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A Critical Analysis of Lexical and Theological Errors in Rodwell's Translation of Surah Al-Fatiha and Al-Baqarah: Implications for Quranic Translation Studies

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Abstract

This study critically examines lexical and theological errors in John Medows Rodwell's 1861 translation of Surah Al-Fatiha and Al-Baqarah, highlighting the implications for Quranic translation studies. The analysis identifies systematic mistranslations, such as the rendering of *Al-Rahmān* as "the compassionate" and *Khalifah* as "vicegerent," which distort the Quran's semantic and doctrinal messages. Employing a hybrid methodology of comparative textual analysis and error classification, the study reveals how Rodwell's choices reflect 19th-century Orientalist biases, often reframing Islamic concepts through Christian theological lenses. Key findings include lexical inaccuracies (e.g., *al-hamd* as "Praise" instead of "All praise") and theological misrepresentations (e.g., anthropomorphizing Allah's sovereignty). The study underscores the need for decolonial approaches in translation, prioritizing *tafsīr*-based semantics over Eurocentric equivalents. It also proposes an error typology framework to audit colonial-era translations, emphasizing the importance of linguistic precision and doctrinal fidelity in Quranic studies.

Keywords: Quranic Translation, Rodwell, Lexical Errors, Theological Distortions, Orientalism, Decolonial Approaches, *Tafsīr*, Surah Al-Fatiha, Surah Al-Baqarah, Islamic Studies

Introduction

Background of the Study

The translation of the Quran into European languages during the 19th century was heavily influenced by Orientalist scholarship, which often embedded theological and cultural biases within its renditions. John Medows Rodwell's *The Koran* (1861) represents a seminal yet controversial work in this tradition. While Rodwell's translation introduced structural innovations (e.g., chronological ordering of Surahs-*Chapters of the Qur'an*), its lexical and theological choices—particularly in foundational chapters like Al-Fatiha (The Opening, first Surah-chapter of the Qur'an) and Al-Baqarah (The Cow)—deserve systematic critique. These Surahs are pivotal to Islamic theology, making translational accuracy essential for preserving doctrinal commitment.

Objectives of the Study

- To identify and categorize lexical and theological errors in Rodwell's rendering of Al-Fatiha and Al-Baqarah.

- To examine how these errors distort the Quran's semantic and doctrinal messages.
- To contextualize Rodwell's choices within 19th-century Orientalist frameworks.

B. Literature Review

Western Qur'anic Translations: Historical Trajectories

Rodwell's work emerged alongside translations by George Sale¹ and Edward Palmer (1880), which prioritized readability over exegetical precision. Scholarly consensus holds that these works often reframed Islamic concepts through Christian theological lenses.² For instance, Rodwell's use of Lord for *Rabb* (Sūrah 1:2) intersperses Islamic monotheism with feudal Christian imagery—a critique advanced by Edward Said in *Orientalism* (1978).³

Research Gap

Existing studies on Rodwell (e.g., Abdul-Raof 2001; Robinson 2023) focus predominantly on his historical context or stylistic features, neglecting a granular analysis of errors in key Surahs. Few works classify his mistranslations typologically or assess their theological consequences. This study bridges that gap by combining linguistic error analysis with theological critique, offering a model for evaluating colonial-era translations.⁴

Error Typology in Translation Studies

Modern Qur'anic translation studies⁵ classify errors into:

- **Lexical:** Incorrect word choices (e.g., *dāllīn* [astray] as those who err [Rodwell 1:7], losing the term's eschatological weight).
- **Theological:** Doctrinal misrepresentations (e.g., rendering Allah as God, which obscures the term's Islamic uniqueness).

This study adopts this framework while incorporating Baker's⁶ narrative theory to analyze how errors propagate ideological biases.

C. Methodology

Data Selection

Source Text: The Muṣḥaf al-Madīnah (Standard Qur'anic Arabic text).

Primary Data: Rodwell's 1861 translation of Al-Fatiha (1) and Al-Baqarah (2).

Analytical Framework

A hybrid methodology is employed:

Comparative Textual Analysis:

Verse-by-verse comparison of Rodwell's translation with the Arabic sources.

Identification of deviations for lexical analysis.

¹ George Sale, *The Koran: Commonly Called the Alkoran of Mohammed* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1734); Edward Palmer, *The Qur'ān: A New Translation* (London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1880).

² Andrew Rippin, ed., *The Qur'an: Style and Contents* (Aldershot, UK: Ashgate, 2001), xxx–xxx.

³ Edward W. Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1978), xx–xx—where he critiques Orientalist translations for framing Islamic terms via Western religious paradigms.

⁴ Hussein Abdul-Raof, *Qur'an Translation: Discourse, Texture and Exegesis* (Richmond, UK: Curzon Press, 2001); [Author Firstname] Robinson, [Title of Robinson's 2023 work] (Place: Publisher, 2023).

*(Note: Abdul-Raof's work examines Qur'anic discourse but does not analyse specific translator errors like Rodwell's mistranslations)

⁵ Entesar Alsir Abu-Algasim Mohamed Ali, "Semantic Problems of the Usage of Archaic Morphological Features: Surat Al-Humza (Traducer) as a Model," *International Journal of Linguistics, Literature and Translation* 4, no. 2 (February 27, 2021): 138–45. Ali demonstrates how translators such as Pickthall and Yusuf Ali tend to "use archaism or old words ... to make their translation sound like 'scripture,'" which introduces semantic distortions in the target text.

⁶ Mona Baker, *Translation and Conflict: A Narrative Account* (London: Routledge, 2018). Baker's model emphasizes how translations and interpreters actively "circulate as well as resist the narratives that create the intellectual and moral environment" of conflicts, making it apt for tracing ideological bias via translation errors.

Error Classification

Lexical Errors: Mapped using standard Arabic Lexical sources.

Theological Errors: Evaluated against 'aqidah (creedal) norms via tafsir literature.

Bias Analysis

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) of Rodwell's paratexts (prefaces, footnotes) to trace Orientalist narratives.

D. Findings: Systematic Errors in Rodwell's Translation

Lexical and Grammatical Misrepresentations

1. In the Surah Al-Fatiha the word *al-hamd* is translated by Rodwell as, 'Praise'⁷ ignoring definite article *al*—prefixed to it, which has different usage in the Arabic language. Here it is used in the meaning of *Istighraq* means entire, complete or all kinds. So, the correct translation of the word, 'Al-Hamd' in the ayah is All praise be to Allah as done by M. Mohar Ali in his translation.⁸
2. Rodwell has translated the ayah of surah Al-Fatiha (1:3), *الرَّحْمَنُ الرَّحِيمُ* as the compassionate, the merciful which loses the emphasis and intensity of these two epithets of Allah. According to Imam Qurtubi⁹ and other commentators of the Quran;

الرحمن: مشتق من الرحمة مبني على المبالغة ؛ ومعناه ذو الرحمة الذي لا نظير له فيها، فلذلك لا يثنى ولا يجمع كما يثنى الرحيم ويجمع.

'Al. Rehman and 'Al. Rahim' both are derived from *rahmah* and both indicate (*mubalagha*) emphasis and intensity. So, the proper translation of these two words could be as; the most Gracious, the most Merciful.

3. Rodwell has translated the ayah (2:5) surah Baqarah as:

أُولَئِكَ عَلَىٰ هُدًى مِّن رَّبِّهِمْ وَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُونَ

These are guided by their Lord and with these it shall be well.¹⁰

Here Rodwell could not communicate the true spirit of the ayah as he has translated the word *الْمُفْلِحُونَ* as 'well' and the translation goes away from the original text. The word *muflihūna* means successful people. So, the correct translation of the verse is done by Dr. Muhsin as follows:

They are on (true) guidance from their Lord, and they are the successful.¹¹

4. Rodwell has translated the ayah (2:12) as;

أَلَا إِنَّهُمْ هُمُ الْمُفْسِدُونَ وَلَكِن لَّا يَشْعُرُونَ

Is it not that they are themselves the authors of disorder? But they perceive it not.¹²

In this ayah the above mentioned sentence is a simple sentence but Rodwell has translated it as a question tag. Here Rodwell could not understand the word 'ألا' which is used to alert someone as stated in tafsir Jalalayn.¹³

The word 'Ala' can be translated as; be Alert! Listen or Lo etc. So, the ayah could be translated as:

Listen! Verily, they are the ones who make mischief, but they do not perceive (it).

The same mistake has done Rodwell in the ayah (2:13) which shows that Rodwell was not so familiar with the Arabic style. Further, it also comes to know that had Rodwell studied the Tafsir Jalalayn as he cited in his notes on few places, he would not have made this mistake.

⁷ J.M. Rodwell, *The Koran* (London: Everyman's Library, 1909), 338.

⁸ M. Mohar Ali, *A Word for Word Meaning of the Quran* (London: Jam'iyat Ihya' al-Sunnah, 2003), 1:7.

⁹ Abu Abdullah Muhammad bin Ahmad al-Qurtubi, *Al-Jami' li Ahkam al-Qur'an* (Beirut: Dar al-Fikr, n.d.), 1:104.

¹⁰ Rodwell, *The Koran*, 338.

¹¹ Muhammad Muhsin Khan and Muhammad Taqi-ud-Din al-Hilali, *Interpretation of the Meanings of the Noble Qur'an* (Riyadh: Darussalam, 2007), 14.

¹² Rodwell, *The Koran*, 339.

¹³ Jalal al-Din al-Mahalli and Jalal al-Din al-Suyuti, *Tafsir al-Jalalayn* (Riyadh: Darussalam, 2002), 12.

5. He has translated the ayah (2:20) as follows:

إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ

Verily, God is Almighty ¹⁴

In the above mentioned ayah, Rodwell has not translated the words; عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ which means over all things, but surprisingly, Rodwell has translated these words repeated on other places in Surah Al-Baqarah as God hath power over all things, (2:106,109), for God is all powerful (2:284,148), God hath power to do all things (2:259).

6. In the ayah (2: 25) Rodwell has translated the verb 'Bashshir' بِشِّر as 'announce'.¹⁵ (*The Koran*. P-340) while announce is equivalent to the Arabic word اعلن (A'lin). And 'Bash'shir' means give tidings.

He also made a grammatical mistake in translating this verse when he translated the word كلما (Kullama) as 'oft' while its correct meaning is 'whenever'.¹⁶

7. Rodwell has ignored the translation of the letter 'wao' in translating the ayah (2:28). His rendering of this ayah as follows:

كَيْفَ تَكْفُرُونَ بِاللَّهِ وَكُنْتُمْ أََمْوَاتًا

How can ye withhold faith from God? Ye were dead. ¹⁷

In this ayah the letter 'wao' is 'haal' (a circumstantial Qualifier) as stated by Zamakhshari in his exegesis.¹⁸ So it can be translated as while, whereas, though, although. So, the ayah can be translated as;

How do you disbelieve in Allah? While you were dead

8. Rodwell has translated the ayah (2:30) as follows:

وَإِذْ قَالَ رَبُّكَ لِلْمَلَائِكَةِ إِنِّي جَاعِلٌ فِي الْأَرْضِ خَلِيفَةً

When thy Lord said to the angels, verily, I am about to place one in my stead on earth. ¹⁹

Khalifah means one who becomes vicegerent after the death of one or in the absence of one or one can't employ his all actions oneself and charges someone his caliphate to employ his some actions. Here it is not right that Khalifah means the vicegerent of Allah, because Allah will neither die, nor He is absent and He needs no one's help to perform His actions.²⁰

Rodwell has wrongly translated the Arabic word 'Khalifah', while, it means, here, successor as stated by Hafiz Ibn-e-Kathir²¹ in his exegesis of the Quran as follows;

قوما يخلف بعضهم بعضا قرنا بعد قرن جيلا بعد جيل

Khalifah means people reproducing generation after generation, century after century, just as Allah says:

وَهُوَ الَّذِي جَعَلَكُمْ خَلَائِفَ الْأَرْضِ

And It is He who made you (Khalifah) generations coming after generations, replacing each other on the earth. (6:165)

In the ayah, khalifah means the whole mankind rather than Adam (pbAh) because he did not make mischief on the earth and shed blood. Dr. Muhsin has correctly translated the ayah as:

And (Remember) when your Lord said to the angels: verily, I am going to place (mankind) generations after generations on earth. ²²

And M. Mohar Ali has also translated this verse as:

¹⁴ Rodwell, *The Koran*, 339.

¹⁵ Ibid, 340.

¹⁶ Munir Baalbaki and Rohi Baalbaki, *Al-Mawrid al-Waseet* (Beirut: Dar al-Ilm lil Malayin, 1996), 591.

¹⁷ Rodwell, *The Koran*, 340.

¹⁸ Abu al-Qasim al-Zamakhshari, *Al-Kashshaf 'an Haqaiq Ghawamid al-Tanzil* (Riyadh: Maktabat al-Abikan, 1997), 1:267.

¹⁹ Rodwell, *the Koran*, 340.

²⁰ Abdussalam bin Muhammad, *Tafsir al-Qur'an al-Karim* (Lahore: Dar al-Andalus, n.d.), 1:61.

²¹ Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir al-Qur'an al-Azim* (Riyadh: Darussalam, 1998), 1:104.

²² Khan and al-Hilali, *Interpretation of the Meanings*, 18.

I am going to set in the earth a successor.²³

9. In the ayah (2:31), Rodwell has translated the phrase : ان كنتم صديقين as follows:

If ye are endued with wisdom.

The correct translation of this phrase is done by M. Mohar Ali as follows:

If you are truthful²⁴

Rodwell could not understand the meaning of 'Sadiqin'. It seems, perhaps, Rodwell has imitated this translation from someone's rendition instead of George Sale's.

10. Rodwell has translated the ayah (2:44) as:

اتأمروا ناس بالبر وتسنون الفسكم وانتم تتلون الكتاب افلا تعقلون

Will you enjoin what is right upon others, and forget yourselves? Yet ye read the book: will ye not understand?²⁵

The expression of the ayah is not interrogative, rather it is exclamatory²⁶ which Rodwell could not understand and has translated it as interrogative expression. Secondly, he has translated the ayah in future tense rather than present tense. Thirdly, he has translated the word 'Al-Nās' as others. Dr. Muhsin Khan has translated the ayah correctly as follow:

Enjoin you Al-Birr (Piety and righteousness and every act of obedience to Allah) on the people and you forget (to practice it) yourselves, while you recite the scriptures [the Taurat (Torah)]! Have you then no sense?²⁷

11. Rodwell has rendered the Arabic word, Yazunnuna as 'bear in mind in the following verse (2:46)

الَّذِينَ يَظُنُّونَ أَنَّهُمْ مُلَاقُوا رَبِّهِمْ وَأَنَّهُمْ إِلَيْهِ رَاجِعُونَ

Who bear in mind that they shall meet their Lord and that unto Him shall they return.²⁸

The Arabic word 'Yazunnuna' from 'Zanna, Yazunnu, Zannan, has two different meanings in Arabic Lexicon; to think, to bear in mind and to firmly believe.²⁹ Rodwell could not convey the correct meaning of 'yazunnuna' in translation.

Here, in the ayah, Yazunnuna means they firmly believe.³⁰

M. Mohar, Abdullah Yousuf Ali and Dr. Muhsin have accurately conveyed the meaning of 'yazunnuna'. The correct translation of the ayah is as follows:

Who firmly believe that they are going to meet their Lord and they are to Him going to return.³¹

12. Rodwell has translated the ayah (2:47) as follows:

يَبْنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ أَذْكُرُوا نِعْمَتِي الَّتِي أَنْعَمْتُ عَلَيْكُمْ وَأَنِّي فَضَّلْتُكُمْ عَلَى الْعَالَمِينَ

O children of Israel! Remember my favour wherewith I shew favour upon you; for verily to you above all human beings have I been bounteous.³²

Here, Rodwell has misinterpreted the phrase وَأَنِّي فَضَّلْتُكُمْ عَلَى الْعَالَمِينَ whereas, in the ayah preference of the children of Israel is being reiterated. So, Dr. Muhsin and other Muslim translators have correctly rendered the ayah as:

O children of Israel! Remember My favour which I bestowed upon you and that I preferred you to Alamin (mankind and gin of your time period, in the past.)³³

13. Rodwell has translated the ayah (2:51) incorrectly as:

واذوعدنا موسى اربعين ليلة

²³ Ali, Word for Word Meaning, 1:16.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Rodwell, *the Koran*, 342.

²⁶ See al-Baydawi's commentary.

²⁷ Khan and al-Hilali, Interpretation of the Meanings, 21.

²⁸ Rodwell, *the Koran*, 342.

²⁹ Ahmad bin Faris, Maqayis al-Lugha (Beirut: Dar al-Fikr, n.d.), 639.

³⁰ Al-Suyuti and al-Mahalli, Tafsir al-Jalalayn, 16.

³¹ Ali, Word for Word Meaning, 1:23.

³² Rodwell, *the Koran*, 342.

³³ M. Muhsin Khan, Al-Hilali, M. Taqi-ud-Din., Interpretation of the Meanings of the Noble Qur'an, 22.

And when we were in treaty with Moses forty nights.³⁴

In the ayah, Rodwell has rendered the verb 'Wa'adna' as 'we were in treaty' which means in Arabic, 'methaq' whereas, 'wa'adna' means we appointed as correctly translated by M. Muhsin as follows:

And (remember) when we appointed for Musa (Moses) forty nights.³⁵

14. Rodwell has translated the ayah (2:53) as follows:

واذاتينا موسى الكتاب والفرقان لعلكم تهتدون

And when we gave Moses the Book and the Illumination in order to your guidance.

In this ayah, Rodwell has not conveyed the correct meaning of these words لعلكم تهتدون 'La'allakum Tahtaduna' as he translates as in order to your guidance which can be translated in Arabic as 'Lihidayatikum', while the Arabic word 'La'alla' in 'لعلكم' means so that, perhaps and 'Tahtaduna' from Ihtida means to be rightly guided.³⁶

So, these words are correctly translated by Dr. Muhsin Khan as follows:

So that you may be guided aright³⁷

15. In the ayah (2:57) Rodwell has rendered the following words as:

وما ظلمونا ولكن كانوا انفسهم يظلمون

and they injured not us but they injured themselves.³⁸

In the ayah, the Arabic word 'Zalamu' from 'Zalam' has different shades of meaning. For this verb, the word injured has been used by Rodwell is not appropriate here. The most appropriate word in English for 'Zulm' is 'to do wrong'. M. Mohar Ali translated these words as:

And they did not wrong us; but they were to themselves doing wrong.³⁹

16. Rodwell has translated the word Misran مصر as 'Egypt' in the ayah (2:61):

اهبطوا مصرا

Get ye down into Egypt.⁴⁰

In the ayah, the Arabic word Misran is a common noun which means any town or city not Egypt, as stated Ibn-e-Kathir from Hazrat Ibn-e-Abbas (R.A).⁴¹

17. Rodwell has translated the ayah (2:64) as follows:

ثم توليتم من بعد ذلك فلولا فضل الله عليكم ورحمته لكنتم من الخسرين

But after this ye turned back; and but for God's grace and mercy toward you, ye had surely been of the lost.⁴²

فلولا فضل الله عليكم ورحمته لكنتم من الخسرين is a conditional sentence, which Rodwell could not correctly interpret and the interpretation of this ayah has gone away from the original text. Abdullah Yusuf Ali has correctly translated this ayah as follows:

Had it not been for the Grace and Mercy of Allah to you, ye had surely been among the lost.⁴³

18. Rodwell has rendered the Arabic word بقرة صفراء as 'fawn-coloured cow'⁴⁴ in the ayah (2:70), whereas the word 'Safraau' means 'yellow'.⁴⁵

Dr. Muhsin, Pickthall, and M. Mohar Ali have correctly translated this word.

19. Rodwell has translated the ayah (2:72) as follows:

واذ قتلتم نفسا فادبرتكم فيها والله مخرج ما كنتم تكتمون

³⁴ Rodwell, *the Koran*, 342.

³⁵ Khan and al-Hilali, *Interpretation of the Meanings*, 22.

³⁶ Baalbaki and Baalbaki, *Al-Mawrid al-Waseet*, 128.

³⁷ Khan and al-Hilali, *Interpretation of the Meanings*, 22.

³⁸ Rodwell, *the Koran*, 343.

³⁹ Ali, *Word for Word Meaning*, 1:26..

⁴⁰ Rodwell, *the Koran*, 343.

⁴¹ Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir al-Qur'an al-Azim*, 1:146.

⁴² Rodwell, *the Koran*, 344.

⁴³ Abdullah Yusuf Ali, *The Holy Qur'an: Text, Translation and Commentary* (Islamabad: Da'wah Academy, 2004), 28.

⁴⁴ Rodwell, *the Koran*, 344.

⁴⁵ Baalbaki and Baalbaki, *Al-Mawrid al-Waseet*, 76.

And when ye slew a man and strove among yourselves about him, God brought to light what he had hidden.⁴⁶

In this ayah, Rodwell could not correctly render the verb Iddara'tum, whereas it means you (all) disputed. And he could not correctly render the clause 'Kuntum Taktumuna' as he has rendered it as 'he had hidden', while its correct rendering is as 'You were concealing'. So the correct translation of the ayah is as follows:

And (recall) when you killed a person and quarreled about it: but Allah brought to light what you were concealing.⁴⁷

20. Rodwell has translated the ayah (2:73) as follows:

فَقُلْنَا اضْرِبُوهُ بِبَعْضِهَا كَذَلِكَ يُحْيِي اللَّهُ الْمَوْتَى وَيُرِيكُمْ آيَاتِهِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَعْقِلُونَ

For we said strike the corpse with part of her. So God giveth life to the dead, and shew you his signs, that haply ye may understand.⁴⁸

In this ayah Rodwell has made some syntactic mistakes which are as follow:

He has rendered the letter 'Fa' in فَقُلْنَا as 'for' which means because, whereas, here 'So' is the appropriate word for the translation of the letter 'Fa'. Second, he has rendered the Arabic word 'Kazalika' as 'So' which is not appropriate here and 'thus' is an appropriate word for 'Kazalika'.

So, the correct translation of this ayah is as:

So we said: Strike him (the dead man) with any part of her (the cow). Thus Allah brings the dead to life and shows you His signs; so that you may understand.⁴⁹

21. In the ayah (2:79), Rodwell has translated the following Qur'anic expression as:

ثم يقولون هذا من عند الله ليشتروا به ثمنا قليلا

and then they say, This is from God, that they may sell it for some mean price!⁵⁰

In the ayah, the verb 'Yashtarū', is originally, 'Yashtaruna'. In Arabic lexicon, it means 'they buy or purchase'.⁵¹

So the correct translation of this expression is as follows:

Then they say; this is from Allah so that they may get by it a little price.

22. Rodwell has translated the ayah (2:81) as:

بَلَىٰ مَنْ كَسَبَ سَيِّئَةً وَأَحَاطَتْ بِهِ خَطِيئَتُهُ فَأُولَٰئِكَ أَصْحَابُ النَّارِ هُمْ فِيهَا خَالِدُونَ

But they whose only gains are evil works, and who are environed by their sins. They shall be inmates of the fire, there in to abide forever.⁵²

In the ayah, Rodwell has rendered the Arabic word 'Bala' as 'But' which is not appropriate here, because the word Arabic 'Bala' comes to refute the statement of the addressee which is given in the previous sentence, it is used in the ayah (81:36) and ayah (76:3) etc. 'Bala' can be rendered in English with these words; yes, Nay, etc.

So this ayah refutes the statement of Jews that the fire will not tough them but for a few days as mentioned in the previous ayah (2:80).

Second, the text of the ayah is active voice, where as the translator has rendered it in passive voice. So, the correct translation is as follows:

Yes! Whosoever earns evil and his sin has surrounded him, such are dwellers of the Fire; they will dwell there in forever.⁵³

23. Rodwell has translated the ayah (2:85) as follows:

ثم أنتم هؤلاء تقتلون أنفسكم وما الله بغافل عما تعملون

Then were ye the very persons who slew one another; and ye drove out a part of your own people from their abodes; ye lent help against them with wrong and hatred; but if

⁴⁶ Rodwell, *the Koran*, 345.

⁴⁷ Ali, *Word for Word Meaning*, 1:34.

⁴⁸ Rodwell, *the Koran*, 345.

⁴⁹ Khan and al-Hilali, *Interpretation of the Meanings*, 26.

⁵⁰ Rodwell, *the Koran*, 345.

⁵¹ Mustafa et al., *Al-Mu'jam al-Waseet*, 481.

⁵² Rodwell *the Koran*, 346.

⁵³ Khan and al-Hilali, *Interpretation of the Meanings*, 27.

they come captives to you, ye redeem them! Yet it was forbidden you to drive them out.⁵⁴

In the ayah, Rodwell has rendered the verbs; 'Taqtuluna' as slew and 'tukhirjuana' as 'drove' and 'Tazaharuna' as 'lent help', while these verbs are used to show the action done either in present or future. So, these verbs should be translated by the first form of the verb, in English.

Moreover, in translating the phrase, وهو محرم عليكم إخراجهم as; Yet it was forbidden you to drive them out, he could not convey the true meaning of the pronoun هو 'Huwa' which is used here, in the meaning of 'pronoun shan' means reality.⁵⁵

So, the ayah could be translated as:

Then, it is you who slay each other and drive out a party of you from their homes, supporting one another against them by sin and transgression. And if they come to you as captives, you ransom them, whereas, the fact is that their expulsion is unlawful for you.

24. Rodwell has translated the ayah (2:87) as:

وَلَقَدْ آتَيْنَا مُوسَى الْكِتَابَ وَفَقَّيْنَا مِنْ بَعْدِهِ بِالرُّسُلِ

Moreover, to Moses gave we the Book and we raised up apostles after him.⁵⁶

In this ayah Rodwell has rendered the Arabic word 'Wa Laqad' as moreover which is grammatically inappropriate because the letter 'Wa' means 'And' and 'Laqad' is used for stress and emphasis. So 'Wa laqad' means 'and indeed, as translated by some Muslim translators.

Second, Rodwell could not comprehend the phrase وَفَقَّيْنَا مِنْ بَعْدِهِ بِالرُّسُلِ as he translated. Zamakhshari⁵⁷ elucidates this phrase as follows:

يعنى وارسلنا على أثره الكثير من الرسل.

It means and we sent many messengers after him in succession.

Abdel Haleem has correctly translated this phrase as follows:

And we sent messengers after him in succession.⁵⁸

25. In the ayah (2:93) Rodwell has translated the following expression as:

وَأَشْرَبُوا فِي قُلُوبِهِمُ الْعِجْلَ بِكُفْرِهِمْ

Then were they made to drink down the calf into their hearts for their ingratitude.⁵⁹

The rendering of this ayah shows that Rodwell is not well acquainted with the style of the Qura'n. The expression is used metaphorically to mean that they were made to imbibe the love of the calf in their hearts, because of their disbelief.⁶⁰

26. Rodwell has translated the sentence تِلْكَ أَمَانِيُّهُمْ in the ayah (2:111) as:

This is their wish⁶¹

The Arabic word 'amaniyyun' in the phrase 'Amaniyyuhum' is plural of 'Uminyyah' means wish or desire. And the Arabic word 'Tilka' is a demonstrative noon used for feminine things. And its plural form is 'ulaika'. In arabic grammer the rule is that before the plural of non-living things the demonstrative noun would be used as singular. So the correct rendering of the sentence is as:

These are there wishes / desires.

27. Rodwell has translated the following piece of the ayah (2:109) as:

فَاعْفُوا وَاصْفَحُوا حَتَّى يَأْتِيَ اللَّهُ بِأَمْرِهِ

⁵⁴ Rodwell, *the Koran*, 346

⁵⁵ Al-Suyuti and al-Mahalli, *Tafsir al-Jalalayn*, 22.

⁵⁶ Rodwell, *the Koran*, 346.

⁵⁷ Al-Zamakhshari, *Al-Kashshaf*, 1:254

⁵⁸ M.A.S. Abdel Haleem, *The Qur'an: A New Translation* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 11.

⁵⁹ Rodwell, *the Koran*, 347.

⁶⁰ Al-Qurtubi, *Al-Jame Li Ahkaam Al-Qur'an*, Vol. II, 31.

⁶¹ Rodwell, *the Koran*, 349.

But forgive then, and shun them till God shall come in with his working.⁶²

Rodwell has misinterpreted the phrase; *as: حتى ياتي الله بامرہ*

God shall come in with his working. Here 'Amr' means command and in Arabic when the preposition comes after an intransitive verb, it makes that verb a transitive. So the correct translation of this ayah is as follows:

But forgive and overlook, till Allah brings His command.⁶³

28. Rodwell has translated the ayah (2:112) as:

بَلَىٰ مَنْ أَسْلَمَ وَجْهَهُ لِلَّهِ وَهُوَ مُحْسِنٌ فَلَهُ أَجْرُهُ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِ وَلَا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُونَ

But hey who set their face with resignation God ward, and do what is right, their reward is with their Lord: no fear shall come on them, neither shall they be grieved.⁶⁴

In rederring this ayah Rodwell has translated the word 'Bala' as 'but' which is inappropriate, because the word 'Bala' is used to convert a negative statement into a positive one. In the previous ayah it is said that no will enter Jannah except the Jews and Christians. This verse is in response to their saying.

Grammatically, Rodwell has translated the phrase 'وجهه' as their face while (هو) is singular pronoun in 'وجهه' as well as in 'Falahu' and 'Rabbihi'. The appropriate translation of this ayah made by M. Mohsin and Pikhthall, as:

Yes, but whoever submits his face (himself) to Allah (i.e follows Allah's religion of Islamic Monotheism) and he is Muslim, then his reward with his Lord (Allah), on such shall be no fear, nor shall they grieve.⁶⁵

29. Rodwell has translated the ayah (2:113) as follows:

وَقَالَتِ الْيَهُودُ لَيْسَتِ النَّصَارَىٰ عَلَىٰ شَيْءٍ وَقَالَتِ النَّصَارَىٰ لَيْسَتِ الْيَهُودُ عَلَىٰ شَيْءٍ وَهُمْ يَتْلُونَ الْكِتَابَ

Moreover the jews say, The Christians lean on nought. On nought lean the Jews. Say the Christians: Yet both are readers of the Book.⁶⁶

In translating the ayah, Rodwell could not communicate the true meaning of the ayah as he says; The Christians lean on nought means that the Christians do not rely on anything and similarly, the Jews do not depend on anything. Whereas, the ayah means the Jews said that the Christians were not on the right religion and same, the Christians said that the Jews were not on the true religion, while they both recite the scripture.⁶⁷

30. Rodwell has misinterpreted the following clause of the ayah (2:118) as:

لَوْ لَا يُكَلِّمُنَا اللَّهُ أَوْ تَأْتِينَا آيَةٌ

Unless God speak to us, or then shew us a sign....!⁶⁸

Translating this ayah, Rodwell has rendered the particle 'لولا' as unless, whereas it means 'why not'. Secondly, rendering the verbal sentence; *أَوْ تَأْتِينَا آيَةٌ* he has translated the word 'Aayatun' as an object which is, here, the subject of the verb 'Tati' in 'Tatina'. Moreover, he has rendered the verb 'Tati' as 'than shew' which is wrong meaning of the verb. Whereas in the verb 'Tati' is third person means she or it comes.⁶⁹ So the correct translation of this ayah is as follows:

Why does not Allah speak to us, or some sign come to us?

31. Rodwell has translated the ayah (2:148) as follows:

وَلِكُلِّ وُجْهَةٍ هُوَ مُوَلِّيهَا فَاسْتَبِقُوا الْخَيْرَاتِ أَيْنَ مَا تَكُونُوا يَأْتِ بِكُمْ اللَّهُ جَمِيعًا إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ

All have a quarter of the Heavens to which they turn them; but wherever ye be, hasten emulously after good: God will one day bring you all together, verily, God is all powerful.⁷⁰

⁶² Ibid.

⁶³ Khan and al-Hilali, Interpretation of the Meanings, 32.

⁶⁴ Rodwell, *the Koran*, 349.

⁶⁵ Khan and al-Hilali, Interpretation of the Meanings, 32.

⁶⁶ Rodwell, *the Koran*, 349.

⁶⁷ Ibn Kathir, Tafsir al-Qur'an al-Azim, 1:215.

⁶⁸ Rodwell, *the Koran*, 350.

⁶⁹ Mustafa et al., *Al-Mu'jam al-Waseet*, 4.

⁷⁰ Ibid, 353.

In this ayah, Rodwell has rendered the Arabic word 'wijhatun' as quarter of the heavens, whereas it means direction. Moreover, he has also changed the order of the expression in translation, which is syntactic ambiguity. So, the correct translation of the ayah is as:

For every nation there is a direction to which they face (in their prayers). So hasten towards all that is good. Where so ever you may be, all will bring you together (on the day of resurrection). Truly, Allah is able to do all things.⁷¹

32. In the ayah (2:151), Rodwell has translated the following expression as:

كَمَا أَرْسَلْنَا فِيكُمْ رَسُولًا مِنْكُمْ

And we sent to you an apostle from among yourselves.⁷²

In this ayah, Rodwell has rendered the Arabic word 'Kama' as 'and' which is not appreciable here, because 'Kama' is used for simile, which is translated as 'as' or 'like'. This ayah is connected with the former ayah. So the verse means that we have accepted the prayer of Ibrahim by settling 'Kabah' as Kiblah 'direction' for offering prayers as we have accepted his praying for sending a messenger.⁷³

So the ayah should be translated as:

Even as we have sent unto you a messenger from among you.⁷⁴

33. Rodwell has translated the ayah (2:162) as follows:

خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا لَا يُخَفَّفُ عَنْهُمْ الْعَذَابُ وَلَا هُمْ يُنْظَرُونَ

Under it shall they remain forever; their tournament shall not be lightened, and God will not even look upon them.⁷⁵

In this ayah the verb, Yunzaruna means they are reprieved⁷⁶ or given time as stated by Suyuti⁷⁷:

ولا هم ينظرون، أي يمهلون

So, the ayah could be translated as: and they will not be reprieved.

34. Rodwell has translated the ayah (2:165) as follows:

وَمِنَ النَّاسِ مَنْ يَتَّخِذُ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ أَندَادًا يُحِبُّونَهُمْ كَحُبِّ اللَّهِ وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا أَشَدُّ حُبًّا لِلَّهِ

Yet there are men who take to them idols along with God and love them with the love of God: but stronger in the faithful is the love of God.⁷⁸

Translating this ayah, Rodwell could not make the sense of the ayah clear as he used the pronoun 'them' whose antecedent is men, whereas in the ayah the phrase 'من دون الله' means besides Allah. Moreover, he has incorrectly rendered the phrase 'والذين آمنوا أشد حبا لله' (But stronger in the faithful is the love of God), whereas the phrase means and those who believe, love Allah more than anything else. So, Dr. Mohsin and Hilali have correctly rendered the ayah as:

And of mankind are some who take (for worship) other besides Allah as rivals (to Allah), they love them as they love Allah. But those who believe, love Allah more (than anything else).⁷⁹

35. In ayah (2:187), Rodwell has misinterpreted the following phrase:

ثُمَّ أَتَمُوا الصِّيَامَ إِلَى اللَّيْلِ وَلَا تُبَاشِرُوهُنَّ وَأَنْتُمْ عَاكِفُونَ فِي الْمَسَاجِدِ

Then fast strictly till night and go not in unto them, but rather pass the time in the Mosques.⁸⁰

Rodwell's rendering means Muslims should not go to their wives during fast, but rather they should pass their time in the mosques. Whereas, the ayah means they (Muslims)

⁷¹ Khan and al-Hilali, Interpretation of the Meanings, 41.

⁷² Rodwell, *the Koran*, 354.

⁷³ Muhammad bin Abdussalam, Tafsir al-Qur'an al-Azim, 1:128.

⁷⁴ Muhammad Marmaduke Pickthall, The Meaning of the Glorious Qur'an (Lahore: Taj Company, n.d.), 60.

⁷⁵ Rodwell, *the Koran*, 355.

⁷⁶ Al-Qurtubi, Al-Jami' li Ahkam al-Qur'an, 2:190.

⁷⁷ Al-Suyuti and al-Mahalli, Tafsir al-Jalalayn, 33.

⁷⁸ Rodwell, *the Koran*, 355.

⁷⁹ Interpretation of the Meanings of the Noble Qur'an, 44.

⁸⁰ Rodwell, *the Koran*, 357.

should complete their fast till the nightfall, and let them not have sexual relations with their wives as long as they are in the mosques to worship Allah. So, Dr. Mohsin and Hilali have accurately translated the ayah as follows:

Then complete your saum (fast) till the nightfall. And do not have sexual relations with them (your wives) while you are in I'tikaf (i.e. confining oneself in a mosque for prayers and invocations learning the worldly activities) in the mosques.⁸¹

36. Rodwell had translated the ayah (2:188) as:

وَلَا تَأْكُلُوا أَمْوَالَكُمْ بَيْنَكُمْ بِالْبَاطِلِ

Consume not your wealth among yourselves in vain things.⁸²

Translating this ayah, Rodwell could not comprehend the meaning of the above expression as he translated. Whereas it means don't eat up one another's wealth or property in any illegal way, e.g. stealing robbing, deceiving etc⁸³

38. In the ayah (2:198), Rodwell has rendered the following phrase as follows:

وَاذْكُرُوهُ كَمَا هَدَاكُمْ وَإِنْ كُنْتُمْ مِنْ قَبْلِهِ لَمَنِ الضَّالِّينَ

And remember Him, because He hath guided you who before this were of those who went astray.⁸⁴

Translating this ayah, Rodwell could not comprehend the Arabic word 'Kama' and misinterpreted it as 'because'. Moreover He could not communicate the sense of the phrase: وان كنتم من قبله لمن الضالين

So, Dr. Mohsin has accurately translated the ayah as:

And remember Him (by invoking Allah for all good) as he has guided you and verily, you were, before this, of those who were astray.⁸⁵

38. Translating the ayah (2:212), Rodwell has failed to convey the correct meaning of the verb 'Zuyyina' as he translated as follows:

زَيْنَ لِلدُّنْيَا كَفَرُوا الْحَيَاةَ الدُّنْيَا

This present life is prepared for those who believe not.⁸⁶

'Zayyina' means 'it is embellished, decorated or beautified etc.'

So, the correct translation of the ayah could be as:

The life of this world is beautified for those who disbelieve.

39. Rodwell has translated the ayah (2:217) as follows:

يَسْأَلُونَكَ عَنِ الشَّهْرِ الْحَرَامِ قِتَالٍ فِيهِ قُلْ قِتَالٌ فِيهِ كَبِيرٌ وَصَدُّ عَنْ سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ وَكَفَرٌ بِهِ وَالْمَسْجِدِ الْحَرَامِ وَإِخْرَاجُ أَهْلِهِ مِنْهُ أَكْبَرُ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ وَالْفِتْنَةُ أَكْبَرُ مِنَ الْقَتْلِ

They will ask thee concerning war in the sacred month. Say: to war therein is bad, but to turn aside from the cause of God, and to have no faith in Him, and in the sacred Temple, and to drive out its people, is worse in the sight of God; and civil strife is worse than bloodshed.⁸⁷

Translating this ayah, Rodwell could not convey the appropriate meaning of the phrase قُلْ قِتَالٌ فِيهِ كَبِيرٌ as he translated: Say: To war therein is bad.

Hence, the word 'Kabir' in the ayah is 'sifah' adjective of the word 'Ithmun' (sin) which is 'mahzoof' (omitted). So, the most appropriate translation of these words is as follows; Say: Fighting therein is a great (sin).

Rodwell also could not convey the sense of the phrase 'وصد عن سبيل الله' as he translated; but to turn aside from the cause of God. Whereas, the word 'saddun' means to prevent or stop someone, so the correct rendering of this phrase is as follows:

But to prevent (the people) from the way of Allah.

Moreover, Rodwell could not comprehend the syntax of the ayah and has made mistake in rendering these words:

⁸¹ Khan and al-Hilali, Interpretation of the Meanings, 44.

⁸² Rodwell, *the Koran*, 358.

⁸³ Al-Suyuti and al-Mahalli, Tafsir al-Jalalayn, 38.

⁸⁴ Rodwell, *the Koran*, 359.

⁸⁵ Khan and al-Hilali, Interpretation of the Meanings, 53-54.

⁸⁶ Rodwell, *the Koran*, 360.

⁸⁷ Ibid, 361.

وَكُفِّرْ بِهِ وَالْمَسْجِدَ الْحَرَامَ

As he has translated as: and to have no faith in Him, and in the sacred temple. In the ayah, the phrase 'والمسجد الحرام' is not the supplement (ataf) to 'وَكُفِّرْ بِهِ' rather 'والمسجد الحرام' is the supplement (ataf) to 'سَبِيلَ اللَّهِ' as Zamekhshari⁸⁸ suggests:

والمسجد الحرام: عطف على سبيل الله ولا يجوز على الهاء في (به).

So, the correct rendering of these words is as follows:

and to disbelieve in Him and to prevent (them) from Al-Masjid al-Haraam.

40. Rodwell has translated the ayah (2:224) as:

وَلَا تَجْعَلُوا اللَّهَ عُرْضَةً لِأَيْمَانِكُمْ أَنْ تَبَرُّوا وَتَتَّقُوا وَتُصْلِحُوا بَيْنَ النَّاسِ وَاللَّهُ سَمِيعٌ عَلِيمٌ

Swear not by God, when ye make oath, that ye will be virtuous and fear God, and promote peace among men; for God is He who Heareth, Knoweth.⁸⁹

Translating the ayah, Rodwell could not comprehend the meaning of the Arabic word 'urdah' which means 'hindrance'⁹⁰ and had misinterpreted the ayah. In this ayah, it has been said to the believers; Do not use Allah's name in your oaths as a hindrance to doing good acts and fear Allah and make peace among people. Moreover, Ali Bin Abu Talha (R.A) reported that Ibn Abbas (R.A) said that; what Allah said;

وَلَا تَجْعَلُوا اللَّهَ عُرْضَةً لِأَيْمَانِكُمْ means: Don't vow to refrain from doing good deeds (if you make such vow then) break it, and pay the Kaffarah and do the good work.⁹¹

This rendering of the ayah is also supported by the Hadith which Imam Muslim reported in his Sahih, that Abu Hurayrah narrated that Allah's messenger said;

Whosoever makes a vow and then finds what is better than his vow (should break his vow and) pay the Kaffarah and perform the better deed.⁹²

41. In the ayah (2:206), Rodwell has misinterpreted the following expression as:

وَإِذَا قِيلَ لَهُ اتَّقِ اللَّهَ أَخَذَتْهُ الْعِزَّةُ بِالْإِثْمِ

And when it is said to him; 'Fear God', The pride of sin seizeth him;⁹³

Hence, the clause أَخَذَتْهُ الْعِزَّةُ بِالْإِثْمِ means pride and arrogance drives him into sin, as Imam Suyuti⁹⁴ states:

(أَخَذَتْهُ الْعِزَّةُ) حملته الأنفة والحمية على العمل (بالإثم) الذي أمر باتقائه.

Trans: False pride and arrogance drove him into the sin that he was commanded to avoid committing.

Allama Asad has accurately rendered this phrase as follows:

his false pride drives him into sin.⁹⁵

42. In the ayah (2:228), Rodwell has translated the following expression as:

وَبُعُولَتُهُنَّ أَحَقُّ بِرَدِّهِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ إِنْ أَرَادُوا إِصْلَاحًا

And it will be more just in their husbands to bring them back when in this state, if they desire what is right.⁹⁶

Rodwell's rendering of this expression does not elucidate the sense of the text as it demands. Since, it means that their husbands are more entitled to take them back in this period, if they wish reconciliation.

Moreover, Rodwell has distorted the rendering of the following phrase:

وَلَهُنَّ مِثْلُ الَّذِي عَلَيْهِنَّ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ

And it for the women to act as they (the husbands) act by them, in all fairness.⁹⁷

⁸⁸ Al-Zamakhshari, Al-Kashshaf, 1:191.

⁸⁹ Rodwell, *the Koran*, 362.

⁹⁰ Al-Zamakhshari, Al-Kashshaf, 1:194.

⁹¹ Ibn Kathir, Tafsir al-Qur'an al-Azim, 1:358.

⁹² Muslim, Sahih Muslim, Hadith no. 21.

⁹³ Rodwell, *the Koran*, 360.

⁹⁴ Al-Suyuti and al-Mahalli, Tafsir al-Jalalayn, 41.

⁹⁵ Muhammad Asad, *The Message of the Quran* (Gibraltar: Dar al-Andalus, 1980), 87.

⁹⁶ Rodwell, *the Koran*, 364.

⁹⁷ Rodwell, *The Koran*, 364.

His rendering of these words shows that to what extent Rodwell is familiar with the style of the Qura'n. The ayah speaks about the rights of women over their husbands. Imam Suyuti elucidates the meaning of this expression as follows:

And they (women) have rights (over their husbands as regards living expenses) similar (to those of their husbands) over them (as regards obedience and respect) according to equity.⁹⁸

43. In the ayah (2:245), Rodwell has distorted the rendering of these words as:

والله يفيض ويبسط

God is close but open handed also.⁹⁹

The Arabic word 'Yaqbidhu' means he decreases and 'Yabsutu' means he increases. So, the ayah means it is Allah who decreases and increases (your provisions), as Allah says in ayah (13:26) that reads:

Allah increases the provision for whom He wills and staintens (it for whom He wills).

Rodwell has not used an appropriate word for Allah Almighty. Open handed means generous and its opposite is close handed means not generous which is not suitable for Allah- He is Holy and Exalted above that which they attribute to Him. Moreover, Rodwell's rendering denotes his hostility towards Islam as he used these words to show his people that how the Qur'an speaks about Allah Almighty.

44. Rodwell has translated the ayah (2:253) as:

تِلْكَ الرُّسُلُ فَضَّلْنَا بَعْضَهُمْ عَلَى بَعْضٍ مِنْهُمْ مَنْ كَلَّمَ اللَّهُ وَرَفَعَ بَعْضَهُمْ دَرَجَاتٍ

Some of the apostles we have endowed more highly than others; those to whom God hath spoken, He hath raised to the loftiest grade.¹⁰⁰

Translating this ayah, Rodwell has not rendered the phrase 'Tilka al-rusul' occurred in the beginning of the ayah, which means 'these messengers', or 'these are messengers'.

Moreover, Rodwell could not comprehend these lines 'منهم من كلم الله ورفع بعضهم درجات' as he translated: Those to whom God hath spoken, he hath raised to the loftiest grade.

Whereas, the context of the ayah says:

Among them are those whom Allah spoke to; and he raised some of them in ranks.¹⁰¹

Rodwell has also made a lexical mistake in translating this ayah, when he rendered the verb 'اقتتل' as 'wrangled' on the both places in the ayah as his rendering reads;

وَلَوْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ مَا اقْتَتَلَ الَّذِينَ مِنْ بَعْدِهِمْ مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا جَاءَتْهُمْ الْبَيِّنَاتُ

And if God had pleased, they who came after them would not have wrangled after the clear signs had reached them and in the end of the ayah, he renders as:

ولو شاء الله ما اقتتلوا

Yet if God had pleased they would not have thus wrangled¹⁰²

There is a difference between both Arabic words 'Qatala' and 'Iqtatala', yet these both verbs have same root words; Qaf, Taa, Lam. Qatala means 'fight someone' and Iqtatala means 'to fight one another'.¹⁰³ Rodwell could not observe this difference. So the correct translation of the ayah is as:

If Allah had pleased, they would not have fought one another.

45. Rodwell has translated the ayah (2:271) as:

إِنْ تُبْدُوا الصَّدَقَاتِ فَنِعِمَّا هِيَ وَإِنْ تُخْفُوهَا وَتُؤْتُوهَا الْفُقَرَاءَ فَهُوَ خَيْرٌ لَكُمْ وَيُكَفِّرُ عَنْكُمْ مِنْ سَيِّئَاتِكُمْ وَاللَّهُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ خَبِيرٌ

Give ye your alms openly? It is well. Do you conceal them and give them to the poor? This, too, will be of advantage to you, and will do away your sins: and God is cognisant of your actions.¹⁰⁴

⁹⁸ Al-Suyuti and al-Mahalli, Tafsir al-Jalalayn, 45.

⁹⁹ Rodwell, *the Koran*, 365.

¹⁰⁰ Rodwell, *The Koran*, 366.

¹⁰¹ Mustafa et al., *Al-Mu'jam al-Waseet*, 715.

¹⁰² Rodwell, *The Koran*, 366.

¹⁰³ Mustafa et al., *Al-Mu'jam al-Waseet*, 326.

¹⁰⁴ Rodwell, *The Koran*, 369.

Rodwell's rendering of this ayah shows that he could not comprehend the sense of the ayah and has ignored, grammatically, the conditional particle (harf-e-Shart), 'إن' in the ayah. So, the correct translation of the ayah is made by Muslim translators as follows:

If you disclose your sadaqat (alms giving) it is well; but if you conceal them and give them to the poor, that is better for you. (Allah) will expiate you some of your sins. And Allah is well acquainted with what you do.¹⁰⁵

46. Rodwell has translated the ayah (2:276) as:

يَمْحَقُ اللَّهُ الرِّبَا وَيُزِيلُ الصَّدَقَاتِ

God will bring using to nought but will increase alms with usury.¹⁰⁶

Rodwell has made a mistake in translating the expression; 'ويربي الصدقات' as his rendering reads: but will increase alms with usury.

In English the word usury means that the practice of lending money to people at unfairly high rates of interest.¹⁰⁷

It is used for Arabic word 'Riba'. Hence, in the second expression of the ayah the verb 'Yurbi' from Arba, Yurbi, means to cause to increase, to cause to grow.¹⁰⁸ So, the correct translation of this expression is as follows:

But he blesses alms with manifold increase.

47. In ayah (2:279), Rodwell has translated the following Qur'anic expression as:

فَأَذِّنُوا بِحَرْبٍ مِنَ اللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ

Then hearken for war on the part of God and his apostle.¹⁰⁹

In the ayah, the intransitive verb 'I'zanu' from Azina, ya'zanu (izn), when it is followed by 'Laam' as in 'Azina Lahu' means to listen (istami'a), and when Azina is followed by 'Ba' ¹¹⁰ as in the ayah, it means alima bihi 'to be informed of' or 'to be warned of'. Rodwell could not observe this difference and has failed to translate the ayah correct. So, the correct translation of this expression is as follows:

Then be warned of war from Allah and His messenger.¹¹¹

48. Translating the ayah (2:282) which is called ayat-ud-dayn, Rodwell has made some lexical and grammatical mistakes; for instance, he has translated the following phrase as:

إِذَا تَدَايَنْتُمْ بِدَيْنٍ إِلَى أَجَلٍ مُسَمًّى

When ye contract a debt (Payable) at a fixed date.¹¹²

Imam Baydawi¹¹³ says:

إِذَا تَدَايَنْتُمْ بِدَيْنٍ: أَيِ إِذَا دَايَنْتُمْ بَعْضُكُمْ بَعْضًا

It means when you contract the debt from one another.

Rodwell has translated the Arabic phrase 'waliyyohu' as 'his friend' in the following expression:

فَلْيَمْلِكْ وَلِيَهُ بِالْعَدْلِ

Let his friend dictate for him with fairness.¹¹⁴

In this ayah, the word 'wali' is not used in the meaning of friend as Rodwell has comprehended; here it means guardian as Imam Suyuti¹¹⁵ explains its meaning in his own words as follows:

وليه: أَيِ مَتَوَلَّى أَمْرَهُ مِنْ وَالِدٍ وَوَصِيِّ وَقِيمٍ وَمُتَرَجِّمٍ

¹⁰⁵ Khan and al-Hilali, Interpretation of the Meanings, 72.

¹⁰⁶ Rodwell, The Koran, 369.

¹⁰⁷ Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary, 8th ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 1765.

¹⁰⁸ Mustafa et al., Al-Mu'jam al-Waseet, 326.

¹⁰⁹ Rodwell, The Koran, 370.

¹¹⁰ Muhammad bin Yaqub al-Fayruzabadi, Al-Qamus al-Muhit (Beirut: Mu'assasat al-Risalah, 2005), see: baab An-Nun, Fasl al-Hamzah wa az-Zaal .

¹¹¹ Sayyid Abul A'la Maududi, Towards Understanding the Quran (Leicester: Islamic Foundation, 1988), 1:220.

¹¹² Rodwell, The Koran, 370.

¹¹³ Al-Baydawi, Anwar al-Tanzil wa Asrar al-Ta'wil, 1:480.

¹¹⁴ Rodwell, The Koran, 370.

¹¹⁵ Al-Suyuti and al-Mahalli, Tafsir al-Jalalayn, 57.

His guardian means the one in charge of his affairs, be it a parent, an executor or a custodian or an interpreter.

Rodwell has used the word 'People' for the Arabic word 'Rijal' in the phrase; *من رجالكم* which is lexically inappropriate, because the word 'people' includes men, women and children. Whereas, the Arabic word 'Rijal' is used only for men. His rendering of this expression reads:

and call to witness two witnesses of your people ¹¹⁶

In this ayah, Rodwell has translated the following expression as:

أَنْ تَضِلَّ إِحْدَاهُمَا فَتُذَكِّرَ إِحْدَاهُمَا الْأُخْرَى

If the one of them should mistake, the other may cause her to recollect. ¹¹⁷

Rodwell has translated the verb 'تضل' as mistake, whereas here it means to 'forget' as Imam Qurtubi¹¹⁸ states that Abu Obaid said:

معنى تضل: تنسى

Theological Distortions

1. Rodwell has translated the ayah (2:34) as follows:

وَإِذْ قُلْنَا لِلْمَلَائِكَةِ اسْجُدُوا لِآدَمَ فَسَجَدُوا إِلَّا إِبْلِيسَ

And when we said to the angels, Bow down and worship Adam, then worshipped they all, save Eblis. ¹¹⁹

In this ayah, he has translated the word 'usjodu' as 'bow down and worship' which is incorrect because the word 'usjodu' means 'prostrate or bow down. So the correct translation of the ayah is as follows:

And (remember) when we said to the angels, Prostrate yourselves before Adam. They prostrated themselves except Iblis. ¹²⁰

Moreover, this prostration was not for worship, rather it was for the veneration and honour. The practice of prostrating to honour some one was allowed for previous nations, but was repealed for us. Muadh said to the prophet (PBUH), I visited Al-Sham (Syria) and found that they used to prostrate before their priests and scholars. You, O Messenger of Allah, are more deserving of prostration. The Prophet said;

لا، لو كنت أمرا بشرا ان يسجد لبشر لأمرت المرأة أن تسجد لزوجها من عظم حقه عليها

No, if I commanded any human to prostrate before another human, I would command the woman to prostrate before her husband because of enormity of his right on her. ¹²¹

All the commentators of the Quran are agree with this view that this prostration before Adam was to honor him, not to worship him¹²² as Tabari¹²³ said:

وكان سجود الملائكة لآدم تكملة لآدم وطاعة لله لا عبادة لآدم

So, it proves that the prostration of angels before Adam was to honor him, not to worship him.

2. Rodwell has translated the ayah (2:42) as follows:

ولا تلبسوا الحق بالباطل وتكتموا الحق وأنتم تعلمون

And clothe not the truth with falsehood, and hide not the truth when ye know it. ¹²⁴

Here, the verb 'La'talbisu' is the imperative form of the verb 'Labasa, Yalbisu, Labsan' which means to mix or to confound and the verb 'Labisa, Yalbaso, Lubsan, means to put on, to clothe, or to wear clothes. ¹²⁵

¹¹⁶Rodwell, *The Koran*, 370.

¹¹⁷ Ibid.

¹¹⁸ Al-Qurtubi, *Al-Jami' li Ahkam al-Qur'an*. 3:397.

¹¹⁹ Rodwell, *the Koran*, 341.

¹²⁰ Ali, *Word for Word Meaning*, 1:17.

¹²¹ Ibn Majah, *Sunan Ibn Majah*, Hadith no. 1853.

¹²² Al-Qurtubi, *Al-Jami' li Ahkam al-Qur'an*, 1:291-292.

¹²³ Muhammad bin Jarir al-Tabari, *Jami' al-Bayan fi Ta'wil al-Qur'an* (Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-Ilmiyyah, 1412 AH), 1:229.

¹²⁴ Rodwell, *the Koran*, 342.

¹²⁵ Ibrahim Mustafa et al., *Al-Mu'jam al-Waseet* (Tehran: Mu'assasat al-Sadiq, 1426 AH), 812..

But Rodwell could not differentiate between these two words and misinterpret the ayah. So, the correct translation is as follows:

And mix not truth with falsehood, nor conceal the truth, while you know.¹²⁶

E. Discussion: Colonial Hermeneutics and Its Legacy

Orientalist Epistemology in Translation

- **Source Dependence:** 72% citations from Sale/Ullmann (Table 2) reflect **textual reliance on non-Muslim intermediaries**, marginalizing *tafsīr* traditions.
- **Christological Framing:**
 - Lord for *Rabb* (1:2) → Christian feudal semantics.
 - Jesus son of Mary (2:87) → Gospel syntax over Quranic diction.

Theological Consequences

- **Erasure of *Tawhīd*:**
 - *Al-Raḥmān*'s dilution (1:3) negates divine-name theology (*asmā' al-ḥusnā*).
 - *Khalīfah* misconception (2:30) anthropomorphizes Allah's sovereignty.

Methodological Implications for Translation Studies

1. **Decolonial Approaches:** Prioritize *tafsīr*-based semantic fields over Eurocentric equivalents.
2. **Error Typology as Audit Tool:** Framework to evaluate colonial-era translations (e.g., Palmer, Arberry).

F. Conclusion

Rodwell's translation exemplifies **linguistic colonialism**, systematically distorting the Quran's message through:

1. *Lexical Christianization*.
2. *Marginalization of classical tafsīr*.
3. *Grammatical oversights* revealing limited Arabic proficiency.

¹²⁶ Khan and al-Hilali, Interpretation of the Meanings, 20.