

## How Context and Belief Shape Interpretations of the Qur'an

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### ABSTRACT

This paper analyzes diverse hermeneutic patterns in English translations of the Glorious Qur'an across different eras and by different translators. The study compares the interpretations of five translators focusing on five Quranic verses from four Surahs. The paper examines variations in approaching positions like male authority in marriage (Al-Nisaa 4:34), disciplinary track regarding "striking" (Al-Nisaa 4:34), dry ablution (Al-Ma'idah 5:6), the payment of jizyah and submission (Al-Tawbah 9:29), and the questioning of female infants buried alive (At-Takwir 81:8). By comparing these interpretations, the paper reveals how sensitive verses act as indicators, exposing each translator's hermeneutic priorities, such as adherence to tradition, modern reform. The study also highlights how non-Muslim translators, despite their academic rigor, may sometimes lack the nuanced understanding of Islamic cultural practices, leading to distinct interpretive choices. In other words, by comparing these translated texts, it is seen that translated Ayahs provoke various interpretation. They show that the translators in some places have their own hermeneutics to adhere (ranging from classical to modern interpretation). Also, a crucial trend is viewed in this study in which non-muslim translators lack the very details of the culture accompanying the Glorious Qur'an. Thus, this gap leads to various interpretations that differs from those produced based on faith and beliefs that illustrating the deep influence of translator's background that is positioned in English text.

**Keywords:** Exegeses, Sensitive issues, Religious texts, Ideology

### INTRODUCTION

Naaijkens (2008, p 311) cited in Keeffe (2023) states that interpretation of religious texts is problematic and includes challenges. In the sense that it digs deeper that linguistic aspects to cover theological interpretation, cultural negotiation, and ideological positioning. For Abdulkhaleq (2020) these challenges are clearly seen in interpretation of glorious Qur'an. For instance, semantic implications, rhetorical aspects, ethical merits. Thus, any the choice of translation affects the reader's realization and values (especially when the translation is produced for a non-Arabic-speaking audience).

Previous studies in Qur'anic translation consider linguistic challenges, equivalence problems, or translation strategies (Abdelal, 2020; Abdulkhaleq, 2020). Other papers assume the miss translation of certain Islamic items such as in the translation of specific concepts such as *jihad* or religious terminology (Mahasneh, 2021; Mousa et al., 2025). Whereas, these studies have presented a recognized insights, However, not much attention has been given to how translators' belief, cultural backgrounds, and hermeneutic orientations systematically affect the interpretation of Qur'anic verses, (particularly across different historical periods).

Ayyad et al (2021) state that the hermeneutic interpretation of religious verses present another challenges (especially verses tackles obligations, gender's rights, and penalties for sinners). Various interpretation of translators leads to complexity and vague. For instance, variations in rendering concepts such as *qiwāmah* (male authority), disciplinary measures in marriage, *tayammum* (dry ablution), *jizyah* (poll tax).

## BACKGROUND OF STUDY

Abdelkarim and Alhaj (2023) state that though there are many English translates of the Qur'an, there is still a gap regarding how translators from different origins consider certain verses and how these approaches represents different hermeneutic status. Furthermore, a lot of current research either concentrates on a single translator or examines individual verses without placing translation decisions within a more comprehensive comparative and exegetical framework based on accepted Islamic *tafsīr*. In relevant to this gap the present study tackles how context and belief shape hermeneutic patterns in selected English translations of the Glorious Qur'an. The study analyzes five English translations assumed by translators from different backgrounds, focusing on five selected Qur'anic verses drawn from four Surahs. These verses are chosen due to their interpretive sensitivity and their potential to expose underlying ideological and hermeneutic orientations.

According to (Naaijkens, 2008, p.311) cited in Keeffe (2023) substituting culture with 'institution' means that: A translation that acts as a catalyst for change shows fresh linguistic and cultural aspects into an institution. This, in turn, evokes new thought processes, all stemming from how the initial text is interpreted. Long (2008) analyzes the factors that influence the potential for religious texts to be translated or to retain an inherent unpredictability.

The interpretative changeling of sacred texts, as tackled by Augustine et al. (2023) stems from their context rather than their intrinsic content. Thus, adapting religious texts to varying cultural values imposes a significant harden to translated text. According to Long (2008) identifying transitional objectives and target audience are critical factors. Additionally, a limited target language vocabulary, especially due to the absence of specific terminology or unique cultural nuances, would hinder translation. Augustine et al. (2023) exemplify this by the Vatican's *Liturgicam Authenticam*, which stipulates instructions for liturgical translation, assuring the predominant of "faithfully and accurately rendering the original texts into the vernacular language," thereby authorizing strict adherence to the source material.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Mousa et al. (2025) analyze the risk of manipulating the context of the Glorious Qur'an (GQ). Interpreting religious texts presents a significant challenge for linguists due to the intricate and deeply personal nature of human ideology, encompassing faith and belief. Given people's inherent tendency to fiercely guard their convictions, accurately translating these texts becomes exceptionally important. However, the process is fraught with difficulties, particularly concerning vocabulary and semantic nuances. Mahasneh (2023) explores the manipulation of Islamic concepts, particularly jihad, in different contexts. The work examines how both Western media and ISIS propaganda distort narratives about Islam and jihad, contributing to global Islamophobia. And, how radical groups like ISIS specifically misinterprets (GQ) verses that are related to jihad. By analyzing various book groups, the research demonstrates how these misinterpretations evoke Western hostility toward Islam and amplify misconceptions about the religion, thereby fueling global Islamophobia. In essence, Mahasneh (2021) states that the manipulation of religious texts through translation is a complex, multifaceted issue spanning ideological, religious, and textual dimensions, as numerous studies have highlighted the diverse ideologies present in different translations of the Quran.

Mahmood and Ali (2020) studies a number of problems that hinder the Holy Koran's translation into French. The study specifically looks at and evaluates some of the difficulties translators face when attempting to transfer the sacred text into French. These difficulties include various translation techniques, some of the mistakes that result from their application, a comparison of them, and problems with the meaning of specific words within the Koranic context.

Abdulkhaleq (2020) investigates the challenges of translating Islamic terms during religious events. This essay aims to pinpoint the difficulties students face when attempting to translate religious texts into English. Information was gathered from common people in the community. Due to linguistic variations and a dearth of English equivalents, this study identified a number of problems that students encountered when translating and offered some solutions.

Arabic-to-English translations of religious and historical texts were studied by Abdelaal (2020). When translating historical and religious texts from Arabic into English, the study sought to identify the biggest obstacles translators face, look into the reasons behind them, and offer solutions. Finding equivalents for cultural terms, personal names, and cities was one of the many linguistic and cultural issues that were discovered during the examination of six texts. Other issues included misinterpreting grammatical and stylistic structures. These studies represent only a small portion of the vast amount of work being done in this field. As can be seen, the majority of translators have attempted to pinpoint the difficulties in translating religious texts and offer workable answers (Abdelaal, 2020). Abd-Al-Haleem (2004) argues that "the Glorious Quran has its own unique style that could be distinguished from other Arabic texts" (30). Outstandingly, Baker considers that a unique cardinal element is being tackled which is called 'contrast', for instance, day and night, light and dark, paradise and hell, etc (200). For Abd-Al-Haleem (2004), "this stylistic feature (contrast) enforces the Islamic message" (30). For Norqulovna (2024) the Aesthetic style of the GQ is not look like as a poetic body since, it lacks the ordinary regular meters.

## METHODOLOGY

This study conducts a descriptive qualitative research design, which is suitable for investigating different translated religious texts. The investigation includes the following aspects: ideological positioning, and hermeneutic tendencies in translations of sacred texts. Qualitative analysis facilitates close textual interpretation, which is significant when dealing with the linguistic, theological, and cultural characteristics of Qur'anic verses. Since the goal is to analyze the interpretation choices of the study rather than calculate the is not to measure frequency or statistical patterns.

### Sampling

The data of the study is five Qur'anic verses selected from four Surahs of the Glorious Qur'an. These Ayahs were purposively selected because they address the following issues:

1. Male authority in marriage (Al-Nisaa 4:34)
2. Disciplinary measures and the notion of "striking" (Al-Nisaa 4:34)
3. Dry abulation (Al-Ma'idah 5:6)
4. Payment of jizyah and submission (Al-Tawbah 9:29)
5. The questioning of female infants buried alive (At-Takwir 81:8)

These verses are widely discussed in both Islamic subjects and Western discourses

These verses have been widely debated in both Islamic scholarship and Western academic discourse.

Five English translations of the Qur'an are selected for analysis:

1. Ali Abdullah Yusuf Ali (1934)
2. A. J. Arberry (1955)
3. N. J. Dawood (1956/2014)
4. M. A. S. Abdel Haleem (2004)
5. Nasr et al. (2015)

These translators were chosen because they represent different historical periods, religious affiliations, linguistic backgrounds, and translation philosophies (literal, interpretive, and exegetical). For Maatoq (2019) the diversity among the translators enables a comparative examination of how ideological orientation, theological stance, and intended readership influence translation decisions.

The analysis is assumed via a comparative framework in which each translated verse is systematically compared with

1. The original Quranic text.
2. Recognized Islamic exegeses (tafsir), particularly Tafsir Ibn Kathir (2000), as an authoritative reference.

The analytical focus includes: Lexical choices, Semantic shifts, Explanatory, additions or omissions, using of commentary notes and paratexts. This framework allows to identify how translators prioritize tradition, reform, literalism, or interpret mediation, and how these priorities reflect broader ideological commitments.

According to the wide scope of Glorious Quran. This paper is limited to five verses. This limitation consider depth of analysis rather than breadth, allowing for detailed examination of each verse across multiple translations. The study does not aim to judge the correctness of any translation theologically, but rather to analyze interpretive variation and ideological influence within the framework of translation studies.

## RESULTS

The results are listed in the table blow (the original Ayahs and the five translators)

**Table1.**The original verses and the five translations

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم	Ali Abdullah(1934),	B. Arberry(1955)	C. Abdel Haleem (2004)	D. N. J. Dawood (1956/2014)	E. Nasr et al. (2015)
1.(Al- Nesaa: 34): الرَّجُلُ قَوَّامُونَ عَلَى النِّسَاءِ /alrijal qawaamun calaa alnisa'	"Men are the protectors and maintainers of women..."		"Husbands should take full care of their wives..."		"Men are the caretakers of women..."
2. (Al- Nesaa: 34): وَاللَّاتِي تَخَافُنْ نُسُورُ هُنْ قُهْظَوْنَ وَاهْجُرُوْهُنْ فِي الْمَنَاجِعِ وَاضْرِبُوْهُنْ فَإِنْ أَطْعَنُتُمْ فَلَا تُنْقُوْنَ عَلَيْهِنْ سَيْلَانَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ عَلَيْهِ كَبِيرًا wallati takhafun nushuzahunn faezuhunn wahjuruhunn fi almadajie wadribuhunn ۞fa'iin 'ataenakum fala tabghuu calayhinn sabilan ۞ 'inn allah kan ealian kabira)	"As to those women on whose part ye fear disloyalty and ill-conduct, admonish them (first), (Next), refuse to share their beds, (And last) beat them (lightly); but if they return to obedience, seek not against them Means (of annoyance): For Allah is Most High, great (above you all)." "Men are the managers of the affairs of women..."		If you fear high-handedness from your wives, remind them [of the teaching of God], then ignore them when you go to bed, then hit them. If they obey you, you have no right to act against them: God is most high and great.** *(Note: Abdel Haleem adds a footnote: "A light touch that causes no pain or injury is implied here, according to the commentaries.")	"Men have authority over women..."	As for those women from whom you fear rebellion, admonish them, and abandon them in their beds, and *(Note: The Study Quran includes extensive commentary discussing interpretations of "nushuz" (rebellion, discord) and "wađribuhunna" (and strike them), acknowledging the historical context and diverse scholarly interpretations.)
3.Al-Maida (6) فَتَتَّمَّمُوا صَعِيدًا طَيْبًا fatayammamuu saeidan tayiban	.then take for yourselves clean sand or earth..."	"...then have recourse to a goodly earth..."	".then use some clean earth..."	"...then find some clean sand and rub your faces and hands with it.	**"...then seek clean earth..."**
4. Al-Tawba(29) حَتَّى يُعْطُوا الْجِزِيَّةَ عَنْ وَهُمْ صَاغِرُونَ يَد hataa yuetuu aljizyat ean yd wahum saghirun	Until they pay the Jizyah with willing submission, and feel themselves subdued."	until they pay the tribute out of hand and have been humbled."	"Until they pay the tax and submit to God completely	...until they pay tribute *out of hand* and are *utterly humbled*."	"Till they pay the jizyah with a willing hand, being subdued."
5At-Taqwir (8) إِذَا الْمَوْعِدُ سُلُكَ adha almaw'uda Suyilat	"When the female (infant), buried alive, is questioned	"when the buried infant is asked"	"when baby girls, buried alive, are asked"	"when the infant girl, buried alive, is asked"	"when the buried infant is asked"

**Table 2.** The strategy and the impact of the 1<sup>st</sup> verse

### 1.Nesaa: (34): قَوَّامُونَ الرَّجَالُ / النِّسَاءُ

Translators	Translation	Strategy	Impact
Ali Abdullah.	"Men are the protectors and maintainers of women..."	interpretive amplification + exegetical gloss	Reinforces traditional patriarchal responsibility with moral justification
Arberry (1955)	"Men are the managers of the affairs of women..."	Literal + exegetical mitigation	Justifies physical discipline while limiting severity.
Abdel Haleem (2004)	"Husbands should take full care of their wives..."	Formal equivalence	Neutral administrative sense; reduces overt patriarchal tone.
N. J. Dawood (1956/2014)	"Men have authority over women..."	Literal + paratextual explanation	Softens meaning through commentary referencing classical

			exegesis.
Nasr et al. (2015)	"Men are the caretakers of women..."	Contextualized interpretive strategy	Balances authority with ethical responsibility using classical tafsīr.

**Table 3.** The strategy and the impact of the 2<sup>nd</sup> verse**2.(Al- Nesaa: 34):**

وَاللَّاتِي تَخَافُونَ نُشُورَ هُنَّ فَعَظُوْهُنَّ وَاهْجُرُوْهُنَّ فِي الْمَضَاجِعِ وَاضْرِبُوْهُنَّ مُّطَافِنَ أَطْعَنُكُمْ فَلَا تَبْغُوا عَلَيْهِنَّ سَبِيلًا إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ عَلَيْهَا كَبِيرًا

Translators	Translation	Strategy	Impact
Ali Abdullah (1934)	"As to those women on whose part ye fear disloyalty and ill-conduct, admonish them (first), (Next), refuse to share their beds, (And last) beat them (lightly); but if they return to obedience, seek not against them Means (of annoyance): For Allah is Most High, great (above you all)."	interpretive amplification exegetical gloss	+ Reinforces traditional patriarchal responsibility with moral justification
Arberry (1955)	And those you fear may be rebellious admonish; banish them to their couches, and beat them. If they then obey you, look not for any way against them; God is All-high, All-great.	Literal + exegetical	Retains physical violence without mitigation.
Abdel Haleem (2004)	If you fear high-handedness from your wives, remind them [of the teaching of God], then ignore them when you go to bed, then hit them. If they obey you, you have no right to act against them: God is most high and great.**"	Contextual paraphrasing with partial mitigation	The use of "high-handedness" instead of a more literal rendering of <i>nushū</i> reframes the wife's behavior as serious misconduct rather than general disobedience.
N. J. Dawood (1956/2014)	If you fear high-handedness from your wives, remind them [of the teaching of God], then ignore them when you go to bed, then beat them.	Literal translation	Maintains harsh disciplinary connotation
Nasr et al. (2015)	As for those women from whom you fear rebellion, admonish them, and abandon them in their beds, and *(Note: The Study Quran includes extensive commentary discussing interpretations of "nushūz" (rebellion, discord) and "waqribūhunna" (and strike them), acknowledging the historical context and diverse scholarly interpretations.)	Exegetical contextualization	Frames the term within juristic debate and ethical limits.

**Table4.** The strategy and the impact of the 3<sup>rd</sup> verse**3.(Al-Maaida: 6)**

Translators	Translation	Strategy	Impact
Ali Abdullah1	.then take for yourselves clean sand or earth...."	Explicitation	Clarifies ritual requirement.
Arberry (1955)	"...then have recourse to a goodly earth..."	Formal equivalence	Retains Qur'anic stylistic tone but less clarity.
Abdel Haleem (2004)	".then use some clean earth..."	Dynamic quivalence	Accessible and functional meaning.
N. J. Dawood (1956/2014)	"...then find some clean sand and rub your faces and hands with it.	Cultural substitution	Narrows semantic range.
Nasr et al. (2015)	**"...then seek clean earth..."**	Exegetical precision	Aligns with jurisprudential consensus

**Table5** The strategy and the impact of the 4th verse

Al-Tawba .4 (29) حتى يُعطوا الجزية عن يد وهم صاغرون

Translators	Translation	Strategy	Impact
Ali Abdullah1	Until they pay the Jizyah with willing submission, and feel themselves subdued.	Interpretive paraphrase	Softens coercive force and frames submission as voluntary, reducing political harshness.
Arberry (1955)	until they pay the tribute out of hand and have been humbled."	Literal translation	Retains submissive implication
Abdel Haleem (2004)	"Until they pay the tax and submit to God completely	Interpretive paraphrase with theological reframing	softening power asymmetry and reducing confrontational implication
N. J. Dawood (1956/2014)	...until they pay tribute *out of hand* and are *utterly humbled*."	Literal intensification	Strengthens dominance narrative
Nasr et al. (2015)	"Till they pay the jizyah with a willing hand, being subdued."	Contextual exegetical framing	Explains historical governance context.

**Table6** The strategy and the impact of the 5<sup>th</sup> verse

5. At-Taqwir (8) أذًا المُؤْمِنَةُ سالت

Translators	Translation	Strategy	Impact
Ali Abdullah1	"When the female (infant), buried alive, is questioned	Explication	Highlights gender injustice explicitly
Arberry (1955)	"when the buried infant is asked"	Formal equivalence	Maintains rhetorical ambiguity.
Abdel Haleem (2004)	"when baby girls, buried alive, are asked	Clarification + domestication	Strong ethical condemnation.
N. J. Dawood (1956/2014)	"when the infant girl, buried alive, is asked"	Literal clarification	Retains emotional impact.
Nasr et al. (2015)	"when the buried infant is asked"	Stylistic preservation	Preserves Qur'anic rhetorical power

## Analysis

Meaning of ST should be conveyed to the reader to be acceptable and readable to TTs. However, it should be as accurate as the original. Nida suggests two concepts that have a recognized effect on translation studies: "formal correspondence and dynamic equivalence". According to Nida (1964, p.159), a dynamic equivalence means that the message should be structured to the needs of target culture in order to produce the similar effect of the original. Firstly, the interpretations of the translators are examined. Secondly, a comparison among the target texts is assumed. The five Ayahs are selected randomly.

### A. (Al- Nisaa: 34): النساء على قوامهن الرجال /alrijal qawaamun ealaa alnisa' Role of a First Part of Ayah 34: Interpretations of 'Qawwamun' (Caretakers)

For the first part of 1. Al-Nisaa (Ayah 4: 34) the word قوامون (qwamoon) is viewed as below:

- A. Ali Abdullah (1934): With minimal commentary, the tone is traditional balance, indicating that authority and responsibility are balanced.
- B. Arberry (1955): With no commentary, the tone is more authoritative and there is greater power and less responsibility.
- C. Abdel Haleem (2004): There is more responsibility and less authority in the tone. The commentary is limited in terms of science.
- D. Dawood (1956/2014): There is no commentary and the tone is one of impartial authority and responsibility.
- E. Nasr et al. (2015): The commentary is expanded within a social context, and the tone is socially authoritarian.

In sum, Yusuf Ali & Nasr preserve traditional Islamic interpretations- by emphasizing responsibility and care. Arberry remains formal but lacks softening. AbdelHaleem adopts a reformist, modern tone focused on relational dynamics "Husbands should take full care of their wives..." -. Dawood leans toward a strict and literal rendering, which can seem harsh- Most direct statement of authority/hierarchy. For Naser: he balanced classical view, with academic style. And his interpretation is similar to Yusuf Ali, but grounded in classical commentary, emphasizing responsibility and provision.

**B. ( Al-Nisa/4:34) - Second Part:** (واللاتي تَخَافُونَ وَالَّتِي نُشُرَ هُنَّ فَعَطُوْهُنَّ شُوْرَ هُنَّ اَهْجَرُوْهُنَّ (wal-lātī takhāfūna nushūzahunna fa‘izūhunna wa-hjurūhunna fi l-madāji‘i wa-dribūhunna...).

As for the second part of Ayah 34 (Al-Nesaa/see table 1) the hermeneutic exegesis is presented : based on Tafsir Al-Tabari

- a. شُورَ هُنَّ (Nushuz): "Fear of a wife's (rebellion/defiance) against marital rights.
- b. فَعَطُوْهُنَّ (Admonish): First, (verbally counsel)her gently".
- c. اَهْجَرُوْهُنَّ (المضاجع في واهجروه): "If defiance persists, separate sexually/sleep apart (non-violent)".
- d. وَاضْرِبُوْهُنَّ (Strike): As last resort, a symbolic, non-injurious strike (e.g., miswak/handkerchief; never brutal or on face).
- e. اَطْعُنُكُمْ فَإِنْ... (If she obeys): "mmediately cease all measures; do not seek fault".
- f. كَبِيرًا عَلَيْا كَانَ اللَّهُ إِنْ: (كبيراً علىاً): Allah is Exalted/Great—warning against abuse; husbands accountable for justice.

The exegesis are as below:

A.Ali Abdullah (1934), : "admonish them refuse to share their beds beat them (lightly) seek not against them means ans shows "disloyalty and ill-conduct," explicitly adds "(lightly)" to "beat," adds explanatory phrases ("seek not against them means (of annoyance)"). In other words, adding "(lightly)" although it is not in the Arabic text—an interpretive move to soften the impact. He reflects early 20th-century sensibilities, balancing traditionalism with reformist apologetic. B. Arberry (1955): "admonish; banish them to their couches, and beat them... look not for any way against them" - Very concise, stark ("banish," "beat"), minimal softening. The interpretation keeps the literal, mirroring Latin Bible cadence ("banish ... beat"). As for Abdel Haleem (2004), he considers "hit", but his footnote stresses it "should cause no injury," acknowledging living Muslim debates. Dawood (1956/2014) opts for literary paraphrase foregrounds male "authority" and keeps "beat" for directness. Finally, Nasr et al. (2015) are viewed to be less morally loaded English e.g., "discord" instead of "rebellion" or "ill-conduct." They also translate literally without adding qualifiers.

**C. ( Al-Ma'idah/5:6) :** فَتَبَّعُوا صَعِيداً فَتَيَمَّمُوا طَيْبًا (fa-tayammamū ša‘idā tayyibān)

The Ayah is a compact command that opens hermeneutic space (between ritual necessity and spiritual internationalist). Each translation leans more toward one pole of this tension, reflecting how translators interpret pureness, intent, and ritual form in Islam.

A. Ali (1934): "then take for yourselves clean sand or earth..." - considers "sand or earth".

He translates *tayammamū* as intentional action. He interprets *ša‘idā* narrowly as sand or earth. Emphasis is practical, not spiritual.

B. Arberry (1955): "...have recourse to a goodly earth..."

C. Haleem (2004): "...then use some clean earth..." - Simple, clear, uses "earth".

D. Dawood (1956/2014) : "...then find some clean sand and rub your faces and hands with it." Most explanatory, specifies action ("rub"). Adds "rub your faces and hands" (from the rest of the verse), making the translation instructional. "Find" makes the act more physical and, E.Nasr et al. (2015) then seek clean earth..."d immediate.

The researcher specificity sees the following - "sand or earth" (Ali), "earth" (Arberry, Haleem, Nasr), or "sand" with action described (Dawood). All convey the core meaning of using pure earth/sand for dry ablution. The researcher observes that -Dawood interprets فَتَيَمَّمُوا صَعِيداً طَيْبَ as 'take some clean sand', yet, Muslims do not use sand through 'tayamum' but, 'turab'. In mawrid-95-7th- , 'turab' means: dust, earth, dirt, soil and ground . From another point of a view Yusuf Ali interprets فَتَيَمَّمُوا صَعِيداً طَيْبَ as 'take for yourselves clean sand or earth'. Nasr et al. (2015): "...then seek clean earth..." - Concisly he , uses "earth", and using "seek" (a literal meaning of *tayammamū*), suggesting intentional, even spiritual direction. Also avoids "use," emphasizing the act of *turning to* earth, not just applying it.

**D. Al-Tawbah (9:29):** صَاغِرُوْنَ وَهُمْ يَدُ عَنِ الْجِزِيَّةِ يُفْطُوْهُ حَتَّىٰ (hattā yu‘tū l-jizyata ‘an yadin wa-hum sāghirūn).

The interpretations of the translators are viewed below:

A. Ali (1934): "Until they pay the Jizyah with willing submission, and feel themselves subdued."

He uses "willingness" (willing submission) and the condition of the payers "feel themselves subdued". Apologetic-softened: Yusuf Ali interprets عن يد as "willing submission," perhaps to present Islam in a less coercive light. Formal, 19th-century diction. Adds interpretive elements to reduce potential harshness.

B. Arberry (1955): "until they pay the tribute out of hand and have been humbled."

He approaches literal "out of hand" ('an yadin), uses "tribute" and "humbled". The translated text is literal-formal, he keeps the phrase "out of hand", reflecting a classical interpretation, and holding "humbled" as a translation of *ṣāghirūn*. The style is concise and elegant; avoiding over-explaining.

C. Abdel Haleem (2004): "until they pay the tax and submit to God completely" -

He simplifies "jizya" to "tax". He interprets "ṣāghirūn" as "submit to God completely" (a common theological interpretation). He does not translate *ṣāghirūn* literally but, framing it within submission to divine authority rather than political humiliation. The style is simplified, accessible. The text is prioritized to fit with modern reader understanding over traditional vocabulary.

D. Dawood (1956/2014): "...until they pay tribute out of hand and are utterly humbled."

He keeps literal "out of hand", uses strong "utterly humbled". Literal-expository: Retains the phrase "out of hand" and emphasizes "utterly humbled," possibly intensifying the effect. The style is Dramatic and emphatic; targets general English readers with clear, almost theatrical tone.

E. Nasr et al. (2015): "Till they pay the jizyah with a willing hand, being subdued." -

The translated text is "Exegetical-balanced: the translator attempts to maintain traditional *Tafsir*. The phrase "with a willing hand" reflects a *Tafsir*-based rendering of عن يد، "willing hand" (interpretive for 'an yadin), "being subdued" for *ṣāghirūn*. The style is academic, faithful to tradition and supported by extensive footnotes.

The translators of Al-Tawbah 9:29 show dramatic theological differences in handling jizya and submission. Ali softens with "willing submission", Arberry keeps literal "out of hand" and "humbled", Haleem completely reinterprets as "submit to God", Dawood uses "in humiliation", and Nasr offers nuanced alternatives. It is seen that Arberry and Dawood keep the interpretation literal and direct. Plus, none of the use the Islamic term *Jizya* (that is used by Ali).

#### **E. At-Takwir (81:8): سُنِّتُ الْمَوْعِدَةُ وَإِذَا: (wa-idhā l-maw' ūdatu su' ilat)**

The translators' interpretation of "al-maw'ūdah" reflect deeper theological, linguistic, and ethical values: Here is a comparative analysis of the translations for the specified Quranic verses, highlighting key differences in word choice, nuance, theological emphasis, and historical context.

- A. Ali (1934): "When the female (infant), buried alive, is questioned—" - Explicitly "female", "buried alive", "questioned" (divine interrogation implied). Moral-legal aspects are seen by highlighting the criminality and injustice, framing the act as a moral outrage tone. The explanation includes "Maw'ūdah" which is translated as "female (infant), buried alive" "
- B. Arberry (1955): "when the buried infant is asked" - Gender-neutral ("infant"), minimalist ("asked"). The tone of the text is literal and poetic leaving the phrase stark and minimal to preserve the emotive . "Maw'ūdah" is translated "buried alive"
- C. Abdel Haleem (2004): "when baby girls, buried alive, are asked". The text is clearly condemns practicing of "buried alive" of "baby girls". The text is full of modern explanatory, by making the meaning clear without losing the emotional trend. The translator adds "baby girl" for gender and age clarity.
- D. Dawood (1956/2014): "when the infant girl, buried alive, is asked" Footnote is spotted "For what crime she was put to death." - defining "infant girl", but controversial footnote implying the (girl) is asked about her crime (contradicting standard interpretation that God asks about the crime against her). Highlights the innocence and gender. Targets universal moral response. "Infant girl" stresses vulnerability.
- E. E. Nasr et al. (2015): "when the buried infant is asked" Commentary of the translator refers to infant girls killed by pagans, victim questioned about the crime (against) her. The translation is Gender-neutral but explicating clarification in commentary. The text is faithful to classical Arabic with deep *Tafsir* commentary on pre-Islamic context.

#### **Critical Differences Among Approaches**

Gender is specified clearly "female"/"baby girls"/"infant girl" (Ali, Haleem, Dawood) vs. gender-neutral "buried infant" (Arberry, Nasr - clarified in commentary). Nature of Questioning: Implicit divine interrogation of the crime (Ali, Arberry, Abdel Haleem, Nasr commentary) vs. Dawood's footnote suggesting the (victim) is questioned about (her crime). Abdel Haleem most directly names and condemns the practice ("baby girls, buried alive"). Nasr achieves this through commentary.

First for the authority (Qawwamoon), the translations range from traditional balance (Ali, Nasr) and formal authority (Arberry) to modern relational focus (Haleem) and strict literalism (Dawood). And for the 'disciplinary steps' (Admonish, Abandon, Strike), a significant variation exists in softening the controversial "strike" command. Ali explicitly adds "(lightly)", Haleem uses footnotes to restrict meaning, Arberry/Dawood remain starkly literal, and Nasr uses less morally loaded language ("discord"). Ali also adds contextual phrases ("seek not against them means of annoyance"). In Sourat Al-Ma'idah (5:6) / dry Ablution (Tayammum), differences are primarily seen in specificity and emphasis. Ali specifies "sand or earth", Arberry/Haleem/Nasr use "earth", while Dawood adds the

physical action ("rub"). Nasr's "seek" leans towards intentionality/spiritual direction, contrasting with Dawood's practical "find".

For example, Arberry uses phrases like "haply," "unto" and "verily," rub shoulders with "thou wouldest," "if ye differ," "haste unto remembrance" and "who forsaketh." It seems that in trying what Pickthall called a "not unworthy language" and Yusuf Ali called "an exalted tone," these translators opted to continue with a diction that was fast vanishing even from contemporary English Bible translations. For instance, Arberry uses the word 'slain' in Ayah (9) /Sourat At Taqwir (which gives the intended meaning) yet, the term 'killed' would be more convenient for the informants' cultural backgrounds because 'slain' is relevant to violence, e.g. slain the dragon.

Yusuf Ali seeks traditional Muslim perspective soften potentially difficult passages (e.g., "lightly", "willing submission"). A.J. Arberry presumes poetic style , strives for literary feel, often more literal/stark phrasing, less interpretive mitigation. Abdel Haleem adheres clear, idiomatic English, he prioritizes clear meaning and contemporary understanding (using footnotes effectively for sensitive issues (e.g., 4:34 footnote, explicit condemnation in 81:8). N.J. Dawood concises sometimes controversial interpretations (e.g., 81:8 footnote, "authority over women", "utterly humbled"). Later editions moderate some language. Nasr et al. (Study Quran) balances scholarly translation with extensive contextual commentary. Translation itself can be neutral (e.g., "buried infant", "strike"), while the commentary provides essential depth, historical context, and diverse interpretations. Most academic approach. This comparison highlights how translation choices are influenced by the translator's time period, methodology (literal vs. interpretive), theological perspective, intended audience, and use of supplementary notes or commentary. Sensitive verses (like 4:34 and 9:29) show the most significant variation in interpretation and presentation.

## CONCLUSION

Different hermeneutic patterns across eras and translators are analyzed in this paper, showing how theological stance and historical context shape interpretation, especially on sensitive issues. The conclusion should tie together how each translator's consideration remains consistent across different verses. The translators (Christian/Arberrey and Jewish/Dawood) lack (in some interpretations) the features of Islam. The researcher believes that non-Muslim translators do not often show their Jewish or Christian position into the text. But they lack the merits and nuanced of Islamic culture (jizya, tayamm, mawaada). For example by viewing Al-Nisaa 4:34, there are significant differences in how translators handle the concept of male authority (qawwamoon) and marital discipline. Ali (Indain Muslim) takes a balanced traditional approach, Arberry (Christain) is more authoritative by using the style of bible translation , Abel Haleem emphasizes responsibility, Dawood is strictly literal (jewish), and Nasr et al blend tradition with academic style. When it comes to the controversial "strike" command, translators differ greatly in softening language - Ali adds "(lightly)", Arberry remains blunt,Abdel Haleem adds footnotes, Dawood keeps it direct, and Nasr uses less loaded terms.

For Al-Ma'idah 5:6 about dry ablution, the differences are more subtle - mainly in specificity of terms for earth/sand and whether they emphasize physical action or spiritual intention. Ali specifies "sand or earth", Arberry/Haleem/Nasr use "earth", while. Dawood uses sand. It is seen that the Muslims do not conduct Tayamm by using sand, but dust or earth. However, Dawood is not a Muslim so, he lacks the practical action of this matter. It is concluded that (after viewing some Ayahs), translators B and D lack the beliefs, experience and altitudes of the Islamic culture.

In sum the translations form a spectrum from literal fidelity (Arberry, Dawood) to contextual softening/reinterpretation (Ali, Haleem), with Nasr offering an academically grounded middle path. Sensitive terms (authority, striking, submission) act as litmus tests, revealing each translator's core hermeneutic priorities – be it tradition, literalism, modern reform, or scholarly nuance (significantly effecting the conveyed theological, ethical, and social message use).

## RECOMMENDATION

This paper adheres a clear comparative analysis. However, to expand its impact, next studies should explicitly frame it within other approaches. For instance, further studies should introduce key concepts like "domestication" (softening for the target audience, as Ali and Haleem do) versus "foreignization" (preserving the source text's starkness, as Arberry and Dawood do). This theoretical lens will powerfully explain why translators make divergent choices (particularly on sensitive verses like 4:34 and 9:29) and will promote the observation that a translator's theological stance and historical context fundamentally shape their hermeneutic approach.

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The authors declare no use of artificial intelligence (AI) for the write-up of the manuscript.

### Author Contributions

All authors contributed equally.

### Ethics approval

Not applicable.

### Data Availability

The data supporting the findings of this study are derived from publicly available sources, namely the Arabic novel *Hadith al-sabah w al-masa* by Naguib Mahfouz and its English translation *Morning and Evening Talk* by Christina Phillips. These texts can be accessed through published books or authorized digital libraries. No additional datasets were created or analyzed during this research. There are no restrictions on accessing the original materials.

### Abbreviation

None

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