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Translation of Qu'ran Between The Universality of The
Holy Message and The Specificity of Languages and
Cultures:

Case Study: The Semantic Loss in English Translations

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“All praise is due to Allah, who has guided us to this, and we would never have been guided if

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Abstract

This research brings to the fore the issue of semantic loss encountered in the English translation of the Qur'an. Arabic and English belong to different linguistic and cultural backgrounds, whereas Arabic descends from a semitic language family, and English belongs to Germanic indo-European language family. These two linguistic backgrounds justify the challenges that occur in the translation process of Arabic-English texts in terms of lexical, linguistic and cultural differences as well as the issue of the absence of such equivalents in the target language. This eventually leads to loss of meaning of the original text which is considered a grave issue in translation studies, especially in religious texts that hold a significant sanctity in their culture. The study investigates the true meanings of three selected terms that are relevant in the Islamic jurisprudence, highlighting their specialized meanings and polysemous features, relying heavily in this process on exegesis, and ultimately comparing and assessing the level of accuracy in three translations of the selected terms. This research is qualitative in its approach, as it analyses the verses and their true meanings and examines the lexical choices made by the translators, for the purpose of constructively criticizing the quality of the translations and suggesting alternatives and solutions to enhance the translations as well as decrease the instances of semantic loss in the field of religious translation.

Keywords: Semantic loss, Translation of holy Qur'an, Polysemy.

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Theoretical Part

Introduction

The glorious Qur'an, is the holy book of Islam and the last and only tangible means of communication left by the Creator to guide and educate His servants. Its message targets all nations, races, languages, and all ethnicities, according to His truest words in surah Al-Anbiya: “We have sent you ‘Prophet’ only a mercy for the whole world” (Qur'an, 21:107). Thus, the translation of the Qur'an holds immense significance in the proper understanding of Islam for non-Arabic speakers, as well as the depth of their faith.

The Qur'an, originally written in Arabic, its eloquence, majestic literary style, and the systematic weighing of each word have compelled Arabic speakers to rely on Arabic interpretations and exegesis of the word of Allah, from scholars and Arabic linguists who have delved deeply into the deciphering of the Qur'an for decades. This hardship of understanding the Qur'an in its original Arabic language among Arab Muslims explains to a certain extent why it is challenging to properly translate the Qur'an and convey its multifaceted cultural, linguistic, and literary intricacies to non-Arabic Muslims. The existing translations teem with over-translations, under-translations, or complete mistranslations of the Quranic verses, which result in distortions and loss of meanings of the source text.

The semantic loss in the translation of the Qur'an is caused by the lack of adequate equivalents in the target language considering that some terms are Qur'an-specific. It is worth mentioning, for instance; *Zakat*, referring to the charity obliged on every Muslim, *Sunnah*, signifying the practices and traditions held by the Prophet Mohamed (peace be upon him), *Sujood*, signifying the act of bowing down in prayer, *Qiblah*, denoting the direction Muslims must face when praying, that is the Kaaba in Mecca, *Tawheed*, meaning the confession of Muslim believers of the oneness of Allah SWT. These concepts, which are firmly and solely

specific to the Qur'an, represent the base of the religion of Islam as they provide the fundamentals according to which the religious activities are performed and the tenets according to which Muslims behave amongst themselves and with others, non-Muslims.

I. Review of Literature

1.1 Equivalence and Translation Loss in Translation Studies.

The term "*Translation*" emerged back in 1340, deriving from the Latin "*Translatio*" which refers to the act of transporting. According to Munday (2004), "the process of translation between two different written languages involves the changing of an original written text (the source text or ST) in the original verbal language (the source language or SL) into a written text (the target text or TT) in a different verbal language (the target language or TL) (p.8). Translation is, thus, a tool used to bridge the gaps between two different languages belonging to two different cultures, entailing shifts from SL to TL.

Shunnaq (1998) states that translation is the process of reproducing the same ideas from the source language into the target language, and translators serve as both the receivers and the creators of the text whose fundamental task is to read, understand, analyze the source language text (SLT) and reproduce it equivalently into the target language text (TLT) (p.33). Similarly, Catford (1965) defines translation as "the replacement of textual material in one language (SL) by equivalent textual material in another language (TL)" (P.20). Both definitions confirm that the translator is condemned to a challenging task that is, in fact, more difficult than that of the SL writer. The translator is a mediator of words and striker of balances between the SL and the TL, and as such he should give ultimate care to the linguistic and cultural aspects, and eventually produce a TT that is at the same equivalent, identical to the ST, and innovative.

Juliana House (2018) introduces translation from a two-fold perspective, positive and negative; positive in the way translation brings new scopes of ideas and experiences buried in a different culture and language community and opens gates that would have remained closed due to the difference of language. Negative, because translation often remains secondary and an 'inferior substitute' to the original. House in her definition coins two types of orientations in the process of translation; Backward orientation is tied to the SL, meaning that the content of the original text must match that of the translated text. Forward orientation is linked to the TL audience, meaning that the translated text must correspond to the communicative conditions of the target culture, and these shifts between the SL and the TL define semantic equivalence. Considering the forward orientation, semantic equivalence alone is not enough, hence, another sort of equivalence is required that considers the translated text's style, formality, and overall structure. That is the pragmatic equivalence; it describes how language is employed in texts. To consider two texts equal in translation, they must have comparable semantic and pragmatic meanings (pp.9-10).

Roman Jakobson (1959) states that the notion of equivalence is the core problem of language and the pivotal issue for linguists. The linguist, being the receiver of verbal messages functions as their interpreter, the science of language cannot comprehend a linguistic sample until its signals are translated into other signs of the same system or signs of another system, therefore, before conducting any comparison between two languages, the science of language must assess the degree of which the two languages can be translatable back and forth while maintaining faithfulness and accuracy (p.115).

Eugene Nida (1964) distinguishes between two types of equivalence; formal equivalence, a translation strategy that aims to reflect the source language's form, structure, and

grammatical elements as precisely as possible in the target language. In other words, the translator strives to accurately and faithfully maintain the formal characteristics of the original text, including sentence structure, word order, and grammatical structures (p.129). Dynamic equivalence, on the other hand, is the “closest natural equivalent to the source-language message.” According to Nida, the translation must be primarily focused on conveying the meaning and impact of the SL text by securing the essence and function of the original message, hence, minimizing the potential semantic difference, that is loss, in the translation (p.136).

J.C. Catford (1965) states that complete equivalence in both meaning and form in the target text TT is rarely fully achieved since it is difficult to transfer the form and meaning from SL into a TL. Consequently, when it is impossible to obtain precise linguistic equivalence, the translator resorts to textual adjustments, grammatical shifts and lexical variations (p.141). In the same vein, Bassnet (2002) denies a perfect state of equivalence and establishes a pragmatic and realistic approach to the translation process, she argues that “once the principle is accepted that sameness cannot exist between two languages, it becomes possible to approach the question of loss and gain in the translation process ” (p.36). Therefore, a loss of meaning or modulation in the translation process is inevitable, and only by accepting this concept of non-sameness, the decisions and choices made by the translators and their effects on the meaning can be justified.

James Dickins, Sándor Hervey, and Ian Higgins (2016) define loss in translation as follows:

“ Translation loss is not a loss of translation, but a loss in the translation process. It is a loss of textual effects. Further, since these effects cannot be quantified, neither can the loss. So, when trying to reduce it, the translator never knows how far there is still to go. Nevertheless, despite the limitations of the analogy, we have found it practical for translators, students and teachers alike. Once one accepts the concept of inevitable translation loss, a TT that is not, even in all important respects, a replica of the ST is not a theoretical anomaly, and the translator can concentrate on the realistic aim of reducing translation loss, rather than the unrealistic one of seeking the ultimate TT.” (p.21)

This definition confirms that translators, scholars, and educators should accept the inevitability of loss within the translation process, regardless of the natural difficulty in quantifying it.

By acknowledging that the translation of texts cannot perfectly capture every detail of the source text, translators must concentrate on reducing this loss instead of seeking for a flawless equivalence. This pragmatic method pivots translators towards focusing on objectives, such as minimizing the translation loss, as opposed to striving for the perfectionist aim of producing an exceptional level of equivalence translation.

According to Dickins, Hervey, and Higgins, loss can be detected at many linguistic levels, such as the phonic level. This occurs for example when words in an SL are pronounced differently in the TL. For instance, the word 'بقرة' (Baqarah) and its English equivalent 'cow' are phonetically different in pronunciation, hence, there is tangible translation loss at the phonic and prosodic levels. This loss, in literary, poetic, or sacred texts, is crucial and violates the concept of aesthetic faithfulness in the TL.

1.2 Approaches to Qur'anic Translation.

The frequent issues that are raised when dealing with the translation of the Qur'an is the nature of the Arabic language mainly in terms of syntax, number, and gender. At the level of syntax, Arabic structure is radically different than the structure of English, hence the translator, in the majority of cases, is forced to change the structure of all the sentences, e.g. The grammatical structure of Arabic verbal sentences is Verb-Subject-Object, while the English structure is Subject-Verb-Object. Thus, in case the word-for-word translation of an Arabic sentence is kept in the same order in the English TT, the translation may be faithful in terms of word order but the overall meaning sounds odd and violates the naturalness of the TL. (Shunnaq,1998: pp 34-35).

At the level of number, Mona Baker (2018) states that English has a grammatical category of number in which it distinguishes between one and more than one (singular and plural), to convey whether a noun refers to one or more, it must be morphologically conveyed by adding a suffix or altering its form, for example: student/students, fox/foxes, man / men, or child /children. Arabic, on the other hand, distinguishes between, one, two, and more than two, thus it contains singular, dual, and plural forms. (p.99). As a result, the translator must verify whether the English plurality is dual or plural when translating it into Arabic, He must be able to understand the differences between the plural and dual forms' applications.

The gender is more complex to translate. In Arabic, pronouns in the second and third person are gendered differently. Arabic includes several forms for "you" based on whether the person or people addressed are male or female, as well as gender differences in the third-person singular and plural. English nouns do not frequently distinguish between feminine and masculine forms, English also includes a person category that makes a distinction between masculine, and inanimate (he/she/it) in the third-person singular. (2018: 102)

The following table provides the differences of gender pronouns¹ in English and Arabic :

Arabic Subject Pronouns	English Equivalent
أنا	I
أنتَ	You (masculine singular)
أنتِ	You (feminine singular)
هو	He
هي	She
نحن	We
أنتما (Dual)	You (masculine plural)
أنتن	You (feminine plural)
هما (Dual)	They (masculine)
هن	They (feminine)

¹ <https://www.optilingo.com/blog/arabic/a-lesson-on-arabic-pronouns/>

1.3 Polysemy in The translation of Qur'an

Polysemy is defined by Ullman (1967:159) as a "situation" in which a single word has two or more distinct meanings. He proceeds to say that polysemy, which can develop in a variety of ways, is a basic characteristic of human speech. Nida (1969:63), however, does not view polysemy as a major issue for translators because multiple interpretations of a single word are rarely in conflict because they frequently have so many different meanings that they do not compete with one another for the same semantic domain. This is because multiple meanings of a single word have relatively well-defined markers that aid in meaning differentiation.

Crystal (2008) in his Dictionary of Linguistics and Phonetics defines polysemy as “ A term used in semantic analysis to refer to a lexical item which has a range of different meanings,e.g. plain =‘clear’, ‘unadorned’, ‘obvious’; also called polysemia; opposed to monosemy (or univocality). (p.373)

Palmer (1981) states that:

“Sameness of meaning is not very easy to deal with but there seems nothing inherently difficult about difference of meaning. Not only do different words have different meanings; it is also the case that the same word may have a set of different meanings. This is POLYSEMY; such a word is POLYSEMIC. Thus the dictionary will define the word flight in at least the following ways: 'passing through the air', 'power of flying', 'air journey', 'unit of the Air Force', 'volley', 'digression', 'series of steps'. Yet there are problems even with this apparently simple concept.” (p.65)

According to Abdel-raof (2018) polysemy is a semantic problem in Qur'anic translation and that has been disregarded throughout the process of Qur'an translation, and “ It can be observed that most Qur'an translations have provided inaccurate transfer of the context-sensitive polysemes.” (p.312)

1.4 Limits of Translatability of the Qur'an.

The Qur'an is constructed on a sophisticated, coherent, and cohesive level. It consists of semantic progression whereas the verses in every Surah are interrelated in terms of sense continuity, which is a vital feature of coherence. The different ties within the sacred text such as reference, ellipsis, substitution, and conjunction make the components of the Qur'anic verses associated both semantically and grammatically. Consequently, the translator must consider four significant decisions regarding text linguistics; coherence and progression of sense along the succession of messages, the arrangement of segments in each message, highlighting the markedness of certain segments in each message which assures the continuity of sense and coherence, and the validation of the dominant thought through syntactic means that can convey coherence (pp.169-170-276).

Newmark (1988) asserts that “ In fact, the greater the quantity of a language's resources (e.g. polysemy, word-play, sound-effect, metre, rhyme) expended on a text, the more difficult it is likely to be to translate, and the more worthwhile”. The Qur'an has poetic features and an aura that complicates the conversion of its effect and ideas to another language, the language of the Qur'an is merely connotative, the translation then, serves as an interpretation rather than a rewriting of the original in a target language. (p.17)

Shunnaq (1998) argues that “ translation of Islamic texts is further complicated when the translator attempts to render a key religious term that constitutes a complete referential gap in English, i.e. the concept is totally missing in the target culture ” (p.44). This statement is evident when the translator is in front of a set of terms, linguistic and phonetic structures that are Qur'an specific only, the language of the Qur'an has not been selected haphazardly, each letter, syllable, pronunciation, and sound depict meanings, hence, no TT can convey precisely the same sequence

of sound segments or letters as any ST, this evidently causes a form of translation loss, the translator's concern, in this case, is whether this loss matters, a question that remains dependable on the context (Dickins, Hervey, Higgins, 2002:80).

Guillaume (1990) in this regard asserts that translating the Qur'an "cannot be accomplished without grave loss." As it has an ear-pleasing cadence and an incredibly beautiful rhythm (as cited in Abdul-Raof, 2004: 93). Languages such as Arabic and English are linguistically and culturally incompatible and cause issues with translatability. This phenomenon can be attributed to the semantic fact that certain expressions in a target language (TL) are delexicalised and thus stated differently, these terms are specific to the source language and represent a gap in the target language. Due to this issue, the English translation may have semantic gaps and not be functionally equivalent to the Qur'an in terms of 'perlocutionary effect on the target audience, stylistic patterns and, semantically oriented sound effects.' (Abdul-roof, 2018: 262)

Furthermore, Muslim scholars reject the concept of translating the Qur'an, according to them, the language of the Qur'an is sacred, divine, and like no other, and attempts at its translation remain a humble human product that is subject to error. Besides, they conclude that Arabic is the only language that can support the linguistic magnitude of the sacred message of the Qur'an, unlike other languages that lack similar linguistic mechanisms that support the syntactic and stylistic-oriented meaning of the Qur'anic language. This linguistic gap between Arabic and other languages ultimately leads to under-translation. Muslim scholars suggest the expression ' The translation of The Meanings of the Qur'an' instead of ' The Translation of the Qur'an' because the Qur'an is the word of Allah, and the translation is the word of man(Abdul-Raof, 2019:329).

II.Hypothesis and Methodology

2.1.Hypothesis and Research Questions

This topic will tackle the semantic loss found in the translation of the Qur'an, The focus will also be on how translation weakens the meaning of the original religious text, primarily in terms of Qur'anic terminology, and syntax of the Arabic language compared to that of the English language.

Aside from other secondary issues covered in this study, the main questions are as follows:

1. Why is there a semantic loss in the translation of the Qur'an?
2. How can translators overcome semantic loss in the process of translating the Qur'an?
3. What procedures, techniques, and measures can be used to improve the quality of the translation and consequently, result in a semantically complete translation?
4. What techniques are resorted to when the target language lacks precise equivalents and terminology?

2.2 Methodology

This research brings to the fore the semantic loss that occurs in the process of translating the Qur'an from Arabic into English. It also seeks to foreground the role of Quranic exegesis in revealing such loss and choosing the most adequate translation equivalents. Therefore, the methodology opted for is qualitative in its essence as it seeks to analyze the qur'anic concepts and their Arabic designations and English re-designations and compare in its approach as it compares, on the one hand, the Qur'anic terms and their translations and on the other hand the different translations.

The first analysis is monolingual (source-text oriented) and based on exegesis. Based on the different exegetic texts, irrespective of their approach, be it intra-textual, contextual or intertextual, the true meanings of terms will be investigated. This analysis will feed into the second phase of the analysis as it will help identify and understand the occurrence of semantic loss in the translation of the Qur'an.

The selected passages will be processed some worth researching lexical choices. More precisely, for the purposes of the present paper, the following lexical units are selected:

- الشهادة (على الناس)
- التأويل (تأويل القرآن، تأويل الأحكام/الرؤى، تأويل الأحداث)
- الظلم (ظلم النفس وظلم الناس)

The above-listed terms have been chosen for their acknowledged pertinence in the field of Islamic jurisprudence. They also convey highly specialized and sharia-specific meanings that non-Muslims cannot easily grasp and henceforth may not translate adequately. The investigation of the true meaning of the selected terms will be based on the following exegesis: *The Terminological Study and Islamic Sciences Part 1* (1993), and *Mafhum al-Ta'wil fil Qur'an Al-Karim* (*The meaning of Ta'wil in the noble Qur'an, A Terminological Study*) by Zumurud Farida, and for passages contextualization, the study will resort to some of the common interpretations of the Qur'an such as Tafsir Al-Qurtobi (671AH)², Tafssir Al-Muyassar(1430AH), Tafssir Al-Wassit(1992)³

The second-phase analysis will be conducted on a selection of translations of Qur'anic verses containing the three selected terms *Al-shahada* الشهادة, *Ta'wil* التأويل and *zulm* الظلم. The first one is written by Abdulah Yusuf Ali⁴, and is entitled “ The Meaning of The Holy Qur'an”, and

² <https://shamela.ws/book/20855>

³ <https://shamela.ws/book/23590>

⁴ <https://quranyusufali.com/>

the second by Rashad Khalifa⁵ and is called “ Authorized English Version”, and the third one by Muhammad Abdel-Haleem,⁶ entitled “ The Qur’an, a New Translation”.

The study will carry out a comparative approach to compare and contrast the phrasing differences and lexical choices between the three versions of translations and evaluate their degree of accuracy, furthermore, the procedures and techniques used in those translations will be illustrated and criticized based on their level of accuracy and faithfulness in rendering the holy message across the non-Arabic cultures.

Therefore, the purpose here is to constructively criticize the existing Qur’an translations, which confront a variety of nearly insurmountable linguistic obstacles, by identifying semantically obscure and arcane nuances that are Qur'an and Arabic-specific and have not received enough attention in the English academic community.

III-Data Analysis and Findings

As seen in the review of literature, the richness, depth, preciseness, and accuracy that the vocabulary of the Qur'an uses to express its meanings and provisions, are a testimony of its originality and significance among the different sacred texts. When translated to a language other than its original Arabic, to English for instance, cases of semantic loss can be spotted on many levels, and that is due to the differences between the Arabic styles used in the Qu’ran and the English one used by translators, those cases will be examined in the selected data in terms of:

⁵https://books.google.co.ma/books?hl=fr&lr=&id=XzfSDwAAQBAJ&oi=fnd&pg=PT7&dq=Rashad+Khalifa&ots=287-ip73VK&sig=4rqZ9J3Q7TsVeDpA9vMwQKM88Tc&redir_esc=y#v=onepage&q=Rashad%20Khalifa&f=false

⁶ <https://ia800501.us.archive.org/16/items/OxfordQuranTranslation/Oxford-Quran-Translation.pdf>

- Specificity of concepts and terminology in the Qur'an, as they are specific to and deeply rooted in the Religion of Islam, the absence of these concepts in foreign cultures such as the English one causes a direct translation loss.
- Multilayered meanings and polysemy: The Qur'anic terms most often convey the specialized religious meanings while retaining some of their original multiple and extended meanings. This semantic richness is referred to by some scholars as inimitability (I'jaz الإعجاز), since this phenomenon is only present in the Qur'an. The attempt to translate such notions causes noticeable challenges.

3.1 Analysis and Discussion

3.1.1. *Al-Shahada* الشهادة

The term الشهادة Al-shahada appears in several verses and different chapters of the Qur'an, and in each instance it conveys a specific meaning. The variation in meanings depends to a large extent on the context in which the term is employed. In this section, the focus will be on the different senses conveyed by the term 'shahada'.

According to A. Najjar et al (1993:295-296), from the lexical perspective, الشهادة Al-shahada conveys four essential meanings:

1- **Presence (الحضور)**: as opposite to absence, according to His truest words:

'فمن شهد منكم الشهر فليصمه' - البقرة: 185

Meaning, whoever was present in the country where the crescent moon of Ramadan appeared should fast.

2-Knowledge (علم): either through sight or insight⁷, *Al-Shahid* الشاهد is the intellectual who teaches, informs, and clarifies what he bears knowledge of, according to his truest words:

‘شهد الله أنه لا إله إلا هو’ - آل عمران:18

Which denotes the knowledge and clarification that there is no other god other than Him. And in the calling of the prayer:

أشهد أن لا إله إلا الله

Which means, knowing and clarifying that there is no god other than Allah.

3- Informing, Clarifying, and delivering (الأخبار والبيان و التبليغ): to testify; to tell what one knows whether by sight or insight. *Al-Shahada* الشهادة in this context, is to deliver knowledge such as news, to the others. According to his Almighty’s saying:

“ارجعوا إلى أبيكم فقولوا إن ابنك سرق وما شهدنا إلا بما علمنا وما كنا للغيب حافظين” - يوسف:81

The verse outlines the meaning of the term as informing the father of the prophet Joseph that his son (Joseph’s brother) has committed theft and these news are originating from what the brothers had seen and experienced.

4- Honesty and Justice in Revealing Knowledge: In the Qur’an, when the term *Al-Shahada* الشهادة is employed to convey the meaning of informing or revealing knowledge, its object is always restricted to informing on the truth, according to the Almighty’s saying:

أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا كُونُوا قَوَّامِينَ لِلَّهِ شُهَدَاءَ بِالْقِسْطِ وَلَا يَجْرِمَنَّكُمْ شَنَا نُ قَوْمٍ عَلَىٰ أَلَّا تَعْدِلُوا^٩ اعْدِلُوا هُوَ أَقْرَبُ لِلتَّقْوَىٰ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ^{١٠} إِنَّ اللَّهَ خَبِيرٌ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ (8 المائدة)

In Al-Qurtubi⁸ interprets this verse as a call from His Almighty to the believers, to tell and testify by the truth, even when it comes against one’s wishes or benefit, and to tell the truth on people regardless of their sins or disbelief in Islam.

⁷ Insight البصيرة: the ability to understand, perceive and anticipate things intuitively or spiritually.

⁸ <https://quran.ksu.edu.sa/tafseer/qortobi/sura5-aya8.html#qortobi> visited on 06/05/2024 at 21:01

"حتى إذا جاوزوها شهد عليهم سمعهم و أبصارهم و جلودهم بما كانوا يعملون وقالو لجلودهم لما شهدتم علينا... " -

فصلت:20-21

The interpretation of this verse by Al-Wassit⁹ indicates that the organs will tell and testify the truth against what people have denied, the same interpretation, informing and telling by the truth, is relevant in the following verse:

"يا معشر الجن والإنس ألم يأتكم رسل منكم يقصون عليكم آياتي وينذرونكم لقاء يومكم هذا قالو شهدنا على أنفسنا" -

الأنعام:130

Based on these general definitions, the four meanings of Al-shahada are interrelated. Presence is the fundamental basis of knowledge, and the act of informing, clarifying and delivering news is the result of knowledge, and news gain their value through justice and truth. As for the specialized meaning of the term Al-shahada الشهادة, it is worth underlying that it draws upon the four general lexical meanings discussed earlier but encompasses other Qur'an-specific features that can be delimited from the Qur'anic context. In this vein, A.Najji et al (1993:297) distinguish between two specialized meanings of the term under-study in the Qur'an; one conveys the testimony of the prophets over the nation of Islam, and the second, is the testimony of the Islamic nation over the people.

Examples:

- فَكَيفَ إِذَا جِئْنَا مِنْ كُلِّ أُمَّةٍ بِشَهِيدٍ وَجِئْنَا بِكَ عَلَى هَؤُلَاءِ شَهِيدًا (١٤ النساء)

According to Tafsir Al-Qurtoby (1384 AH), this verse is interpreted as "إِذْ يُؤْتَى بِالْأَنْبِيَاءِ شُهَدَاءَ عَلَى" (p.94). "أَمَّهُمْ بِالنَّصْدِيقِ وَالتَّكْذِيبِ".

The prophets are summoned, as witnesses, to testify on their nations, each on his nation whether they believed or disbelieved in their message of God.

⁹ <https://surahquran.com/aya-tafsir-20-41.html#moyassar> visited on 06/05/2024 at 21:35

Tafsir Al-Muyassar(1430AH) interprets the verse as follows:

فكيف يكون حال الناس يوم القيامة إذا جاء الله من كل أمة برسولها ليشهد عليها بما عملت، وجاء بك - أيها الرسول - لتكون “
شهيذاً على أمتك أنك بلغتهم رسالة ربك ؟

Each nation will be confronted by the truth, and that is, their prophet delivered the message of God to them and it is evidently, the testimony of the prophet on them, and their choices in the worldly-life *Dunya* will determine their destiny in their after-life.

- يَوْمَ نَبْعَثُ فِي كُلِّ أُمَّةٍ شَهِيدًا عَلَيْهِمْ مِنْ أَنْفُسِهِمْ ۖ وَجِئْنَا بِكَ شَهِيدًا عَلَى هَؤُلَاءِ ۚ وَنَزَّلْنَا عَلَيْكَ الْكِتَابَ تِبْيَانًا لِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ وَهُدًى وَرَحْمَةً وَبُشْرَى لِلْمُسْلِمِينَ (89 النحل)

Tafsir Al-Wasit interprets the meaning of the verse as ‘

شهيذاً: شهيد كل أمة نبيها يشهد لهم، يشهد للمؤمن بالإيمان ويشهد على الكافر بالكفر. ‘(p212)

Meaning that each prophet reveals and tells the truth about his nation, confirms the faith of the believers, and denies the faith of those who chose not to believe despite their receipt of the prophet’s message of God.

- ...وَفِي هَٰذَا لَيَكُونُ الرَّسُولُ شَهِيدًا عَلَيْكُمْ وَتَكُونُوا شُهَدَاءَ عَلَى النَّاسِ ۚ فَأَقِيمُوا الصَّلَاةَ ... (78 الحج)

Al-Tafsir Al-Muyassar(1430AH) explanation:

“وتكونوا شهداء على الأمم أن رسلكم قد بلغتهم بما أخبركم الله به في كتابه” (p.341)

Al-Qortoby(1384 AH), interpretation:

“ليكون الرسول شهيدا عليكم أي بتبليغه إياكم . وتكونوا شهداء على الناس أن رسلكم قد بلغتهم” (p.99)

Meaning that the prophets hold accountability of delivering the message of God, which they will testify by the truth that the nations have received it, and that the believers will testify by the truth that their prophets have delivered the message.

Based on the analysis above, it can be concluded that the term ‘shahada’ in Arabic has undergone the process of ‘terminologization’ in which it has retained some elements of its

original lexical meaning, namely giving testimony or bearing witness, but has acquired new elements in the context of Islam and jurisprudence as revealed in the Quran. It encompasses the confirmation or denial of faith by the prophets upon their nations, in the role of emissaries to their nations. The Qur'an adds more features to the term Al-shahada الشهادة such as the embodiment of the sacred revelation transmitted through the messengers chosen by god. This sacred trait granted by God to the prophets pinpoints their responsibility and role in delivering His message to humanity. On the day of judgment, the prophets stand to tell the truth, inform, deny, and confirm the faith, and receipt of the holy message to the nations. The significance of Al-Shahada الشهادة in the Qur'anic context interplays between faith, revelation and accountability. The richness of these connotations is often overlooked in the translation process, consequently causing a loss of complete understanding of meanings that are inherent in the sacred texts of the Qur'an.

Now the Quranic concept of 'shahada' is clearly delimited, the present section seeks to investigate the adequacy of the English equivalents found in the existing translations of Qur'an.

3.1.2. Translation of the term Shahada الشهادة in Surat An-Nisa'(4:41)

Arabic Source Text	Yusuf Ali Translation	Rashad Khalifa Translation	Abdel Haleem Translation
فَكَيْفَ إِذَا جِئْنَا مِنْ كُلِّ أُمَّةٍ بشَهِيدٍ وَجِئْنَا بِكَ عَلَى هَؤُلَاءِ شَهِيدًا. النساء 41	How then if We brought from each people a witness and We brought thee as a witness against these people!.	Thus, when the day (of judgment) comes, we will call upon a witness from each community, and you (the messenger) will	What will they do when We bring a witness from each community, with you [Muham-mad] as a witness

		<u>serve as a witness</u> among these people.	against these people?
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Discussion:

Based on the terminological analysis conducted in the first section of this research, the study constated that the specialized meaning of the term الشهادة *Shahada* includes bearing witness based on presence and insight, affirming or declining the faith of the nations, acknowledgement of sacred revelation, and the accountability the prophets bear in their holy task to deliver Allah's message, these concepts are rooted in the Islamic culture, based on these meanings, we establish the following analysis on the three translations of the verse 41 from Surat An-Nisa'(4:41):

While all translations efficiently convey the essence of the verse, the approach to the specialized meaning of the term varies in each attempt:

1- Yusuf Ali's translation adopts an archaic style (Thee) to implicitly refer to the prophet (may peace be upon him), and he keeps the past tense (we brought) as is in the source text إِذَا جِئْنَا, however, in his translation, the profound meanings of الشهادة are not emphasized, the equivalent he opted for is ' witness' without any additional explanations or note, hence it is understood in a general sense and lacks the sacred task of confirming the faith of the receiving nations, and the acknowledgement of the nations that they received the divine revelations.

2- Rashad khalifa's Translation is more clarified and adds contextual notes to highlight that those events are occurring on the Day of Judgement, as well as the explicit reference to the Prophet between parenthesis to explain that he is the one that will bear the responsibility and duty

attributed in the term الشهادة. This translation conveys the intended meaning of the verse, however, an additional explanatory note on “the witness from every community” is necessary to highlight the task of admitting the receipt of the holy message by the nations.

3- Abdel Haleem’s translation keeps the overall meaning of the verse, by posing a rhetorical question (what will they do) to highlight the greatness of such an event, however , the significance of the term الشهادة *shahada* which involves the prophetic role of confirming the faith of the nations, the delivery of Allah’s message to them, and the great weight of such prophetic testimony, is absent in the translation, hence, additional explanatory notes are necessary to help the translation to keep those spiritual meanings. Those layers of meanings are hard to convey in English because the english culture lacks such concepts, which evidently, lead to a degree of loss in translation.

3.1.3 Al-Ta’wil التاويل

The term Al-Ta’wil التاويل is mentioned in the Qur’an seventeen times in seven Surates: Al-Araf الأعراف, Al-Isra’e الإسراء, Yunus يونس, Yusuf يوسف, Al-Kahf الكهف, Al’Imran عمران, and Nisa’e النساء. (Zumurud 2014:125). Before investigating the meanings of the term Al-Ta’wil التاويل in the Qur’an, it is important to look at the etymology of the term, its contextualization, and the general meanings it carries.

The term Al-Ta’wil التاويل is derived from the Arabic root أ-و-ل, and its trilateral root is "آل", which, according to the Almaany¹⁰ dictionary, is a polysemous word that conveys the following meanings:

1- The beginning of something, as seen in the following common Arabic proverbs:

¹⁰ <https://www.almaany.com/ar/dict/ar-ar/%D8%A3%D9%88%D9%84/>

أَوَّلُ الْعَمَلِ يَقِيمُ“ which means the good beginnings have an ever-lasting impact. Or, “أَوَّلُ الطَّيِّبِ يَدُومُ” which means the first steps in putting on work establishes victory.

2- Returning or going back to the origins of something e.g “أَوَّلُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْكَ ضَالَّتْكَ : أَيُّ أَرْجَعَهَا، أَعَادَهَا إِلَيْكَ“

3-Explaining speech, dreams or visions¹¹ e.g “أَوَّلُ الْكَلَامِ: أَيُّ فَسَّرَهُ“ , أَوَّلُ الرُّؤْيَا: عَبَّرَهَا، حَاوَلَ أَنْ يَفْسِّرَهَا“

Starting from this root أ-و-ل, the derivative Al-Ta'wil التاويل is formed.

The term *Al-Ta'wil* التاويل in the Islamic discourse is often used interchangeably with the term *Tafsir* التفسير, the slight yet significant difference between the two terms raise a semantic issue due to their interconnecting meanings in the Islamic exegetical culture. This difficulty stems from the multitude of ways scholars have traditionally defined and used these concepts over the years, resulting in differences in their interpretation and usage; for instance Al-Asfahani (as cited in H.Sekaff 2022) states that *Tafsir* التفسير is a broader term than *Ta'wil* التاويل, *Tafsir* التفسير concerns the significance of words and vocabulary, it is used in general texts as well as sacred texts, while *Ta'wil* التاويل concerns meanings and sentences, and it is specifically applied in divine texts and sacred books such as the Qur'an (p.108). This variation has resulted in inconsistencies in comprehending the scope and purpose of each term. Ta'wil refers to the interpretations of the texts and requires the application of logic and *ijtihad*¹² to obtain interpretations and rulings from them. The Shafi'i Al-Zarkashi (as cited in H.Sekaff 2022) states that "Ta'wil is revealing a message that is buried " implying that it seeks to expose concealed or ambiguous meanings. While *Tafsir* التفسير concentrates on the narrative component, which includes conveying meanings as they are, with little use of *Ijtihad* (p.108). It is then, a matter of

¹¹What a person sees in his/her sleep, events seen in a dream, which are often explained by a religious scholar and by Qur'an.

¹² *Ijtihad*: “ an Islamic legal term referring to independent reasoning by an expert in islamic law” retrieved from Wikipedia on 15/05/2024 at 14:42

reporting and interpreting the straightforward meanings grasped from the sacred message, as it is evident in the following example:

"لَيْسَ الْبِرَّ أَنْ تُولُوا وَجُوهَكُمْ قِبَلَ الْمَشْرِقِ وَالْمَغْرِبِ وَلَكِنَّ الْبِرَّ مَنْ آمَنَ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ وَالْمَلَائِكَةِ وَالْكِتَابِ وَالنَّبِيِّينَ وَآتَى الْمَالَ عَلَى حُبِّهِ ذَوِي الْقُرْبَىٰ وَالْيَتَامَىٰ وَالْمَسَاكِينَ وَابْنَ السَّبِيلِ وَالسَّائِلِينَ وَفِي الرِّقَابِ وَأَقَامَ الصَّلَاةَ وَآتَى الزَّكَاةَ وَالْمُوفُونَ بِعَهْدِهِمْ إِذَا عَاهَدُوا وَالصَّابِرِينَ فِي الْبَأْسَاءِ وَالضَّرَّاءِ وَحِينَ الْبَأْسِ أُولَئِكَ الَّذِينَ صَدَقُوا وَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْمُتَّقُونَ." - البقرة: 177

The *Tafsir* التفسير in this case is reporting the definition of righteousness, which is apparent and mentioned in the verse through believing in Allah, the day of resurrection, the angels, the Qur'an, the prophets, and providing charity with a pure intention of love to those in need, the relatives, the orphans, the poor, the traveler, and those who ask for it, and freeing slaves, establishing prayer, giving *Zakah*, fulfilling the promises when given, and those who are patient in sickness and hardships and during battles... This is a form of *Tafsir* التفسير because it does not require personal reasoning and efforts to break down the meanings of the verse as they are listed in a clear straightforward manner, therefore, the *Tafsir* التفسير is a tool of confirmation and proving the correct intended meaning in a given verse, it is generally regarded to include a more literal and explicit explanation based on the existing information in the text. In contrast, *Ta'wil* التأويل is regarded as digging into deeper, hidden meanings, based on the scholar's intellectual capacity and skills and *Ijtihad* (scholar's personal reasoning). This overlap in concept may confuse distinctions producing ambiguity regarding when and how each word should be used.

In the Qur'an, the term *Ta'wil* التأويل is put in numerous contexts, hence the meaning shifts according to its placement within the verse. At times, *Ta'wil* التأويل is expressed in reference to the holy book Qur'an (Ta'wil Al-kitab التأويل الكتاب), while at other times, it is pertained to interpreting dreams or honest visions (Ta'wil Al-Ru'ya التأويل الرؤى) or to the

interpretation of events (تأويل الأحداث). Consequently, it is crucial for translators to understand and carefully examine the Qur'anic context before starting the translation process, that is to reduce the probability of translation loss and maintaining the faithfulness in conveying the intended meaning in the sacred verse. The following discussion shall demonstrate the three distinct meanings the term *Ta'wil* التأويل carries and shall examine the particular instances in which the term occurs in the Qur'an.

● Ta'wil of the Qur'an تأويل الكتاب

Example:

وَمَا كَانَ هَذَا الْقُرْآنُ أَنْ يُفْتَرَى مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ وَلَكِنْ تَصْدِيقَ الَّذِي بَيْنَ يَدَيْهِ وَتَفْصِيلَ الْكِتَابِ لَا رَيْبَ فِيهِ مِنْ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ (37)
 أَمْ يَقُولُونَ افْتَرَاهُ قُلْ فَأْتُوا بِسُورَةٍ مِثْلِهِ وَادْعُوا مَنِ اسْتَطَعْتُمْ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ (38) بَلْ كَذَّبُوا بِمَا لَمْ يُحِيطُوا بِعِلْمِهِ
 وَلَمَّا يَأْتِهِمْ تَأْوِيلُهُ كَذَّبَ الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ فَانْظُرْ كَيْفَ كَانَ عَاقِبَةُ الظَّالِمِينَ (39). - (يونس: 37-38-39)

The Term Ta'wil التأويل in the verse under-study is attached by the pronoun 'its' (الهاء) which refers back to the Qur'an, this ultimately indicates that the term is referring directly to the content of the Qur'an. According to Tafssir Al-Muyassar (1430AH) the meaning of the verse is as follows:

"بل سارَعوا إلى التكذيب بالقرآن أول ما سمعوه، قبل أن يتدبروا آياته، وكفروا بما لم يحيطوا بعلمه من ذكر البعث والجزاء والجنة والنار وغير ذلك، ولم يأتهم بعد حقيقة ما وعدوا به في الكتاب. وكما كذب المشركون بوعد الله كذبت الأمم التي خلت قبلهم، فانظر -أيها الرسول- كيف كانت عاقبة الظالمين؟ فقد أهلك الله بعضهم بالخسف، وبعضهم بالغرق، وبعضهم بغير ذلك." (p.213)

Meaning that the disbelievers rushed to deny and reject the Qur'an as soon as they heard it before understanding its verse, so they disbelieved what they have not yet come to comprehend,

including the resurrection, the recompense, the heaven and the hellfire, and they have denied the truth of what they have been promised in the Qur'an, similar to the previous nations that have denied, and when the promises in the Qur'an have finally come true, that is the punishment due their disbelief, the consequence of this matter (العاقبة) was the destruction of these nations and their disbelief .

Discussion:

The term *Ta'wil* تأويل in this verse, since it is attached to the pronoun 'its' 'الهاء', it indicates the direct reference to the practical fulfillment of the promises mentioned by the Almighty-Allah in the Qur'an, the term brought the meaning of the consequences or, more precisely, the tangible occurrence of the promises mentioned in the Qur'an, it does not stop at the sole element of explaining the verses or understanding them, but it goes beyond that to convey the actual realization of the events. Understanding the term *Ta'wil* as the realization and occurrence of the events foretold in the Qur'an is a key element for a comprehensive grasp of the holy message, because it goes beyond linguistic or textual analysis, hence, translators ought to go further the mere understanding of *Ta'wil* as 'interpretation' of words that are ambiguous but rather the fulfillment and tangible occurrence of the events mentioned in the Qur'an as actual events in life which reinforce the truth foretold in the Qur'a. With that being said, the translator holds a significant responsibility in conveying the right meanings, thus, incorporating insights from accredited scholarly sources such as *Tafssir Al-Muyassar*, is crucial in enhancing the translation and reducing the translation loss, hence, offering an accurate presentation of the holy message, and deepen the appreciation of the divine guidance.

- **Ta'wil Ro'ya (Honest Visions) تأويل الرؤى**

alongside the connection of ta'wil to the Qur'an as demonstrated in the preceding analysis, the term also came associated with visions (what a person sees in their sleep); in this context, the term *Ta'wil* التَّأْوِيل obtains a specialized meaning that goes past its traditional lexical meaning of merely clarifying the ambiguous. Considering the following verse as an example to understand the significance of Ta'wil in the context of visions:

"وَرَفَعَ أَبَوَيْهِ عَلَى الْعَرْشِ وَخَرُّوا لَهُ سُجَّدًا وَقَالَ يَا أَبَتِ هَذَا تَأْوِيلُ رُؤْيَايَ مِنْ قَبْلُ قَدْ جَعَلَهَا رَبِّي حَقًّا وَقَدْ أَحْسَنَ بِي إِذْ

أَخْرَجَنِي مِنَ السِّجْنِ وَجَاءَ بِكُمْ مِنَ الْبَدْوِ مِنْ بَعْدِ أَنْ نَزَعَ الشَّيْطَانُ بَيْنِي وَبَيْنَ إِخْوَتِي إِنَّ رَبِّي لَطِيفٌ لِمَا يَشَاءُ إِنَّهُ هُوَ الْعَلِيمُ

الْحَكِيمُ" - (يوسف:100)

The meaning of the verse entails that the prophet Yusuf (peace be upon him) raised his parents on the throne and they have all bowed in respect and appreciation, and the prophet acknowledges that this act of bowing performed by the parents, and the eleven brothers, is the actualization of the vision foreseen by the prophet Yusuf in his early childhood, which is mentioned in the very beginning of the surah. In order to collect the true meaning of the term Ta'wil, the following extract from the classical exegesis Tafssir Al-Qortobi (671AH) shall explain the meaning of the verse:

"وقال يوسف لأبيه: هذا السجود الذي سجدتموه لي الآن، هو تفسير رؤياي التي رأيتها في صغري. فقد جعل ربي هذه الرؤيا حقا، وأراني تأويلها وتفسيرها بعد أن مضى عليها الزمن الطويل. قالوا: وكان بين الرؤيا وبين ظهور تأويلها أربعون سنة. والمراد بهذه الرؤيا ما أشار إليه القرآن في مطلع هذه السورة في قوله يا أبتِ إِنِّي رَأَيْتُ أَحَدَ عَشَرَ كَوْكَبًا وَالشَّمْسَ وَالْقَمَرَ رَأَيْتُهُمْ لِي سَاجِدِينَ." (p.417)

Discussion

In verse under-study, the term *Ta'wil* التَّأْوِيل is directly linked to the prophet's vision, the relation is evident in "هَذَا تَأْوِيلُ رُؤْيَايَ مِنْ قَبْلُ" whereas "هَذَا" (this) is the determiner linking the event happening - which is the bow of his parents alongside the eleven brothers to him - to the

tangible reality and actualization of the vision, hence the event happening is the Ta'wil of the vision, it became true. In this context, the term Ta'wil, once again, does not solely signify an interpretation as in theoretical sense, but rather signifies the physical realization and tangible actualization of the vision (حدث / وقوع) the prophet Yusuf had foreseen in his sleep as a young child, the vision is translated to reality in the event he is experiencing which is the bow of his family in front of him after forty years of separation. The following sentence "قَدْ جَعَلَهَا رَبِّي حَقًّا" confirms that the vision became a concrete event, reinforcing the significance of Ta'wil as actualisation of events aforementioned in the Qur'an.

● Ta'wil Al-Af'al (of actions) تأويل الأفعال

The term Ta'wil is used in surat Al-Kahf in the context of the righteous man Al-khidr¹³ whose deeds surpassed the comprehension of Moses and ultimately were revealed to have a deeper, sacred significance and divine purposes. The following verse will serve as a case-study to grasp the third meaning of the term Ta'wil:

"قَالَ هَذَا فِرَاقُ بَيْنِي وَبَيْنِكَ سَأُنَبِّئُكَ بِتَأْوِيلِ مَا لَمْ تَسْتَطِعْ عَلَيْهِ صَبْرًا (78) أَمَّا السَّفِينَةُ فَكَانَتْ لِمَسَاكِينَ يَعْمَلُونَ فِي الْبَحْرِ فَأَرَدْتُ أَنْ أَعِيبَهَا وَكَانَ وَرَاءَهُمْ مَلِكٌ يَأْخُذُ كُلَّ سَفِينَةٍ غَصْبًا (79) وَأَمَّا الْغُلَامُ فَكَانَ أَبَوَاهُ مُؤْمِنَيْنِ فَخَشِينَا أَنْ يُرْهِقَهُمَا طُغْيَانًا وَكُفْرًا (80) فَأَرَدْنَا أَنْ يُبْدِلَهُمَا رَبُّهُمَا خَيْرًا مِنْهُ زَكَاءً وَأَقْرَبَ رُحْمًا (81) وَأَمَّا الْجِدَارُ فَكَانَ لِغُلَامَيْنِ يَتِيمَيْنِ فِي الْمَدِينَةِ وَكَانَ تَحْتَهُ كَنْزٌ لَهُمَا وَكَانَ أَبُوهُمَا صَالِحًا فَأَرَادَ رَبُّكَ أَنْ يَبْلُغَا أَشُدَّهُمَا وَيَسْتَخْرِجَا كَنْزَهُمَا رَحْمَةً مِنْ رَبِّكَ وَمَا فَعَلْتُهُ عَنْ أَمْرِي ذَلِكَ تَأْوِيلُ مَا لَمْ تَسْتَطِعْ عَلَيْهِ صَبْرًا (82) . - (الكهف: 78-79-80-81-82)

Before analysing the significance of the term Ta'wil, it is fundamental to look at the context of the verse in which it is used, then rely on exegesis to collect its true meaning.

The verse discusses the narrative of Al-Khidr who accompanied the prophet Moses, for the purpose of passing on the god giving gift of wisdom, through a sequence of actions that

¹³ Al-Khidr: a righteous figure mentioned in the Qur'an who accompanied the prophet Moses for the purpose of teaching him wisdom and knowledge gifted to him by Allah.

initially appeared perplexing to Moses. The destruction of the ship, the killing of the young child, the repairing of the wall, were at first glance, incomprehensible acts to Moses, only to reveal at the end that the wisdom behind those actions was to:

1- Save the ship for the poor fishermen from seizure, by digging a hole in it to prevent the tyrannical king from seizing all the ships in good state by force.

2- Save the pious parents from their oppressive son who will grow in disbelief and cause torture to the parents, hence, his execution was for the purpose of granting the parents a future child who will be more loving, and serve them well.

3- Secure a treasure that belongs to two orphans, the treasure is buried beneath the wall of the town that refused to offer hospitality to Al-Khidr and Moses, hence by repairing the wall, the treasure is secured until the two orphans are grown enough to collect it.

The exegesis Tafssir Al-Muyassar (1430AH) explains the verse as follows:

"قال الخضر لموسى: هذا وقت الفراق بيني وبينك، سأخبرك بما أنكرت علي من أفعالي التي فعلتها، والتي لم تستطع صبراً على ترك السؤال عنها والإنكار علي فيها، أما السفينة التي خرقتها فإنها كانت لأناس محتاجين - لا يملكون ما يكفيهم ويسد حاجتهم - يعملون في البحر عليها سعياً وراء الرزق، فأردت أن أعيبها بذلك الخرق؛ لأن أمامهم ملكاً يأخذ كل سفينة صالحة غصباً من أصحابها. (٨٠) وأما الغلام الذي قتلته فكان في علم الله كافراً، وكان أبوه وأمه مؤمنين فخشينا لو بقي الغلام حياً لحمل والديه على الكفر والطغيان؛ لأجل محبتهم إياه أو للحاجة إليه. (٨١) فأردنا أن يُبدل الله أبويه بمن هو خير منه صلاحاً ودينياً وبراً بهما. (٨٢) وأما الحائط الذي عدلتُ مِئْلَهُ حتى استوى فإنه كان لغلامين يتيمين في القرية التي فيها الجدار، وكان تحته كنز لهما من الذهب والفضة، وكان أبوهما رجلاً صالحاً، فأراد ربك أن يكبرا ويبلغا قوتهما، ويستخرجا كنزهما رحمة من ربك بهما، وما فعلت يا موسى جميع الذي رأيته فعلته عن أمري ومن تلقاء نفسي، وإنما فعلته عن أمر الله، ذلك الذي بينتُ لك أسبابه هو عاقبة الأمور التي لم تستطع صبراً على ترك السؤال عنها والإنكار علي فيها." (p.302)

The exegesis Tafssir Al-Qortobi (671AH) asserts the following explanation:

“تَأْوِيلُ الشَّيْءِ مَا لَهُ أَيْ قَالَ لَهُ: إِنِّي أَخْبَرْتُكَ لَمْ فَعَلْتُ مَا فَعَلْتُ. وَقِيلَ فِي تَفْسِيرِ هَذِهِ الْآيَاتِ الَّتِي وَقَعَتْ لِمُوسَى مَعَ الْخَضِرِ: إِنَّهَا حُجَّةٌ عَلَى مُوسَى لَا عَجَبَ لَهُ... (p.33)

The term *Ta'wil* التَّأْوِيل in the verses in question is linked directly to the actions of the righteous man Al-Khidr, the use of “ذَلِكَ” (that) in the verse “ذَلِكَ تَأْوِيلُ مَا لَمْ تَسْطِعْ عَلَيْهِ صَبْرًا” serves as a demonstrative connector, referring to the justification given by Al-Khidr concerning each of his behaviours, the consequences of the actions, which are the saving of the ship from seizure, saving the parents from the oppressive child, and the repairing of the wall to secure the treasure buried underneath it for the orphans, are not random acts but rather they are an actualisation of Allah’s wisdom, it is an outcome (العاقبة و ما ألت إليه الأفعال) that Moses could not initially foresee. Tafssir al-Muyassar clarified that those actions are performed with holly wisdom aimed to end in positive and beneficial results. Al-khidr’s justification highlights that the term *Ta'wil* التَّأْوِيل in this context is concerned with the positive end result (العاقبة) and the greater good which was hidden from the prophet Moses’s initial comprehension. On the same vein, Tafssir Al-Qortobi explained that the term *Ta'wil* التَّأْوِيل signifies the ultimate result (المآل), Those actions that seemed disturbing and unjust, uncovered the mercy and justice intended by the Almighty Allah, putting to the fore the tight human perception and inability to always understand the broader divine plan.

Based on the above analysis, it is crucial for the translators to recognise this nuanced intricacies and multifaceted meanings of the term *Ta'wil* التَّأْوِيل . Achieving that is through relying on exegesis in order to fully grasp and comprehend the shades of meanings the term has. For instance translating *Ta'wil* التَّأْوِيل as ‘ interpretation’ fails to fully capture and understand its variety of significance in the different contexts as seen earlier. For instance, a more specific

translation of the term in the context of actualisation of events in the Qur'an or the outcome of God's intended wisdom, mainly of the verse “ذَلِكَ تَأْوِيلُ مَا لَمْ تَسْطِعْ عَلَيْهِ صَبْرًا”, might be “that is the realization of Allah's holly intent ” or “ That is the ultimate outcome of Allah's planning ”.

3.1.4 Translation of the term Ta'wil التاويل in Surat Al-Kahf (18:78)

Arabic Source Text	Yusuf Ali Translation	Rashad Khalifa Translation	Abdel Haleem Translation
قَالَ هَذَا فِرَاقُ بَيْنِي وَبَيْنِكَ ۚ سَأُنَبِّئُكَ بِتَأْوِيلِ مَا لَمْ تَسْطِعْ عَلَيْهِ صَبْرًا. الكهف: 78	He answered : “ This is The parting between me And thee : now will I Tell thee the <u>interpretation</u> Of (those things) over which Thou wast unable To hold patience.	He said, "Now we have to part company. But <u>I will explain to you everything</u> you could not stand.	This is where you and I part company. I will tell you <u>the meaning</u> of the things you could not bear with patiently.

Discussion:

Based on the above analysis conducted on the different meanings the term Ta'wil التاويل folds, the research covered the context of the verse under-study, which pertains to the successive actions made by the righteous man named Al-Khidr accompanied with Moses who could not fully understand the hidden wisdom behind those actions, the consequences of these actions,

meaning the ultimate result, as explained by the exegesis, were the Ta'wil which Moses could not initially understand only after the justifications were revealed afterwards. Based on this contextualisation, we carry the following analysis of the translations:

1- Yusuf Ali adopts a literal approach whereas he uses 'interpretation' as an equivalent for the term Ta'wil, this translation captures the overall essence of explaining ambiguous actions, however, the broader implication of the divine intention and actualization of the holy wisdom is lost. Because the term Ta'wil in this context, refers to the consequences and outcome of these actions (العاقبة وما آلت إليه الأمور), which were intended by Allah's divine wisdom and guidance.

2-Rashad Khalifa uses the word 'explain' as an equivalent to Ta'wil, it is a simpler word which lacks the depth of the original term Ta'wil تأويل in unfolding the sacred wisdom in those actions and revealing the positive outcomes.

3-Abdel Haleem opted for the word 'meaning' which conveys the intended significance however it also overlooks the nuance of the outcomes of those events as fruits of the divine wisdom.

The three translations, somewhat convey the overall meaning of the verse, however, the equivalents opted for remain all general, leaning more to a mere intellectual understanding of the actions rather than ultimate result (العاقبة), this consequently does not convey the depth of the term Ta'wil and cause a varying degree of translation loss. A more precise translation may include explanatory notes or the use of terms like 'divine realization' or 'the divine intention of God's plan'. These two suggestions may reduce the translation loss and enhance the understanding of the term Ta'wil as the manifestation of Allah's will and the ultimate results of the divinely guided actions., thus, providing a more faithful and accurate representation of the holy message

3.1.5 *zulm* الظلم

The Qur'an mentions several forms, types and concepts of the term *zulm* الظلم. Before tackling the Qur'anic use of the term, it is crucial to look at the lexical definition of the term, according to Ibn Faris Dictionary (2002)¹⁴:

"(ظَلَمَ) الظَّاءُ وَاللَّامُ وَالْمِيمُ أَصْلَانِ صَحِيحَانِ، أَحَدُهُمَا خِلَافُ الضِّيَاءِ وَالنُّورِ....وَالْأَصْلُ الْآخَرُ: ظَلَمَهُ يَظْلِمُهُ ظُلْمًا. وَالْأَصْلُ: وَضَعَ الشَّيْءَ [فِي] غَيْرِ مَوْضِعِهِ ; أَلَا تَرَاهُمْ يَقُولُونَ: " مَنْ أَشْبَهَ [أَبَاهُ] فَمَا ظَلَمَ "، أَيْ مَا وَضَعَ الشَّيْءَ غَيْرَ مَوْضِعِهِ. "

The term constitutes of the Arabic root ظ-ل-م, its first meaning signifies the opposite of light, that is, darkness. And the second meaning signifies the act of placing something in an inappropriate position with a form of transgression. Ibn Manzur dictionary¹⁵ adds to that definition:

"وأصل الظلم الجورُ ومجاوزة الحدِّ، ومنه حديث الوضوء: فمن زاد أو نقص فقد أساء وظلم أي أساء الأدب بتركه السُّنَّةَ

والتَّأْدِبَ بِأَدَبِ الشَّرْعِ، وظلم نفسه بما نقصها من الثواب بتركها المرات في الوضوء."

The third meaning grasped from that definition is exceeding the limits, as it is reflected in the Hadith of the prophet Mohamed may peace be upon him, on Wudu' that whoever adds or diminishes from it, have acted improperly and deprived themselves the reward as much as they decreased the repetitions in the Wudu'. In essence, the lexical meaning of the term circles around displacing something in the wrong place, or to deprive someone from something be it a reward or a right, it also conveys the meaning of exceeding a proper limit or injustice.

¹⁴ <http://arabiclexicon.hawramani.com/%d8%b8%d9%8e%d9%84%d9%8e%d9%85%d9%8e/?book=9>

¹⁵ <http://arabiclexicon.hawramani.com/%d8%b8%d9%8e%d9%84%d9%8e%d9%85%d9%8e/?book=9>

While the term *zulm* الظلم is often translated as ‘oppression’ and “injustice”, the complex term carries a multitude of connotations, The term, along with its derivatives are mentioned in the Qur’an approximately 299 times¹⁶ in various forms, conveying different meanings which does not only connect to legal and ethical transgression but also covers the spiritual ones. The following chart will illustrate few of the derivatives of the term and their grammatical forms, some of which will be the case study to comprehensively compile the various meanings of the term in the Qur’anic context:

Derivative of the term & forms	Arabic Source Text	Surah
- Verb form	1- قَالَ أَمَّا مَنْ ظَلَمَ فَسَوْفَ نُعَذِّبُهُ ثُمَّ يُرَدُّ إِلَىٰ رَبِّهِ فَيُعَذِّبُهُ عَذَابًا نُكَرًا.	1- Al-Kahf:87
	2- يَكَادُ الْبَرْقُ يَخْطَفُ أَبْصَارَهُمْ كُلَّمَا أَضَاءَ لَهُمْ مَشَوْا فِيهِ وَإِذَا أَظْلَمَ عَلَيْهِمْ قَامُوا وَلَوْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ لَذَهَبَ بِسَمْعِهِمْ وَأَبْصَارِهِمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ.	2- Al-Baqarah:20
	3- أَلَمْ تَرَ إِلَى الَّذِينَ يَزْكُونَ أَنْفُسَهُمْ بِاللَّهِ يَزْكِي مَنْ يَشَاءُ وَلَا يُظْلَمُونَ فَتِيلًا	3-An-Nissa:49

¹⁶<https://www.islamweb.net/ar/article/218065/%D9%85%D8%B5%D8%B7%D9%84%D8%AD-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B8%D9%84%D9%85-%D9%81%D9%8A-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%82%D8%B1%D8%A2%D9%86-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%83%D8%B1%D9%8A%D9%85>

	4- مَثَلٌ مَا يَنْفِقُونَ فِي هَذِهِ الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا كَمَثَلِ رِيحٍ فِيهَا صِرٌّ أَصَابَتْ حَرْثَ قَوْمٍ ظَلَمُوا أَنْفُسَهُمْ فَأَهْلَكَتْهُمَا وَمَا ظَلَمَهُمْ اللَّهُ وَلَكِنْ أَنْفُسَهُمْ يَظْلِمُونَ 5- وَلَوْ أَنَّ لِكُلِّ نَفْسٍ ظَلَمَتْ مَا فِي الْأَرْضِ لَأُفْتِنَتْ بِهِ وَأَسْرُوا النَّدَامَةَ لَمَّا رَأَوْا الْعَذَابَ وَفُضِيَ بَيْنَهُمْ بِالْقِسْطِ وَهُمْ لَا يُظْلَمُونَ 6- وَمَا ظَلَمُونَا وَلَكِنْ كَانُوا أَنْفُسَهُمْ يَظْلِمُونَ 7- كُنَّا الْجَنَّتَيْنِ آتَتْ أَكْلَهَا وَلَمْ تَظْلَمْ مِنْهُ شَيْئًا وَفَجَّرْنَا خِلَالَهُمَا نَهْرًا	4-Al-Imran:117 5-Yunus:54 6-Al-Baqarah:57 7-Al-Kahf:33
- Active participle form	8- وَدَخَلَ جَنَّتَهُ وَهُوَ ظَالِمٌ لِنَفْسِهِ قَالَ مَا أَظُنُّ أَنْ تَبِيدَ هَذِهِ أَبَدًا. 9- وَإِذْ وَعَدْنَا مُوسَىٰ أَرْبَعِينَ لَيْلَةً ثُمَّ اتَّخَذْتُمُ الْعِجْلَ مِنْ بَعْدِهِ وَأَنْتُمْ ظَالِمُونَ. 10- وَكَذَلِكَ أَخَذُكَ رَبُّكَ إِذَا أَخَذَ الْقُرْآنَ	8- Al-Kahf:35 9-Al-Baqarah:51 10- Hud:102

	وَهِيَ ظَالِمَةٌ إِنَّ أَخَذَهُ أَلِيمٌ شَدِيدٌ 11- وَمَنْ أَظْلَمُ مِمَّنِ افْتَرَىٰ عَلَى اللَّهِ الْكَذِبَ وَهُوَ يُدْعَىٰ إِلَى الْإِسْلَامِ ۗ وَاللَّهُ لَا يَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ الظَّالِمِينَ. 12- ... قَالُوا جَزَاؤُهُ مَنْ وَجَدَ فِي رَحْلِهِ فَهُوَ جَزَاؤُهُ كَذَلِكَ نَجْزِي الظَّالِمِينَ	11- As-Saf:8 12-Yusuf:75
- Noun form	13- فَبِظُلْمٍ مِّنَ الَّذِينَ هَادُوا حَرَّمْنَا عَلَيْهِمْ طَيِّبَاتٍ أُحِلَّت لَّهُمْ وَبِصَدِّهِمْ عَنْ سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ كَثِيرًا. 14- الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَلَمْ يَلْبِسُوا إِيمَانَهُمْ بِظُلْمٍ أُولَٰئِكَ لَهُمُ الْأَمْنُ وَهُمْ مُّهْتَدُونَ 15- وَالسَّارِقُ وَالسَّارِقَةُ فَاقْطَعُوا أَيْدِيَهُمَا، فَمَنْ تَابَ مِن بَعْدِ ظُلْمِهِ وَأَصْلَحَ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ يَتُوبُ عَلَيْهِ ۗ إِنَّ اللَّهَ غَفُورٌ رَّحِيمٌ 16- -- وَإِذْ قَالَ لُقْمَانُ لِابْنِهِ وَهُوَ يَعِظُهُ يَا بُنَيَّ لَا تُشْرِكْ بِاللَّهِ إِنَّ الشِّرْكَ لَظُلْمٌ عَظِيمٌ	13- Nissa:160 14-Alan'am:82 15-Al-Ma'ida:39-40 16-Luqman;13
- Noun resembling to a	17- إِنَّ الَّذِينَ تَوَفَّيْنَاهُمُ الْغُلَامَ ظَالِمًا	17- An-Nisa:97

verb	أَنفُسِهِمْ قَالُوا فِيمَ كُنْتُمْ قَالُوا كُنَّا مُسْتَضْعَفِينَ فِي الْأَرْضِ قَالُوا أَلَمْ تَكُنْ أَرْضُ اللَّهِ وَسِعَةً فَتُهَاجِرُوا فِيهَا فَأُولَٰئِكَ مَأْوَاهُمْ جَهَنَّمُ وَسَاءَتْ مَصِيرًا	
- Passive participle	18- وَلَا تَقْتُلُوا النَّفْسَ الَّتِي حَرَّمَ اللَّهُ إِلَّا بِالْحَقِّ وَمَنْ قُتِلَ مَظْلُومًا فَقَدْ جَعَلْنَا لَوْلِيَّهِ سُلْطَانًا فَلَا يَسْرِفُ فِي الْفَتْلِ إِنَّهُ كَانَ مَنْصُورًا.	18- Al-Isra:33
- Adverb or <i>Maf'ul Mutlaq</i>	19- إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يَأْكُلُونَ أَمْوَالَ الْيَتَامَى ظُلْمًا...	19- An-nissa:10
- Adjective in the exaggerated form ‘fa’al) or <i>Sighat Al-Mubalagh</i>	20- ذَلِكَ بِمَا قَدَّمْتَ أَيْدِيكُمْ وَأَنَّ اللَّهَ لَيْسَ بِظَلَّامٍ لِّلْعَبِيدِ	20-Al-Anfal:51

The above list contains different contexts in which the term has been used, some of the verses (3-4-5-6-20) the term was directly associated to Allah SWT in the negative form, emphasizing that Allah SWT does not commit injustice toward His creatures, in other verses (4-8-9-11-14-17), the term was linked to the self (النفس), highlighting the injustice an individual can commit to their own soul, some other instances (12-15-18-19) the term was reflecting the

injustice committed by individuals toward others, as in depriving others of their right. The following analysis shall cover the different meanings the term *zulm* الظلم carries in each context.

- **Denial of committing *zulm* ‘injustice’ in any kind or form by the Almighty Allah:**

Sample 1:

- ذَلِك بِمَا قَدَّمْتُ أَيْدِيكُمْ وَأَنَّ اللَّهَ لَيْسَ بِظَلَّامٍ لِلْعَبِيدِ. (الأنفال:51)

Tafssir Al-Wassit (1996) explains the verse as follows:

"أى: ذلك الذي نزل بكم- أيها الكافرون- من الضرب وعذاب النار، سببه ما قدمته أيديكم من عمل سيء، وفعل قبيح، وقول منكر، وجود للحق. وأن الله- تعالى- ليس بذی ظلم لكم ولا لغيركم، لأن حكمته- سبحانه- قد اقتضت ألا يعذب أحدا إلا بسبب ذنب ارتكبه، وجرم اقترفه." (p.126)

The term *zulm* الظلم in the verse under-study is employed as an adjective in the exaggerated form fa'al (*Sighat Al-Mubalagh*) which means extremely unjust or oppressive, the term is preceded by a negation tool ليس (*is not*) which serves as an indicator of the absence or non-existence of the subject attribute, which denies the trait of the term *zulm* الظلم attributed to the subject of the verse Allah SWT, therefore, the appropriate approach to the translation of this case should reflect the emphasis on the negation of any form of extreme injustice when the term is syntactically associated to the Almighty Allah. The exegesis clarifies that the punishment described is the consequences of the individuals wrongdoings rather than the divine injustice, and that Allah SWT does not misplace the punishment or the reward, for He is the source of the divine justice and fairness.

Sample 2:

أَلَمْ تَرَ إِلَى الَّذِينَ يَزْكُونَ أَنْفُسَهُمْ بِاللَّهِ يَزْكِي مَنْ يَشَاءُ وَلَا يُظْلَمُونَ فَتِيلًا . (النساء:49)

Tafssir Al-Qortobi (1384AH) explains the verse as follows:

“وقوله وَلَا يُظْلَمُونَ فَتِيلًا بيان لكمال عدله- سبحانه- وأنه لا يظلم أحدا من خلقه لا قليلا ولا كثيرا. والفتيل: هو الخيط الذي يكون في شق النواة. وكثيرا ما يضرب به المثل في القلة والحقارة. أى أن هؤلاء الذين يزكون أنفسهم بغير حق يعاقبون على هذا الكذب بما يستحقون من عقاب عادل لا ظلم معه لأنه- سبحانه- لا يظلم أحدا من عباده شيئا بل يجازى كل إنسان بما هو أهل له

The term in this verse is utilized as a verb in the passive negative form, the negative particle “لا” (are not) preceding the passive voice of the present tense “يُظْلَمُونَ” emphasizes that the action of committing injustice will not occur, it negates the chance of injustice befalling those who lie about performing good deeds, and the use of the metaphor “فتيلاً” emphasizes that Allah SWT does not **decrease or increase** the punishment or the reward to those who deserve it, not even the slightest amount - resembling the thread of the date (فتيلاً) - of injustice will occur, the term الظلم in this case bears the connotation of **decreasing or increasing** the amount of the punishment to those committing sins, and that every individual receives the precise and exact recompense they deserve according to their doings and deeds, eliminating any chance of unfair treatment by the Almighty Allah.

Sample 3:

مَثَلُ مَا يُنْفِقُونَ فِي هَذِهِ الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا كَمَثَلِ رِيحٍ فِيهَا صِرٌّ أَصَابَتْ حَرْثَ قَوْمٍ ظَلَمُوا أَنْفُسَهُمْ فَأَهْلَكَتْهُ وَمَا ظَلَمَهُمُ اللَّهُ وَلَكِنْ أَنْفُسَهُمْ يَظْلِمُونَ. (ال عمران:117)

Tafssir Al-Muyassar (1430 AH) explains the verse as follows:

"مَثَلُ مَا يُنْفِقُ الْكَافِرُونَ فِي وَجْهِ الْخَيْرِ فِي هَذِهِ الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا وَمَا يُؤْمَلُونَهُ مِنْ ثَوَابٍ، كَمَثَلِ رِيحٍ فِيهَا بَرْدٌ شَدِيدٌ هَبَّتْ عَلَى زَرْعٍ قَوْمٌ كَانُوا يَرْجُونَ خَيْرَهُ، وَبِسَبَبِ ذُنُوبِهِمْ لَمْ تُبْقِ الرِّيحُ مِنْهُ شَيْئًا. وَهَؤُلَاءِ الْكَافِرُونَ لَا يَجِدُونَ فِي الْآخِرَةِ ثَوَابًا، وَمَا ظَلَمَهُمُ اللَّهُ بِذَلِكَ، وَلَكِنْهُمْ ظَلَمُوا أَنْفُسَهُمْ بِكُفْرِهِمْ وَعَصْيَانِهِمْ." (p.65)

Tafssir Al-Qortobi (1384 AH):

قال الله تعالى: - مَا ظَلَمَهُمُ اللَّهُ - بِذَلِكَ - لَكِنْ أَنْفُسَهُمْ يَظْلِمُونَ - بِالْكَفْرِ وَالْمَعْصِيَةِ وَمَنْعِ حَقِّ اللَّهِ تَعَالَى وَقِيلَ: ظَلَمُوا أَنْفُسَهُمْ بِأَرْعَا فِي غَيْرِ وَقْتِ الزَّرَاعَةِ أَوْ فِي غَيْرِ مَوْضِعِهَا فَأَدَّبَهُمُ اللَّهُ تَعَالَى، لَوْضَعَهُمُ الشَّيْءَ فِي غَيْرِ مَوْضِعِهِ، كَمَا هُوَ الْمَهْدِيُّ. (p.178)

The exegetical explanations provided above explains the metaphor used in the verse, meaning that the disbelievers spend in this world and hope for a return, which is similar to a

violent wind carrying great cold that slays the tillage of those who have wrought sins. So that wind leaves nothing of their substance. In the Hereafter, these disbelievers will be given nothing as a recompense for their deeds. And Allah has not done them any injustice; rather, they have brought the injustice upon themselves by way of their disbelief, denial and disobedience. So the wind here is a metaphor for the event of the Day of Judgement and the harsh penalty that will befall the disbelievers in this world and the next. It will be as if they have been struck by a harsh wind carrying a great harm that obliterated their goods and what they have harvested. Hence, the wind will not leave any of their wealth. Al-Qurtubi mentioned adds that Allah did not unjustly forbid them the fruit of their deeds; rather, they did injustice to themselves by way of their disbelief, denial and disobedience. There is another interpretation which is that they did injustice to themselves by way of growing their harvests early or late, or sowing them in places other than where they should have sown. This is the literal meaning of the term *الظلم* *zulm*, and Allah rewarded them for placing their crops in an improper location. The denial of any kind of injustice ascribed to Allah is a common theological theme in the Qur'an, stressing the total and divine justice of Allah. The expression *الظلم* *injustice* is always introduced by a negation particle which denies any attribute of injustice, indicating that any kind of injustice is contrary to His nature. This linguistic point is important because it shows that all so-called injustices are the effect of human actions, and not of divine will. The precise negation of such particles in such cases lays stress on the Qur'anic assertion that the rules and provisions of Allah are in reality just and equitable, and He is to be cleared of all ascription of injustice.

- Self-injustice *zulm* 'nafs (ظلم النفس)

Sample 1

- وَإِذْ قَالَ لُقْمَانُ لِابْنِهِ وَهُوَ يَعِظُهُ يَا بُنَيَّ لَا تُشْرِكْ بِاللَّهِ إِنَّ الشِّرْكَ لَظُلْمٌ عَظِيمٌ. - لقمان:13
- الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَلَمْ يَلْبِسُوا إِيمَانَهُمْ بِظُلْمٍ أُولَئِكَ لَهُمُ الْأَمْنُ وَهُمْ مُهْتَدُونَ. الأنعام:82
- وَإِذْ وَعَدْنَا مُوسَىٰ أَرْبَعِينَ لَيْلَةً نُّؤْتِيكَهُمُ الْفَلَاحَ إِنَّمَا اتَّخَذْتُمُ الْمُجْرِمِينَ نِسِيًّا وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا رَبُّهُمْ لَهُمُ الْمَغْنَمُ. - البقرة:51

In Surat Luqman:13 and Al-An'am:82; the two verses share the definition of the term ظلم as *Shirk*, which means associating other partners with Allah SWT, this act is seen as a great sin upon oneself, according to Tafssir Al-Muyassar:

"واذكر - أيها الرسول - نصيحة لقمان لابنه حين قال له واعظاً: يا بني لا تشرك بالله فتظلم نفسك؛ إن الشرك لأعظم الكبائر وأبشعها." (p.413)

Tafssir Al-Qortobi:

لَمَّا نَزَلَتْ "الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَلَمْ يَلْبِسُوا إِيمَانَهُمْ بِظُلْمٍ" «٢» [الأنعام: 82] شَقَّ ذَلِكَ عَلَى أَصْحَابِ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ وَقَالُوا: أَئِنَّا لَا يَظْلِمُ نَفْسِهِ؟ فَقَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ: لَيْسَ هُوَ كَمَا تَظُنُّونَ إِنَّمَا هُوَ كَمَا قَالَ لُقْمَانُ لِابْنِهِ: (يَا بُنَيَّ لَا تُشْرِكْ بِاللَّهِ إِنَّ الشِّرْكَ لَظُلْمٌ عَظِيمٌ).

Tafssir Al-Qortobi adds that Luqman's words to his son, show that *Shirk* (association of other partners with Allah) is the greatest **injustice to oneself**. These words prove that polytheism is not just a theological mistake, but an existential and moral wrong of a greatest magnitude. In hadith of the Prophet Muhammad (may peace be upon him), the companions were perplexed by the expression "who do not include their faith with injustice (ظلم)". The Prophet explained that the injustice الظلم referred to was *Shirk*, as mentioned by Luqman. The companions were reassured by this explanation as they were afraid that every sin hardened the heart and took one away from faith.(p.62)

Based on the above contextualisation, The Arabic term "ظلم" implies moral and spiritual transgression, the two selected verses share the definition of the term as being *Shirk*, which is a form of injustice committed against oneself because it misleads the soul far away from its true purpose in this worldly life, by committing *Shirk*, individuals cause harm to themselves both spiritually and morally. Translators must ensure that the translation captures this richness. Using phrases like "Great injustice to oneself" in conjunction with explanatory comments might serve to express the full meaning and severity of *Shirk* as self-injustice and a grievous sin. In the Qur'anic verses Luqman 13 and Al-An'am 82, the term "ظلم" is explicitly connected with *Shirk* so the gravity of the matter is emphasized. Al-Qurtobi's supports this understanding pinpointing that this knowledge is critical for correctly reading the passages and comforting the companions, and the believers who are concerned about their faith. In the process of translation, it is a must to adequately convey the connotation of the term "ظلم" in its complete religious and social context. This entails exposing *Shirk* as the ultimate self-injustice and a severe moral sin while preserving the original Arabic text's purity and depth. This terminological precision is evident in Surat Al-baqarah:51, according to Tafssir Al-Muyassar:

"واذكروا نعمتنا عليكم: حين واعدنا موسى أربعين ليلة لإنزال التوراة هدايةً ونورًا لكم، فإذا بكم تنتهزون فرصة غيابه هذه المدة القليلة، وتجعلون العجل الذي صنعتموه بأيديكم معبودًا لكم من دون الله - وهذا أشنع الكفر بالله- وأنتم ظالمون باتخاذكم العجل إلهًا." (p.8)

The verse highlights that worshiping other creatures other than Allah is a major injustice. According to the interpretation in Tafsir al-Muyassar, this verse reminds Banu Israel of Allah's kindness when He appointed Moses for forty nights to receive and bring the Torah as guidance and enlightenment to their souls. During Moses' absence, they seized the opportunity to create and worship an animal shaped like a bull, which was created by their own hands, this act is

considered "أشنع الكفر بالله" (the most terrible disbelief in Allah), emphasizing the cruelty of their sin. This act of *zulm* ظلم harmed their relationship with Allah and marked them as wrongdoers (ظالمون) to themselves because they deprived themselves of the kindness and guidance sent to them by Allah in various tangible forms (the miracles).

The current study illustrates that the term *zulm* ظلم in Islamic jurisprudence has significant theological, moral, and legal significance that are inherently integrated in Islamic culture and practice. In many passages of the Qur'an as well as the Hadith, *zulm* الظلم is used as an umbrella term that covers a variety of forms of injustice, specified within the context, or in the sunnah which adds clarifications to the existing verses as seen in the case of surate Luqman. The meanings of the term surpass the social and legal transgressions to include the spiritual ones, such as Shirk. Nevertheless, translating "ظلم" into English presents major semantic difficulty because of the lack of a similar concept that reflects its whole sense. The English word "injustice" often refers to a breach or violation of rights or unjust treatment in a socio-legal context, rather than the profound spiritual and ethical aspects that the Islamic concept "*zulm* ظلم" incorporates in Islamic jurisprudence. This distinction often leads to semantic loss since the English translation fails to reflect the depth and breadth of the original term. The weakness of the English term "injustice" to completely capture the Islamic dimension of "*zulm*" as it is conveyed in the source Arabic text, underlines a major challenge in translation studies, especially when dealing with such specialized concepts that have strong roots in certain religious and cultural contexts. Therefore, to overcome this semantic loss, translators must use special techniques such as explanatory footnotes extracted from exegesis, and contextualisations, or even preserve the original term with an explanatory comment. Establishing that the translated text accurately conveys the various complexities of "*zulm*" is critical for sustaining the authenticity of Islamic

legal and theological discourse in multicultural environments. This difficulty highlights the greater complexity of translating religious and culturally distinct notions, requiring a nuanced and knowledgeable approach to retain the true meaning and richness of the original holy message in the universal target language.

Sample 2:

- وَمَنْ أَظْلَمُ مِمَّنِ افْتَرَىٰ عَلَى اللَّهِ الْكُذْبَ وَهُوَ يُدْعَىٰ إِلَى الْإِسْلَامِ ۗ وَاللَّهُ لَا يَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ الظَّالِمِينَ. الصف:8

Tafssir Al-Muyassar:

ولا أحد أشد ظلماً وعدواناً ممن اختلق على الله الكذب، وجعل له شركاء في عبادته، وهو يُدعى إلى الدخول في الإسلام وإخلاص العبادة لله وحده. والله لا يوفق الذين ظلموا أنفسهم بالكفر والشرك، إلى ما فيه فلاحهم. (p.552)

The term "ظلم" in this verse is used to indicate an extreme form of sin, that is fabricating and announcing lies and falsehood against Allah, and ignoring the call to Islam. As explained by Tafsir Al-Muyassar, this verse highlights that no one is more cruel and unjust than those who fabricate lies about Allah, adopting partners aside Him despite being advised to follow the religion of Islam and to entirely devote commitment to Allah SWT. This type of *zulm* includes both intellectual and hypocrisy, which are considered significant spiritual and moral sins in Islamic provisions. In this sense, the term "ظلم" refers to fundamental moral and spiritual wrongdoings besides social or legal injustices. It means the intentional choice of rejecting sacred truth, propagating lies, and adopting the traits of hypocrites, these acts are considered the highest level of *zulm* since it leads oneself and others astray from holy salvation. Such semantic distinctions illustrate the difficulties encountered in translation when the cultural and religious significance of terms can be lost or weakened.

- Injustice to others *zulm an-nas* (ظلم الناس)

Sample 1:

- السَّارِقُ وَالسَّارِقَةُ فَاقْطَعُوا أَيْدِيَهُمْ، فَمَنْ تَابَ مِنْ بَعْدِ ظُلْمِهِ وَأَصْلَحَ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ يَتُوبُ عَلَيْهِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ.

المائدة: 39-40

- قَالُوا جَزَاؤُهُ مَنْ وُجِدَ فِي رَحْلِهِ فَهُوَ جَزَاؤُهُ كَذَلِكَ نَجْزِي الظَّالِمِينَ. يوسف: 75

In surate Al-Ma'ida:39-40, the term ظلم is attached to a personal pronoun "ظلمه" (*zulmihī*: his injustice ' which serves to refer to the thieves and describe their act of theft as an injustice, Tafssir al-Muyassar explains the verse as follows :

"والسارق والسارقة فاقطعوا أيديهما بمقتضى الشرع، مجازاة لهما على أخذهما أموال الناس بغير حق، وعقوبة يمنع الله بها غيرهما أن يصنع مثل صنيعهما. والله عزيز في ملكه، حكيم في أمره ونهيه." (p.114)

The theft in the verse is described as a form of zulm, which is taking other peoples' money or property without permission or out of transgression, this is considered a grave breach upon the rights of others. Surate Yusuf:75 shares the same definition of zulm as theft and describes the thieves as committing injustice *zalimin* ظالمين, Tafssir al-muyassar clarifies this concept in his explanation:

"قال إخوة يوسف: جزاء السارق مَنْ وُجِدَ المسروق في رحله فهو جزاؤه. أي يسلم بسرقة إلى مَنْ سرق منه حتى يكون عبداً عنده، مثل هذا الجزاء -وهو الاسترقاق- نجزي الظالمين بالسرقة، وهذا ديننا وسنتنا في أهل السرقة." (p.244)

The context demonstrates that the Islamic connotation of the term is multifaceted and contains multiple layers of meanings, that includes spiritual, moral, physical, individual and social impacts. In both verses the term addresses the theft as an act of injustice that causes harm

and fairness upon others, depriving them from their rights. In this sense, translators must appropriately express the cultural and ethical meaning that the term "zulm" bears in Islamic jurisprudence, especially its connection with ethical violations such as theft and the larger societal and moral disturbance it creates, as well as the spiritual harm it causes within the individual, this notion of zulm doesn't not only require literal translation but also providing contextualization and explanatory comments to help enhance the complete meaning of the term and result in a comprehensive reading of the translation of the source text.

Sample 2:

-وَلَا تَقْتُلُوا أَنْفُسَ الَّتِي حَرَّمَ اللَّهُ إِلَّا بِالْحَقِّ وَمَنْ قُتِلَ مَظْلُومًا فَقَدْ جَعَلْنَا لَوْلِيَّهِ سُلْطَانًا فَلَا يَسْرِفُ فِي الْقَتْلِ إِنَّهُ كَانَ مَنْصُورًا.

الإسراء:33

Tafssir Al-muyassar:

ولا تقتلوا النفس التي حرم الله قتلها إلا بالحق الشرعي كالقصاص أو رجم الزاني المحصن أو قتل المرتد. ومن قُتل بغير حق شرعي فقد جعلنا لولي أمره من وارث أو حاكم حجة في طلب قتل قاتله أو الدية، ولا يصح لولي أمر المقتول أن يجاوز حدَّ الله في القصاص كأن يقتل بالواحد اثنين أو جماعة، أو يُمَثَّل بالقاتل... (p.285)

Based on the exegesis and context of the verse, the term “ظلماً” refers to the act of killing an innocent soul; which is considered a grave act of injustice upon others, because it takes away one’s right of living away, without a solid reasonable justification as mentioned in the verse, such as the Qisas, adultery, or the execution of an apostate, these three cases are the only exceptions that allow such an act of taking away a life in the Islamic law in order to prevent any arbitrary acts of violence.

As seen in the analysis conducted on the term الظلم, the context in which the term is used plays a significant role in exhibiting its polysemous features and modes of application. The analyzed verses highlighted the different meanings grasped when the term الظلم appears, the term ظلم in the Qur'an has several connotations, ranging from associating partners with Allah (Shirk) to different acts of injustice against oneself such as hypocrisy and spreading lies about Allah, and injustice to others such as theft, killing the innocent, adultery, exceeding the limits when executing the Qisas. Based on these evidences we constate that this multidimensional word has significant moral and theological roots in Islamic jurisprudence, understanding these semantic nuances is key to produce an accurate translation and preserve the sanctity of the holy message. Hence, translators bear the responsibility of correctly communicating and conveying these subtle and meanings across linguistic and cultural barriers. Effective tactics, that this study suggest, include relying on exegesis, providing contextual clarifications, utilizing consistent and contextually appropriate vocabulary, providing further explanations, and being culturally sensitive to the term's connotations in both Islamic and non-Islamic instances. Using these tactics, translators can maintain the rich meanings of "ظلم" while also ensuring that its ethical and religious value is adequately transmitted to a culturally-varied audience.

3.1.6 Translation of the term *zulm* الظلم in Surat Al-An'am (6:82)

Arabic source text	Yusuf Ali Translation	Rashad Khalifa Translation	Abdel Haleem Translation
الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَلَمْ يَلْبِسُوا إِيمَانَهُمْ بِظُلْمٍ أُولَٰئِكَ لَهُمُ الْأَمْنُ وَهُمْ مُهْتَدُونَ. -	It is those who believe and confuse not their beliefs with	[6:82] Those who believe, and do not pollute their belief	It is those who have faith, and do not mix their faith with

الأنعام: 82	<u>wrong</u> that are (truly) in security for they are on (right) guidance.	<u>with idol worship,</u> have deserved the perfect security, and they are truly guided.	<u>idolatry,</u> a who will be secure, and it is they who are rightly guided.
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As seen in the previous terminological analysis of the term الظلم *zulm* in Surat Al-An'am (6:82), The context of the verse indicates that the *term* الظلم *zulm* refers to associating partners with Allah (Shirk), which is an important concept as identified in the exegesis Tafsir Al-Qortobi when the companions were confused on the nature of الظلم *zulm*, the prophet Mohammed (may peace be upon him) clarified that it refers to the sin of associating partners with Allah, this context is essential in the process of translation to ensure a faithful and appropriate rendering of the intended meaning, thus providing an accurate reading of the verse by the target readers. The present discussion will examine how the polysemous nature of the term الظلم *zulm* was handled in the three translations, and to what degree the translators succeeded in preserving its theological and spiritual significance. This analysis is fundamental to comprehending the semantic depth of the term الظلم *zulm* in Islamic jurisprudence and its potential of mistranslation or transformation in the process of translation to English, thereby highlighting the challenges encountered in dealing with such specialized Islamic terms.

1- Yusuf Ali adopt the word ‘ wrong’ as an equivalent for the term الظلم *zulm*, which is a poor choice given the very general nature of the word, it does not specify the precise connotation of الظلم *zulm* in the Qur’anic context, which implicitly refers to *Shirk*, This generalisation causes

semantic loss and confusion for the target audience, and overlooks the heavy weight the concept of الظلم *zulm* in the original text as well as the Islamic culture.

2- Rashad Khalifa uses ‘ idol worship ‘ which is a more direct term specifying and explaining the type of الظلم *zulm* mentioned in the verse. This approach reduces the semantic loss by aligning with the exegesis which explains the term الظلم *zulm* as *Shirk*. The choice of wording also reduces the broader forms of الظلم *zulm* as seen in the previous analysis which include theft, adultery, self-sabotage and transgressions....

3- Abdel Haleem also contextualizes the term الظلم *zulm* by using ‘ idolatry’ as an equivalent to convey associating other partners, or idols, with Allah SWT. This approach secures the term’s precise significance within the context of the verse, hence, reducing the chance of translation loss.

In the process of translation, it is essential to find the balance between the faithfulness and comprehensibility in the target text. The technique adopted by Yusuf Ali produces ambiguity and causes confusion to the target reader, due to the general meanings the word ‘ wrong’ introduces. This equivalent opted for fails to capture the holy message of the severity of *Shirk*. Unlike the approaches used by Rashad Khalifa and Abdel Haleem, of specifying and contextualizing the term, using the precise meaning intended in the Qur’anic verse which is forbidding the sin of idolatry or associating other partners with Allah SWT, therefore, the two translations succeeded in securing faithfulness between the source text and the target text.

IV-Conclusion

The process of translating the Qur'an into English presents a multitude of challenges, including the polysemous nature of many of the Arabic terms and their deep cultural and religious significance rooted within the Islamic culture. Terms in the Qur'an hold numerous layers of meaning that cannot be simply conveyed by single-word equivalents in foreign languages, as well as the lack of such religious concepts in foreign cultures that are more difficult to translate, this requires putting explanatory sentences or asserting definitions or resorting to transliteration with explanations of the concepts. This specialized terminology of the Qur'an may not have direct equivalents in universal or secular cultures, consequently, it stresses the issue of translatability and increasing the chance for significant loss of meaning and nuances, this ultimately causes the target reader to fall into misunderstanding of the holy texts's full depth and significance.

Throughout the present study, these translation challenges were addressed in the monolingual examination of the three selected terms; الشهادة *Al-shahada*, التأويل *Al-Ta'wil*, الظلم *zulm*. The first analysis observed that the term الشهادة *Al-shahada* in the Qur'an surpasses the general lexical meanings which are the presence, acquiring knowledge, informing and honesty in revealing knowledge, and adds layers of meanings such as the prophetic task to confirm the faith of the believers, acknowledgment of the holy revelation, and the acknowledgment of the nations of the receipt of the holy message delivered through god's messengers. These layers of meanings are inherently rooted within the Islamic jurisprudence, and underscore the challenge of bridging the linguistic and cultural differences between the holy message communicated through the source Arabic text and the universality of cultures of the target audience.

Throughout the comparative study of the three English translations of the term الشهادة *Al-shahada*, The study detected varying levels of success in accurately conveying the specialized meaning of the term الشهادة *Al-shahada*; The translation of Yusuf Ali faithfully kept the gravity of the events mentioned in the verse, and the formality of the source text, however; it lacked the specialized features inherent in the original term. As for Rashad khalifa's attempt, he was successful in contextualizing and explaining the verse using notes between brackets, but he also did not highlight the profound implications of the prophetic witness. Lastly, and through the use of a rhetorical question, Abdel Haleem's translation succeeded in shedding light on the prophetic accountability, however, the translation still lacked the full richness of the term الشهادة *Al-shahada*.

The second analysis observed that the term التأويل *Ta'wil* carries special significance in Arabic and in Islamic jurisprudence, transcending the common meaning as mere 'interpretation', to encompass the actualization and realization of Allah's wise will. The present study discussed the multifaceted nature of the term التأويل *Ta'wil* in different contexts, some of which it was related to the actualization of the events mentioned in the Qur'ann, others were connected to the science of honest visions and actualization of the foreseen events in the honest visions, and other contexts which the term referred to the consequences and positive outcomes of actions .

The translation of Surat Al-Kahf (18:78) by Yusuf Ali, Rashad Khalifa, and Abddel Haleem demonstrated the instances of translation loss when dealing with polysemous specialized terms and the challenges encountered in conveying such concepts as complex as the term التأويل *Ta'wil* in English. The three translations succeeded to convey the overall meaning of the verse, however they decreased the broader specialized implications of the term in question. The use of 'interpretation' by Yusuf Ali, 'explain' by Rashad Khalifa, and 'meaning' by Abdel

haleem, each choice of wording exhibited degrees of translation loss, primarily because of the limitations of these units in conveying the specialized dimension of manifestation, realization and ultimate outcome. The translation of these specialized terms presents considerable issues in the field of translation studies especially in regards to sacred texts, because this process requires a delicate balance between language faithfulness and conceptual correctness. The struggle to completely translate Ta'wil without losing its essential meaning highlights the larger issue of translation loss in religious translation.

As seen in the analysis, relying on exegesis is essential to fully understand the complete meaning of the verses, and future translators could benefit from exegesis as references to enhance the quality and accuracy of their translations, and also pave the way for a facilitated understanding and appreciation of the holy message among non-Arabic readers.

The third analysis of the term *الظلم* *zulm* observed that it carries multiple meanings in Qur'anic contexts, varying from committing sins and wrong doings against oneself and against others. This polysemous feature hinders the process of capturing the full connotation of the term *الظلم* *zulm*, which is a crucial concept in Islam that needs to be addressed accurately to the target audience. The comparative analysis of the three translations of Surat Al-An'am 6:82 found that Yusuf Ali chose the word 'wrong' as an equivalent for the term *الظلم* *zulm*, and that is a broad approach which weakens the term's conceptual implications, causing ambiguity on the nature of 'wrong' discussed in the verse, and consequently overlooking the intended meaning that is the Qur'anic reference to *Shirk*, hence, Yusuf Ali fell in the semantic loss in his approach to the verse. In contrast, Rashad Khalifa and Abdel Haleem dodged the ambiguity and adopted a more context-specific approach, rendering the term *الظلم* *zulm* as 'idol worship' and 'idolatry' which convey the intended meaning of the verse as explained by the exegesis. The two translations

succeeded in effectively communicating the holy message to the target audience and thus, minimized the chances of falling in semantic loss.

To conclude the findings of this research, the analysis demonstrated that incorporating exegetical approach plays a significant role to enhance the accuracy of the translation, mainly when dealing with specialized terms that are specific to the source language and culture, that way translators will be able to gain a proper understanding of the context of the verse as well as the implicit and explicit meanings of the terms used. This approach guarantees that the translated texts are in line with the source text and they provide e a comprehensible reading of the target texts.

In order to reduce translation loss, and that is a fundamental question raised by the present study, it is necessary to incorporate exegetical collaborations, whereas translators and scholars of Islamic studies could produce annoations or works that address complex specialized terms, or glossaries of religious concepts to assist translators and readers in understanding the Islamic concepts and jargon. Lastly, this study emphasizes the critical role of exegesis in understanding religious texts. Without such academic tools, translations of terms like "zulm" risk losing their deep meanings, reducing the text's religious and moral significance. As translation studies evolve, it is critical to use such methodologies to retain the richness and originality of sacred texts across languages.

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Translation Part

Abdel Karim and The Riff War

From page 130 to page 167

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Ajedir

The Imgharn Board

Friday Morning

A huge number of tribes attend the General Assembly of the Imgharn board.

Abdelkarim leads the session surrounded by his brother Mohammed and their uncle Abdessalam.

Abdelkarim:

“ In the name of Allah the most gracious, the most merciful, and may Allah’s prayers be upon his most honorable prophet.

Praise be to Allah Who hath guided us to this (felicity): never could we have found guidance had it not been for the guidance of Allah.

My brothers, as you all know, we have written to Sultan Moulay Youssef requesting his aid to resist Christian invasion in our pure lands.

But it seems that he is incapable and powerless...How so?

Moulay Youssef is being watched by his closest assistants, particularly by the great minister Al-Mokri and agents from France and Spain; especially that “ The true Sultan of Morocco is the French general resident Marchal Lyoti” as claimed by the English people.

Hence, from now on, we shall not seek help from anybody, we will free the Rif by ourselves and by the help of our Lord Allah. To achieve this, the troops must leave their childish conflicts behind and unite to become one unified troop that moves forward to combat our common enemy in a disciplined organized manner, we choose to die as martyrs rather than to live as slaves.

Our Lord Let not our hearts deviate now after You have guided us but grant us mercy from Your Own Presence; for You are the Grantor of bounties without measure.

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Ajedir

Six days after the General Assembly

of Imgharn Board

It hasn't been a week on the general assembly of the Imgharn board that the presidents of the troops, who were hesitant to join their counterparts loyal to Abdel Karim, received letters from the general secretary of the board calling out for unity of the judge...

The end of the letter was:

“Oh, ye who believe! When ye meet a force, Be firm, and call God In remembrance much (and often); That ye may prosper, and obey God and His Apostle; And fall into no disputes, Lest ye lose heart And your power depart; And be patient and persevering: For God is with those who patiently persevere”¹⁷

Indeed those are the true words of Allah and He is the Truest in all his words, as he said:

Not if thou hadst spent All that is in the earth, Couldst thou have produced That affection, but God Hath done it: for He Is Exalted in might, Wise.

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Yes, After they received the messages of the general secretary of the Imgharn board, the Sheikhs of the tribes who remained intractable despite the “ Charter of Covenant’ which obligates the minority to join the majority regarding the higher interest of the Riff, accepted the invitation of the Imgharn Board except Timesman Tribe who preferred to stay subjugated to the Spanish flag and imperialism.

The first tribes to swear loyalty for the sake of Abdelakrim were Taferseet, Beni Said, Beni Taouzin, and Isnadt.

The event that warmed the heart of Abdelakarim and boosted the spirits of his fellow supporters was the personal and public presence of the two Ouazzanian commanders, Sidi Ahmedo Sherrif Ouazzani, and Mohamed Sherrif El-Khamlichi, who came to Ajedir to set an example in supporting the victory of the judge.

Concerning the weapons, they were provided by different sources:

- From Melilla, whereas the Spanish officers, who spend twice their salary in one month, steal rifles from weapon stores and sell them to the Riffs.
- From Ceuta, through the Spanish-Moroccan Friendship Association.

¹⁷ Al-Anfal [8:45-46]. (n.d.). In Yusuf Ali (Translation.), Quran. <https://quranyusufali.com/8/>

- From Gibraltar, thanks to the Cold War between Spain and England which seeks to retrieve its active presence in Morocco that was rejected by Paris and Madrid

In this regard, London sends out its intelligence officers to spy under various covers. A vivid example is captain Robert Gordon Canning who is a frequent member of the “ Riff Committee”, a jury from the British civil society search for a cooperation residency “ English- Riffian ” in the different metal square region.

From Tangier, the destination of international smuggling of all kinds, to conclude deals with the great experts in smuggling, Abdelkarim sends his European-like profiles so that they wouldn't be recognized by the spies of Madrid who are engaging with the regular civilians who are the largest community in the cosmopolitan city: their number exceeds forty thousand inhabitants, followed by the Moroccan Jews with fifteen thousand, the French with eight thousand, the Italians with two thousand five hundred, the British with one thousand five hundred, the Portuguese with one thousand two hundred, the Belgian with four hundred fifty, the Americans with three hundred and the Dutch with a hundred and sixty...

2

The General Governor Manuel Selvestre

or

The General Al-Mathbor

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Melilla

The General Governor Palace

On a February morning

In the meeting room, on the stage, the minister of war of the Spanish kingdom, on his right, the general Commis Khordana, former governor-general of the city of Melilla, and on his left, General Silvestre who, shortly, will be officially appointed general governor of the Moroccan borders under the Spanish control.

Manuel Silvestre Fernandez Pantiga y Eleuteria, from a Spanish father and a Cuban mother, is a narcissistic commander, and insanely reckless, and has, just like a cat, seven lives, whereas he miraculously survived death in dozens of battles in the Philippines and Cuba, and his body is distorted from more than sixty scars of wars.

Upon his return, with the rank of colonel, from Cuba to Spain, he was appointed commander of the military base in Larache “ The fifth Spanish Territory” according to the Spanish General Staff in Morocco.

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He was recently sentenced to the death penalty for his involvement in the murder of the Moroccan messenger who was carrying a message addressed to General Damasso Pieringware, the Spanish High Commissioner in Morocco, paving the way for a peace treaty between Spain and Moulay Raissouni governor of the city Assilah, Fahs-Anjra and the Southern-East region of the great tribe of Anjra.

Being an opponent of peace between Moroccans and the Spanish, Silvestre ordered officers to murder the messenger in an ambush at Aqaba Al-Hamra near the “ Crouche Blanco” (the white

crossroads) which separates Tangier and Tetouan, all to prevent the letter from reaching the Higher Commissioner in Tetouan.

However, despite the sentence issued by the military court against him, Silvestre benefited from a royal amnesty from the king who sees in him a national hero and a strong man who is capable of fulfilling the dream of Alfonso XIII; the dream of Africanistas: The Spanish Africa.

The minister of war:

“ Gentlemen,

His Majesty King Alfonso XIII honored me to appoint General Manuel Silvestre a general governor on Melilla in succession to General Commis Khordana.

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General Khordana will be in charge of higher duties in the royal palace, considering the significant constructive work he offered to his country, king, and the royal armed forces (...).

In conclusion, I advise General Manuel Silvestre, the new general governor, and the officers under his command, to be diplomatic toward the people if they wish to keep the Riff and live safely on its lands.

Violence, sooner or later, leads to destruction, because every violence generates counter-violence.”

The General Governor Palace

The Diwan

Evening of the inauguration of the General Governor

Manuel Silvestre and his Vice General “ Felipe Navaro y Ceballos-Escalera, Baron Casada Balyo”, in a meeting with various commanders in the jury of the Local General Staff.

“ Gentlemen,

I advise you to forget the nonsense our minister of war came up with this morning; Do the people of Riff have the minds to distinguish between diplomacy and a stick?! No! Their cattle are smarter than them. Hence, there is no room for diplomacy in dealing with them otherwise they will consider us as weak...”

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Silvestre twists his bushy mustache before proceeding with his speech:

“ Would an officer of his Majesty’s officer, worthy of such an honorable position, listen to the banality coming from the tiny brain of the minister and throw the royal instruction out the window?! If this happens, it will be a crime of insulting The King”.

He taps his right-hand fingertips on a piece of paper on the desk and adds:

This letter was addressed to me by His Majesty the King, responding to my letter, He says:

I have chosen you to be a general governor on Melilla and the strong man who supports the regime, and hereby ordering you to destroy any obstacle that comes your way of invading the Riff and subjugating their people at any cost.

Do as I order and do not mind the minister of war, he is a foolish man.”

He takes a sip of water and then points with his finger to another piece of paper:

“ A note from the Temsman tribe. The rebel Abdelkarim was able to unify and join Sheikhs of tribes with him, even the farthest one Beni Ouriaghel. He also managed to access a huge number of advanced weapons. (A moment of silence) How could this crippled cockroach get advanced weapons ?! From Gibraltar? We have spies in the rock!

From Tangier? Our agents are numerous in the cosmopolitan area! (Brief Silence) I am certain that these are just rumors by Abdelkarim poisoning public opinion so that the Riffians will fear him and join his side.”

He turns to General Nabaro....

Nabaro:

“What if the Temsanis are right?! No matter how it is, the enemy should not be underestimated.”

Silvestre:

“ Let us begin then by constructing advanced centers to confuse the enemy and paralyze his movement... The chiefs of the Corps of Engineers must study the territory and send me their reports... But I want them yesterday!”

3

Battle of Dhar Obaran

1921 June 13,

Dhar Obaran

Before Sunrise

The sun has not yet risen, the weather is warm despite the stillness of the naked night, and the wind is calm upon the waves of the sea, on the plains, and above the majestic mountains.

Under Abdelkarim’s orders, undercover men were in the midst of the trees that cover the bottom of a hill before Dhar Obaran castle, a center of surveillance, was established on the 1st of June, 1921.

The commander and his brother Ahmed, in a dialogue, whispering:

Abdelkarim:

“ Are you sure of Tamsman’s good intentions?”

‘Mhamed:

“ The envoy of the tribal Sheikh informed me that Moulay Mouh has given orders to three hundred cavalrymen to join us without him knowing about the “ Obaran Operation”.

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Abdelkarim:

“ Do you think they will keep their promise? wouldn’t it be a trick so they can inform the enemy about our movements?”

‘Mhamed:

I have taken all precautions, the Tamsmanian Movement does not know the nature of its mission nor the direction where it is going. I have given precise instructions to Lieutenant Benhaddou: Two hours before dawn, he should meet the Movement in Khandaq Ouchen which is three kilometers away from Dhar Obaran, and, undercover, they shall wait for a while to make sure they are not being followed, then they shall proceed their journey.”

as soon as ‘Mhamed finished his explanation, the silence of the night was broken by a neighing that rose with the sunrise. A sapphire redness, and with the golden lines of the timid sun...

Abdelkarim and ‘Mhamed turn around only to see a “ movement” of cavalrymen led by the commander Benhaddou...

Abdelkarim (blaming himself):

“ I should fast for three days.”

‘Mhamed:

“Why?”

Abdelkarim:

“ Because I was unjust to Tamsman people”

Meanwhile, the awakening sounds blow within Dhar Obaran castle...

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Dhar Obaran

The Morning

The redness in the horizons vanishes to bring back the blueness in the sky of the Riff, a blueness with a turquoise serenity, the warmth of the night is overwhelmed by the continuous, escalating heat of the day, and the gentle gust of the wind starts a sweet conversation with the trees in their tender breeze...

The gate of Dhar Obaran castle opens, and three platoons of cavalrymen emerge with a lieutenant at the head of each one, all led by Captain Salafranca, commander of the castle.

Salafranca is on a mission to study the area, what is conspicuous is the absence of the expedition soldiers from his unit: it is an error in the military strategy when the army is in a hostile area or of an unknown terrain.

Forgetting that caution knows no limits, Salafranca considers Dhar Obaran a safe area since it is under the Tamsman and the Spanish ally tribe rule. This is what general Silvestre was depending on when building the castle, thinking that it would help him conquer the Beni Ouriaghel tribe.

However, on the night of June 20th, The Sheikhs of Temsman and their counterparts in Ajedir met in total secrecy and concluded a peace treaty “ Wt’ah” to unify the two tribes into one against the enemy.

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To prove their good intentions, The Tamsmanians provided, from their best soldiers, five hundred armed men with rifles under the disposal of Abdelkarim.

Abdelkarim climbs up the hill to see Salafranca’s army landing in ‘ Khaneq’...

The commander returns to his army and gives the first order: A commander shall emerge from the forest at the top of ‘Ma’tah’ to surround the castle...

As soon as the echo of the rifle armies reached the ear of Captain Salafranca, he immediately returned with his army to the garrison, and there, the two armies locked their gazes in a fierce meeting...

On a peak of the mountains of the eastern Riff, in front of one of the gates of Anwal base, the general Silvestre assists the battles through a spyglass...

Silvestre did not send out backup to the castle, thinking that the Riff fighters would be defeated given their small number compared to the garrison soldiers.

But victory took the side of Abdelkarim’s army.

Captain Salafranca and three-quarters of his army were killed in the battle, and the rest were held hostages with the “ First Lieutenant” Flomista.

Plunders:

- Two canon weapons of caliber 68.
- 6 machine guns (metrallers)
- 308 rifles

- 7 boxes of ammunition

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During the battle, more than fifty “ citizen soldiers” from the Spanish forces joined Abdelkarim’s army.

Imzourn

On the Evening of Dhar Obaran Battle

Al-Khatabiyin Village

Near the doorstep of Al-Khatabiyin village in Imzouren, and under the blooming orange trees, Abdelkarim, his brother M’hamd, their uncle Abdessalam, their close assistants and other nobles from the Temsman tribe are celebrating the victory they have achieved in the battle of Dhar Obaran.

In front of the audience, the local choir of Tarab El-Andaloussi chants “ Chams El-Ashi” in the musical scale that Abdelkarim admires.

Under the shadow of trees, two butlers watch over the grilling of four goats plugged in *Sfouds*¹⁸ on a wood fire, from time to time, the two butlers butter the two goats with ghee butter to brown the meat and make it more delicious.

Four butlers leave the house carrying *tyafer*¹⁹, the audience then splits into groups of four, and each one is surrounded by a “*Tifour*”.

Each cooked goat is served to the guests on a silver oval plate.

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After the feast, Abdelkarim calls for a toast:

“ My brothers,

¹⁸ Long sharp thin sticks used to pin pieces of meat in order to grill it.

¹⁹ Plural of *Tifour*: A traditional dish from the heritage of the Moroccan Kingdom.

To manipulate the morale of General Silvestre and his army, we must execute the ‘ Rebound Plan’: attack after attack after attack. Sometimes during the day, and other times at night or dawn.

All at the same time and in different territories that appear safe to the enemy.

In these operations, the purpose is not to kill soldiers nor it is to invade a station, but to send shivers down the Spanish spine so that they live on their nerves day and night. This will consequently drive them to tactical errors, that will serve our interest instead.

The Sherrif Tamsmani, a commander of the Beni Oulshek, intervenes:

“ Where and when do we carry the next operation?”

Abdelkarim:

“ We have not decided yet.”

To keep the news in secrecy and prevent it from leaking, every military operation is studied between Abdelkarim and his brother, neither the plan or its details are announced until it is time for the army to depart to the battlefield of honor.

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General Manuel Silvestre's Preparations to Attack The Beni Ouriaghel Tribe

July 9th,1921

Mountain Ighriben

3 pm

The Spanish castle Ighriben appears to be an ordinary facility and easy to invade since there are no signs of canon weapons or machine guns in its lobby as it used to be in states of war or unsafe territories.

At the doorstep of the three castle gates, furious soldiers are sitting, leaning against the wall, two by two, rolling cigarettes, smoking, or placing bets in a gambling card game.

The six soldiers see a military convoy coming towards them, so they stand up in a firm stagnation of a single-man stance: Manuel Silvestre, the General Governor of Melilla city, accompanied by Colonel Gabriel Moralice, Chief of the General Staff, and others of his high officers.

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The convoy enters the castle to find in the spacious courtyard, the legion standing...

The commander:

“Attention! Stand Still!”

The legion stands still, the commander turns half a turn and salutes the General saying:

“ Senior, legion Ighriben is under your commands”

The General:

“How many are you, and how many officers, non-commissioned officers, and soldiers are there?

The commander:

“ Eight Officers, sixteen lieutenants among the first and second, forty non-commissioned officers including ten *Alfriths*, and six hundred thirty-nine soldiers”

The General and the commander enter the latter’s office, and a young lieutenant-colonel addresses the chief of the General War Staff:

“ Senior, don’t you see that there are too many Officers and non-commissioned officers in this legion?”

Colonel Morice:

“ These are the orders of Silvestre.”

Lieutenant-colonel:

“Since he was the one who ordered this structure, why all the drama?”

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The Colonel:

“ Don’t you know that General Silvestre is a foolish man! ”

Lieutenant-colonel:

“ And what is it with those soldiers guarding the gates of the castle and who don’t know how to be disciplined? and what is it with the lack of exterior protection of the castle?”

Moralice:

“ These are the General’s tactics: the castle is the rod and those guard soldiers are the bait (smiles) and for who? For Abdelkarim!”

Lieutenant-colonel:

“ Do you know him well?”

Moralice:

“ Abdelkarim was my Arabic tutor, he used to teach it to the intelligence officers in Melilla...”

Ighriben castle

3:10 pm

General Silvestre, Colonel Moralice, and the accompanying officers, hosted by the commander of the castle in his cabin at a table of different “ Tapas”, and a bottle of Anis Del Mono, the General’s favorite drink.

General Silvestre drinks half of his cup in one gulp, then asks Colonel Moralice:

“ What do you think of this legion?”

Moralice:

“ Perfect legion”

Silvestre: (smiling):

“ Right?!”

Moralice:

“ It is organized by you, I see that every footstep of yours fosters growth.”

Silvestre (Pointing at the commander of the castle):

“ Moralice, tell Commander Benith what you think about this louse that will inevitably aim at my left fingernail so I can crush it with my right fingernail.”

Moralice:

“ Do you mean Abdelkarim?”

Silvestre:

“Yes.”

Moralice:

“ Abdelkarim is not a louse that cannot detect danger whilst staying in one place, nor is it a flea that foolishly jumps from one place to another drawing attention to itself.”

Silvestre (Finished his drink in two gulps):

“ What do you mean?”

Moralice:

“ The fox does not fall in the bear’s trap”

Battle of Ighriben

July 9th,1921

The Road Leading to Ighrebn

Midnight

Riding on the back of his horse, Abdelkarim, with two formations behind him:

Calvary men led by his brother 'Mhamd Al-khattabi, and the infantry, under the command of their uncle Abdessalam. Following the men are dozens of muzzled mules; some of them are pulling two cannons on two carts, other ones are carrying three-legged machine guns, and the third ones are carrying large bags of sand...

Ighriben

One Hour Before Dawn

Abdelkarim and his army arrive at Ighriben Mountain where the Spanish castle is located near a dense forest.

The castle, a heavily fortified fortress, has a gate and two doors lit by three lanterns hung up on top of them. On its hall, and on each doorstep, two guard soldiers drifted off to sleep shriveled around their rifles.

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Abdelkarim and his men enter the forest to stop in the middle of a wild space.

The leader gives the first order:

In complete calmness, six men shall sneak into the lobby of the castle, attack the guard soldiers, and decapitate them, then take their weapons and retreat to the forest which reigns with the silence of the graves.

Second order:

One cannon is taken out of the woods and placed between two trees, aiming at the gate of the castle.

Third order:

Protective walls are constructed with sandbags in front of the castle facade.

Fourth order:

Two machine guns are placed between the cannons and the fortress.

The fifth order:

Reinforced by four machine guns and a cannon, rapid intervention forces surround the fortified fortress, forming a semi-circle, and isolating the castle from the outside world, that is to tackle any attack or leak, and to make any attempts to escape from the fortress impossible.

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Ighriben Castle

6 am

In various halls, officers, non-commissioned officers, and soldiers are having breakfast.

The gathering of all soldiers is announced by a horn...

Commander Benith, in a formal uniform, standing in the yard, smoking a cigarette, near the flag... joined by his deputy-commander Ramirez ...

The legion comes out to the courtyard, each army is formed in front of its officer.

Benith gives an order, and Ramirez addresses the legion:

“ Captain Roderiquez’s army and Captain Taldan’s army: we will carry a reconnaissance mission... from Captain Tapata, a platoon is appointed to supply the legion with water because it is all consumed, and to transport shells to our cannons which are now merely decorations to the castle.

Then he mounts on his horse and orders the opening of the gate...

Two soldiers rush to open the gate fully, and they see the army of Riff ready to attack, and the two guard soldiers slaughtered...

Meanwhile, Abdelkarim orders:

“ Tabji! Shoot!”

shells penetrate the gate one after the other, inflicting destruction within the castle.

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Abdelkarim then orders to cease fire, and the gates immediately close.

Then the leader shouts into a loudspeaker:

“Attention! Abdelkarim addresses the castle... I address all soldiers, the Spanish, and tribes...drop your weapons and go out. whoever wishes to join us they are welcome! Whoever chooses to go back to the base, Anwal, may do so! This is a word of honor. You do recognize that Abdelkarim, who was a friend of yours in Melilla, does not break the promise he took upon himself.”

A voice coming through a speech trumpet responds to Abdelkarim:

“ Commander Benith...Senior Abdelkarim! As long as I am alive, nobody shall surrender, even if you tear the castle down over our heads.

The Royal Military Base Anzal

8:20 am

If the two Riffian artillery shots on Ighriben castle put the royal military base in a state of alert, then none of the officers, not even General Phillipe Dabaro, had the authority to make a decision in the presence of General Manuel in the base.

Yes! Silvestre was present but in his bed, heavily drunk, General Philippe Nabaro couldn't wake him up until ten past eight o'clock.

General Silvestre comes to the base lobby, surpassing Baron Nabaro and Colonel Moralice.

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The lieutenant stands still and greets him, but the General, without returning the greetings, slightly looks at the auxiliary officer and continues walking to stop in front of a barrier overlooking the Ighriben...

In his memoir, the American General Vernard Weltair, a graduate officer states that:

“ Even if he is a marshal of a president of a state, an arrogant officer who does not return greetings to a subordinate, regardless of his rank, is not worthy of his high position.”

Silvestre looks at the castle Ighriben from the observation tower and says, while an unpleasant smell emanates from him, the smell of alcohol that has been “re-fermented” in the stomach:

“ Unbelievable! A heavily fortified fortress with a legion containing the finest of my men is besieged by a lice led by a crippled cockroach?!”

He turns to the Chief of the General War staff:

“ Moralice, send a troop of infantry to crash these savages.”

Moralice:

“ Senior, one troop is not enough.”

Silvestre:

“ Do these hooligans scare you? they managed to encircle the Ighriben castle only due to the element of surprise.”

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Moralice:

“But, Senior...”

Silvestre (interrupts):

“ Moralice, please! I said one troop!” then he departs with General Nabarro.

One troop of infantry is sent in the same morning and is defeated.

The next day, two troops try to break the siege but they are also defeated and their weapons are added to the first troop now belonging to Abdelkarim.

July 13

Ighriben Castle

7:05 am

The yard officers near the wreckage of the infantry, it seems that they are waiting for orders. A corner of the yard became a collective graveyard to avoid the smell of the dead bodies.

Commander Benith comes out from his office accompanied by his deputy Captain Ramires who miraculously survived an artillery attack from Abdelkarim.

The captain orders the officers to gather the soldiers and the remnants of the legion. The officers, non-commissioned officers, and soldiers stand in a miserable state: Trembling, yellowed bodies, sunken eyes, bandaged and bare wounds...

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The Commander:

“ Gentlemen, we have been under siege for four days and that made us suffer a lot from the lack of water. To withstand and overcome this hardship, we will divide the water: one liter per day for the officer, and half a liter for the non-commissioned officer and the soldier...”

Alfrith interrupts him, a mid-level rank between the non-commissioned and the officer:

“ Senior! What’s with this discrimination? In such hard circumstances like these, inequality leads to rebellion...”

The First Sergeant intervenes:

Alfrith is right: You know that the soldier's work is harder than an officer’s work, therefore, soldiers should have double of the amount of water given to the officers.”

Noticing the expressions of anger on the officers’ faces and the soldiers.

The commander tries to save the situation:

“ I will reconsider the water division.”

Alfrith intervenes again:

“ Senior, how long will we remain locked in the coop like chickens waiting to be slaughtered?”

The commander:

“We hold on to hope...”

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Ighriben

Bivouac Abdelkarim

07:05 AM

Bivouac (an open camp) in the style of hordes (legions) the Roman Imperial army:

The Riffian archers forces are still surrounding the fortified fortress.

In front of every soldier, on the protective sandbag wall, a breakfast meal and a five-liter can of water.

On the borders of the forest in front of the sieged castle, Abdelkarim, surrounded by his brother ‘Mhamd and their uncle Abdelsalam, having breakfast, with infantry on their right, and machine gun shooters on their left.

The mules are locked in the middle of a hurriedly built corral:
winds blowing over mountains.

17 July

The Royal Military Base

07:05 AM

At the dining hall, officers are having breakfast. A good-looking captain enters;
blond hair and fair skin, younger than thirty years, tall, with an arched forehead, light eyes and a
straight nose; a mouth with defined lips : well symmetrical features that give the impression of an
Aryan man.

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An officer, among a group of officers around a table at the door of the dining hall; a soldier calls
a waiter:

“ Manolo!”

The waiter:

“ Senior!”

The officer:

“ A chair for Captain Sibyeno”

The waiter disappears and returns with a chair, Sibyeno’s friends arrange a seat for him to join
them.

Meanwhile, Colonel Moralice enters, Chief of the General War Staff, and the officers stand.

The Colonel (Smiling):

“ Who is this generous young man offering coffee to the old Colonel? ”

Sibyeno:

“ Me, Senior. ”

Another chair is placed next to Sibyeno.

Unlike General Manuel Silvestre, who practices dictatorship against twenty thousand soldiers working under his command, Colonel Moralice treats them with kindness to relieve the psychological torture that they experience day and night since the day Abdelkarim declared war against the general governor of Melila city.

Moralice (addressing Captain Sibyeno):

“ Ready?”

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Sibyeno:

“ Si, Senior.”

The Colonel lifts his cup shouting:

“ To the brave captain Sibyeno Von Lindman!”

Then he asks again:

“ How many barrels of water will you transport?” The legion is dying of thirst!” : This is the last letter coming from Ighriben”

Sibyeno: “ Seventy barrel.”

Moralice:

“ And the shells for the cannons?”

Sibyeno:

“ Sixty shell.”

Moralice:

“ The king is not satisfied with the outcome, especially that Silvestre assured him that he had the situation under control.”

Sibyeno:

“ I shall teach these bugs the cockroach dance!”

Moralice:

“ Don’t be arrogant, be a brave fighter, not a brave arrogant! Beware of Abdel Karim's trickery!...

On the night of June 15th , the battle of “Sidi Driss”, in which we were defeated and we lost the center and weapons, and we lost two hundreds and seventy three men, including eight naval officers and an infantry captain José Vilaseca Gil de Arana in this battle, when soldiers of this castle were shooting hundreds of bullets, the Riffians were shooting less than ten bullets, and the victory was theirs... the strategist loses in advance every military operation when he underestimates the opponent... (He stands up) Suerte Captain! He leaves the restaurant.

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Ighriben

Bivouak Abdel Karim

08:30 AM

Emerging from the mountains with a great speed, a calvary, riding on a horse covered with foam of sweat, he crosses the lobby of the Ighriben castle and enters the forest and stops at the clear space where Abdel karim has set up the command center.

The calvary dismounts from his horse, ‘Mhamd notices traces of exhaustion on his face.

‘Mhamd:

‘ What is behind you?’

The calvary:

‘ More than four hundred Spanish soldiers, followed by seventy mules carrying barrels and boxes, headed here without a doubt.”

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‘Mhamd:

“ Thank you, Ouchen... how many of you are in the observation center?”

Ouchen:

“ Two.”

‘Mhamd:

“ And how many hours have you spent there?”

Ouchen:

“ We have been at the observation center since yesterday morning.”

‘Mhamd:

“ Go back to the observation center, I will replace you without delay.”

Ouchen:

“ Thank you, sir ‘Mhamd.”

Ouchen takes off.

Abdel Karim, ‘Mhamd and Abdeslam leave the forest, they climb up the hill and stop at the top. The leader sticks the telescope to his eyes to see two formations of infantry, estimated at four hundred men, and a huge herd of mules, all resting on a hill in the mountains of the eastern countryside that are difficult to pass through.. it is narrated that, one day, a mule from the city, asked one of the nobles from his tribe who lived in the wilderness, saying:

“ What do you prefer in the mountainous countryside? the obstacles or the slopes?”

The wild mule replied:

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“ May God’s curse be upon both of them.”

The three captains go down the hill and go out into the lobby. Abdel Karim orders to return the canons, the machine guns and the bags of sand to the woods, and he also orders The Tabijis and archers to join the rest of the military units in the cleared space, so that the surrounding of the castle become clear of men and equipments, except for six corpses wrapped in robes on the thresholds of the gates of the fortified fortress.

Ighriben

09:05 AM

Captain Sibyeno Von Lindemann arrives with a semi-legion to Ighriben, then stops, accompanied by two lieutenants, a corporal, and two soldiers at the foot of a hill, leaving his men and mules at the bottom. A terrible silence looms over the area, broken only by the chirping of flocks of white storks with red beaks, coming from the north and heading towards the middle countryside. Captain Sibyeno wonders:

“ What’s with this silence?! Did the entire Ighriben legion die? Where’s Abdelkarim and his squad? They are certainly hiding in the forest!” He holds a telescope to examine the entire area starting from the woods, where he peered closely between its trees. Then he orders the corporal and the two soldiers to explore the area. So they set off in different directions ordering their horses to trot, only to return to the hill after five minutes.

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The corporal (in his report to the Captain):

“ Senior! There is nobody around.”

Captain Sibyeno then orders the two platoons and the calvary men to ascend the hill. At a moment of their unawareness, factions of Riffian archers below, hidden in a hollowed dark cave covered by wild oak trees grown on a hill of which goats were grazing from its surface.

While the mules and Spanish soldiers were descending from the hill and heading to the lobby, Abdel Karim and his men left the cave climbing the hill towards the mountain...

Captain Sibyeno arrives at the lobby and shouts in the speaker at the castle:

“ *Commandante Benith ! Soy el Capitano Sibyeno Von Lindemann.* I am here to rescue you...

You may open the gates: There is no trace of the Riffian cockroaches, and in front of you are four hundred and twenty men with rifles and machine guns, the Riffians are no match against them...!

A voice from the castle responds:

“ I am Commander Benith... who is the officer that calls himself the Old Colonel?”

Sibyeno:

“ Colonel Moralice.”

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Benith:

“ What is the name of the vice-general Silvestre?”

Sibyeno:

“ General Nabaro.”

Benith:

“ I want the full name:”

Sibyeno:

“Philippe Navarro y ceballos-escalira, Barron Casada paleo.”

Joyful chants of over six hundred men rises from the courtyard to immortalize in the sky of Ighriben.

As soon as the gates of the fortress opened, a shell was fired from the forest to explode inside the castle, followed by other shells rupturing the bodies of the emergency soldiers and their mules...

Captain Sibyeno's two platoons are now ceased between three fires: The fire of missile shooters, positioned up the hill, and the fire of platoons of the same weapon, arrayed by the borders of the forest, using the tree trunks as protective shields, and the fire of the invisible canon...

Captain Sibyeno and the two lieutenants dropped down dead bodies, most soldiers were killed, dozens of mules died and the rest of the soldiers laid down their weapons.

Regardless of this victory, Abdelkarim did not want to seize the castle.

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Ighriben

Thursday

08:00 AM

Two days have passed since the Ighriben battle and General Silvestre has not yet taken any action to break the siege of the fortress.

That Thursday has been extremely hot like it has never been before in the countryside in the last twenty years.

In the lobby of the castle, machine-gun shooters, behind sandbags, are sniffing pieces of cloth soaked in rose water to not faint by inhaling the bad smell of the thirty two dead bodies of mules with their intestines spilling out of their bodies, covered by thick flocks of blue flies.

Abdel karim comes into the lobby. His left hand holds a handkerchief on his mouth and nose, and his right hand holds a trumpet...

Ighriben Castle

08:00 AM

If the rose water helped Abdel karim and his men a little bit to avoid inhaling the putrid fumes exhaled by the corpses of the mules that are in a state of rotting under the walls of Ighriben castle, then the Spanish legionnaires were suffocating inside the fortress by the sickening trench.

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Captain Ramirez, the vice-president of the legion, at the office door of Commander Benith, waiting for the soldiers to gather in the courtyard, most of which is dirty with vomit and gags.

The soldiers, with a brisk gait, leave their dorms and line up in the courtyard, treading on the dirt and pinching their nose with their fingers of filthy, blackened nails.

The commander:

“Gentlemen! Courage is one of the traits of a soldier...”

An elderly sergeant interrupts:

“Senior! We know what you mean... enough of the useless rhetoric. Courage is one thing and suicide is another. If you have come to an agreement with Abdelkarim, who is known for his chivalry, we would not have reached this miserable situation; ever since the siege of the castle, eight soldiers, who are younger than eighteen years old, have gone mentally insane, twenty-seven have died due to their illness of *Zikhar Al Aswi* (*Dizantri Paslir*) and forty-two have been confined to bed... but you and your officers do not know the hardships we, non-commissioned officers and soldiers, endure...”

The commander interrupts:

“ This speech will lead you to prison.”

The sergeant:

“ The prison is a better place for me than this filthiness.”

A young lieutenant interrupts addressing the leader:

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“ Senior! The sergeant is right! Each special situation requires a special solution...”

The commander:

“ Are you crazy!?”

Abdel Karim’s voice interrupts...

19 July

Ighriben, the lobby

08:02AM

Abdelkarim sticks the trumpet in his mouth, addressing the castle:

“ Commander Benith, be realistic, use your intelligence, do not sink in your mistakes!

Do you think I am incapable of destroying the gates and take you out the fortress like I take my chickens out the coop!? I did not do so for strategic reasons... I would explain them to you if you find kindness in you to be my guest in my house.”

The commander:

“ What guarantees to us that we will be treated as hostages with all our rights?

Abdel Karim:

“ Abdel Karim is not that bloody general - meaning Silvestre- who cuts off the heads of his Riffian hostages and flaunts them hanging at the tip of his rifle spears.”

The two speakers remain silent, a “heavy” silence pervades the space of Ighriben...

Suddenly the gates open...

Commander Benith and his deputy Ramirez come out side by side followed by the legion, they line up in the lobby.

Dozens of Riffians enter between the lines of soldiers to assure that they do not carry any weapons.

Abdel Karim then approaches the two officers and shakes their hands before addressing the legion:

“ Gentlemen, I have previously said: If you come out on your own free will, you shall be treated well and you will have the choice between staying with us or returning to your units... and since you have responded honorably to my call, which I thank you for, I assure that whoever wishes to receive our unconditional hospitality, may come out the lines.”

A span of time passes while the legion is still in a state of silence and stagnation...

Abdelkarim:

“ Gentlemen, you are free! Do whatever you want. But hurry, the castle will be demolished soon.”

The first to join the ranks of Abdel Karim was a rural sergeant from the local army...