# Translation of Religious Texts: Difficulties and Challenges

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Abstract:
Throughout history, people have always tried to get through many different spheres. Their incessant thirst for knowledge brought them in close contact with other cultures and provided them with means to transfer their opinions to other cultures and civilizations that are different or similar to them. One of the effective means of ensuring this cultural exchange is translation. This paper is mainly concerned with the difficulties and the challenges that Arab translators are confronted with when they deal with religious texts. A case in point here is Shalabi's insightful book, *Islam Between Truth and False Allegations: A Response to the False Allegations against Islam.(1997)* This religious book is full of instances which demonstrate clearly the diverse difficulties that Arab translators face while translating source texts which encompass very sacred religious terms. It seems that grammatical equivalence, redundancy and paragraphing are the most important key elements that ought to be taken into account in order to produce an accurate and appropriate translation. The main objective in this paper is to draw the reader's attention to the difficulties and challenges that I encountered while translating some religious extracts from Shalabi's book.
*Keywords:* Grammatical Equivalence, paragraphing, redundancy, religious texts

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**1-Some Theoretical Perspectives on Translation**
Translation is generally considered as a means of bridging the gap between languages and cultures. In addition to this, it is a communicative process which transfers the message of a source language text to a target language. Generally, translation is defined as being neither a creative art nor an imitative art, but stands somewhere between the two. Furthermore, it is a discipline that gives too much importance to structure and meaning. Therefore, the translator should take into account both the structure and the meaning before translating a particular text. In this respect, Bassnett (1954) believes that the process of translation has to take into consideration both the structure and the meaning. She points out that translation:

> involves the rendering of a source language text into the target language so as to ensure that the surface meaning of the two will be approximately similar and the structures of the source language will be preserved as closely as possible but not closely that the target language structures will be seriously distorted. (p.2)

From the above quotation, it is clear that there are no specific, correct, good or agreed upon definitions for translation. Each one focuses on certain concepts, but all tend to agree that the function of the translator is basically to bring about in the minds of the readers of the target language text, "as closely as possible" (Bassnett, 1954: 2) the same feelings as those achieved by the source language text. Translation is undoubtedly a more complicated process since the translator cannot always be viewed as George Steiner claims "Someone who invades, extracts and brings home" (Steiner, 1975: 298). Instead, the translator should create an equivalent effect of the source text on the target text reader so that the text can be adaptable to its new socio cultural environment. In this respect, Basil Hatim and Mason (1990) point out that:

> The role of the translator as reader is then one of constructing a model of intended meaning of source text and of forming judgments about the probable impacts of source text on intended receivers. (p.92)

This testifies to the fact that translators have to find the appropriate words and expressions in order to convey the exact meaning. The basic task of translators is to formulate a new text in which they express their intended meaning. Moreover, they have to be very effective in their judgments in order to create an impact on readers. However, translators are often confronted with many problems while translating texts from English into Arabic. One of the problems that translators face is equivalence and since translation "is a model of communication where choices are further subjected to a principle of equivalence between a source text in one language and a target text in another" (Beaugrande,1994: 56), translators should be very careful if they want to succeed in producing relevant translations which produce similar effects on the reader to those achieved by the original text. In other words, translators ought to work within the core of the target culture and know the rules of the target language community so as to find appropriate equivalents to achieve pragmatic competence which "…consists not only of linguistic knowledge but also of knowledge of the rules of language use". (Olshtain & Blum Kulka, 1996:16).

## 2-Equivalence in Translation

Equivalence is a very important element in translation and translators are usually confronted with difficulties while translating texts for their target language audiences. In other words, the translator has to find the most suitable words in order to create an impact on his audience. Consequently, equivalence means "the correspondence of effects: those of the original on the source language audience versus those of the translation on the target language audience". (Beaugrande,1994:56). There are many types of equivalence but the most important ones are formal equivalence, functional equivalence, ideational equivalence and dynamic equivalence.

The notion of equivalence has actually created two opposite different views concerning the organization of the diversity of natural languages. Both the formalists and the functionalists see natural languages from different perspectives. The formalist Chomsky sees natural languages as "a system of finite rules for generating an infinite number of abstract sentences and they relegate lexical items to movable syntactic pieces or counters to be selected and manipulated by the principle of open choice: any word can serve if it fits the syntactic constraints". (Beaugrande, 1994: 55). This is a clear indication that formalists are much more interested in the linguistic forms that ought to be arranged in an appropriate way. Apart from this, the functionalists stress the importance of natural languages. According to them, the natural language is a very significant means of communication and its importance resides in the fact of attaining basic "communicative acts and moves". (Beaugrande, 1994: 56)

The above facts are clear evidence that equivalence is an outstanding element in translation. Both Arab and European translators are exposed to the problem of equivalence while translating texts, which contain words that do not have an equivalent in the target language. A case in point here is the word:    الشريعة   To translate this word from Arabic into English is not an easy task because it does not have an equivalent in the target language and if a translator finds this word in a sentence or in a text, he is compelled to translate the meaning. Translators should take into consideration, the notion of acceptability and adequacy before translating a particular text. The target language audience will accept a translation if it embodies both the notions of adequacy and acceptability. This is exactly what Toury said about translation and more specifically about one of the elements of literature, which is "Haiku". (Connor,1996:122). He pointed out that:

> Thus, what may be said to operate in translation is not any fact about the reception of its end product (which is not there, in the first place), only certain assumptions with respect to it, namely, assumptions as to the prospects of a text whose structure and linguistic make up follow a certain pattern which is acceptable to the target end. Being members of the target culture, or tentatively assuming the role of ones, translators are more or less aware of the factors, which govern the acceptability of texts and textual linguistic features in that culture or certain sector thereof. To the extent that they choose to subject themselves to these factors and resort to the appropriate translation strategies, the act itself is executed under the initial norm of acceptability, whether the end product will indeed be admitted into the target system or no. (Connor, 1996:122).

This means that the translator should master the rules of the language and ought to come up with expressions that would be accepted by the target language audience. In other words, he must

stick to the syntactic and the grammatical structures of the language of his target audience in order to create an impact on them. Likewise, Hatim and Mason have further elaborated on the effect of equivalence on the target audience. They have defined Nida's dynamic equivalence as "the principle of equivalence of effect on the reader of target text". (Hatim & Mason,1990:7). In other words, dynamic equivalence is the fact of making a significant effect on the readers of the target audience. Thus, in order to attain this, the method goes for cultural transposition. That is to say, replacing items or idioms by another, which would be known to the speech community of the target language and which, would imply the adequate idea and have more or less the same idea. An example, which illustrates this, is the following one: "Carrying coals to Newcastle". This sentence would sound irrelevant if rendered literally into Arabic because the audience of the target language has no idea about what is Newcastle (A place famous for coal mining in Great Britain). Thus, in Arabic the equivalent would be:

<div dir="rtl">بيع الماء في حارة السقايين</div>

However, such similarity of response cannot be achieved because even in one speech community we have different approaches to one text and this is of course what Bassnett (1954) clearly states in this passage,

> Equivalence in Translation, then, should not be approached as a search for sameness, for sameness cannot even exist between two target language versions of the same text, let alone between the source language and the target language versions. (p. 29)

It is very difficult for translators to attain "sameness" in translation and, therefore, they have to transfer grammatical units of sentences and substitute them all the time. An example, which illustrates the difficulty of attaining sameness in translation between the source language text and the target language one, is the following one:

<div dir="rtl">"منذ عودتها إلى السلطة سنة 1993، وبينازير بوتو تحاول سحب الملف الأفغاني من يد المخابرات الباكستانية"</div>

(My own example).

This sentence could be translated like this:

Since her return to power in 1993, Binazir Buttou has been trying to withdraw the Afganie issue from the Pakistani intelligence.

While translating the Arabic version into English, the translator will definitely be exposed to the problem of translating the word "Milaf". He ought to find the appropriate word that would certainly be accepted by the target language audience. In this way, the appropriate word is "issue". This is a clear indication that it is very difficult for the translator to achieve sameness between the source language text and the target language text. In this example, the translator has tried to keep the meaning. That is why he has replaced the word "Milaf" by "Issue" in order not to distort the meaning.

### 3-Religious Texts: Difficulties and Challenges

Religious texts are very difficult to translate and I was really exposed to many difficulties while rendering sentences from English into Arabic. Still, equivalence was one of the problems that I encountered. It was really difficult for me to find the appropriate words and expressions in order to convey the meaning that would be accepted by the target audience. Equivalence at the grammatical level was also one of the challenges and problems that I faced.

Apart from this, equivalence at the word level is another problem which hinders gifted translators from conveying the message to the target audience. Shalabi's book is actually a good example which encompasses key religious texts that really entail a good grasp of the source language in order to come up with an accurate and acceptable translation to be understood by the target audience. An example which could be used as an illustration here is the following passage in English:

> It is required that the doctrine be indelibly established in the heart of the Muslim and deeply rooted in his mind. In this context, we should note that the holy Quran calls on every human being to make sure for himself that the doctrine is true by looking at the history and the fate of previous nations and by constantly observing the universe and contemplating its natural phenomenon so as to strengthen the faith in the heart through reasoned acceptance. (Shalabi,1997:16).

This key religious text will be translated in Arabic as follows:

وإنه من الضروري أن تترسخ العقيدة في قلب المسلم وعقله٠وفي هذا السياق،تجدر
الإشارة إلى أن القرآن الكريم يدعو الإنسان إلى إكتشاف صحة العقيدة وذلك بالعودة
إلى تاريخ ومصير الأمم السابقة وإمعان النظر في الكون وتأمل ظواهره الطبيعية وذلك من
أجل تقوية الإيمان في القلب بطريقة منطقية

While translating the above passage from English into Arabic, it was really difficult for me to find the equivalent of both "Established" and "Rooted" because if I ever opted for the literal translation, I would distort the meaning. But I managed somehow to find the appropriate verbs that would be both adequate and acceptable. I have changed the sentence, "the doctrine be indelibly established in the heart of the Muslim and deeply rooted in his mind". (Shalabi, 1997:16) by the following Arabic sentence:

وإنه من الضروري أن تترسخ العقيدة في قلب المسلم وعقله

Similarly, I have encountered certain difficulties while rendering certain expressions into Arabic. A case in point here is the following expressions from the above passage: "To strengthen the faith in the heart through reasoned acceptance". (Shalabi, 1997:16). The expression "Reasoned acceptance" would sound irrelevant if translated literally into Arabic. The equivalence at the word level would be "Koubol Manteki". However, this is not the right translation because the meaning is distorted. So, the best translation is the following one:

''تقوية الإيمان في القلب بطريقة منطقية''

Another example which illustrates the difficulty of finding the appropriate equivalent of certain words that would be both adequate and accepted in the target culture is the following passage:

> The Quran and the traditions have limited the elements of doctrine to believing in Allah, his angels. His scriptures, His Prophets and in destiny i.e in the good and the bad and in the day of judgement. (Shalabi, 1997:15).

The word "Traditions" can be interpreted in many different ways. Hence, if this word is rendered literally into Arabic, it would mean "Takalid". In this respect, if the translator uses the literal sense and more specifically this word in the target language text, he will distort the meaning. Therefore, he should know the culture and the language of his target audience in order

to come up with the appropriate word that would fit into the context of the target language. Consequently, the best translation is:

إن القرآن والسنن قد حددا عناصر العقيدة في الإيمان بالله وبملائكته وكتبه ورسله وبالقدر خيره وشره وبيوم القيامة''

Apart from this, Shalabi's book is full of examples which contain words and expressions that are difficult to translate. A case in point here is the following passage:

> This religious standard (or conscience) that fasting sows in the heart of the Muslim is what we referred to as "Taqua" (Godliness). It is a kind of constant and watchful feeling that Allah knows all of what goes on inside us and not only what we do and say out of people's sight. (Shalabi, 1997:19).

In this passage, we can notice that the verb "Sow" has been used in the source text in such a remarkable way in order to fit in the context and at the same time to convey the meaning. However, if this verb is rendered literally into Arabic, the meaning will be different and certainly irrelevant. "Sow" literally means زرع . If this verb is used in the target language text, it will not fit into the context and in Arabic we do not normally say that:

''يزرع الصوم في قلب المسلم''

This means that the translator should use the best words that would fit in the context of the target language text. By using formal and adequate verbs, the translator will certainly gain the attention of the target language receivers. In this case, the best translation is the following one:

هذه القيمة الدينية (أو الوعي ) التي يحرص الصوم على ترسيخها في قلب المسلم هي ما يشار إليه ''بالتقوى '' وهذا نوع من الشعور المستديم الذي يعلم الله خباياه، فهو يعلم ما بداخلنا وليس فقط ما نقوم به، وما تقوله عن الناس

Similarly, grammatical equivalence is qualified as one of the most difficult elements that the translator is confronted with. This latter finds himself in many instances translating texts literally. In other words, literal translation which essentially means translating word by word can have sometimes bad effects on the target language audience. An example which illustrates best the problem of grammatical equivalence is the following passage in English: "Islam also produces all the conditions propitiate for treating one's wife correctly". (Shalabi,1997: 22). At the level of grammar, there is nothing wrong with the verb "Produce". However, it cannot be adopted and used in the Arabic translation because it does not clarify the intended meaning. In Arabic, we could not say:

''وقد أنتج الإسلام كل الظروف المواتية لمعاملة الزوجة ''

Therefore, the best translation is the following one:

وقد هيأ الإسلام كل الظروف المواتية لمعاملة الزوجة معاملة حسنة''

أما الإسلام فقد هيأ كل الظروف المواتية لمعاملة الزوجة معاملة حسنة      Or:

Grammatical equivalence leads us to another problem which is the problem of structure in both languages. Sentence structure is one of the problems that I actually encountered while translating religious passages from English into Arabic. It seems that Arabic is a language which favors the use of a great number of words to mean one thing and to achieve stylistic decorativeness, while English qualifies this as redundant and irrelevant. In addition to this, translators are often confronted with the problem of sentence structure while they are engaged in

the process of translation because each language has its own syntactic structure. One of the characteristics of the Arabic language is that it follows both the SVO and VSO. While translating some of Shalabi's key passages from English into Arabic, I was compelled to change the structure of the source text which favors the SVO:

"Honoring one's neighbor occupies an important place in Islamic Ethics as well". (Shalabi, 1997:23).

The translation of the above sentence is:

''ويحتل تشريف الجار مرتبة مهمة في أخلاقيات الإسلام''

What can be deduced from the Arabic version is that the sentence structure is completely different from that of the English language. Still, there is another crucial element that is associated with the Arabic language which is the length of sentences. Translators of religious texts are really required to use very long sentences and clauses while translating a source text from English into Arabic. In a sense, they have to come up with the most adequate translation that is more or less close to what is stated in the original text. An example to illustrate my point is Shalabi's (1997) extract:

> The second remark concerns the apparent severity of punishment. Islam weighs the form of punishment in relation to the size of the sin committed and the extent of its corrupting impact on the desirable ideal society it tries to establish. If we look at the crimes, we will find that they represent a clear infringement on the rights of society and contempt for its rules and systems. (p.28).

The following passage could be translated in Arabic like this:

والملاحظة الثانية تخص صرامة وشدة العقاب فالإسلام يحدد شكل العقوبة حسب الجريمة والإثم المرتكب ودرجة تأثيرها السلبي على إنشاء المجتمع المثالي المرغوب فيه. وإذا نظرنا إلى هذه الجرائم، فإننا نجد أنها تمثل خرقا وانتهاكا واضحين لحقوق المجتمع وتشكل سوء احترام للأحكام والأنظمة.

In my own translation of the source text, I have repeated certain words and expressions in order to convey the meaning and to achieve a clear understanding. After all, the target language receivers expect translators to provide very accurate translations. Since, Arab translators tend to use more than one word to mean only one thing; I was impelled to use two words and more specifically two nouns which actually have the same meaning:

فإننا نجد أنها تمثل خرقا وانتهاكا واضحين لحقوق المجتمع

Redundancy in this extract will not affect the intended meaning. Rather, it is used for the sake of decorativeness. However, it should be noted that the English language disfavors the repetition of two nouns in order to mean one thing. Again taking into consideration, the syntactic structure of Arabic, we can say that translators of religious texts tend to use, for instance, one linking word several times as it is the case in the Arabic translation of one of Shalabi's key religious passages:

''والحقيقة هي أن العقيدة الإسلامية تعطي معنى لحياة المسلم، فعندما يظهر المسلم خشوعه لله مالك السموات والأرض، يصبح تحت العناية الإلهية ورحمة الله تحميه من كل جهة، وكل أفعال الإنسان تصبح في سياق العقيدة الإسلامية الصحيحة موجهة بالأساس إلى هدف معين، ألا وهو ابتغاء مرضاة الله وتجنب غضبه، وتدريجيا، يترسخ نوع من الشعور في قلب المسلم، شعور تميزه حساسية كبيرة قيما يخص مسائل الخير والشر والرذيلة والفضيلة، وكل هذه الأشياء يشار إليها في المصطلح الديني بالتقوى''.

The source text is quite different from the target one as the English native speakers tend to use a very straightforward syntactic structure which disfavors the use of long sentences and the same linking words several times. Shalabi's original version reflects this vogue:

> The truth is that it is Islamic doctrine which gives meaning and telos to the life of the Muslim. At the time when he shows submission to the lord of the skies and earth, a Muslim feels that he is under divine providence, and that Allah's mercy protects him from every side. All man's deeds- in the context of a true Islamic doctrine-become oriented toward one goal which is to attain Allah's blessing and avoid his wrath. Gradually, a sort of moral consciousness gets set up in the heart of a Muslim, a consciousness that is hypersensitive to questions of good and bad, depravity and virtue, all of which are referred to in religious terminology as "taqwa". (Shalabi,1997:16).

Significantly, the reader of both versions is invited to draw a comparison between the source text and the target one. After all, we can notice that the linking word "WA" has been repeated ten times in the Arabic target language text and this of course is a clear indication that Arab lexicographers and translators find difficulties in diction or in the choice of terms. Moreover, we might rightly argue that religious texts favor the repetition of linking words. In this respect, there is nothing wrong with repetition as long as it does not affect the meaning. Redundancy in Arabic is not at all a negative characteristic because it is mainly used for the sake of clarification. In other words, all translators of religious texts tend to use this stylistic element in order to communicate their message. A case in point here is the Arabic version in which the word يجب is repeated twice:

''لا يجب عليه إعطاء الزكاة، فما يجب عليه إعطاؤه هو حصة محددة شريطة ألا تتغير الثروة خلال سنة كاملة''.

       If we draw a comparison between the Arabic version and the English one, we realize that the English text is better than the target language text because there is no redundancy in the syntactic structure of English. Furthermore, it is not complex but rather simple and to the point: "The person who has got a lot of wealth but keeps spending from it all throughout the year to a point that nothing is left from it after a year elapsed should not give alms". (Shalabi,1997:19).

       There is no doubt that diction and the choice of terms are very significant when it comes to the translation of religious texts that require highly sophisticated diction that should fit in the context of the Islamic culture. In other words, the translator must avoid any mistakes or disruptions that may mislead the audience. This argument is further reinforced by Gutt who maintains that the good translator is the one who communicates and translates relevantly. Gutt (1991) elucidates that:

> The translator is confronted not only with the question of "how" he should communicate, but "what" he can reasonably expect to convey by means of his translation. (p.180).

An example which illustrates best the difficulty of finding the best religious words and more specifically verbs for Arab translators is the following extract:

All man's deeds- in the context of a true Islamic doctrine-become oriented toward one goal which is to attain Allah's blessing and avoid his wrath. (Shalabi, 1997:16).

The Arabic translation of the above passage is:

''وكل أفعال الإنسان، تصبح في سياق العقيدة الإسلامية الصحيحة موجهة بالأساس إلى هدف معين ألا وهو ابتغاء مرضاة الله وتجنب غضبه''.

The above facts are clear evidence that the translation of religious texts is very difficult because they embody a specific ideology. In this sense, taking into consideration the notion of the universe of discourse, we could say that the translator of a particular religious text ought to be faithful to the text and to the reader as well and this notion is clearly stated in chapter 4 in Lefevere's book, *Translation, History and Culture*. Lefevere (1992) points out that:

> Translators have to strike a balance between the universe of discourse (the whole complex of concepts, ideologies, persons and objects belonging to a particular culture) as acceptable to the author of the original and that other universe of discourse which is acceptable and familiar to the translator and his or her audience. (p.35).

Central texts like the holy Quran must be respected. In other words, the contents of the Quran ought to be preserved. This means that any Arab translator who wants to render the English version of the Quran into Arabic has to be careful and, at the same time, has to take into consideration the basic ethics of the Islamic religion which forbid the falsification and the misinterpretation of the Quranic verses. Therefore, the translator must be very selective in his choice of terms so as not to provide his target language audience with a false translation.

Equally important, Prophetic sayings are also part of the Islamic religion because they embody and reflect our understanding of ideology. I have been exposed to many difficulties while translating the Prophetic sayings in spite of the fact that some of them were very familiar to me and I happened to learn them by heart in my secondary education. The two prophetic sayings that were very difficult for me to translate were the following ones:

"You and what you belong to your father" (Reported by Ibn Majah and Tabarani). (Shalabi, 1997:22).

"O. Messenger of Allah. Why was your prostration so long?" He said: "My son rode and I hated to rush him". (Nisai's Sunan and Ibn Hanbal's Musnad). (Shalabi Ahmed, 1997:26).

One of the problems which I encountered while translating the prophetic sayings was that the source texts contain some verbs and expressions which do not actually have the same lexical equivalence in the target language. Hence, the translator of such sayings must be very selective in his choice of words in order to convey the exact meaning. Still, the translator of prophetic sayings should take into account the element of lexical cohesion. This means that there must be a lexical cohesion between the difference parts of the same Prophetic sayings. After all, a successful and gifted translator is the one who provides an accurate translation of the source text in such a way as to leave a good impression as well as a tremendous impact on the target audience. The translation of the two prophetic sayings is as follows:

''أنت ومالك لأبيك'' (رواه بن ماجة والطبراني)

''يا رسول الله إنك سجدت بين ظهراني صلاتك سجدة أطلتها. قال'' إرتحلني إبني فكرهت أن أعجله حتى يقضي حاجته'' (رواه النسائي في السنن، وابن حنبل في المسند).

The other example that illustrates the problem of equivalence at the lexical level or the choice of terms in religious texts is the following Prophetic saying:
"Who afflicted this bird by taking her son away from her? Give her back her son". (Abu Dawud's sunan). (Shalabi, 1997: 25). My translation of this Prophetic saying is:

‫"من فجع هذه في ولدها ردوا ولدها إليها" (سنن ابن داود)‬

I have rendered the English verb "afflict" into the Arabic verb "Fajha" in order to arouse the emotions of my target audience and to convey the meaning. In addition to this, there is another significant example which depicts the problem of lexic for Arab translators which is the Prophet Mohammed peace be upon him saying: "Try as much as you can to ward off legal punishments if there are doubts". (Reported by Ibn adi and Sama'ani). (Shalabi, et al:28). In my translation, I opted for a simple syntactic structure in order to avoid ambiguity and the complexity of the English clause:

‫"إدرءوا الحدود بالشبهات" (رواه ابن عدي والصمعاني)‬

Apart from this, there is another problem that I was exposed to while translating this religious text which is the authority of the text itself. The Arabs favor what is called "Hanhana" and consider it one of the highly sophisticated techniques of religious texts. As a matter of fact, Prophetic sayings ought to be rendered in such a way as to be accepted by the target language audience. In this text, it was difficult for me to translate the Prophetic saying and I did not opt for the literal translation because if I ever indulged in this activity I would not respect the concept of "Hanhana" and by the same token the authority of the religious text. This example clarifies my point: "It is reported that the Prophete Mohamed peace be upon him said: A woman went to hell because she tied a cat, did not feed her and did not let her eat from the grass on earth till she died". (Reported by Bukhari and Muslim). (Shalabi, 1997: 25). The translation of the Prophetic saying is:

‫"روي عن الرسول صلى الله عليه وسلم أنه قال: " دخلت امرأة النار في هرة، ربطتها فلم تطعمها، ولم تدعها تأكل من خشاش الأرض" (رواه البخاري ومسلم)‬

What can be deduced from the Arabic translation is that in religious texts the lexical term "Han" should be used in order to preserve the authority of the text. In other words, we must not say in a Prophetic saying:

‫قال الرسول صلى الله عليه وسلم " دخلت امرأة النار في هرة، ربطتها فلم تطعمها، ولم تدعها تأكل من خشاش الأرض" (رواه البخاري ومسلم)‬

If Arab translators do not respect the concept of "Hanhana" in religious texts and more specifically in Prophetic sayings, their translation will be rejected by the target language audience and will lose its value.

Likewise, paragraphing is another element which is very important in translation. Arab translators are often exposed to the problem of divisibility. The English language does not favor long sentences and long paragraphs. By using long paragraphs, Arab translators convey their intended meaning in an effective way. The following source and target texts illustrate clearly the difference between the English and the Arabic languages respectively. Arab translators could not really get rid of long paragraphs because it is something peculiar to the Arabic language whereas English does not preclude this:

> This religious standard (or conscience) that fasting sows in the heart of the
> Muslim is what we referred to as "Taqwa" (godliness). It is a kind of constant

and watchful feeling that Allah knows all of what goes on inside us and not only what we do and say out of people's sight. After prayer and fasting, come the two other rites, namely almsgiving and pilgrimage. The first is required of wealthy people only and the second concerns whoever can afford it. Almsgiving (Zakat) in Arabic means well-being and purity. According to jurisprudence, it consists of giving a very small percentage of what one has earned in one year, and which one does not need for daily expenses. It is doubtless that divine justice is very clear in this context. The person who earns his living on a daily basis should not give alms and the person who has got a lot of wealth but keeps spending from it all throughout the year to a point that nothing is left from it after a year has elapsed should not give alms. He should give only a determined part and on the condition that that wealth remains unchanged for a whole year in the possession of the person concerned. Small percentages of the yearly crops are due on the part of farmers. Because the objective behind levying Zakat is to deal with the problem of poverty and because people cannot individually supervise the impact of almsgiving on improving poor people's conditions, it is required that an institution specialized in gathering alms from Muslims and distributing them be set up so as to ensure that Zakat carries out its function in improving the conditions of society. Allah specified in the Holy Quran the various aspects of how the money should be spent. All of them revolve around helping the needy, and alleviating the misery of the poor. "Alms are for the poor and the needy, and those employed to administer (the funds), for those hearts have been (recently) reconciled (to truth), for those in bondage and in debt, in the cause of god and for the wayfarer". (Thawba,60). Through this ritual, a sort of social welfare, necessary for the balance of the mobility of Islamic society and its stability is ensured. (Shalabi,1997:19).

The Arabic translation is quite different from the source text as the translator is impelled to use long sentences and to repeat certain expressions and linking words which are very much peculiar to the Arabic language:

هذه القيمة الدينية (أو الوعي) التي يحرص الصوم على ترسيخها في قلب المسلم هي ما يشار إليه "بالتقوى" وهذا نوع من الشعور المستكيم الذي يعلم الله خباياه، فهو يعلم ما بدالنا، وليس فقط ما نقوم به ونقوله عن الناس.

وبعد الصلاة والصوم، تأتي الشعائر الأخرى خصوصا الزكاة والحج . فالأولى إلزامية للأغنياء فقط، أما الثانية فتخص من استطاع إليه سبيلا . والزكاة في اللغة العربية تعني الرفاهة والطهارة، فحسب القضاة فهي إعطاء نسبة قليلة مما كسبه الإنسان في سنة ، والتي لا يحتاج إليها في مصاريفه اليومية . ومما لا شك فيه أن العدالة الإلهية واضحة في هذا السياق . فالشخص الذي يكسب قوت يومه لا يجب عليه إعطاء الزكاة. أما الشخص الذي له ثروة كبيرة ينفق منها باستمرار خلال السنة إلى درجة أنه لم يبق منها أي شيء بعد انقضاء سنة، لا يجب عليه إعطاء الزكاة . فما يجب عليه إعطاؤه هو حصة محددة شريطة ألا تتغير الثروة خلال سنة كاملة . أما المزارعون فهم ملزمون بإعطاء نسب صغيرة من المحصول السنوي . ونظرا لأن الهدف من وراء فرض الزكاة هو معالجة مشكل الفقر، ونظرا لأن الناس فرديا لا يستطيعون مراقبة تأثير الزكاة فيما يخص تحسين ظروف الفقراء فإنه من الواجب و اللازم إنشاء مؤسسة متخصصة في جمع الصدقات من المسلمين وتوزيعها من أجل تحسين ظروف المجتمع. وقد حدد الله في القرآن الكريم الأوجه المتعددة لصرف المال والتي ترمي كلها إلى مساعدة المحتاج والتخفيف من بؤس الفقير . يقول الله سبحانه وتعالى في سورة التوبة الآية 60: إنما الصدقات للفقراء والمساكين والعاملين عليها والمؤلفة قلوبهم وفي الرقاب والغارمين وفي سبيل الله وابن السبيل فريضة من الله والله عليم حكيم '' وعن طريق هذه الشعيرة يصبح نوع من التكافل الاجتماعي مضمونا وضروريا بالنسبة لتوازن المجتمع الإسلامي.''

All in All, we could say that the translation of religious texts is not at all an easy task because translators are all the time exposed to many problems such as equivalence, syntactic structure and other difficulties that are mainly related to the universe of discourse. In other words, translators should be aware of the differences across cultures and ought to find what is more relevant in a given culture. This means that they ought to be faithful both to the reader and to the text. Ultimately, translators as Wilhelm clearly pointed out have to be "Creative in their native language in order to be able to convey the message contained in the original text in the most accurate and understandable and yet elegant way possible". (Wilhelm,1984:4). This is clear evidence that the gifted translator should not mislead the target audience by a false translation.

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