulm*. In such cases, the translator has to suffice with approximations which fall short of conveying the full semantic scope and richness of the original terms, giving a truncated or lopsided sense to the message communicated.

Regarding the second requirement—that a translation should possess an easy and natural form of expression—this largely depends on the translator's understanding of the nature, meaning, and purpose of translation, as well as their approach to the task. Translations can generally be categorized into two broad types: (1) those that strive for formal equivalence, and (2) dynamic (or functional) equivalence translations. The latter approach offers an advantage over the former, as it is more aligned with the primary objective of discourse: effective communication. However, it presupposes that the translator can fully grasp the intentions and meanings of the source text, leaving the sole task of finding and producing the closest natural equivalent to the message conveyed in the source language. Ultimately, the best purpose a translation can serve is to provide access to the Arabic Quran itself.

Some older interlinear translations of the Quran are essentially word-for-word dictionaries, providing the meaning of each Arabic word and phrase below the text. However, since Urdu and Persian are written in opposite directions, this format is less useful for English readers. This translation uses a phrase-for-phrase approach to offer some benefits of

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interlinear translations to English-speaking audiences. "Mirror-paraphrasing" is a new method for translating sacred Islamic texts, including the Quran and hadith. This approach aligns the translation phrase by phrase with the corresponding Arabic, ensuring that each target language phrase reflects the meaning of the source phrase. The challenge lies in accurately conveying the full meaning of each phrase while connecting them coherently to create fluent and natural prose. The main features of this translation method include:

1. To provide a translation affording direct access to the Arabic Quran and to maintain a formal equivalence between the phrases and clauses of the source and the target text, but I have not hesitated to make adjustments when required by the need for intelligibility, clarity, and naturalness of expression.

2. Translation has been carried out according to what appeared to be the most probable among the interpretations mentioned by the commentators, such as those of Ṭabarī, Rāzī, Zamakhsharī, and Suyūṭī among Sunni works, and ʿAllāmah Ṭabāṭabāʾi's *al-Mīzān*, Ṭabrisī's *Majmaʿ al-Bayān*, and Baḥrānī's *Tafsīr al-Burhān* among Shīʿī works.

3. The treatment of Qurʾanic idioms falls into three categories: 1) There are some Arabic idioms which though unfamiliar to the English-speaking audience are not difficult to understand when translated literally. These have been rendered literally. 2) Some idioms are unintelligible when translated literally. These have been paraphrased appropriately in order to be understood. 3) In certain cases, similar idioms exist in the English language that the author has utilized in the translation.

4. The translation is based on Ḥafṣ's version of the reading of ʿĀṣim.

5. Instances of ellipses in the Quran, which in the context of English means "omission of a word or phrase necessary for a complete syntactical

construction but not necessary for understanding," often go beyond such a description and are not always so evident. These have been indicated in the footnotes.

6. Cross references have been mentioned under verses in some cases, but a relatively extensive index of subjects, names, and terms has been placed in the appendix. (Qarai, The Quran, 2005: xv-xxi)

The second part of the article examines selected verses from *Sūrat al-Fātiḥa* in terms of vocabulary, *tafsīr*, grammar, and rhetoric. Then, it elucidates the chosen theory regarding the translation of the Quran.

﴿الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعالَمِينَ﴾

Sale: Praise be to God, the Lord of all creatures

Arberry: Praise belongs to God, the Lord of all Being

Qarai: All praise belongs to Allah, Lord of all the worlds

1. *Al-Ḥamd* (الْحَمْد)

1.1. Exegetical Analysis

In "*Kashf al-Ghummah*," there is a hadith from Imam Sadiq (a) regarding an incident reported by his father, Imam Baqir (a), about the meaning of "*al-ḥamdulillāh*." Imam Baqir (a) stated that after uttering this phrase, he did not leave anything unaddressed, nor did anything remain; he dedicated all praises exclusively to God, asserting that every type of praise falls

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within the scope of what he has expressed[3] (Irbilī 2002, 2:118). The term "*al-ḥamd*" refers to a form of praise that is directed towards an act performed voluntarily by the praiseworthy, as opposed to the term "*madḥ*," which encompasses both voluntary praise and praise for involuntary actions. For instance, one might say, "I praised someone for their generosity," but when referring to the luster of a pearl or the fragrance of a flower, we do not use the word "*ḥamd*," but rather, we use the word "*madḥ*." The definite article (the "*al*" at the beginning of the word) conveys comprehensiveness and generality, and it may signify genus (Ṭabāṭabāʾī 1996, 1:19).

In the Longman Dictionary, "Praise" means to publicly say that someone has done something well or that you admire him/her (Longman 2009, 785). Therefore, this word is suitable for the term "*al-ḥamd*," which signifies praise for deserving qualities, and the choice of all three translators is correct. However, both Sale and Arberry have only used the word "Praise," which corresponds to the literal meaning, but they have not considered the "*al*" in "*al-ḥamd*," which, according to many exegetes (e.g., *Nimūnih* 1:28; *Al-Mīzān* 1:19; *Majmaʿ al-Bayān* 1:97; *Tasnīm* 1:325; *Al-Muḥarrar al-Wajīz fī Tafsīr al-Kitāb al-ʿAzīz* 1:66), refers to all forms of praise. In the *tafsīr* of *Nūr al-Thaqalayn*, it is narrated from Imam Zayn al-ʿĀbidīn (a): "Whoever says *al-ḥamdulillāh* has fulfilled the gratitude for every blessing of God Almighty"[4] (ʿArūsī Huwayzī 1994, 1:15). This hadith does not specify a particular number of praises, and the apparent meaning is that uttering "*al-ḥamdulillāh*" once carries such an effect. This hadith can support the exegetes' assertion that it encompasses all forms of praise, as the one who utters it considers all praises to belong to God and

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3. امام صادق ﷺ : «فَقَدَ أَبِی بَغْلَةً لَهُ فَقَالَ لَئِنْ رَدَّهَا اللَّهُ تَعَالَى لَأَحْمِدَنَّهُ بِمَحَامِدَ يَرْضَاهَا فَمَا لَبِثَ أَنْ أُتِيَ بِهَا بِسَرْجِهَا وَ لِجَامِهَا فَلَمَّا اسْتَوَى عَلَيْهَا وَ ضَمَّ إِلَيْهِ ثِيَابَهُ رَفَعَ رَأْسَهُ إِلَى السَّمَاءِ فَقَالَ الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ فَلَمْ يَزِدْ ثُمَّ قَالَ مَا تَرَكْتُ وَ لَا بَقِيتُ شَيْئاً جَعَلْتُ كُلَّ أَنْوَاعِ الْمَحَامِدِ لِلَّهِ عَزَّ وَ جَلَّ فَمَا مِنْ حَمْدٍ إِلَّا وَ هُوَ دَاخِلٌ فِيمَا قُلْتُ».

4. وَ بِاسْنَادِهِ الى علی بن الحسین علیهما السلام قال: «و من قال الحمد لله فقد ادى شکر کل نعمة الله تعالی».

does not regard anyone else as worthy of praise. Therefore, the translation "All Praise," which takes into account this important exegetical point, that all praises are exclusively for God, is better than the other two translations.

2. Rab (رب)

2.1. Lexical Analysis

In the "*Muʿjam Maqāʾīs al-Lughah*," the term "Rab" originally means to rectify something and to sustain it, and it signifies ownership, creation, and lordship. God is referred to as "Rab" because He is the rectifier of the conditions of His creatures (Ibn Fāris 1983, 2:381-382). In "*Lisān al-ʿArab*," "Rab" is understood to mean "owner" in relation to God (Ibn Manẓūr 1993, 1:399). In "*Mufradāt*," "Rab" fundamentally denotes nurturing and upbringing, meaning the creation of a state after another in something until it reaches its ultimate perfection (Rāghib Iṣfahānī 1991, 336). The common essence of "Rab" involves guiding something toward perfection and eliminating deficiencies through purification and adornment, whether concerning its essence, attributes, beliefs, morals, actions, or customary knowledge, whether it pertains to humans, animals, or plants. This guidance is based on what is deemed necessary for elevating status and completing the dignity of that entity (Muṣṭafavī 2020, 4:22-23).

2.2. Exegetical Analysis

In the *Tafsīr* of *Nūr al-Thaqalayn*, it is narrated from Imam Reza (a) that "*Rab al-ʿĀlamīn*" signifies the Oneness and praise of God, meaning that He is the sole creator and owner, and no one else holds this status[5] (ʿArūsī

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[5] . فى من لا يحضره الفقيه و فيما ذكره الفضل من العلل عن الرضا ﷺ انه قال: «و الحمد لله انما هو أداء لما أوجب الله عز و جل على خلقه من الشكر، و شكر لما وفق عبده من الخير «رب العالمين» توحيد له و تحميد و إقرار بأنه هو الخالق المالك لا غيره».

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Ḥuwayzī 1994, 1:15). In a lengthy hadith from Imam Reza (a), which is
reported from Imam Ali (a), "*Rab al-ʿĀlamīn*" is interpreted as the owner,
creator, and sustainer, indicating that He provides sustenance to His
creatures from sources they know and those they do not[6] (ibid, 1:17).
ʿAllāmah Ṭabāṭabā'ī interprets "*Rab*" as a master whose governance over
His property is absolute, and His actions concerning His possessions are
valid and just (Ṭabāṭabā'ī 1996, 1:21).

2.3. Analysis and Examination of the Term "*Rab*"

The meanings associated with the term "*Rab*" as mentioned in the noble
hadiths reinforce the concepts of ownership and creation, which exegetes
have also highlighted, emphasizing that this entails the validity of actions
concerning one's possessions. According to lexical sources and the
etymology of the word "*Rab*," meanings of nurturing, growth, and
perfection can also be derived, which ultimately relate back to God's
ownership and creation. This reflects His wisdom, which necessitates that
every being be brought to its appropriate perfection. Thus, considering
both the meaning of the hadiths and the lexical sources, the notion of
ownership is prominent in the term "*Rab*." The Oxford Dictionary also
references this meaning, defining "Lord" as an owner, ruler, or master of
his servants, and it cites the Gospel of Matthew (24:46): "Blessed is that
servant whom his lord, when he comes, will find so doing" (OED 1989,
9:25). Therefore, the term "Lord" serves as a suitable equivalent for the
word "Rab," and all three translators have used this term.

3. ʿ*Ālamīn* (عالمین)

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[6]. «... قال عليه السلام: «و رب العالمين» مالكهم و خالقهم و ســـائق أرزاقهم إليهم من حيث يعلمون و من حيث لا
يعلمون ...».

3.1. Lexical Analysis

In the book "*al-ʿAyn*," the term "*ʿĀlam*" is defined as encompassing all creatures (Farāhīdī 1989, 12:153). In "*Tāj al-Lughah*," "*ʿĀlam*" refers to creatures, while "*ʿĀlamīn*" denotes the various categories of creatures (Jawharī 1986, 5:1991). In "*Mufradāt*," it is noted that the plural form "*ʿĀlamīn*" indicates the inclusion of various types of creatures, such as angels, jinn, and humans while excluding other beings and phenomena. It is narrated from Imam Sadiq (a) that the term refers to people, each of whom is considered a distinct "*ʿĀlam*." Additionally, it is mentioned that there are two types of worlds: the "*ʿĀlam al-Kabīr*," which refers to the cosmos and its contents, and the "*ʿĀlam al-Ṣaghīr*," which refers to humans, as humans are created in the form and likeness of the world[7] (Rāghib Iṣfahānī 1991, 582). ʿAllāmah Muṣṭafavī considers the singular term "*ʿĀlam*" to encompass any individual being or a type of rational and non-rational entities. He argues that the plural form "*ʿĀlamīn*" specifically includes rational beings, excluding the mineral, plant, and animal kingdoms, and also views the realms of angels and intellects as outside the sphere of human life. Furthermore, he notes that they are not commonly referred to as "*ʿuqalā*" (intellectuals) (Muṣṭafavī 2020, 8:256).

3.2. Exegetical Analysis

In the *Tafsīr* of *Nūr al-Thaqalayn*, it is stated that "*Rab al-ʿĀlamīn*" refers to the creator of all creatures, indicating that "*al-ʿĀlamīn*" means creatures[8] (ʿArūsī Ḥuwayzī 1994, 1:15). In multiple narrations in "*Dur al-*

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7. قِيلَ: إِنَّمَا جُمِعَ هَذَا الْجَمْعُ لِأَنَّهُ عُنِيَ بِهِ أَصْنَافُ الْخَلَائِقِ مِنَ الْمَلَائِكَةِ وَ الْجِنِّ وَ الْإِنْس دُونَ غَيْرِهَا. وَ قَدْ رُوِيَ هَذَا عَن ابْن عَبَّاسٍ (انظر: البصائر ٤/ ٩٥، و الدر المنثور ١/ ٣٤) وَ قَالَ جَعْفَرُ بْنُ مُحَمَّدٍ ﷺ: عُنِيَ بِهِ النَّاس وَ جُعِلَ كُلُّ وَاحِدٍ مِنْهُمْ عَالَماً (انظر: البصائر ٤/ ٩٥)، وَ قَالَ ﷺ: الْعَالَم عَالَمَان الْكَبِيرُ وَ هُوَ الْفَلَكُ بِمَا فِيهِ، وَ الصَّغِيرُ وَ هُوَ الْإِنْسَان لِأَنَّهُ مَخْلُوقٌ عَلَى هَيْئَةِ الْعَالَمِ، وَ قَدْ أَوْجَدَ اللَّهُ تَعَالَى فِيهِ كُلَّ مَا هُوَ مَوْجُودٌ فِي الْعَالَمِ الْكَبِير (انظر تفصيل النشأتين ص ٧٨).

8. في تفسير على بن إبراهيم في الموثق عن أبى عبد الله ﷺ في قوله: «الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ» قال: الشـكر لله و في قوله «رَبِّ

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Manthūr," "*ʿĀlamīn*" is interpreted as referring to humans and jinn, or various worlds of humans, jinn, angels, and the multiple realms in the earth and the seven heavens (Suyūṭī 1983, 1:13). Ayatollah Makarem emphasizes that the phrase "*Rab al-ʿĀlamīn*" serves as a justification for the claim that all praises belong to the Lord, as He is the Lord of all worlds. In his explanation of "*ʿĀlamīn*," he believes that this term can refer to the world of humans, animals, inanimate objects, or even to the east and west, or to past and present. He also points out that based on the usages of this term in the Quran, it can refer to the realms of all beings, including angels and jinn (Makārim Shīrāzī 1995, 1:29-32). ʿAllāmah Ṭabāṭabā'ī considers "*ʿĀlam*" in "*Rab al-ʿĀlamīn*" to have a broad meaning that encompasses all beings, including the mineral, plant, animal realms, and humans, as well as all categories such as the Arab and non-Arab worlds (Ṭabāṭabā'ī 1996, 1:21). Ayatollah Javādī Āmulī believes that the term "*ʿĀlamīn*" includes all realms before this world, the world itself, and the realms after this world "the Middle World" (*Barzakh*) and "the Day of Resurrection" (*Qiyāmah*), as well as the world of humans, angels, and other realms of existence. He asserts that the term "*ʿĀlamīn*" in the verse of praise refers to the entire system of possible existence, not just human societies, which is indicated by the context of guidance or warning in the verses of *Āl ʿImrān* and *al-Furqān* (Javādī Āmulī 2009, 1:333).

3.3. Analysis and Examination of the Term "*ʿĀlamīn*"

Considering the narrations transmitted by both Shiʿi and Sunni sources, as well as the points mentioned in various Quranic exegeses, the meaning of "*ʿĀlamīn*" as "worlds" appears to be the most comprehensive. This encompasses not only the external and internal worlds but also the smaller (*al-ʿālam al-ṣaghīr*) and larger worlds (*al-ʿālam al-kabīr*), including the realms of inanimate objects, plants, animals, humans, and angels, thereby

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ألْعالَمِينَ»: خالق المخلوقين.

covering all of existence. Additionally, based on some narrations and the opinions of lexicographers, the meanings of "worlds" or "creatures" are also deemed valid. Therefore, the translation "all the worlds" is considered the best option. The French translations by Mason and Fakhri also use "des mondes," meaning "the worlds," and in Hamidullah's translation, "de l'univers" is employed, which translates to "the universe" or "the existence". Thus, based on the hadiths and *tafsīrs*, the meaning of "all the worlds" is deemed more appropriate.

3.4. Literary Analysis

The benefit of the "nominal sentence" (*jumlih-yi ismiyyah*) is the continuity and stability of praise, and in "*li-llāh,* الله" a specific technique in denotation has been indicated, whereby all forms of praise are exclusively attributed to God (Ṣāfī 1997, 1:24). Therefore, the "*l*" in "*li-llāh,* الله" is mentioned to express exclusivity, meaning that all praises are specifically for the Lord. Consequently, the translation by Qarai and Arberry, which uses the verb "belong," appears to be appropriate, while George Sale's translation, which employs the verb "be," seems less suitable.

Another important point is that in the nominal sentence, there exists a type of continuity and stability that indicates a form of emphasis, whereby the subject, which encompasses all praises, is eternally connected to the predicate, which is God. However, this meaning, which is the concern of rhetorical science, cannot be fully and comprehensively conveyed through the structures of the English language. This is one of the reasons why the Quran was revealed in Arabic, as the rhetorical and literary nuances of the Arabic language convey meanings beyond the literal words, depending on the structures used, to an audience familiar with Arabic literature, which cannot be transferred to English. This can be considered one of the aspects of the miraculous nature of the Quranic discourse. If we wish to reflect the rhetorical meanings of this Quranic phrase in translation, it may be better

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to use words like "forever" or "perpetually," which convey continuity, although none of the English translations have mentioned this.

In addition to the semantic significance of the definiteness or indefiniteness of the genitive noun, it also depends on the definiteness or indefiniteness of the noun it is attached to (Īrānī 2020, 188). In the translation of "*Rab al-ʿĀlamīn*, ربالعالمین" attention must be paid to the definiteness of the genitive, and the definite article "the" should be used. Arberry and Sale recognized this point and employed the definite article for "*Rab*, رب" translating it as "the Lord." However, Qarai used the term "Lord" alone without indicating its definiteness in the translation.

﴿مالِكِ يَوْم الدِّينِ﴾

Sale: the king of the day of judgment.

Arberry: the Master of the Day of Doom.

Qarai: Master of the Day of Retribution.

4. *Mulk* (مُلک)

4.1. Lexical Analysis

In *Kitāb al-ʿAyn*, "*mulk*" is defined as ownership and sovereignty (Farāhīdī 1989, 5:380). The essence of this term is the control over something in such a way that its authority lies with the owner. This control can relate to the essence of the thing itself, such as God's ownership over His creation, or it can pertain to the essence in a conventional sense, such as the owned property (*mamlūk*) and the sale items (*mabīʿ*) (Muṣṭafavī 2020, 11:177). "*Mālik*" refers to someone who has authority over the commands and prohibitions concerning others. The phrase "*mulk-i yawm al-dīn*, ملک یوم

"الدین" signifies sovereignty on the Day of Judgment. Two types of ownership can be conceptualized: first, ownership that conveys ownership, supervision, and governance; second, ownership that demonstrates someone's power, whether they choose to exercise guardianship or not (Rāghib Iṣfahānī 1991, 774). In the context of the Quran, "*mulk*, مُلک" denotes governance and the administration of affairs (Qarashī 1991, 6:273).

5. Dīn (دین)

5.1. Lexical Analysis

In *Lisān al-ʿArab*, the term "*dīn*" is defined as meaning "*jazā*'" (i.e. recompense or reward) (Ibn Manẓūr 1993, 13:169). The term originally refers to a form of submission and humility, thus denoting obedience (Ibn Fāris 1983, 2:319). It fundamentally signifies submission and surrender to a specific program or regulations (Muṣṭafavī 2020, 3:310). "*dīn*, دین" encompasses the meanings of worship and recompense and is metaphorically used in relation to "Divine law" (sharia) (Rāghib Iṣfahānī 1991, 323).

5.2. Exegetical Analysis

According to some narrations from both Shiʿi and Sunni sources, "*Yawm al-Din*" (Day of Judgment) refers to the day when the deeds of servants are assessed (ʿArūsī Ḥuwayzī 1994, 1:19; Baḥrānī 1995, 1:107; Suyūṭī 1983, 1:14). In the phrase "*Mālik Yawm al-Dīn*," the expression indicates the "sovereignty of God," which signifies His ultimate control and influence over everything and everyone on that day, a day when all human beings will appear before the great court for judgment (Makārim Shīrāzī 1995, 1:38). What is correct to attribute to God is true ownership, not nominal ownership, and true ownership cannot be separated from

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governance. It is impossible to assume that the Earth, along with all living and non-living beings on it, exists independently of God and is self-sufficient. Since God is the owner of all existences, the governance of the Earth and its creatures, as well as the entire universe, belongs to Him. Thus, He is the Lord of all except Himself, as the term "Lord" means the owner who governs. The term "*Yawm al-Dīn*" refers to the Day of Resurrection, as "*dīn*" means recompense, and recompense on the Day of Resurrection is specifically for humans and jinn (Ṭabāṭabā'ī 1996, 1:21).

Bayḍāwī mentions the readings of ʿĀṣim, Kisā'ī, and Yaʿqūb as "*Mālik*, مالک" while other reciters have read it as "*Malik*, مَلِک." Bayḍāwī also adopts this reading because it was the preferred reading among the people of the two holy cities (Mecca and Medina) and is supported by the Qur'anic verse "لمن المُلك اليوم" *(To whom does the sovereignty belong today) (Quran 40:16).* In addition, he notes the significance of this reading. The term "*Mālik*" refers to someone who has the authority to dispose of their possessions as they wish, whereas "*Malik*" implies authority through command and prohibition over agents (Bayḍāwī 1997, 1:27). However, the prevalent reading among Shiʿi and some Sunni scholars is the reading of Ḥafṣ from ʿĀṣim, which is rendered as "*Mālik*, مالک." The arguments presented by Bayḍāwī are also debatable, as the term "*Mālik*" also conveys reverence and honor, and a "*Mālik*" can indeed exercise authority over their possessions through commands and prohibitions. It seems that Bayḍāwī views the term "*Mālik*, مالک" as more indicative of generative Lordship (*Rubūbiyyah takwīnī*) and "*Malik*, مَلِک" as pertaining to legislative Lordship (*Rubūbiyyah tashrīʿī*), whereas both terms can refer to both types of lordship, and relying on these arguments appears to be more subjective than logical.

Analysis and Examination of "*Mālik-i Yawm al-Dīn*"

Considering the hadith-based and other exegeses, as well as lexical analysis, it appears that "*Mālik*, مالِک" signifies the true owner and manager

of the possessed affairs, a meaning that is also reflected in the translation of "*Rabb*." In addition, this term indicates governance, guardianship, and kingship. The term "*Dīn*" in this verse, according to various hadith-based exegeses, refers to "*ḥisāb*" (accountability), where the deeds of the servants are assessed. Qarai and Arberry have translated the word "*Mālik*, مالِک" as "Master," which means a person with control or authority, one who guides or manages the actions of others; it is used to denote a manager, leader, chief, commander, ruler, or governor (OED 1989, 9:441), making it an appropriate translation for this term. However, Sale has used the word "king," which seemingly indicates a reading of the term "*Malik*, مَلِک" meaning "king" (Longman 2009, 564). Qarai translates "*Yawm al-Dīn*" as "Day of Retribution," referring to the day when divine reward or punishment is determined for humans. It generally signifies any day of punishment or retribution (OED 1989, 13:793). Therefore, the negative aspect of this term prevails, and it is more commonly used in the context of punishment or recompense for wrongful deeds.

The term "Judgment" refers to the ability to make decisions regarding individuals and situations, as well as the official ruling of a judge or court. The day when all humans are held accountable by God after death is referred to as "Judgment Day" according to certain religions (Longman 2009, 556). "Day of Doom" is the day when the dead are resurrected for the judgment of their actions during their lifetime (OED 1989, 4:273). "Doom" signifies judgment or an official ruling that is often unpleasant, and "Day of Judgment or Doom" is referred to as the day of reckoning (OED 1989, 4:956). All three terms are correct; however, the terms "doom" and "retribution" predominantly carry a negative and punitive connotation, whereas "Judgment," which means accountability or adjudication, seemingly balances both negative and positive aspects of punishment and reward, and most translators have opted for this term. Moreover, "Judgment" is a more contemporary term that aligns better with

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everyday language, while the other two terms are older and less commonly used.

Literary Analysis

"*Mālik*" is a "verbal noun" (*ism-i fāʿil*) derived from "*malaka yamliku*," meaning it serves as a participial adjective and indicates the permanence of ownership (Ṣāfī 1997, 1:25). "*Mālik*" is definite and in the genitive construction, with "*Yawm al-Dīn*" as the genitive complement. Sale and Arberry acknowledged this point and used the term "the"; however, Qarai opted for the word "Master" without the definite article "the."

Preferred Theory in Quran Translation

1. Style

The best style for translating the Quran is one that is contemporary and suitable for the general understanding of the public. As much as possible, the translator should avoid using difficult, technical language and unfamiliar terms. Additionally, colloquial and informal expressions should not be employed, as special attention must be given to the elevated status of the divine revelation of the Quran. Furthermore, the use of outdated terms or expressions, such as those found in sacred texts, literary works like Shakespeare, or poetic forms reminiscent of certain English poems, should be avoided. This is because the Quran is neither purely poetic nor purely prose; rather, it possesses the rhythmic qualities of poetry while maintaining the fluidity of prose.

Moreover, an excessive focus on rhetorical devices and the musicality of speech can sometimes come at the expense of the profound meanings and concepts of the Quran. In such cases, the translator may prioritize finding the most stylistically pleasing word or phrase aligned with an old-fashioned or poetic style, sacrificing the essence of meaning for the sake

of the appearance of words. Therefore, the translator should strive to provide a fluent translation of the Quranic verses while preserving the literary and rhetorical substance of the text and adhering to sound interpretive principles.

2. Method

The best method for translating the Quran is the phrase-by-phrase approach, which Ali Quli Qarai has also employed. This method allows for a fluent translation of the Quran that avoids the rigidity of a literal translation while maintaining fidelity to the Quranic verses. It provides a smooth rendering of the Quranic text and establishes a close connection between the reader and the meanings of the verses, as the translation of each Quranic phrase is presented alongside the original text, facilitating visual and semantic engagement with the Quran. Regarding other aspects related to the method of Quran translation, the views of Ali Quli Qarai are considered acceptable.

3. Exegetical Foundations

In examining interpretations, it is essential to first refer to the hadiths of the *Ahl al-Bayt* (a) regarding the relevant verses, as these narrations often clarify the meanings of words, interpret phrases, and unveil certain truths. At times, they also discuss the inner meanings and interpretations of the verses. Therefore, consulting exegetical hadiths should take precedence in analyzing the meanings of Quranic words and phrases. Subsequently, one should refer to other authentic Quranic exegeses from both Shiʿi and Sunni scholars to strive for a correct and comprehensive understanding of the verses.

The *tafsīrs* of the *Ahl al-Bayt* (a) should be prioritized in understanding both the meanings of words and the interpretation of verses. However, one should not overlook the authentic Quranic exegeses from Sunni scholars,

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and these should also be consulted. Sunni *tafsīrs* that align with or support the interpretations of the *Ahl al-Bayt* (a) and Shiʿi exegeses should be given attention. In cases where there are differing yet valid interpretations of verses, phrases, or words within the verses, the translator should strive to acknowledge both interpretations as much as possible, indicating the more probable meaning in the main text and the alternative meaning in the footnotes. For example, the hadith-based *tafsīrs* of Sunni scholars support the meaning of "*al-ʿĀlamīn*" as "the worlds" which aligns with certain Shiʿi hadiths and *tafsīrs*. Therefore, if this meaning is prioritized by the translator, it should be rendered as "all the worlds" in the main translation. However, the meanings referring to the beings of the universe or humans, as well as jinn, are also present in Shiʿi *tafsīrs* and are valid. The English equivalent for this could be "all the creatures," which can be included either as the main translation or as a footnote.

4. Literary Foundations

4.1. Vocabulary

To understand the meanings of the words used in the Quran, it is essential to first refer to the *tafsīrs* of the *Ahl al-Bayt* (a), which are compiled in reputable exegetical works such as "*Tafsīr Nūr al-Thaqalayn*," "*Al-Burhān*," "*Tafsīr al-Qummī*," and other hadith-based *tafsīrs*. Then, if a specific meaning or interpretation of the words that clarify their literal meanings is not provided, it is essential to refer to authentic lexicons.

When referencing lexicographical works, the authenticity, historical significance, and proximity of these texts to the era of the Infallibles (a) should be taken into account to derive meanings that closely reflect the intended message of the Quran. For instance, it is advisable to refer to works like "*Lisān al-ʿArab*," "*Al-ʿAyn*," or "*Maqāʾīs al-Lughah*" to obtain meanings that are either original or closely aligned with the time of the Infallibles (a). Furthermore, one should consult reliable and scholarly

books such as "*Mufradāt-i Alfāẓ al-Qur'ān*" and "*Al-Taḥqīq fī Kalimāt al-Qur'ān al-Karīm*," which are specifically dedicated to the words of the Quran and are highly regarded by scholars. This approach ensures a comprehensive and accurate understanding of the intended meanings of the relevant words, taking into consideration the teachings of the Infallibles (a).

2.4. Morphology, Syntax, and Rhetoric

To understand the literary complexities of the Quran, including its rhetorical and syntactical subtleties, it is essential to refer to reputable works in this field, such as "*Al-Jadwal*." As much as possible, these nuances should be conveyed in the translation. For example, when translating "رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ" (*Rabbi al-ʿĀlamīn*), attention must be paid to the definiteness of the noun phrase. The definite article "the" should be used to reflect the specificity and significance of "The Lord of the Worlds" in English. This careful consideration helps preserve the original meaning and rhetorical impact of the Quranic text in translation.

Conclusion

The language of Qarai's translation is characterized by its conventional, comprehensible style, marked by simplicity and fluency. In addition, the phrase-by-phrase translation method appears to be a suitable approach for translating religious texts. This method not only maintains a close connection between the audience and the source language by presenting phrases individually, but it also preserves the semantic coherence of the original text. As a result, readers can grasp the meanings of phrases independently while simultaneously relating to the overall meaning of the verse within the context of the entire sūra. Such an approach is also effective in motivating readers to learn the Arabic language. Furthermore, despite certain weaknesses in the translation of specific words or

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structures, Qarai's translation is considered the most accurate and precise rendition available.

The author believes that the best style for translation is one that is suited to the common language of the people, and the optimal method is the phrase-by-phrase approach. For translating words, it is essential to first consult reliable exegetical sources, both hadith-based and non-hadith-based, from Shiʿi and Sunni traditions. Following this, one should refer to reputable lexicographical works that are close to the era of the Infallibles (a). Additionally, it is crucial to utilize authoritative texts such as "*Al-Taḥqīq fi Kalimāt al-Qur'ān al-Karīm,*" by ʿAllāmah Muṣṭafavī and "*Mufradāt-i Alfāẓ al-Qur'ān*" by Rāghib Iṣfahānī, which specifically address Quranic vocabulary. Then, with a focus on the exegetical hadiths of the Infallibles (a) and the *tafsīrs* of Shiʿi and Sunni scholars, the best equivalents should be selected by consulting reliable English dictionaries, such as Oxford or Longman. Moreover, in translating phrases and sentences, both exegetical insights and grammatical and rhetorical considerations should be taken into account by referring to authentic sources, and these elements should be reflected in the translation as much as possible. This comprehensive approach ensures that the translation is not only accurate but also resonates with the intended meanings and nuances of the original text.

Translating the Quran is a highly valuable yet delicate and sensitive task, as the translator is dealing with divine words that are miraculous in both content and expression and have been revealed for the guidance of humanity. Therefore, a diligent and responsible translator is someone who, first and foremost, has complete mastery of both the source and target languages; secondly, is familiar with Islamic sciences, particularly the fields of vocabulary, morphology, syntax, and *tafsīr*, to the extent necessary; and thirdly, possesses the required skills and abilities for this important endeavor. Consequently, those who enter the field of Quran

translation should strive to leave behind a worthy and lasting translation by recognizing and employing the correct foundations and methods.

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