READDRESSING THE TRANSLATION OF NEAR SYNONYMY IN THE GLORIOUS QUR'AN

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Abstract

Complete synonymy is known to be rare or almost non-existent, as it is not easy to find words with identical denotations and/or connotations. In contrast, incomplete or near synonymy is plentiful in almost all types of lexis, in general, and the lexis of the Glorious Qur'an, in particular. In addition to its abundance, near synonymy is a source of richness in the ST, a feature that challenges translators and makes it quite difficult for them to produce equally rich TT, with communicatively equivalent lexical items. This ST richness is probably among the main reasons why many translators fail to capture the shades of overlapping denotations or suggestive connotations of the lexical items used in the ST. This study attempts to explore the notion of synonymy in both Arabic and English. It also seeks to assess the accuracy of the translations of selected near synonyms offered by a number of translations of the meanings of the Glorious Qur'an. The adequacy of the translations of the near synonyms in question is judged according to their interpretations by Arab and non-Arab linguists and exegetes as well as to the context in which they occur. The study concludes that the translators under study have limitations in translating the near synonyms adequately. Therefore, it proposes more appropriate renditions of those synonyms, thus minimizing the chances of distortion which other defective translations are riddled with.

Keywords: Quran, near Synonymy, exegesis, *rayb/shakk, fu'ad/qalb*

1. Introduction

Translating the meanings of religious texts is not an easy task, as some translators may think. Referring to the difficulty of rendering religious books into a foreign language in general and the Glorious Qur'an in particular, Ghali (2003) notes: "It is undoubtedly a huge task to try to translate the meanings of any religious text; and it seems a more perilous undertaking when the decision is to translate the Words of the Glorious Qur'an" (p. xi). The reason is that the translator of the meanings of the

Qur'anic text is required to transfer not only the appearance of its lexemes but also the intended message behind these lexemes. In addition, what makes the task difficult is that most words of the Glorious Quran have more than one meaning and that some of these words are interpreted differently by Muslim exegetes (Hassan, 2003, p.40). Consequently, "the translation (i.e. of the Glorious Qur'an) is by nature restricted and incomplete" (Saleh, 2002, p. iii) and "bound to be little more than an approximation of the source language text" (Al-Malik, 1995, p.3). Elaborating on the different problems involved in the process of translation in general and the translation of religious books in particular, Rizk (2003) says:

> Translation has always been considered one of the most intricate tasks that require knowledge in diverse disciplines: linguistic, cultural and pragmatic. It becomes more difficult when the source language (SL) and the target language (TL) differ in both structure and culture. The nature of text to be translated adds an extra effort particularly if it is religious such as the Glorious Qur'an. (p. 113)

One of the linguistic problems posing real difficulties in translation is synonymy, particularly near synonymy. As it will unfold, some translators of the meanings of the Glorious Qur'an cannot distinguish between near synonyms and therefore fail to translate them accurately, which makes their translations a faint echoing of the original and, more importantly, results in misunderstanding the meanings of the Qur'an.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

The main problem of this study can be stated in the following questions:

- How far do translators pay attention to nuances and shades of meaning associated with near synonyms in the Glorious Qur'an?

- To what extent do translators consider the context when translating near synonyms in the Qur'anic text?

- How far do translators take into account the exegetical work related to near   synonyms in the Qur'an?

1.3 Purpose of the Study

This study aims to:

1. Explore the notion of synonymy in both Arabic and English.

2. Show the limitations of the translators in approaching near synonymy.

3. Assess the appropriacy of the translations of selected near synonyms offered by a number of translators of the meanings of the Qur'an.

4. Suggest adequate renditions of the near synonyms under study.

5. Guide future translators of the Qur'an to read available Arabic exegeses of the Qur'an to be able to translate it appropriately.

1.4 Methodology

The notion of synonymy in both Arabic and English will be explored. Four translations of the Glorious Qur'an by Ali (n. d.), Arberry (1955), Irving (1992) and Ghali (2003)[1] will be investigated to assess their renditions of the following near synonyms:

- *Rayb* / *Shakk* (generally meaning doubt)
- *Ghaith* / *Matar* (generally meaning rain)
- *Fu'ad* / *Qalb* (generally meaning heart)
- *Al-Half* /*Al-Qasam* (generally meaning swearing) [2]

The adequacy of the translations of the near synonyms under investigation will be assessed in terms of their interpretations by Arab and non-Arab linguists and exegetes and the contexts in which they occur.

2. Synonymy
2.1 Definition

Synonymy can generally be defined as a linguistic term referring to lexical items which have the same or similar meanings. Synonymous words appear different but share the same or almost the same meanings.

2.2 Synonymy in Arabic
2.2. i Early vs Contemporary Arabic Linguists' View of Synonymy

The term synonymy, as it stands today, was not yet known to early Arabic linguists and lexicographers, and consequently not clearly defined by them. For example, Ibn Manzour (1999) holds that synonymy in language means succession (Vol. 5, p.189). Ibn Faris (1979), Al-Razy (1989), Al-Faiyoumy (1978) and Al-Fairouzabady (1978) hold a similar view to that of Ibn Manzour (p. 503; p.210; p.86; p.139). Al-Fairouzabady adds that a synonym refers to names expressing the same thing (p.139).

Unlike early Arabic linguists, contemporary Arabic linguists and scholars view synonymy more broadly. They point out that, for two words to be completely synonymous, they must have the same meaning, exist in the same language, and belong to the same era and age. Among those who apply the above criteria to define, assess and distinguish between synonymous and non-synonymous words are Anis, Bishr and Al-Garem (Al-Shaye, 1993, pp. 30-32). Anis (1984), for example, believes that true synonymy refers to words that share almost the same meaning and become identical by constant use (pp. 166-67). Consequently, any nuances of meaning among synonymous words push them to the periphery of complete synonymy.

2.2. ii Proponents vs Opponents of the Prevalence of Synonymy in Arabic

The advocates of synonymy in Arabic maintain that more than one lexeme can share the same meaning and be used interchangeably in all contexts. Al-Ansary, Al-Asmaey, Sibawaih, Ibn Jinny, Al-Fairouzabady, Ibn Al-Mustansir, and Ibn Isma'el adhere to this view. Al-Ansary and Ibn Jinny, for example, consider it common to express one meaning with more than one lexeme (Al-Shaye, 1993, pp.46-49).

In contrast, the opponents of synonymy in Arabic opine that no two words have absolutely the same meaning. However, they see that synonymous words can be used to illustrate one another. The supporters of this view include Al-Askary, Ibn Faris, Ibn Al-Araby and Al-Gaza'ery (Al-Shaye, 1993, p. 88). Al-Askary, for instance, dismisses the idea of complete or absolute synonymy. He argues that dissimilar words necessitate dissimilar meanings. He further points out that since a word can give a certain meaning, there is no need then to use another to give the same meaning (Al-Shaye, pp.106-07). Al-Askary seems to be right about his claim because the tendency to use two or more words to express the same thing is likely to bring about redundancy.

2. 2. iii Proponents vs Opponents of the occurrence of Synonymy in the Glorious Qur'an

The debate over synonymy in the Arabic language in general has extended to the particular case of the Glorious Qur'an. In this regard, there are two teams vying with each other in their attempts to prove the strength of their theses. Those believing in the prevalence of absolute synonymy in the Qur'anic text include Ibn Al-Sukkeit, Al-Zubaidy, Al-Romany, Ibn Jinny, Al-Baqlany, Ibn Sida, Al-Fairouzabady (Al-Zawbaey, 1995, p.5), Ibn Al-Athir, Ibn Al-Arabi, Al-Husseiny, Al-Salih, and Anis (Al-Shaye, 1993, p. 171). Ibn Al-Athir, for example, asserts the prevalence of absolute synonymy in the Qur'anic text and he exemplifies his view by citing the two Qur'anic words *athab* and *rijz* (generally meaning torment) which he believes to be absolutely synonymous. Al-Salih, a contemporary defender of synonymy, asserts the pervasiveness of absolute synonyms in the Qur'an and cautions against denying the idea of synonymy in Arabic (as well as in the Qur'an).He further claims that this may cast doubt upon the uniqueness and richness of this language. (Al-Shaye, pp.163-70).

The view, however, that absolute synonymy occurs plentifully in the Qur'anic text contradicts the fact that words of the Qur'an have been selected very carefully to express very precise meanings whether connotative or denotative. The scholars who assert the abundance of absolute synonymy in Arabic in general deny its prevalence in the Qur'an since this for them is

likely to undermine its excellence and uniqueness. However, among those denying the occurrence of absolute synonymy in the Qur'an are Ibn Taymiya, Al-Raghib Al-Asfahany, Al-Tabary, Ibn Attyah, Al-Zamakhshary, Ibn Kathir, Al-Qurtuby, Al-Khataby, Al-Siyouty, and Bint Al-Shati' (Al-Shaye, 1993, pp. 175-180). Al-Tabary, for instance, dismisses the notion of synonymy in the Qur'anic text. He distinguishes between the two Qur'anic lexemes *sir* and *najwa* (generally meaning secret ideas) that are thought to be completely synonymous. For him, *sir* is what one unfolds to one's self, whereas *najwa* is what one discloses to others. (Al-Shaye, p.195). Like Al-Tabary, Al-Zamakhshary (2009) confutes absolute synonymy in the Qur'an. He differentiates betweem *bath* and *huzn* (generally meaning sadness). For him, *bath*, unlike *huzn*, refers to extreme and unbearable sadness (p.528).Similarly, Bint Al-Shati'(1977), a contemporary scholar, dismisses the idea of absolute synonymy in the Qur'an. (Vol.1, p.167).

2.2. iv Types of Synonymy in Arabic

Issa (2011) identifies three types of synonymy in Arabic, namely, complete synonymy, lexical synonymy and nominal synonymy. She explains that lexical synonymy refers to words that share the basic elements of conceptualization but differ in their shades of meaning (e.g. *fam*/*thaghr* for mouth). Although *fam* and *thaghr* refer to the same object, they cannot be used in all contexts (pp.26-27). Of the three types of synonymy mentioned above, lexical synonymy seems to imply near synonymy, the main concern of this study.

2.3 Synonymy in English
2.3. i Definition

Synonymy is defined by many linguists in English as the sameness or the similarity in meaning (Palmer, 1981, p. 88; Crystal, 1993, p.340; Ghazala, 2002, p. 89). Harris (1973) adopts a similar view to those of Palmer, Crystal and Ghazala; moreover, he lists Collinson's nine factors to differentiate between synonyms:

1. One term is more general and inclusive in its applicability; another is more specific and exclusive, e.g. *refuse/ reject, seaman/sailor, ending/inflexion.*
2. One term is more intense than another, e.g. *repudiate/refuse.*
3. One term is more highly charged with emotion than another, e.g. *looming/emerging, luring/threatening.*
4. One term may imply moral approbation or censure where another is neutral, e.g. *thrifty/economical, eavesdrop/listen.*
5. One term is more professional than another, e.g. *decease/death, domicile/house.*

6. One term may belong more to the written language; it is more literary than another, e.g. *passing/death.*

7. One term is more colloquial than another, e.g. *turn down/refuse.*

8. One term is more local or dialectal than another, e.g. *flesher/butcher*

9. One term belongs to child-talk, is used by children or in talking to children, e.g. *daddy, dad, papa/ father*. (10)

Cooper (1979) and Jackson (1988) define synonymy in terms of the interchangeability of words in all contexts. Cooper sees that "two expressions are synonymous [. . .] if they may be interchanged in each sentence [. . .] without altering the truth value of that sentence" (p.167). Jackson, likewise, believes that synonymy refers to words which are substitutable in all contexts. He lists five ways to distinguish between synonyms:

1. Synonyms may persist in the vocabulary because they belong to different dialects, e.g., *lift* and *elevator*.

2. Synonyms may be differentiated by style or level of formality, e.g., *climb* and *ascend*.

3. Synonyms are differentiated in terms of technicality. We refer to some lexemes as technical vocabulary or jargon, e.g., *cardiac/heart*.

4. Synonyms may be differentiated as a result of connotation, e.g., *love* and *adore*. In fact, *adore* has connotations of passion or worship, which *love* does not share: *love* is the more neutral of the pair.

5. Euphemism is a fifth reason, e.g., *die/ pass away*. (pp. 65, 68)

2.3. ii Debate Over the Existence of Synonymy in English

The issue of synonymy has been controversial in English. It has been addressed by many linguists and scholars. Ishrateh (2006) notes:

[T]here are two points of view regarding synonymy: the strict point of view and the flexible one. The former denies the existence of synonymy altogether. The flexible view [. . .] maintains that any two words which share at least one sense are synonymous. (p.43)

On the one hand, the advocates of synonymy, such as Sturtevant, Brodda, Suarez, Schneidemesser, and Thrane, assert the existence of synonymy in natural languages. Sturtevant, for example, argues about the notion of synonymy in Old Norse and reaches the conclusion that synonyms prevail in Old Norse owing to the historical developments that occurred to the language. Similarly, Brodda suggests the occurrence and the need for synonymy in natural languages as well as in computer languages. In the same vein, Suarez provides a case of absolute synonymy in the Tehuelche language, spoken in the province of Santa Cruz, Argentina, and concludes

that there are many words in that language that mean the same thing or have the same meaning. (Abdellah, 2003, pp.16-17).

On the other hand, the opponents of absolute synonym assert the scarcity of perfect synonymy while at the same time emphasizing the prevalence of near synonymy in natural languages. Bloomfield (1962), for example, dismisses the idea of sameness in meaning of items and points out that each linguistic form has a specific meaning and that phonemically different forms have different meanings (p. 144). Hurford and Heasley (1983) maintain that there is no need for words expressing the same sense (p. 102).

Nida (1975) considers overlap in dealing with synonymy. He explains that words whose meanings overlap are likely to substitute for one another in certain, but not all, contexts. For example, although the words 'peace' and 'tranquility' are synonyms, one of the meanings of 'peace' overlaps with the meaning of 'tranquility'(p. 98).

Yule (1998) and Lyons (1981) approach synonymy in terms of context. For Yule, while one word is fitting in a sentence, its synonym would be inappropriate. He explains that the two words 'answer' and 'reply' are synonymous, yet 'answer' is proper in a context whereas 'reply' would appear unusual (p.118). Lyons states: "lexemes [. . .] may be described as absolutely synonymous if and only if they have the same distribution and are completely synonymous in all their meanings and in all their contexts of occurrence" (p.148). However, this type of synonymy addressed by Lyons hardly prevails in any language, as the opponents of complete synonymy think. Crystal (1993), for example, contends that absolute synonymy "is unlikely to happen" (p.340). Ghazala (2002) asserts the same view by noting that "[i]t is a well-established universal fact in the study of meaning, words and language in general that absolute synonyms do not exist in language or are quite rare, to say the least"(p.89). Inkpen (2004) takes a position similar to that of Ghazala by maintaining that "[t]here are very few absolute synonyms, if they exist at all" (p.16).

Evidently, unlike near synonymy, absolute synonym hardly exists in any language.

2.3. iii Types of Synonymy in English

According to Ishrateh (2006), four types of synonymy have been identified: Absolute synonymy, plesionymy (near synonymy), cognitive synonymy, and contextual-cognitive synonymy. Plesionymy refers to lexical items that share some, but not all, aspects of meaning, e.g., *foggy* and *misty*. As one may recall, Plesionymy, another name for near synonymy, is the main interest of this study. (pp.7-14)

3. Context and Synonymy

Distinguishing between synonyms does not solely depend on linguistic criteria. Rather, it is connected for the most part with context, that is, the meanings of synonyms are largely determined by the contexts in which they occur. In particular, it is difficult to differentiate between most, if not all, synonyms in the Qur'an without recourse to the contexts in which they exist.

Emphasizing the importance of context in translating synonyms, Issa (2011) says: "Among the factors translators need to pay attention to when translating […] comes the issue of context" (p. 30). It is not, she adds, the individual words that need to be explained but rather the deeper concept that lies in the surrounding elements that help the translator to choose the best contextual equivalent. The reason why most translators are likely to translate synonyms inaccurately is that they do not take heed of "context-based meanings" (Issa, pp. 32, 38). Therefore, if all else fails to make distinctions between synonyms, recourse to context as a means of differentiation is required.

4. Assessing the Adequacy of the Translations of the Near Synonyms under Study

As one may recall, four pairs of near synonyms, namely *rayb/shakk*, *ghaith/matar*, *fu'ad/qalb*, and *Al-Half/Al-Qasam*, are selected for assessment. The Qur'an translations involving the renditions of these near synonyms into English are, as indicated above, by Ali, Arberry, Irving, and Ghali.

4.1 *Rayb / Shakk* (Doubt)

The first pair of lexical items thought to be absolutely synonymous is Rayb and Shakk that generally mean doubt.

Rayb

The word *rayb*, as well as its derivatives, occurs in 36 verses of the Qur'an. Among the verses involving the word and its derivatives are:

A. They alone ask leave of thee who believe not in Allah and the Last Day, and whose hearts **feel doubt**, […]. (Picthall's translation, 1977) [3] (Al-Tawbah, 9: 45)

B. Is there in their hearts a disease, or **have** they **doubts**, or fear they lest Allah and His messenger should wrong them in judgment? Nay, but such are evil-doers. (Al-Nur, 24: 50)

C. And thou (O Muhammad) wast not a reader of any scripture before it, nor didst thou write it with thy right hand, for then might those **have doubted**, who follow falsehood. (Al-Ankabut, 29:48)

D. [A]nd that those to whom the Scripture hath been given and believers may not **doubt**; […]. (Al-Muddathir,74: 31)

E. Lo! the Hour is surely coming, there is no **doubt** thereof; yet most of mankind believe not. (Ghafir, 40: 59)

Shakk

As far as the word *shakk* is concerned, it occurs in 15 verses of the Qur'an as noun (Al-Rajhy, 2009, p.13). It is derived from *shakaka* which has the meaning of 'piecing or pricking'. Among the verses in which it appears are:

F. Say (O Muhammad): O mankind! If ye are in **doubt** of my religion,[…]. (Yunus, 10: 40)

G. [T]hose who disagree concerning it are in **doubt** thereof; they have no knowledge thereof save pursuit of a conjecture; they slew him not for certain. (Al-Nisaa, 4:157)

Most Arabic linguists and exegetes describe *rayb* as doubt, apprehension, conjecture and restlessness (Ibn Faris 1979, Vol.2, p.463; Al-Faiyoumy, 1987, p.94; Al-Gamal, 2003, p.232; Al-Gawhary, 1990, Vol.1, p.141)). Ibn Manzour (1999), Al-Razy (1989), Al-Askary (1977) and Al-Gaza'ery (1380 H) view *rayb* as doubt coupled with accusation or ill thinking (Vol.5, pp.384-85; p. 233; p.92; p.110). Abul-Suood (n.d.), Al-Zamakhshary (2009) and Al-Shoukany (2007) contend that *rayb* entails self-anxiety, feeling of unease, bewilderment and disturbance (Vol.1, p.42; Vol.1, p.36; p.25). Ibn Taymiya (1972) maintains that *rayb* is close to doubt in meaning; however, it involves self-disturbance as opposed to certainty which implies peace of mind and quietness (pp.52-53).

In contrast, the word *shakk* is regarded by most Arabic linguists and exegetes as the opposite of certainty (Ibn Faris, 1979, Vol.3, p. 173; Al-Razy, 1989, p. 302). Al-Gaza'ery (1997) describes *shakk* as the opposite of belief (p. 507). Al-Raghib Al-Asfahany (n.d.) sees that the word implies the equilibrium in two contradictory attitudes toward something. It is also connected with the inability or hesitation to make a decision about someone or something (p.349).

Nevertheless, some celebrated exegetes interpret *rayb* as *shakk*, pointing to no differences in meaning between them (Ibn Aby Hatim, 1997, Vol.1, p. 34; Al-Wahedy, 1995, Vol.1, p.90). However, the Qur'anic context, as it will unfold, distinguishes between the two words in question.

Examining the Qur'anic contexts in which *rayb* and *shakk* occur, it turns out that r*ayb* is a peculiarity of the disbelievers, hypocrites and evil-doers, as demonstrated by verses **A**, **B** and **C** above. The Qur'anic context reveals that it is the disbelievers who *yartabu*, i.e., experience self-anxiety and restlessness. In contrast, *rayb*, as verse **D** indicates, is uncharacteristic of

the believers whose faith in God results in their peace of mind, contentment and composure. According to the Qur'anic context, *shakk*, on the contrary, is typical of people in general, as in verse **F**. Further, it is based on conjecture and uncertainty, as evident in verse **G**.

The role of context in identifying the differences in meaning between *rayb* and *shakk* figures out most conspicuously in the following verse:

-And those who were made to inherit the Scripture after them are verily in **hopeless doubt** concerning it. (Al-Shura, 42: 14)

As the above verse indicates, *rayb* and *shakk* occur in the same context in which *rayb* is used to describe *shakk*, but not vice versa. This suggests that the two words have been selected very carefully to serve different functions and that they differ in one respect or another. It also indicates that *rayb* and *shakk* cannot be interchangeable in all contexts, since one word can be fitting in a sentence while its synonym would be inadequate, to recall Yule's approach to synonymy in light of context. Consequently, the two words cannot be absolute synonyms since they do not meet the criteria mentioned above. This view complies, as one may recollect, with the definitions of complete synonymy given by Arabic linguists and non-Arab linguists, who hold that absolutely synonymous words must be identical in meaning and replace each other in all contexts. Furthermore, what backs up the view of the impossibility of complete synonymy of *rayb* and *shakk* is that *mureeb* (i.e., suspicious; distrustful; apprehensive; disbelieving), the adjective from *rayb*, is used in several verses, as shown above, to describe *shakk*. The notion that a word cannot be used to describe itself asserts the distinction between *rayb* and *shakk* and refutes their absolute synonymy. (Al-Shaye,1993, p.230).The two words, therefore, are near synonyms sharing one or more of their sense components, e.g., the sense of uncertainty.

It is inferred from the preceding analysis that, if shakk means doubt, *Rayb* most likely implies intense or extreme doubt. This distinction between the two words evokes one of Collinson's nine factors of distinguishing between synonyms, i.e., one synonym is more intense than another.

The aforementioned critique is necessary for assessing the aptness of Ali's, Arberry's, Irving's, and Ghali's translations of *rayb* and *shakk* that are often thought to be absolutely synonymous. As indicated above, *rayb* and *shakk* occur abundantly in the Qur'an. The following table features the translations of *rayb* and *shakk* by Ali, Arberry, Irving, and Ghali that appear in columns (A) and (B) respectively:

Translator	Translations Offered	
	(A) *Rayb*	**(B)** *Shakk*
Ali	And if ye are in **doubt** as to what We have revealed from time to time to Our servant, […]. (Al-Baqarah, 2:23)	If you are in **doubt** as to what We have revealed unto thee, […]. (Yunus, 10: 94)
Arberry	And if you are in **doubt** concerning that We have sent down on Our servant, […].	So, if thou art in **doubt** regarding what We have sent down to thee, […].
Irving	If you (all) are in any **doubt** about what We have sent down to Our servant, […].	If you are in any **doubt** concerning what We have sent down to you, […].
Ghali	And in case you are **suspicious** about what We have been sending down upon Our bondman, […].	So, in case you are in **doubt** regarding what We have sent down to you,[…].

As the table above indicates, Ali, Arberry, Irving, and Ghali use the English word doubt as an equivalent to the word *Shakk*. Most English lexicographers define doubt as a feeling of uncertainty (O'Connor, 1996, p.156; Rundell, 2002, p. 415; Hornby, 2005, p. 458; Thompson, 1995, p. 406; Braham et al., 2001, p. 396).This definition corresponds with the interpretation of *shakk* as uncertainty and hesitation offered by the Arabic linguists and exegetes mentioned above. Therefore, the renditions of *shakk* as doubt offered by the four translators are adequate, since their translations of *Shakk* as doubt comply with the definition and interpretation of the word given by the English lexicographers and the Arab linguists and exegetes. However, Ali, Arberry and Irving have missed the point when they come to render the word *rayb*. They have inappropriately used the word doubt as equivalent to *rayb*, thus making *rayb* and *Shakk* absolute synonyms. This shows their inability to recognize the subtle difference between the two words.

However, it is only Ghali who has managed to translate *rayb* as suspicion. According to Hornby (2005), suspicion is "a feeling that sb has done sth wrong, illegal or dishonest, even though you have no proof" (1547). In the same way, Rundell (2002) defines suspicion as "a feeling that someone has done something wrong" and as "a feeling that you do not trust someone or something." (415). Similarly, O'Conner (1996) demonstrates that "[s]uspicion [and] [d]istrust are terms for a feeling that appearances are not reliable. Suspicion is the positive tendency to doubt the trustworthiness of appearances and therefore to believe that one has detected possibilities of something unreliable, […] menacing or the like […]" (531). In the same vein, Braham et al. (2001) defines suspicion as "the act of suspecting, esp something wrong or evil" and as "misgiving" (1320). Thompson (1995), too, defines suspect (and hence suspicion) as "distrust" (1404).

Obviously, the above definitions accord to a great extent with the linguistic and exegetical interpretation of *rayb* demonstrated above. Taking this into account, it turns out that Ghali's rendition of *rayb* as 'suspicion' is appropriate and testifies to the superiority of his translation to those by Ali, Arberry and Irving. Ghali's adequate translation of the word may be attributed partly to his tendency to translate words in context, and partly to his interest in reading exegetical works related to the Qur'an, which makes his translation faithful to the original. The researcher agrees to Ghali's suggestion of the word 'suspicion' as an equivalent to *rayb* and further recommends the words -apprehension, distrust and misgiving- as adequate equivalents to the word.

4.2 *Ghaith / Matar* (**Rain**)

Ghaith and *Matar* are the second pair of lexical items. They generally mean 'rain' and are regarded as completely synonymous.

Ghaith

The word *ghaith* is derived from the stem *ghawth*. It means help at times of need (Ibn Faris, 1979, Vol.4, p. 400; Al-Raghib Al-Asfahany, n. d., p.476; Al-Faiyoumy, 1987, p. 173; Ibn Manzour, Vol.10, p. 139). It is associated with good, mercy and utility. The following verses include the noun and verb forms of *ghaith*:

-And He it is Who sendeth down the saving **rain** after they have despaired, […]. (Al-Shura, 42: 28)

-When ye sought **help** of your Lord and He answered you (saying): I will **help** you […]. (Al-Anfal, 8: 9)

Matar

It occurs 15 times in the Qur'an in the form of verbs and nouns. Matar is associated with damage, harm, torment and punishment. Among the verses involving *matar* are:

-And We rained a **rain** upon them. See now the nature of the consequence of evil-doers! (Al-Araaf, 7:84)

-[A]nd We **rained** upon them stones of heated clay.(Al-Hijr, 15:74)

According to Al-Zawbaey (1995), no slight distinction between *ghaith* and *matar* is made in the work of some renowned Arabic linguists and exegetes (p.157). This view is asserted by Al-Fairouzabady (1978), Ibn Manzour (1999), Al-Faiyoumy (1987), Al-Gawhary (1990), who describe *ghaith* as *matar*, making them identical in meaning (Vol.1, p. 170;Vol.10, p. 110; p. 173; Vol.1, p. 289). In the same way, Al-Fakhr Al-Razy (1420 H), Al-Gaza'ery (1997) and Al-Wahedy (1995) interpret *ghaith* as *matar*, making no discrimination between them (Vol.25, p. 133; Vol.4, p. 217;

Vol.2, p. 851).On the other hand, some early linguists and exegetes identify subtle differences between the two words. For instance, Al-Thalaby mentions some early linguists' view that *matar* can be called *ghaith* if it falls when it is urgently needed. Similarly, Al-Qurtuby refers to Al-Mawardy's notion that *ghaith* is what is opportunely helpful to people, whereas *matar* may be harmful and useful to people both seasonably and unseasonably. Al-Mawardy's view of rain as harmful is asserted by Al-Siyouty, who refers to Ibn Oyayna's opinion that Allah (Highly Exalted) associates *Matar* with punishment and torment in the Qur'an, whereas the Arabs regard it as *ghaith*, i.e. urgent help (Al-Zawbaey, 1995, pp. 157-58).

　　　Nevertheless, investigating the Qur'anic contexts in which *ghaith* and *matar* are mentioned is necessary to explore the differences in meaning between the two words. According to Al-Zawbaey (1995), the contextual meaning of *ghaith* in the verses above is associated with good, utility, mercy, and bounty. In contrast, the context-bound meanings of *matar* involve evil, punishment and torment (Al-Zawbaey, pp.158-59). The distinction, however, in meaning between the two lexical items in the Quranic text is not fortuitous; rather, it is intended by Allah (Highly Exalted). It not only testifies to the non-existence of absolute synonymy in the Qur'an but also exhibits the inimitable aspects of expression characteristic of its text. Therefore, *ghaith* and *matar* cannot be completely synonymous. Rather, they can be regarded as near-synonyms sharing a shade of meaning, i.e., the notion of utility.

　　　Undoubtedly, the aforementioned critique is necessary to assess the adequacy of the translations of *ghaith* and *matar* offered by Ali, Arberry, Irving, and Ghali. The table below shows the four translators' renditions of *ghaith* and *matar* in columns (A) and (B) respectively.

Translator	Translations Offered	
	(A) *Ghaith*	**(B)** *Matar*
Ali	Verily the knowledge of the Hour Is with God (alone). It is He who sends down **rain**, […].(Luqman, 31: 34)	We **rained** down on them a **shower** of (brimstone): and evil was the **shower** on those who were admonished (But heeded not)! (Al-Shuara', 26: 173)
Arberry	Surely God- He has know ledge of the Hour; He sends down the **rain**; […].	We rained on them a **rain**; and evil is the **rain** of them that are warned.
Irving	God has knowledge about the Hour. He sends down **showers** […].	We sent a **rain** down upon them. How evil was such a **rain** for those who had been warned!
Ghali	Surely Allah, Ever He, has in His Providence knowledge of the Hour; and He sends down **succoring** (rain); […].	And We **rained** on them a **rain**, so odious is the **rain** of them that are warned.

As indicated by the above table, Arberry renders both *ghaith* and *matar* as rain. Wehr (1976) defines *matar* as "rain" (914). In this regard, Arberry's translation of the two words as rain corresponds with the definition of *Matar* offered by Wehr. Similarly, Irving translates *matar* as shower. His translation complies with the definitions of the word as both rain and shower given by Braham, et al. (2001, p. 1092) and O'Connor (1995, p. 438).Consequently, both Arberry and Irving make *ghaith* an absolute synonym of *matar*.

Arberry, Irving, and Ghali translate *matar* as rain, whereas Ali translates it as shower which he parenthetically describes as one of brimstone. Further, Ali offers a footnote in which he explains why he uses the phrase 'a shower of brimstone' to render *matar*:

The shower is expressly stated in Q. xi. 82 [i.e. "[…] (and rained down on them brimstones hard as baked clay)] to have been of stones. In xv. 73-74 [i.e. […] (But the (mighty) Blast overtook them before morning; And We turned (the cities) upside down, and rained Down on them brimstones hard as baked clay)], we are told that there was a   terrible blast or noise (saihat) in addition to the shower of stones. Taking these passages into consideration […], I think it is legitimate to translate: "a shower of brimstone." (364)

Interpreting the verse -We rained on them a rain. And dreadful is the rain of those who have been warned (Al-Shuara', 26: 173)- that includes the word *matar*, Ibn Katheer (1990), an authorized exegete, points out that Allah (Highly Exalted) rains stones of hard-baked clay on the people of Lut, who disbelieve the messengers (Vol.3, p. 324). Abul- Suood (n. d.) holds a view corresponding to that of Ibn Kathir. He maintains that Allah (Highly Exalted) showers the disbelievers with stones that bring about their destruction (Vol. IV, p.230). Al-Saedy (2002) shares the same view with both Ibn Kathir and Abul- Suood (p. 596). Compared with the interpretations of *matar* offered above by Ibn Kathir, Abul- Suood and Al-Saedy, Ali's translation of the same word corresponds with theirs. This indicates that Ali is conscious of the intended meaning of the word *matar* and therefore manages to render it appropriately. On the other hand, Arberry and Irving render *matar* as rain without clarifying the nature of that rain.

As illustrated above, Ali, Arberry and Irving translate *ghaith* as rain. In contrast, Ghali renders it as succoring and parenthetically as 'rain'. According to O'Connor (1995), "[t]o succor […] is to give timely help and relief to someone in difficulty or distress: *succor him in his hour of need*" (250). This definition of succor accords with that provided by Braham et al. (2001, p. 1308), Hornby (2005, p. 1533), Thompson (1995, p. 1391) and Rundell (2002, p. 1434). Obviously, Ghali's rendition of *ghaith* as succoring complies   with   the   definitions   of   'succor'   given   by   the   aforesaid

lexicographers. His use of succoring to render *ghaith* is adequate in the sense that he determines the nature of that rain, one that entails good and usefulness. However, Ghali's use of 'succoring' is perhaps inaccurate grammatically; he should have used the word succor that functions here as noun instead of succoring which indicates the act of providing succor. This, however, does not affect Ghali's translation of *ghaith* as succoring or detract from its appropriateness. If this and the exegetical as well as the contextual interpretations of *ghaith* are taken into account, then Ghali's translation turns out to be the most appropriate if compared with the other translations offered by Ali, Arberry, and Irving. In addition to the prowess of Ghali as a translator, as well as the authenticity and scholarly value of his translation, it seems certain that Ghali has read the numerous interpretations of *ghaith* offered by renowned exegetes. Furthermore, he has sought to explore the connotational and the contextual meanings of such Qur'anic words as *ghaith* to reveal their intended meanings which the Qur'an seeks to impart to people.

It is worth noting, however, that if Ali's translation of *matar* as 'a shower of (brimstone)' is superior to those by Arberry, Irving, and Ghali, the translation of *ghaith* as succoring by Ghali is also better than those by Ali, Arberry, and Irving.

4.3 Fu'ad / Qalb (Heart)

The third pair of lexical items thought to be absolute synonyms is *fu'ad* and *qalb* which generally mean heart.

Qalb

As far as the lexical item *qalb* is concerned, it is derived from the stem *qalb* which refers to man's heart, anything's centre and the act of inverting or changing. It is called *qalb* because it is the most elevated organ of the body (Ibn Faris, 1979, V.5, p.17). According to Al-Raghib Al-Asfahany (n. d.), *Qalb* is called so because it is ever changing (p.411). Among the verses involving *qalb* are**:**

A. Lo! therein verily is a reminder for him who hath a **heart**, […]. (Qaf, 50: 37)

B.Thus doth Allah seal the **hearts** of those who know not. (Al-Rum, 30: 59)

C. For indeed it is not the eyes that grow blind, but it is the **hearts**, which are within the bosoms, that grow blind. (Al-Hajj, 22: 46)

D. [A] nd **hearts** reached to the throats. (Al-Ahzab, 3: 10)

E. Have they not travelled in the land, and have they **hearts** wherewith to feel […]. (Al-Hajj, 22: 46)

F. Say (O Muhammad, to mankind): Who is an enemy to Gabriel! For he it is who hath revealed (this Scripture) to thy **heart**. (Al-Baqarah, 2: 97)

G. [A]nd make strong your **hearts** and firm (your) feet hereby. (Al-Anfal, 8: 11)

Fu'ad

The term *fu'ad* occurs in 5 verses as singular and 8 as plural. It is derived from the stem *fa'ada*. The stem has the meaning of 'heating up' or 'roasting'. Among the verses in which *fu'ad* occurs are:

H. [S]o incline some **hearts** of men that they may yearn toward them, […]. (Ibraheem, 14: 7)

I. And the **heart** of the mother of Moses became void,[…]. (Al-Qasa, 28: 10)

J. Lo! the hearing and the sight and the **heart** - of each of these it will be asked. (Al-Isra', 17: 36)

The word *qalb* is used in some Qur'anic verses in its concrete sense, i.e. as an organ which pumps blood through the body, as in verse **C**. However, the Qur'anic text abounds in many verses which express multiple abstract senses associated with *qalb*. The word assumes different meanings based on the contexts in it occurs. For instance, *qalb* is used to express *soul*, as in verse **D**; suggest the place of *learning* and *understanding*, as verse **E** shows (Al-Zawbaey, 1995, pp. 164-65; Al-Doury, 2005, pp.109-10); demonstrate the site of power, as verse **F** indicates; and express the strengthening of will, the enhancement of courage, and endurance, as in verse **G** (Al-Doury, pp.109-10).

As regards the lexical item *fu'ad*, it is used in the Qur'an to express the whole body, being the most delicate, sensitive and honourable organ, as verse **H** suggests. Unlike other body organs, it is easily affected by situations involving fear and horror, as verse **I** indicates. It also refers to *Al-Aql* (mind) in which ideas and beliefs originate (Al-Doury, 2005, p.108).

Most Arabic lexicographers draw no distinction between *fu'ad* and *qalb*, and use one word to interpret the other (Ibn Manzour, 1999, Vol.10, p.166, Vol.11, p.271; Al-Gawhary, 1990, Vol.1, p.204; Al-Jamal, 2003,Vol.3, p.234; Al-Razy, 1989, pp.430, 481; Al-Faiyoumy, 1987, pp.184, 195; Al-Fairouzabady, 1978, Vol. 1, pp.118, 318; Al-Raghib Al-Asfahany, n. d., Vol. 2, pp. 499, 531).On the other hand, some exegetes distinguish between *fu'ad* and q*alb*, pointing out that *fu'ad* refers to *Al-Aql* (mind) rather than *qalb* (Al-Zamakhshary, 2009, p. 795; Al-Amady, n. d., Vol. 4, p.295). Malik holds a similar view to that of Al-Zamakhshary and Al-Amady; he explains that *fu'ad* implies *Aql*, as is verse **B** (as cited in Al-Sharawy, 1991,Vol. 17, p. 10890). This asserts Hassan (2003)'s view that "the term [*fu'ad*] 'denotes' *heart* but 'connotes' *mind*" (p.96). In this regard,

Hassan's view reflects, as one may recall, one of Jackson's five ways of making distinctions between synonyms, i.e., synonyms may be distinguished as a result of connotation.

The Qur'nic context, however, settles the dispute over whether *fu'ad* and *qalb* are absolute or near synonyms. Consider, for example, the following verse:

-And the heart of the mother of Moses became void, and she would have betrayed him if We had not fortified her heart, that she might be of the believers. (Al-Qasas, 28:10)

As the above verse demonstrates, *fu'ad* and *qalb* occur in the same context, which dismisses the notion that they are identical in meaning. Instead, this testifies to the difference(s) between them, since there is no need to use two words to express the same sense in one context, as early Arabic and contemporary English linguists point out.   The verse in question suggests that there is nothing engaging the mind of Moses' mother other than thinking about her baby whom the family of Pharaoh has picked up out of the river. Here *fu'ad* implies *Aql* (mind), being the centre of thinking and the most sensitive organ easily affected by inauspicious situations.

It is concluded from the above analysis regarding *fu'ad* and *qalb* that the two lexical items are similar but not identical in meaning, since *fu'ad* strictly suggests an abstract sense, i.e., *Aql*, while *qalb* both abstract and concrete senses. This implies that *qalb* is more general and inclusive in its applicability than *fu'ad*, to use one of Collinson's factors for distinguishing between synonyms.   Besides, although the two words share some of their abstract senses, e.g., the faculty of comprehension, they cannot substitute for each other in all contexts. This is reminiscent of Nida's notion of overlap and its relation to synonymy. As has been demonstrated before, words whose meanings overlap cannot replace one another in all contexts.   Consequently, *fu'ad* and *qalb* are near rather than absolute synonyms.

The aforementioned argument about *fu'ad* and *qalb* is indispensable to assessing the appropriateness of the translations of the two words by Ali, Arberry, Irving, and Ghali, which figure in columns (A) and (B) respectively in the table below.

Translator	Translations Offered	
	(A) *Fu'ad*	(B) *Qalb*
Ali	The (Prophet's) (mind and) **heart** in no way falsified that which he saw. (Al-Najm, 53: 11)	God has not made for any man two **hearts** in his (one) body. (Al-Ahzab, 33: 4)
Arberry	His **heart** lies not of what he saw; […].	God has not assigned to any man two **hearts** within his body.
Irving	His **vitals** did not deny whatever he saw.	God has not placed two **hearts** in any man's body.
Ghali	In no way did the **heart-sight** lie (about) what it saw.	In no way has Allah made to any man two **hearts** within the hollow (of his breast); […].

Examining the translations of *fu'ad* and *qalb* offered in the table above, it is obvious that Ali, Arberry, Irving, and Ghali encounter no difficulty in translating *qalb*. They appropriately translate it as heart, paying attention to the concrete sense it has in the context in which it occurs. Their renditions of *qalb* as heart accords with the definitions of heart as "the organ in the chest that sends blood around the body" (Hornby, 2005, p.720); as "a hollow muscular organ maintaining the circulation of the blood" (Thompson, 1995, p.626); as "the organ in your chest that pumps blood around your body" (Rundell, 2002, p. 662); and as "a muscular organ […] that pumps [blood] through the arteries" (Braham et al., 2001, p. 607).

As far as the word *fu'ad* is concerned, Ali and Arberry render it as heart (*qalb*). Like them, Irving translates *fu'ad* as vitals which Rundell (2002) and Hornby (2005) define as "the most important organs of the body, especially the heart and lungs"(1660) and as "parts of the body, esp the lungs, heart and brain"(959) respectively. Taking this into consideration, Irving's translation of *fu'ad* as vitals corresponds with Ali's and Arberry's. Consequently, the three translators make *fu'ad* and *qalb* semantically identical.

However, Arberry, Irving and Ghali miss the point when they come to translate *fu'ad*. Apparently, they adhere to the literal meaning of the word, disregarding the purport which it attempts to convey. The verse in which *fu'ad* occurs tells about the Prophet's ascent to the heavens and how he, on seeing the angel Gabriel, believes that what he sees is "pure truth; there [is] no illusion in it"(Ali, n. d., p. 1444). Although Ali renders *fu'ad* as heart, he also translates it parenthetically as mind, thus displaying the intended meaning of *fu'ad*, i.e., mind. Furthermore, in order to demonstrate his awareness of the connotative meaning of heart, he provides a footnote in which he states that "heart in Arabic includes the faculty of intelligence as well as the faculty of feeling" (p.1444). In this regard, Ali complies with, as one may recall, the contextual meaning of *qalb* as a place for learning and

understanding. Ali also echoes the Muslim exegetes' view that '"hearts are the centres for minds"'(Hassan, 2003, p.101).

Like Arberry's and Irving's, Ghali's rendition of *fu'ad* as heart-sight is not quite accurate. Evidently, the translator seeks to transfer the maximum meanings intended by both the word *fu'ad* and the entire verse in which it occurs. In fact, what he imparts here is the rhetorical picture of the words. By associating heart with sight, Ghali perhaps wants to personify heart. He makes it look like a human with eyes, thus giving heart its concrete rather than abstract sense. Ghali's ardour for the Quranic verse affects his translation of *fu'ad* and makes him give an image somewhat different from that actually existing in the verse. The type of meaning involved in Ghali's translation falls to a great extent within Cruse's classification of meaning. Cruse in his book on lexical semantics, as quoted in Baker (1992), identifies four types of meaning:

1.   Propositional meaning: arises from the relationship between the word and what it refers to.

2.   Expressive meaning: relates to the speaker's feelings or attitude rather than to what

words or utterances refer to.

3. Presupposed meaning: arises from restrictions on what other words or expressions we expect to see before or after a particular lexical unit.

4. Evoked meaning: arises from a dialect or a register variation. (13-15)

In terms of Cruse's classification, the meaning given by Ghali here can be called 'expressive meaning'. Ghali's translation is affected by his feelings, which makes him unable to recognize the connotative meaning of the word. However, Ghali's excuse for not translating *fu'ad* accurately is perhaps attributed to his keenness on transmitting a beautiful image of the original. Similarly, Arberry's and Irving's failure to convey the connotative message of *fu'ad* can be justified by the notion that connotative meaning may or may not be perceived by everyone (Hassan, 2003, p. 101). Perhaps their inability to transfer precisely the item in question can also be due to their attempt to remain faithful to the original text. However, of all the translations offered above, Ali's remains the most appropriate.

In terms of the aforementioned thesis about *Fu'ad* and *Qalb*, one can safely say that Arberry, Irving, and Ghali have made the two words absolute synonyms that can be interchangeable in all contexts. In contrast, Ali's translation of *fu'ad* and *qalb* demonstrates that the two words are near rather than absolute synonyms, since they share some, and not all, of their sense components. As indicated above, the sense components of *qalb* include understanding and the faculty of intelligence that are closely connected with

Aql (mind) or *fu'ad*. The researcher approves of Ali's use of the word mind as an equivalent to *fu'ad*, and further recommends the word intuition to be another equivalent to it.

4.4 Half / Qasam (Swearing)

The fourth pair of lexical items generally regarded as absolute synonyms is *Al-Half* and *Al-Qasam* that generally mean 'swearing' or 'oath-taking'.

Al-Half

Al-Half (or *Al-Halif*) is derived from the stem *Halafa* and generally has the meaning of 'swearing' or 'taking an oath'. Among the verses in which the verb forms of *Al-Half* occur are :

A. They **swear** by Allah that they said nothing (wrong), yet they did say the word of disbelief, and did disbelieve after their Surrender (to Allah). (Al-Tawbah, 9:74)

B. [A]nd they **swear** a false oath knowingly. (Al-Mujadilah, 58: 14)

C. They **swear** unto you, that ye may accept them. Though ye accept them. Allah verily accepteth not wrongdoing folk. (Al-Tawbah, 9:96)

D. [A]nd for him who findeth not (the wherewithal to do so) then a three days' fast. This is the expiation of your oaths when ye have sworn [...]. (Al-Ma'idah, 5: 89)

Al-Qasam

Al-Qasam is derived from the stem *qasam* (and *aqsama*). It generally means 'to swear' or 'to take an oath'. Among the verses in which the verb forms of *Al-Qasam* occur are:

E. Nay, I **swear** by the places of the stars […]. (Al-Waqiah, 56: 75)

F. Lo! We have tried them as We tried the owners of the garden when they **vowed** that they would pluck its fruit next morning. (Al-Qalam, 68: 17)

G. And on the day when the Hour riseth the guilty will **vow** that they did tarry but an hour - thus were they ever deceived. (Al-Rum, 30:55)

H. And they **swore** by Allah, their most binding oath, that if a warner came unto them they would be more tractable than any of the nations; yet, when a warner came unto them it aroused in them naught save repugnance[…].(Fatir, 35: 42)

Most Arabic lexicographers show no distinction between *Al-Half* and *Al-Qasam*, and use one word to interpret the other (Ibn Manzour, 1993, Vol.3, p.275, Vol.11, p.164; Al-Gawhary, 1990, Vol. 4, p.1346, Vol.5, p.2010; Al-Jamal, Vol.1, p.437, Vol.3, p. 351; Al-Razy, 1989, p.470; Al-Faiyoumy, 1987, p.192; Al-Fairouzabady, 1978, Vol.3, p.125). In like manner, some contemporary Arabic linguists draw no clear lines of

demarcation between the two words, regarding them as absolute synonyms (Al-Salih, 1976, p. 300). In contrast, some contemporary Arabic scholars distinguish between the two words. For example, Bint Al-Shati'(1977) sees that *Al-Qasam* does not mean *Al-Half*. According to her, *Al-Half* suggests false swearing, while *Al-Qasam* honest or truthful one. Besides, the Qur'anic context, as she contends, distinguishes between the two words, not to mention the phonemic and morphemic differences between the two words necessitating differences in meaning (Vol.1, pp.167-68).

The Qur'anic contexts in which *Al-Half* and *Al-Qasam* occur differentiate, as it figures most clearly in the above verses, between the two words in question. First, *Al-Half* suggests or is based on false oath, as in verse **B**. Second, it is typical of the disbelievers, wrong-doers, hypocrites and the people who have gone astray to take oaths which entail lying and deceit, as verses **A**, **B** and **C** show. Third, associating *Al-Half* with expiation asserts that *Al-Half* is a dishonest swearing; for taking an oath with the intention of lying necessitates atonement, as in verse **D**. Fourth, *Al-Half*, as Al-Shaye(1993) explains, is based on   probability, doubt and hesitancy; therefore, the person swearing is susceptible to not saying the truth since his/her swearing is based on conjecture rather than certainty (pp. 238-39).

In contrast, *Al-Qasam* involves honest and faithful oath. It belongs to believers, disbelievers, hypocrites and wrong-doers alike. Further, it indicates truthfulness as it occurs in the verses where the Creator (Highly Exalted) swears by any of his creations, as in verse **E**. Swearing by God involves honesty, if even those swearing include disbelievers or hypocrites; for when a disbeliever swears, he is convinced that he is saying the truth, even though he is not. Consider, for example, verse **F** in which the owners of the garden (considered wrong-doers) are honest and truthful about the oath which they have taken (Al-Shaye,1993, p. 242; Al-Zawbaey, 1995, p.66). Consider, also, verse **G** in which the guilty and the hypocrites, like the owners of the garden, are also honest about the oath which they have taken (Al-Zawbaey, 1995, pp.66-67; Bint Al-Shati' 1977, Vol.1, pp. 167-68). Both the owners of the garden and the guilty referred to above think they are not lying about their claims. Ultimately, *Al-Qasam* does not imply probability or doubt; rather, it is based on certainty.When all is said and done, Bint Al-Shati' (1971) differentiates between *Al-Qasam* and *Al-Half*, arguing that the former is used to mean swearing generally, while the latter is confined to false swearing (p. 207).

The above thesis about *Al-Qasam* and *Al-Half* is helpful in evaluating the accuracy of the Ali's, Arberry's, Irving's, and Ghali's translations of the two words which appear in columns (A) and (B) respectively in the following table:

Translator	Translations Offered	
	(A) *Al-Half*	(B) *Al-Qasam*
Ali	To you they **swear** by God. In order to please you: […].(Al-Tawbah, 9: 62)	They **swear** their strongest oaths by God, that God will not rise up those who die: […].(Al-Nahl, 16: 38)
Arberry	They **swear** to you by God, to Please you; […].	They **have sworn** by God the most earnest oaths God will never raise up him who dies; […].
Irving	They **swear** by God for you just to please you (all).	They **have sworn** by God with their most solemn oaths, God will not raise up anyone who dies.
Ghali	They **swear** by Allah to you, to satisfy you.	And they **have sworn** by Allah the most earnest oath (that) Allah will not make him who dies to rise again.

Examining the four renditions of the lexical items *Al-Half* and *Al-Qasam*, it is clear that Ali, Arberry, Irving, and Ghali have used the word swear as an equivalent to both *Yahlif* and *Yoqsim* (i.e., to swear). Their renditions of *Yahlif bi* and *Yoqsim bi* as 'swear by' comply with most western lexicographers who define 'swear by' as "to make a solemn declaration […] by some sacred being or object, as a deity" (Braham et al., 2001, p. 1322); "to name sb/sth to show that you are making a serious promise" (Hornby, 2005, p. 1550); and "[to] appeal to as a witness in making an oath" (Thompson, 1995, p. 1406).

However, the four translators have not drawn any distinctions between the two words, making them absolutely synonymous with each other. Neither have they pointed out the nature of swearing. Therefore, their translations of *Al-Half* and *Al-Qasam* have turned out to be inaccurate. This, however, may be ascribed to the translators' tendency to translate those words out of context, though context can contribute a lot to revealing their precise meanings. The translators' inattention to the role of context in translating near synonyms is contrasted with the great importance which Yule and Lyons have given to context as a distinguishing factor among synonyms.

Although Ghali displays undeniable prowess at translating the words of the Qur'an in context, this time he misses the point by disregarding the contexts of the two words under investigation. However, taking into consideration the exegetical and contextual interpretations of *Yahlif* and *Yoqsim* (swear), the researcher recommends the verbal phrases 'to swear falsely' and 'to swear honestly or truthfully' to be apt equivalents to *Yahlif* and *Yoqsim* respectively**.**

5. Conclusion

This study comes to the conclusion that translating near synonyms in the Qur'anic text is not quite easy. This is because these synonyms (particularly the ones selected for investigation) involve very subtle differences

in meaning that are difficult to grasp. The study also concludes that Ali, Arberry, Irving, and Ghali have not entirely been successful in translating the near synonyms *rayb / Shakk*, *Ghaith / Matar*, *Fu'ad / Qalb*, as well as *Al-Half / Al-Aqsam*. This is perhaps due to either their inability to recognize the nuances among the near synonyms in question, their tendency to translate these near synonyms out of context, or their inattention to most of the linguistic and exegetical works pertinent to synonymy.

6. Recommendations

In terms of the above critique about near synonyms and the failure of most translators to render them adequately, the following is recommended:

1. A study of the near synonyms in the Glorious Qur'an that have not been explored yet, such as Al-Rigz / Alʿathab (torment), Al-Jiloos /Al-Kuʿood (sitting), Al-Bahr / Al-Yam (sea), Thakifa / Wajada (found), Al-Bathth / Al-Hozn (sadness), Khatama / Tabaʿa (sealed), Ma'wa / Mathwa (abode), Effk / Kathib (lying), Al-Shoh / Al-Bokhl (miserliness), Khodhooʿ / Khoshoo' (submission), to name only a few.

2. Promoting translators' awareness of the necessity of reading and understanding the linguistic and exegetical works pertinent to the Qur'an.

3. Adopting the contextual approach in translating the meanings of the Qur'an.

Notes

1. The reason for selecting the aforementioned translators (and hence their translations) for examination is that they fall under different categories as regards their ethnicity and religion. For example, Ali and Irving are non-Arab Muslims, Arberry is a devoted Christian, and Ghali is an Arab Muslim. In this way, they represent different religious backgrounds to the Glorious Qur'an. In addition, the four translators belong to the 20th –century that is regarded a turning point in the field of translation in general and in the Qur'anic translations in particular. Ali is well-known in Qur'anic literature and his translation of the meanings of the Qur'an "is so well read that almost every English-speaking Muslim house has a copy" (Al-Malik, 1995, p.27).His approach to the Qur'an shows him aiming at "an interpretive translation" which he "supported with footnotes as an attempt to give the exact and complete meaning of the verses" (Hassan, 2003, p.12). As regards Arberry's translation of the Qur'an, it offers "some specimens of how the Qur'an might be presented in English to better effect" (Al-Malik, 1995, p.34). Arberry seeks to display the sublime rhetoric of the Arabic Qur'an, and attempts "to find the best English equivalent for every meaning and every rhythm of the original Arabic" (Al-Malik, 1995, p. 34). Concerning Irving's translation of the Qur'an , it is not as accurate as those translations offered by

Ali and Arberry; it has been selected to be the concern of this study because it is the first American translation of the Qur'an which sheds light on the way American translators of the Qur'an approach it. The reason Ghali's translation of the Qur'an has been included among the other translations that are the concern of this study is that Ghali's mainly concentrates on the use of and distinction between synonyms in the Glorious Qur'an, which the researcher seeks to focus on in this study.

 2. The reason the above-mentioned near synonyms have been selected for determining how appropriately they have been translated is that many translators have failed to render them adequately owing to linguistic and cultural differences that impinge on clear understanding of the intended meanings of the near synonyms under investigation. Besides, it seems that the translators rendered these words out of context, though the context can be helpful in explaining their right meanings. Their apparent failure to delve deep into the appropriate Arabic interpretations of the meanings of the Glorious Qur'an is also another reason for their inability to recognize the nuances of meaning that exist among near synonyms.

 3. Apart from the translations provided by Ali, Arberry, Irving, and Ghali in the above tables, this and subsequent translations are by Pickthall.

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