

## The Miraculous Untranslatable Qur'an

### Abstract:

This paper attempts to highlight the fact that much is lost when the Qur'an is encountered in translation and that it is out of the question for a perfect accurate translation of the most eloquent of all speeches to be attained. This research measures faithfulness and explores the possibility of preserving the meanings, including possible scientific implications, if literal translation were adopted. This was done through the analysis of some selected words in five widespread translations. Results show non-equivalence and unsuccessfulness in transferring accurately some features of the Qur'an's inimitability or 'I'jaz'. Thereafter, the study draws the conclusion that the Qur'an could be considered untranslatable and literal translation is key to approximating the unmatchable divine words.

**Key Words:** -The Qur'an – The inimitability or 'i'jaz' - Untranslatable.

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### ملخص:

يحاول هذا المقال تسليط الضوء على حقيقة أن الكثير يضيع عند ترجمة القرآن وأنه من غير الوارد لترجمة دقيقة مثالية لأفصح كلام على الإطلاق أن تتحقق. يحاول هذا البحث قياس مدى التكافؤ ويستكشف إمكانية الحفاظ على المعاني بما في ذلك الاستنباطات العلمية المحتملة إذا اعتمدت الترجمة الحرفية. وقد تم ذلك من خلال دراسة تحليلية لبعض الكلمات المختارة في خمس تراجم واسعة الانتشار. لقد أظهرت النتائج عدم التكافؤ والإخفاق في النقل بدقة لبعض مظاهر الإعجاز القرآني. تصل الدراسة بعد ذلك إلى استخلاص نتيجة مفادها أنه يمكن اعتبار القرآن غير قابل للترجمة وأن الترجمة الحرفية هي الأقرب للكلمات الإلهية التي لا نظير لها.  
**الكلمات المفتاحية:** - القرآن - الإعجاز - غير قابل للترجمة

### Introduction :

**Allah** has sent messengers throughout the history with many divine miracles as proofs of their prophethood and messages so as to believe that Allah is the only One Who must be worshiped. Unlike the other messengers, the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), the last and final Messenger of Allah, was sent to the whole world.

Thus, one of his given proofs or miracles -THE INIMITABLE QUR'AN- should be different from former messengers' miracles in that it remains effective, everlasting, and challenging until the Day of Resurrection.

### 1. The Holy Qur'an

The Holy Qur'an is the final manifestation of God's revelation. It is a divine book that is sent to all mankind. It is divided into 30 parts (ahzab), 114 chapters (suar) and more than 6000 verses (ayat).

#### 1.1. What is the Qur'an?

The word 'Qur'an' literally means 'the recitation'. According to Muslims, the Qur'an is the **speech or the literal word of Allah** that was **revealed in Arabic** through the angel Gabriel (Jibreel) **to the Prophet Muhammad, the last messenger. It is the final book of divine revelation** sent down both **in word and in meaning** over a period of twenty-three years and it is an ongoing **challenge to anyone on Earth**. A more precise definition was given by scholars in Ad-Dausaree (2013) introducing its words entity as being miraculous in nature.

The language of the Qur'an, as is well known, is Arabic. The Qur'an itself asserts its Arabic language through some verses like:

"إِنَّا أَنْزَلْنَاهُ قُرْآنًا عَرَبِيًّا لَعَلَّكُمْ تَعْقِلُونَ" (Yusuf: 02)

*"Verily, We have sent it down as an Arabic Quran in order that you may understand".*

*(The translation of 'Al-Hilali and Khan' is used for all the verses in this research paper)*

Being the language of the Qur'an and with the rise of Islam, Arabic became the lingua franca for the Muslim world. The knowledge of the Arabic language became a matter of utmost seriousness. Ibn Taymiyah believed that the knowledge of Arabic is an obligation because it is from the religion and explained: "whatever obligation is not fulfilled except by certain steps then those steps themselves become obligatory" (cited in Spencer, 2009, p.61).

As a matter of fact, the Qur'an is a different unprecedented miracle. First, the former Messengers of Allah were given physically perceptible miracles of limited effectiveness. Al-Mehri (2013) clarified that the tangible miracles only impress on the spot eye witnesses and by the death of these witnesses these miracles' effectiveness would end. In contrast, the main miracle of the Prophet Muhammad, the Qur'an, is intellectual. Al-Hajj Ahmad (2010) stated that the miracle of the Qur'an is an intellectual miracle in that it corresponds to the fact that the message of Islam is for the entire humanity and for all times.

Second, the Qur'an is meant to be a universal everlasting miracle that will survive until the Day of Judgement. Al-Mehri (2013) referred to the Qur'an as unrestrained by time or geographical considerations. It is a permanent message and as it provided convincing proofs to people of the past, it may do the same to future generations.

Third, compared to the former books and even to the Sunnah and 'Ahadith Qudsia', the Qur'an is a verbatim revelation. That is to say, the Qur'an's words, meanings and even letters were all divinely inspired. According to Denffer (in Fahad, 1995), the Qur'an is the Word of God (Allah), sent down in its *precise meaning and precise wording*. Consequently, transmitting the Qur'an by meaning is prohibited. Al-Suyuti (cited in Algar and Schubart, 2011, p.101) emphasized the fact that it is not possible to transmit the Qur'an by meaning because Gabriel transmitted it verbatim.

Finally, with the Qur'an's everlasting objective and as long as technology advances, man keeps bringing to light new insights and perspectives derived from many verses in different fields like science, geology, cosmology...etc. However, a point of paramount significance is that the Qur'an is a book of guidance and interpreting it in accordance with scientific discoveries may lead to suspicion about the Book of Allah in case a scientific interpretation needs to be revised. In fact, the interpretation of the Qur'an is bound by the exegesis '*tafseer*' explained through the Sunnah of the Prophet, or by the companions or exegetes. So, in this research, some scientific implications are introduced not as interpretations of the verses but as mere possible reflections that could be right or wrong in order to illustrate the supernatural content of the Qur'an and the need to pursue a literal translation which may be the most reliable approach to the miraculous words of Allah.

### 1.2. I'jaz (Inimitability or Miraculousness) of the Qur'an

'Inimitability' or 'Miraculousness' are English translations for the Arabic word 'I'jaz' that literally means 'causing incapability or causing incapacity'. Eliman (2013, p.20) gave the literal translation of 'I'jaz' as "rendering incapable or powerless". In regard to this matter, the Qur'an uses the word 'Ayat' to designate its verses. Thus, 'Ayat' are miracles or signs and not just mere verses. Abdul-Raof (2006) believed that the Qur'an is an immortal inimitable linguistic miracle that is beyond human capability. Also, Long (2005, p.162) stated: "Qur'an is a linguistic miracle with transcendental meanings that cannot be captured fully by human faculty". In fact, the Qur'an is unsurpassable in all its features. However, Leaman (2006) divided inimitability basically into two broad divisions: inimitability of form which includes figures of rhetoric and style, and inimitability of content that comprises prophecies, scientific accuracy...etc. The reason behind the 'i'jaz' is that it is the speech of the Creator; hence, its inimitability implicates its untranslatability.

### 1.3. Untranslatability of the Qur'an

Due to the absence of true fidelity in the Qur'an's translations and that a complete equivalence between the inimitable divine source and the human target language can never exist, the Qur'an is considered untranslatable. Rosen (2008) was persuaded that the standard Muslim theory is that the Qur'an is untranslatable and that translation is a threat to its integrity since it was delivered

in Arabic and must never be subject to change. In fact, Allah, the Exalted, has challenged the Prophet's opponents in some verses to produce the like of the Qur'an. These verses are named 'the verses of challenge'. Here is an example:  
"قُلْ لَّيْنِ اجْتَمَعَتِ الْإِنْسُ وَالْجِنُّ عَلَىٰ أَنْ يَأْتُوا بِمِثْلِ هَٰذَا الْقُرْآنِ لَا يَأْتُونَ بِمِثْلِهِ وَلَوْ كَانَ بَعْضُهُمْ لِبَعْضٍ ظَهِيرًا"

*Say: "If the mankind and the jinns were together to produce the like of this Quran, they could not produce the like thereof, even if they helped one another." (Al-Israa: 88)*

Although Arabs were proud of their excellence in Arabic language, eloquence and rhetoric, they failed to defeat the Qur'an's challenge. By the same token, any attempt to translate the Qur'an into another language is considered an example of this challenge. Thus, translating the untranslatable -the Qur'an- exhibits many shortcomings and even mistakes.

## **2. The Study**

### **2.1. Methodology and Research Tools**

This research is based on comparing and contrasting five well-known English translations of some selected words. The reason behind selecting these particular translations is on account of their widespread popularity. The correspondent translators are: Muhammad Asad, Muhammad Farooq-i-Azam Malik, Muhammad Marmaduke William Pickthall, Abdullah Yusuf Ali, Muhammad Taqi-ud-Din Al-Hilali and Muhammad Muhsin Khan.

The translations of some words are examined and adequacy and faithfulness are investigated with reference to the original's inimitability 'i'jaz'. This is done through exhibiting the meanings as the exegetes have interpreted the verses. Besides, scientific reflections related to those words are displayed. Moreover, the equivalent meanings in English in the light of the aforementioned explanations and features are analyzed and discussed. At the end, some comments or suggestions for solving some problems are added.

The Qur'an is an ever-present miracle witnessing to itself and to the Prophet of Allah. On the one hand, the Holy Qur'an is a book of guidance. Hence, it is not considered right and religiously permissible to adapt it to changeable scientific theories. On the other hand, one cannot deny that the Qur'an contains references to some natural phenomena and recent scientific discoveries. Subsequently, the approach is that it is advisable conditionally to know the different scientific implications as an aid in attracting people's attention to Allah's glory and the miraculousness of the Qur'an and thereby, bring them closer to Him. The condition is that the Qur'an is errors' free and if a scientific insight turned to need revision, there should be no doubt directed to the Qur'an.

### **2.2. Analysis and Discussion**

The following is a discussion of ten miraculous words serving as a humble reference to this verse. The Almighty said:

"سنُرِيهِمْ آيَاتِنَا فِي الْأَفَاقِ وَفِي أَنْفُسِهِمْ حَتَّىٰ يَتَبَيَّنَ لَهُمْ أَنَّهُ الْحَقُّ..."

"We will show them Our Signs in the universe, and in their own selves, until it becomes manifest to them that this (the Qur'an) is the truth..." (Fussilat: 53)

1. 1) 'يَصْعَدُ' (yassaaad) -Surah (06): Al-Anaam –Ayah: (125)

{ فَمَنْ يُرِدِ اللَّهُ أَنْ يَهْدِيَهُ يَشْرَحْ صَدْرَهُ لِلْإِسْلَامِ وَمَنْ يُرِدْ أَنْ يُضِلَّهُ يَجْعَلْ صَدْرَهُ ضَيِّقًا حَرَجًا كَأَنَّمَا يَصْعَدُ فِي السَّمَاءِ كَذَلِكَ يَجْعَلُ اللَّهُ الرِّجْسَ عَلَى الَّذِينَ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ }

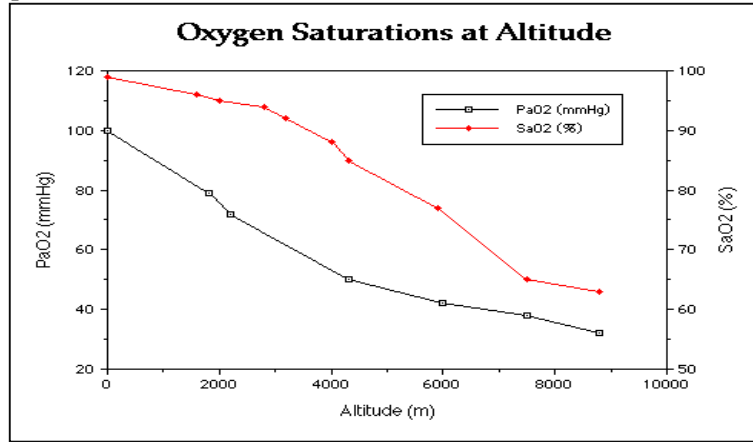
"And whomsoever Allah wills to guide, He opens his breast to Islam, and whomsoever He wills to send astray, He makes his breast closed and constricted, as if he is climbing up to the sky. Thus Allah puts the wrath on those who believe not".

Asad	Malik	Pickthall	Yusuf Ali	Al-Hilali and Khan
<i>climbing</i>	<i>to climb up</i>	<i>engaged in sheer ascent</i>	<i>to climb up</i>	<i>climbing up</i>

This verse in surat Al-Anaam includes an antithesis in which God is contrasting between the states of two kinds of people. The first is anybody whom God wills to guide, He opens his breast to accept Islam. However, the second is whomsoever He desires to leave disbelieve, He makes his chest narrow and so constricted that he is unable to accept the guidance. Allah describes this state of chest, using imagery, with the word 'يَصْعَدُ' which, in all the renditions above, is treated as 'يَصْعَدُ' coming from 'يَفْعَلُ' 'yafaal' meaning doing the action of climbing. Yet, the word's origin is 'يَنْصَعِدُ' 'yatasaaad' from 'يَنْفَعِلُ' 'yatafaaal' and the 'ت' was assimilated with the 'ص' to make the latter stressed. 'يَصْعَدُ' means experiencing hardship or discomfort while trying to ascend. Al-Qurtobi (cited in Atturki, 2006, p.25) described this process as follows "يَتَكَفَّفُ مَا لَا يَطِيقُ شَيْئًا بَعْدَ شَيْءٍ". It means there is an increasing hardship in enduring what a person cannot bear. Abd Arrahim Charif (2010) in his article explained 'التفعل' 'Attafaal' in general and the verb under discussion in particular as follows. Whenever the action grows, its effects grow too; so, for 'يَصْعَدُ', whenever the ascending augments, the constriction increases to become 'haradj' which means extremely constricted or even closed as the word may denote. Indeed, while it seems that not much is there to talk about regarding the difference between the words 'يَصْعَدُ' and 'يَنْصَعِدُ', a lot of pathological effects take place in the human body. It was not really or fairly comprehensible before how ascending is of such difficulty until science comes to illustrate and expose the facts.

Scientifically speaking, Rehberg (2007) defined 'altitude sickness' and 'acute mountain sickness' as illnesses encountered when exposed to a new high altitude environment as a result of poor adjustments to the decrease in O2 (hypoxia). What is more is that at very high altitudes 'altitude sickness' can progress to pulmonary and cerebral edema (fluids in the lungs and the brain). Whereas these are potentially fatal, the death zone refers to altitudes where the

amount of oxygen is insufficient to sustain human life. Giannantonio et al. (2013, p. 83) defined the death zone as “the area above 8000 meters on a mountain where the human body quickly deteriorates due to the lack of oxygen”. The following figure shows the continuous decrease of oxygen saturation SaO2 and oxygen pressure PaO2 with the increase of altitude.



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

After all, even out of context, the imagery which clarifies slightly the meaning of the word ‘يَصْعَدُ’, this concept illustrates that some miraculous facts could be contained in shades of meaning related to even a mere letter. In other words, ‘يَصْعَدُ’ ‘climbing’ is not as expressive and faithful to the original as ‘يَصْعَدُ’. So, since there is a lexical gap, translations should contain descriptions of this ascending as being increasingly uncomfortable and hard.

➤ 2) ‘الْخَنَسُ’ (Alkhunnas) -Surah (81): At-Takwir –Ayah: (15)

{ فَلَا أَقْسِمُ بِالْخَنَسِ }

“So verily, I swear by *the planets that recede (i.e. disappear during the day and appear during the night)*.”

Asad	Malik	Pickthall	Yusuf Ali	Al-Hilali and Khan
<i>the revolving stars</i>	<i>the retreating stars</i>	<i>the planets</i>	<i>the planets that recede</i>	<i>the planets that recede (i.e. disappear during the day and appear during the night)</i>

➤ 3) ‘الْكَنَسُ’ (Alkunnas) -Surah (81): Attakwir –Ayah: (16)

{ الْجَوَارِ الْكُنَسِ }

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“And by the planets that move swiftly and *hide themselves*”

Asad	Malik	Pickthall	Yusuf Ali	Al-Hilali and Khan
<i>set</i>	<i>hide</i>	<i>set</i>	<i>hide</i>	<i>hide themselves</i>

‘*The black holes*’ is a recent name given to a kind of stars which at the end of their lives, they contract and hide themselves after having been apparent. They reflect no light (*black*) and no escape is possible (*hole*). In other words, they are veiled since even light cannot get out from them because of their gravity. As a result, everything near is gravitated in a manner resembling swallowing. Contemporary scientists claim that the Qur’an is referring to the black holes in the above verses and that there is conformity between the Qur’an and the scientific description of these stars. The Qur’an’s characterizations of these stars are that they are receding away (الْخُنُسُ) and cleaners (الْكُنُوسُ). Frolov et al. (1998, p. xviii) defined black holes like: “putative objects whose gravitational fields are so strong that no physical bodies or signals can break free of their pull and escape”.

In the light of the above descriptions, checking the translations revealed that Malik succeeded in rendering the word ‘الْخُنُسُ’. Although ‘Al-Hilali and Khan’ and Yusuf Ali described them as planets -not stars- that recede, the formers specified that they only hide during the night. Asad and Pickthall were far from approximating the aforementioned characterizations. On the other hand, for the word ‘الْكُنُوسُ’, three translators handled it as synonymous to ‘الْخُنُسُ’ while ‘set’ was employed as a rendition by the remaining two. Therefore, the literal translations ‘receders’ and ‘sweepers’ are considered most faithful for the words ‘الْخُنُسُ’ and ‘الْكُنُوسُ’ respectively.

➤ 4) ‘الطَّارِقُ’ (Attariq) -Surah (86): Attariq –Ayah: (01)

{ وَالسَّمَاءِ وَالطَّارِقِ }

“By the heaven, and *At-Tariq (the night-comer, i.e. the bright star)*”

Asad	Malik	Pickthall	Yusuf Ali	Al-Hilali and Khan
<i>comes in the night</i>	<i>the visitant by night</i>	<i>the Morning Star</i>	<i>the Night-Visitant</i>	<i>At-Tariq (the night-comer, i.e. the bright star)</i>

“وَالسَّمَاءِ وَالطَّارِقِ” is an oath -by the sky and ‘Attariq’- made by Allah. ‘Attariq’ expresses knocking, pounding and striking hard and it is the origin of ‘Attariq’ which is the knocker. The tool used for pounding is called in Arabic ‘مطرقة’ ‘mitraqa’ whose English equivalent is the ‘hammer’. ‘Attariq’ might be the real entity of a special kind of stars, recently discovered, named ‘pulsars’. It is a one word contraction for “pulsating stars” which are stars having a precise repetition of pulses or rhythmic recurrence of strokes. Chandran (2005, p. 160) defined a pulsar as “an abbreviation for pulsating Radio Star, first discovered in 1967. Pulsars are radio sources which emit brief pulses of signals at very regular

short intervals of typically one second or less”. About the difference between these stars’ pulses, Arnold (2014) said that some resemble the speeded up ticking of a clock while “the millisecond pulsars sounds like a hammer drill boring a hole in a wall and is quite ear-piercing” (p. 28). An audio clip from a pulsar is available at: [www.astrosurf.com/luxorion/audiofiles-pulsar.htm](http://www.astrosurf.com/luxorion/audiofiles-pulsar.htm)

Except for one translator who gave the ‘morning star’ as a rendition, all the translators opted for ‘the night visitant’ because the word ‘Attariq’ in Arabic is used to refer to any person knocking on the door at night. Regarding the above jaw-dropping recent discoveries, ‘the knocker’ -the literal translation which was absented in the exegesis as such since it was interpreted- is considered more valid than any other rendition because it could serve the exegetical interpretation as well as the new scientific implication.

➤ 5) ‘الرَّجْعُ’ (Arraja) -Surah (86): Attariq –Ayah: (11)

{وَالسَّمَاءِ ذَاتِ الرَّجْعِ}

“By the sky (having rain clouds) which *gives rain, again and again*”

Asad	Malik	Pickthall	Yusuf Ali	Al-Hilali and Khan
<i>ever-revolving</i>	<i>sends down rain</i>	<i>giveth the returning rain</i>	<i>returns (in its round</i>	<i>gives rain, again and again</i>

Another oath given by Allah in the same surah is “وَالسَّمَاءِ ذَاتِ الرَّجْعِ”. The term ‘الرَّجْعُ’ conveys the meaning of ‘return’ or ‘turn back’. So, the question is what does the sky return? Does it return just water in the form of rain as shown in the three translations from the table above through taking into consideration that the word is metaphorically referring to rain? Or are there other things that are being returned, reflected or bounced back in addition to rain? As a matter of fact, science has discovered that each layer of the atmosphere has this sending back or returning function. Rays, meteors, heat and others are either sent back into space or back down to the Earth.

The following are some examples of some layers’ roles in protecting the Earth and preserving life in it through this special quality of the sky. First, the troposphere, “the prefix “tropo” comes from the Greek word for turning over” (Schneider et al, 2011, p. 112), enables water vapour to rise from the surface of the Earth to be condensed and turned back as rain. In addition, Schneider et al added that this is the region where most of the weather’s upward and downward motions happen. Second, the ozone layer reflects harmful radiation and ultraviolet light and sends them back into space. Gillespie (2006) stated that the ozone is our sole protection against the middle ultraviolet. Filho (2011, p. 614) confirmed that: “The ozone layer reflects some sunrays back into space”. Another layer is the magnetosphere one formed by the magnetic field of the Earth. It serves as a shield protecting the Earth from anything that could be



harmful (radioactive particles, celestial bodies, cosmic rays ...) and sending it back into space before it reaches the Earth and scours the atmosphere. Lastly, as also having this returning function, the ionosphere reflects radio waves broadcast coming from the Earth back down to different parts of the world. Pulinets et al. (2004, p. 24) mentioned: "The ionosphere has the ability to reflect radiowaves".

Concerning the remaining translations, Yusuf Ali provided the recommended literal translation, return, but added (in its round). This addition could be right for rain but might not be for others. However, Asad's translation was far from the term's presumed meaning.

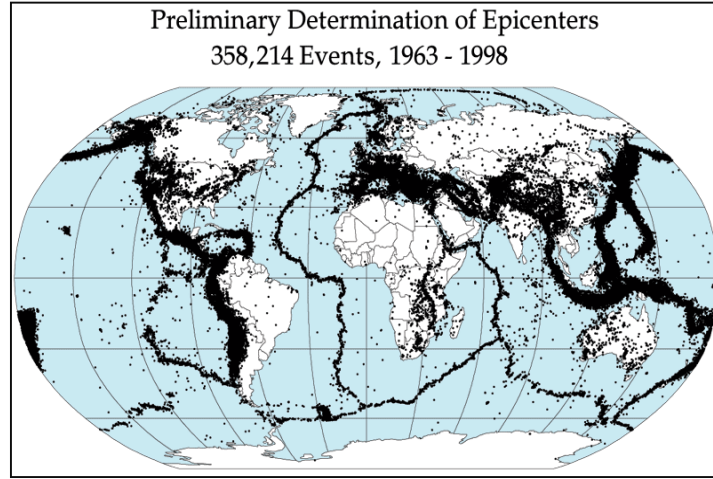
➤ 6) 'الصَّدْعُ' (Assada) -Surah (86): Attariq –Ayah: (12)

{ وَالْأَرْضِ ذَاتِ الصَّدْعِ }

"And the earth which *splits (with the growth of trees and plants)*"

Asad	Malik	Pickthall	Yusuf Ali	Al-Hilali and Khan
<i>bursting forth with plants</i>	<i>ever bursting with new growth</i>	<i>splitteth (with the growth of trees and plants)</i>	<i>opens out (for the gushing of springs or the sprouting of vegetation)</i>	<i>splits (with the growth of trees and plants)</i>

The possible English literal equivalents for the term 'الصَّدْعُ' are split, rift, fissure or fault. Investigating the versions, it is noticed that all the translators transferred the word as the space reserved for plants to come to the surface while growing. As a matter of fact, besides the meaning given by the translators and since it is a general term, it is claimed by some scholars that it might also refer to a split that is so huge that it could be a quality describing the Earth. So is there just one 'صدع' or many? According to Gabrovec (2001), scientists believe that the movement of the tectonic plates influences the formation of landforms and the occurrence of natural disasters which is the case of the one land mass 'Pagaia' which drifted apart to constitute the seven continents. In the opinion of Fanch (2010, p.34), "Tectonic plates are driven by forces that originate in the earth's interior. As the plates pull apart or collide, they can cause such geologic activities as volcanic eruptions, earthquakes, and mountain range formation". Thus, tracing the geological disasters' locations over the years, this huge split can be identified. This figure in Chester (2008, p.77) displays the global distribution of earthquakes between 1963 and 1998. It shows that there are many splits throughout the world connected as a net to form one major split penetrating and surrounding the Earth.



➤ 7) 'رَوَاسِي' (rawasi) Surah (21): Al-Anbiyaa –Ayah: (31)

{ وَجَعَلْنَا فِي الْأَرْضِ رَوَاسِيًا أَنْ تَمِيدَ بِهِمْ ... }

“And We have placed on the earth *firm mountains*, lest it should shake with them, ...”

Asad	Malik	Pickthall	Yusuf Ali	Al-Hilali and Khan
<i>firm mountains</i>	<i>mountains</i>	<i>firm hills</i>	<i>mountains standing firm</i>	<i>firm mountains</i>

Contrary to what has been known, new geological findings revealed that mountains rest on massive strata that may be many times as deep as the portion remaining on the surface. The Indian Science Congress Association (2003) confirmed that comparing with their height, Hayford has shown that the depth of subterranean compensation is huge. A precise explanation is written by Logsdon (1995, p. 195):

According to the theory of isostasy, a mountain cannot poke its head up for any length of time unless its weight is supported by a big, fat “root” that protrudes down into the denser magma below. Mountains are thus, to some extent, supported by buoyancy forces; they float like timber or iceberg floating on water.

Leviton (2006) stated that the Earth’s crust is vulnerable to shaking. He asserted: “The mountains act like stakes or nails inserted into the crust to steady and stabilize it.” (p. 100).

In view of these geological findings, contemporary Muslim scholars believe that the above verse is meant to be for the hidden downward extension

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of mountains and Qur'anic words like 'أوتادا' (pegs) and 'رواسي' seem to be miraculous. Hence, examining the accuracy of the renditions, it is observed that all of them are not pointing to the downward part of mountains and the genuine message might be correctly transmitted if it was translated as stable stakes anchoring the Earth or steady deeply implanted mountains stabilizing themselves and the crust not to move or shake 'تميد'.

➤ 8) 'أدنى' (Adna): -Surah (30) : Arrum –Ayah: (03)

{ فِي أَدْنَى الْأَرْضِ وَهُمْ مِنْ بَعْدِ عَلَيْهِمْ سَيَّغْلِبُونَ }

“In the nearer land (Syria, Iraq, Jordan, and Palestine), and they, after their defeat, will be victorious”.

Asad	Malik	Pickthall	Yusuf Ali	Al-Hilali and Khan
<i>close-by</i>	<i>the neighboring</i>	<i>the nearer</i>	<i>close by</i>	<i>the nearer</i>

In addition to holding the meaning of being 'close' as given by exegetes, the word 'أدنى' also linguistically stands for 'depression' and exactly the most depressed land. Geologists discovered that the place in question is indeed the lowest point on Earth called the Dead Sea Depression -Located along the borders of Palestine, Jordan, Iraq and Syria with an elevation of approximately 420 meters below sea level. Migon (2010, p. 246) stated: “The Dead Sea is a hypersaline, dense terminal lake, lying 422 m below sea level in the lowest continental depression on the earth”.

Nonetheless, all the translators did not mention this meaning and this is considered not fully acceptable in terms of faithfulness to the original. Therefore, due to the absence of an English word that can stand for both meanings, the second one should be added.

➤ 9) 'يَحْطِمَنَّكُمْ' (yahtimannakum) -Surah (27): An-Naml –Ayah: (18)

{ حَتَّىٰ إِذَا أَتَوْا عَلَىٰ وَادِ النَّمْلِ قَالَتْ نَمْلَةٌ يَا أَيُّهَا النَّمْلُ ادْخُلُوا مَسَاكِنَكُمْ لَا يَحْطِمَنَّكُمْ سُلَيْمَانُ وَجُنُودُهُ وَهُمْ لَا يَسْعُرُونَ }

“Till, when they came to the valley of the ants, one of the ants said: "O ants! Enter your dwellings, lest Sulaiman (Solomon) and his hosts crush you, while they perceive not.”

Asad	Malik	Pickthall	Yusuf Ali	Al-Hilali and Khan
<i>crush</i>	<i>crush</i>	<i>crush</i>	<i>crush</i>	<i>crush</i>

In this verse, an ant is addressing the other ants to enter their dwellings for fear of being killed unintentionally by the messenger Solomon and his soldiers. 'يسحق' is the usual Arabic term used for killing insects without referring to what happens exactly. Consequently, all the translators went for 'crush' (deforming when compressing forcefully) as the translation for 'يَحْطِمَنَّكُمْ', which is a word

used generally when breaking something rigid. In point of fact, God, to support the internal and fragile body of the ant, has equipped it with a strong external skeleton (exoskeleton) which is inflexible. Petrie (2010) said that the crunching sound when squashing ants is coming from each ant’s exoskeleton. He defined the latter as “a stiff outer covering that is much like a shell. Ants do not have bones, so the hard exoskeleton protects their organs” (2010, p.08). Thus, the ant’s skeleton when pressed gets broken just as a glass or bone does. Therefore, the most suitable equivalent could be ‘smash’ as being more specific and accurate than ‘crush’.

➤ 10) ‘يَعْقِلُونَ’ (yaaqilun) -Surah (22): Al-Hajj –Ayah: (46)

{ أَفَلَمْ يَسِيرُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ فَتَكُونَ لَهُمْ قُلُوبٌ يَعْقِلُونَ بِهَا أَوْ آذَانٌ يَسْمَعُونَ بِهَا... }

“Have they not travelled through the land, and have they hearts wherewith to **understand** and ears wherewith to hear? ....”

Asad	Malik	Pickthall	Yusuf Ali	Al-Hilali and Khan
<i>gain wisdom</i>	<i>to learn wisdom</i>	<i>to feel</i>	<i>(and mind) may thus learn wisdom</i>	<i>to understand</i>

Scholars explained the verse as a lesson should be taken from the previous peoples and emphasized the obligation to use the hearts to understand. But, as it is well known, the heart is a muscular pump that pumps the blood. Most Muslims often turn a blind eye to words like ‘يعقلون’ and ‘يفقهون’ connected in the Qur’anic speech with the heart as being real actions of it, and consider them kinds of metaphors. Two translators transformed the word as to learn or gain wisdom which is not really an equivalent to ‘يعقلون’. Pickthall rendered it ‘to feel’ as being relevant to the heart. Yusuf Ali added the word ‘mind’ to fit the action whereas Al-Hilali and Khan were successful in translating this word regarding the following.

An intriguing matter discovered recently is that, according to neurocardiologists, the heart really thinks. Roosevelt (2011, p. 93) stated: “It has been proven through heart transplants that the heart really does have a mind”. Dr. Paul Pearsall, a neuropsychologist as a guest in Goodwin’s programme (1999) said that they knew since the early 90’s that the heart has its own brain and that it has its own intelligence just as much so as the brain. Perus (2013) wrote that Dr Andrew Armour, a heart specialist, had discovered a sophisticated collection of neurons in the heart and claimed that the brain is veritably receiving more information from the heart than the other way around. New evidences shocked the heart specialists when they received strange claims from heart recipients taking on many life aspects of the deceased heart donors that were not

having them before the transplantation such as the same passions, interests, habits...etc. Pointing to receiving more than just the organ, Dr. Paul Pearsall used the terminology “cellular memories”. He accounts for it as “Recipients have reported inheriting everything from the donor’s food cravings to knowledge about his murderer - information that in one case led to the killer's arrest” (Perus, 2013, p. 189).

### Conclusion

No man has ever written a comprehensive book with absolute perfection and certainty of knowledge. Therefore, generally writers apologize in advance for any mistake or error. Yet, Allah said in the very beginning of the Qur'an: "ذَلِكَ الْكِتَابُ لَا رَيْبَ فِيهِ هُدًى لِّلْمُتَّقِينَ"

**“This is the Book (the Qur'an), whereof there is no doubt, a guidance to those who are Al-Muttaqun [the pious and righteous persons who fear Allah much...]” (Al-Baqara: 02)**

Since the Qur'an is a book of signs and not a book of science, it contains miraculous scientific facts (discovered only recently and still may reveal others), for the sake of guidance. But, despite the fact that scientific revelations might not be free from rectifications, reviews or even faults, Qur'an is impeccable. This research maintains that the translations produced of some words fail because of the i'jaz of these divine words. Hence, it is recommended to use the literal translation as the best strategy for at least approaching the miraculous unmatchable words of Allah.

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