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ENGLISH QUR'ĀN TRANSLATORS' RESPONSES TO PAUSING SIGNS, *AL-WAQF WA AL-'IBTIDĀ'*

Ismail Albayrak*

Abstract: The pause (*waqf*) is an important punctuation signal in the text of the Qur'ān. There are six such signs: i. an obligatory pause; ii. prohibition of a pause; iii. a pause at the discretion of reciter; iv. a pause is permitted, but continuation is preferable; v. continuation is permissible, but a pause is preferable; and vi. alternative grouping of words. These are relevant to the understanding of the Qur'ān, so have a role in understanding the main branches of Qur'ānic hermeneutics—namely, *muḥkam* and *mutashābih* (clear and ambiguous verses). Self-evidently, they are an important guide to the syntactic structure of the text of the Qur'ān for anyone concerned with rendering its meaning in another language. One of the most fruitful aspects of this neglected discipline of the Qur'ānic sciences can be observed in the differences between various Qur'ān translations. This article focuses on the frequently used 20 English translations—of the introduction and main texts—to understand and critically analyse translators' general awareness of the notion of the *waqf* in the context of the translation of selected verses. Although the translators have not followed a certain pattern regarding the locations of the pauses, they appear to have been aware of this concept and tried to demonstrate how this notion contributes to the translations. Nevertheless, compared to recent translations, earlier translations (19th and early 20th centuries) suggest that translators have not paid enough attention to this concept.

Keywords: *Qur'ān, waqf, 'ibtidā', translation, verses, meanings*

INTRODUCTION

In his article titled “Human Intervention in Divine Speech: *Waqf* Rules and the Redaction of the Qur'ānic Text,” Amr Osman addresses one of the most neglected aspects of Qur'ānic studies in the West: the *waqf* (stop or pause). Although the title is ambitious,¹ the article

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¹ Amr Osman, “Human Intervention in Divine Speech: *Waqf* Rules and the Redaction of the Qur'ānic Text,” *Journal of Qur'ānic Studies* 14, no. 2 (2012). My main criticism of Osman's article is regarding the gap between the materials he used and the title's inference. Osman's article is mainly based on reports, but in the title, he gives the impression that Qur'ānic stops are completely in tune with individual *ijtihād* (personal opinion). I do not claim that all punctuation marks (*waqfs*) are *tawqīfī* (determined by the prophetic instructions). Some scholars also consider the notion of *waqf* as an issue transmitted from previous generations. In addition, classical scholars mention different types of *waqfs* for training and other reasons. For instance, there are *ikhtiyārī* (personal choice), *iḍtirārī* (necessary) and *ikhtibārī* (based on training purposes and experience) *waqfs*. This classification indicates some arbitrariness. It is also worth

deserves praise because it is one of the pioneering works that the subject of *al-waqf wa al-ibtidā'* (pausing and beginning)² has been analysed, and the article has shown in detail the subject's effect on the English meanings of the verses. In addition, the relationship between theology, jurisprudence and *waqfs* is eloquently illustrated and discussed using numerous examples from the Qur'ān. Thus, there is no need to reiterate all the theoretical aspects of this notion. Instead, this article will focus on more practical aspects of the notion of the *waqf*. Considering that one of the essential parts of Qur'ānic hermeneutical devices is directly related to the location of the pause *mīm* in verse 3:7, the division of *muḥkam* and *mutashābih*³ makes the Qur'ānic discourse vibrant and always contemporary to Muslim readers. Due to this concept's importance, this article looks first at the English translators of the Qur'ān's general awareness of the notion of the *waqf* in the context of their introductions to the translations of the Qur'ān. This article will also compare the translations of some Qur'ānic verses in 20

noting that pause marks change in accordance with variant readings. If one examines the current *Maṣāḥif* published in Egypt and Turkey (both follow the reading of 'Āṣim (d. 745), the transmission of Ḥafṣ (d. 796) and heavily rely on Sajāwandī's punctuation), one can find some differences (Egyptian *Maṣāḥif* have less punctuation or pause marks than Turkish ones; there is no need to mention varieties of *waqfs* in accordance with the variant readings). Additionally, I also do not claim that only the meanings of the verses or theological or juristic preferences are the motivation behind the determination of the *waqfs* in the Qur'ān. For instance, regarding the position of the *waqf*, Imām Nāfi' (d. 785) mainly considers the meaning of the verses, whereas Ibn Kathīr (d. 738) and Hamza (d. 773) focus more on where the readers' breath ends. Imām Hamza always reads the Qur'ān on the basis of *taḥqīq* style (very slow and gives the right of each letter); therefore, he recites the long vowels properly (*hurūf al-madd*). When one reads properly and pronounces long vowels, one's breath needs frequent refreshing and pauses (*iḍtirārī waqf*) are inevitable. See Abdurrahman Çetin, "Vakf" [Qur'anic Pause], *Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslam Ansiklopedisi* 42 (2012): 460; İsmail Ahmet et-Tahhān, "Kur'an'ı anlamada vakfın rolü" [Role of Pause Marks in the Understanding of the Qur'an], trans. Necattin Hanay, *R.T. Erdoğan Üniversitesi İlahiyat Fakültesi Dergisi* 2 (2012): 238.

The relationship between *waqfs* and meaning (i.e. grammar and syntax) is similar to the relationship between the variants and meanings. Notably, many of the reciters are also grammarians. Further, early *waqf* works date to the Successors' generation: 'Abd Allāh b. 'Āmir al-Yaḥṣubī's (d. 736) *Kitāb al-maqtū' wa al-mawṣūl* is considered the earliest and he is one of the authentic seven reciters. See Soner Aksoy, "Hicri ilk üç asırda bir Kur'an ilmi olan vakf ve ibtidā literatürüne dair bir inceleme" [An Examination of the Literature of Waqf and Ibtidā, a Sub-discipline of the Qur'anic Sciences, in the First Three Centuries of the Islamic Year], in *Kur'an Ve Yorumu: İlk Üç Yüz Yıl-1* [The Qur'an and its Exegesis: First Three Centuries-1], ed. Halil Rahman Açar (Ankara: İlim Dallarının Düşünce Temellerini Araştırma Enstitüsü Pub., 2019), 467.

Completely disregarding the *waqf* transmissions and reports from the earlier generations via reciters (*qurrā*) is unwise and contradicts the oral transmission of the Qur'ān. For instance, if one only considers *awqāf al-nabī* or *Jibrīl* (prophetic stops or Gabriel's pauses), one realises the majority of these kinds of *waqfs* are not at the end of the verses but in the middle. See Shams al-Dīn Abū al-Khayr ibn al-Jazarī, *al-Nashr fī qirā'at al-'ashr* [A Publication in Ten Variant Readings] (Cairo: Maṭba'at al-tijāriyya al-kubrā, n.d.), I.227-241; Veli Kayhan, "Vakf ve ibtidā ilmi ve Kur'an tefsirindeki yeri" [The Discipline of Waqf and Ibtidā and its Place in Qur'anic Sciences], *Cumhuriyet Üniversitesi İlahiyat Fakültesi Dergisi* 10, no. 2 (2006): 326-7.

Simply, no one can know their correct location apart from in oral transmission (et-Tahhān, "Kur'an'ı anlamada vakfın rolü," 240). In short, considering the meaning as a sole determiner of the *waqf* is a reductionist approach; similarly, disregarding the role of the meaning in the designation of the *waqf* is also inadequate.

² It is interesting to observe that *waqf* precedes *ibtidā'* (beginning).

³ "It is He who sent down upon thee the Book, wherein are verses clear that are the Essence of the Book, and others ambiguous. As for those in whose hearts is swerving, they follow the ambiguous part, desiring dissension, and desiring its interpretation; and none knows its interpretation, save only God. And those firmly rooted in knowledge say, 'We believe in it; all is from our Lord'; yet none remembers but men possessed of minds" (Qur'ān 3:7).

different translations from the perspective of the translators' attention to the *waqf*. Of course, I am aware the pause signs differ according to variant readings of the Qur'ān (*qirā'āt*). Therefore, it is worth mentioning that I will base my discussion on the commonly used *Mushaf* (*qirā'at 'Āṣim* and *riwāyat Ḥafṣ*) and the stop signs that come up in the commentaries of the subject matter verses. I also assume that Qur'ān translators are also based on this widely used variant.⁴

Evaluating the Prefaces of Selected Scholars' English Translations of the Qur'ān⁵

It is common practice to begin analysing modern English Qur'ān translations with George Sale (d. 1736).⁶ When examining his long introduction in which he does not omit any historical data from the life of the Prophet and the revelation of the Qur'ān, I do not find any reference to the notion of the *waqf* in his *magnum opus*. Interestingly, intermittently in the translation of certain verses, he openly declares his translation is based on Zamakhsharī's (d. 1144) and Bayḍāwī's (d. 1286) exegeses; nonetheless, this translation implies Sale was unaware of the existence of the important instrument (namely, the *waqf*) of exegesis. Because his translation belongs to quite early stages of the Western study of the Qur'ān, his unawareness of this tool (*waqf*) is understandable. He also sometimes follows commonly used authentic patterns of punctuation in his translation.⁷

Classical Western scholars' English translations of the Qur'ān are not much different from Sale's work. John M Rodwell (d. 1900), whose chronological order of the Qur'ānic translation was first published in 1861, prefers a passage-by-passage translation, rather than verse-by-

⁴ Most of the Qur'ānic text (*Mushaf*) in the Muslim world uses pausing systems (signs) of Muḥammad b. Tayfūr al-Sajāwandī (d. 1165). However, in the *Mushafs* published especially in North Africa, Abū 'Abd Allāh Muḥammad b. Abī Jum 'a al-Ḥabṭī's systems (19th century) are considered. Ḥabṭī's pause signs, which are simple when compared to Sajāwandī, sometimes overlap and sometimes differ significantly (Mehmet Emin Maşalı, *Tarihi ve Temel Meseleleriyle Kıraat İlmi* [The Discipline of the Variant Readings with its History and Basic Issues] (Ankara: Otto, 2020), 145-6; Mohammed Nahar Ali and Mohammad Qasem al-Zoubi, "Different Pausing, Different Meaning: Translating Qur'anic Verses Containing Syntactic Ambiguity," *Perspectives, Studies in Translatology* 17, no. 4 (2009); Bakri al-Azzam, "Translating Structural Pause in the Qur'an," *Translation and Interpreting Studies* 4, no. 1 (2009)).

⁵ I generally prefer the distinction between Western and Muslim translators rather than the distinction between Muslim and non-Muslim translators. In fact, most translators (Muslim and non-Muslim) are Western authors.

⁶ Which *Mushaf* the early Western translators based on is a somewhat vague issue. Although it is stated that Sale used the Italian Orientalist Ludovico Marracci's (d. 1700) Latin translation of the Qur'ān, the answers to the questions about the original text are not clear in terms of pause signs. The same is true for Rodwell (d. 1900). Although he uses Weil (d. 1889) and Nöldeke (d. 1930) in the chronology of the *surah*, it is not clear which *Mushaf* he is based on in his translation. Probably, Rodwell and many other Orientalists of the 19th and early 20th centuries had Gustav L. Flügel's (d. 1870) work (Gustav L. Flügel, *Corani Textus Arabicus* [Arabic Text of the Qur'an] (Leipzig: S.E. Breddtii, 1834). However, there is not a single pause sign in the *Mushaf* that Flügel prepared for publication. Besides other problems in this publication, it is interesting that Flügel never mentioned or referred to the pause signs.

⁷ For instance, regarding verse 3:7, Sale's translation is: "yet none knoweth the interpretation thereof, except God. But they who are well grounded in the knowledge say, We believe therein, the whole is from our Lord; and none will consider except the prudent." Without referring to the *waqf* sign (*mīm*) (obligatory stop, *waqf lāzim*), even in the footnotes, and with a full stop after the word 'God,' it appears he followed a pattern. See George Sale, trans. *The Koran* (Chapel Hill, North Carolina: The Project Gutenberg, 2005), eBook, <http://www.gutenberg.org/cache/epub/7440/pg7440-images.html>.

verse. The difference between these two types of Qur'ānic translation (passage-by-passage versus verse-by-verse) approaches is that verse-by-verse translation is problematic due to the fact that every verse is not a full sentence and sometimes the meaning of a verse ends in the middle of the second verse that follows. For this reason, translation made within the framework of passage-by-passage seem more appropriate in terms of the stops in question. Although he addresses various topics (e.g. the Qur'ān's reliance on Christian traditions, Rabbinic legends, distorted apocryphal sources, the repetition that is "an inherent characteristic of the Semitic mind," the psychology of Arab prophets, the unfettered and irregular rhythmic flow of lines and that the writing was intended not for readers but listeners) in his 18-page preface (together with G. Margoliouth's introductory notes), Rodwell does not mention the notion of the *waqf*.⁸

The most dramatic approach in the context of the *waqf* in classical Western scholarship of the Qur'ān is that of Richard Bell (d. 1952). Bell, who assumes a lofty prophetic mission to rearrange the Qur'ānic verses in his two-volume translation, also misses this vital exegetical device. Although he openly expresses his reliance on Baydāwī's exegesis in his four-page preface, which is mainly a linguistic and textual interpretation of the Qur'ān, Bell gives importance to the division of Qur'ānic *surahs* that were limited by historical-critical approaches. The criteria Bell adopts to reorganise the locations of the Qur'ānic verses in his translation do not include, however, the *waqf* or related concepts. Verse 3:7 in his translation demonstrates that he did not consider the significance of the *waqf*.⁹ Although it contains many good materials, the details in his *Introduction to the Qur'an* (published in 1953) and the revised version by his pupil W. M. Watt in 1970 are not different from his translation regarding the concept of the *waqf*.

The early Western scholars whose translations of the Qur'ān were examined in this article have not acknowledged or alluded to this notion of the *waqf*. Nevertheless, some Western translators appear to have been aware of this concept even though they did not express this awareness openly. Pride of place belongs to Arthur John Arberry (d. 1969) and his translation titled *The Koran Interpreted*.¹⁰ In his introduction of four and a half pages, he does not explicitly state the concept of the *waqf*, but it is clear from his presentation and passage-by-passage translation that he is aware of the existence and importance of the notion: "I have striven to devise rhythmic patterns and sequence groupings in correspondence with what the Arabic presents, paragraphing to grouped sequence as they seem to form original units of revelation."¹¹ Few other non-Muslim scholars have translated the Qur'ān passage by passage rather than verse by verse, but it is unclear from their works whether they were aware of the notion of the *waqf*. N. J. Dawood's (d. 2014) four-page introduction and subsequent translation of the Qur'ān is a good illustration of this group. Dawood's translation is widely known and his translation follows a chronological pattern rather than the traditional one. Instead of giving

⁸ See John Medows Rodwell, *The Koran* (London: Everyman's Library, 1963), vi-x, 4-14.

⁹ Richard Bell, *The Qur'an: Translated, with a Critical Re-arrangement of Surahs* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1938), vol. 1, v-viii. Regarding verse 3:7, he connects the location of the related part of the verse to the second verse of the *surah* (Bell, *The Qur'an*, vol. 1, 45).

¹⁰ The naming of this translation is also interesting.

¹¹ Arthur J. Arberry, *The Koran Interpreted* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1955), x.

more space to textual features of the Qur'ān, he discusses Jewish and Christian influences or a similar topic such as *ḥanīf* in his introduction.¹²

A final example of a recent Western attempt to translate the Qur'ān into English is A. J. Droge's *The Qur'an: A New Annotated Translation*. Droge's introduction to the translation is 45 pages long and addresses almost all current related and unrelated debates (e.g. critical editions of the Qur'ānic text, Uthmanic text, rival Qur'āns, conjectural emendations, Ṣan'ā manuscripts and Wansbrough's abrogated controversial theories); however, the notion of the *waqf* is not mentioned.¹³ Although this translation has many merits, its revisionist spirit and verse-by-verse translation overshadow its understanding of the *waqf*. Now it is time to look at the punctuation marks reflected in the introduction of the Qur'ānic translations made by Muslim scholars.

Evaluating the Prefaces of Muslim Scholars' English Translations of the Qur'ān

Muslim scholars' translations are not much different from those of their Western counterparts regarding the *waqf* and its role in Qur'ānic translations. One of the earliest translations examined in this article is Abdullah Yusuf Ali's (d. 1953) widely used work. Despite the list of punctuation marks in the introduction, he does not touch the topic of the *waqf* in the long preface.¹⁴ This list was likely inserted after the translation was completed.

Besides Yusuf Ali's translation, Marmaduke W. Pickthall's (d. 1936) and Muhammad Asad's (d. 1992) works remain the two most popular translations.¹⁵ Demonstrably, Asad's translation has been translated into several Muslim vernaculars. Notably, Pickthall does not note the notion of the *waqf* in his short introduction, but the publisher inserted a list of punctuation (stopping) marks at the beginning of the translation, which is a common practice in many vernacular Qur'ān translations. Further, in his 10-page introduction, Asad gives detailed information regarding the importance of bringing the Qur'ān closer to the hearts and minds of people raised in different socio-religious cultures;¹⁶ however, he does not use one of the essential tools of translation: the *waqf*. In addition, both works are verse-by-verse translations that treat every verse as a complete sentence.

Ahmed Ali (d. 1995) does not refer to the notion of the *waqf* despite having used the ambiguous terms 'pauses' or 'stops' in his two-page introduction. Ahmed's translation is a verse-by-verse translation.¹⁷ Similarly, Ali Ünal (b. 1955) gives detailed information regarding the eloquence of the Qur'ān and focuses on various aspects of the Qur'ānic text but does not

¹² N. Joseph Dawood, *The Koran* (UK: Penguin Books, 1974), 8-9.

¹³ Arthur J. Droge, *The Qur'an: A New Annotated Translation* (Bristol: Equinox, 2013), vii–xxxii. Similarly, the translation by Thomas Cleary (b. 1949) does not reference the notion of the *waqf* in the introduction. Moreover, his verse-by-verse translation also indicates that he overlooked the importance of this concept. See Thomas Cleary, *The Qur'an: A New Translation* (USA: Starlatch Press 2004).

¹⁴ Abdullah Yusuf Ali, *The Meaning of the Holy Qur'an* (Maryland: Amana Pub., 2006).

¹⁵ Marmaduke Pickthall, *The Meaning of the Glorious Qur'an*, 7th ed. (Lahore: Qudrat Allāh Co., 2011); Muhammad Asad, *The Message of the Qur'an* (Gibraltar: al-Andalus, 1980).

¹⁶ Asad, *The Message of the Qur'an*, ii.

¹⁷ Ahmed Ali, *al-Qur'an: A Contemporary Translation* (New Jersey: Princeton Uni. Press, 1993).

refer to the notion of the *waqf* in his long introduction.¹⁸ Majid Fakhry's introduction of three and a half pages does not address this topic; however, his passage-by-passage translation implies he was aware of this issue.¹⁹ Tarif Khalidi's (b. 1938) translation demonstrates he was also aware of this issue by giving essential information about the composition of the Qur'ānic verses, but he does not express it clearly. His foreword contains useful information regarding the techniques of the translation and his preference of passage-by-passage translation is a significant indication of his understanding of this notion.²⁰ Hilālī-Khān's translation, *Translation of the Noble Qur'an in the English Language*, includes a standard list of punctuation marks after the Qur'ānic text; however, the introduction mainly discusses dogmatic issues and the content of the translation appears embellished with theological colour.²¹

The translations of two Ahmadi scholars, Maulana Muhammad Ali (d. 1951) and Zafrulla Khān (d. 1985), have the longest introductions (Ali's is more than 50 pages, while Khān's is 42 densely written pages) that address various topics (e.g. life after death, the status of women, original sin, purity of the Qur'ānic text, permission to war, piecemeal revelations and the collections of the Qur'ān during the time of the companions, and variants). However, neither refers to the concept of the *waqf*. Both works are verse-by-verse translations.²²

Clear neglect of the notion of the *waqf* has been observed in Western and Muslim scholars' approaches to translation. Only two translations state—one directly and the other indirectly—the importance of this issue in their introductions. Notably, the most praiseworthy translator in this regard is Muhammad Abdel-Haleem (b. 1930). Under 'paragraphing and punctuation' in his introduction, he highlights:

the Qur'an has its own system of marking pauses; indeed, a whole branch of study is devoted to it, but the now conventional system of commas, full stop, colons and semicolons, question marks, dashes, quotation marks, etc. is not used in the Qur'an. These have been carefully and consciously introduced into this translation.²³

Abdel-Haleem makes it clear that his translation divides the verses into paragraphs; he also provides the number of verses.²⁴ This awareness of the notion of the *waqf* is quite important and to what extent Abdel-Haleem successfully uses this concept when translating verses will be discussed practically in the later part of this article.

¹⁸ Ali Ünal, *The Qur'an with Annotated Interpretation in Modern English* (New Jersey: Tughra Books, 2010).

¹⁹ Majid Fakhry, *The Qur'an: A Modern English Version* (UK: Ithaca Press, 1997), 1-4.

²⁰ Tarif Khalidi, *The Qur'an: A New Translation* (London: Penguin Classics, 2008), xi-xx.

²¹ Muḥammad Taqī-ud-Dīn al-Hilālī and Muḥammad Muḥsin Khān, *Translation of the Noble Qur'an in the English Language* (Madinah: King Fahd Complex, n.d.).

²² Maulana Muhammad Ali, *The Holy Qur'an: Arabic Text with English Translation and Commentary* (Ohio: Ahmadiyya Anjuman Isha'at Islam Lahore Inc., 2002); Muhammad Zafrulla Khān, *The Qur'an: The Eternal Revelation Vouchsafed to Muhammad, the Seal of the Prophets* (London/Dublin: Curzon Press, 1971).

²³ Muhammad Abdel-Haleem, *The Qur'an* (Oxford: Oxford Uni. Press, 2005), xxxiv.

²⁴ Ibid.

The translation that indirectly refers to the notion of the *waqf* is the recent work by Seyyed Hossein Nasr et al.²⁵ Although Nasr et al. do not refer to the notion of the *waqf* in the introduction, because of the existence of many valuable articles in this translation that emphasise and illuminate a different aspect of the Qur'an, the topic is addressed indirectly. Ingrid Mattson's article "How to Read the Qur'an" and the interpretation of the notion of *muhkam* and *mutashābih* in the context of verse 3:7 is relevant here.²⁶ The next section will demonstrate how the abovementioned translators put theoretical aspects of the *waqf* into practice in their translation of the verses.

Translators' Practices Regarding the Notion of the *Waqf*

In this section, I will evaluate how the abovementioned Muslim and non-Muslim translators address the notion of the *waqf* in their translations of verses: 2:96, 3:36, 26:87-89, 29:26, 6:34-35, 57:19 and 102:5-6. The choice of these verses is subjective, but preferred because they clearly show the effect of pause signs on the meanings.

Verse 2:96

The first example is the verse 2:96 and its original Arabic is:

وَلْتَجِدَنَّهُمْ أَحْرَصَ النَّاسِ عَلَى حَيَاةٍ (ج) وَمِنَ الَّذِينَ أَشْرَكُوا (ع) يَوَدُّ أَحَدُهُمْ لَوْ يُعَمَّرُ أَلْفَ سَنَةٍ (ط) وَمَا هُوَ بِمُرْحَزَجِهِ مِنَ الْعَذَابِ أَنْ يُعَمَّرَ وَاللَّهُ بَصِيرٌ بِمَا يَعْمَلُونَ²⁷

There are two important pauses (*waqf*) in this verse: one follows the word *حَيَاةٍ* (life), whereas the other positions the punctuation letter after the word *أَشْرَكُوا* (unbelievers, idolaters) as seen in the original text.²⁸ Thus, these different stops change the meanings of the verse. There are also many nuanced differences among the translators. Generally, the abovementioned translators take the pausing system into consideration and give a plausible translation. The best translation is by Nasr et al.: "You will find them the most covetous of people for life, [even] more than those who are idolaters. Each one of them would wish to live a thousand years, although that would not remove him from the punishment." Nasr et al. also give the second meaning in a footnote: "You will find them the most covetous of people for life; and among the polytheists are those who would like to live a thousand years."²⁹ Considering the textual context of the verse and that of the previous and following verses, it is apparent the Qur'an discusses Jewish people when it says "you will find them." The Qur'an conveys the message

²⁵ Seyyed Hossein Nasr et al., eds., *The Study Quran: A New Translation and Commentary* (New York: HarperCollins Religious, 2015).

²⁶ Ingrid Mattson, "How to Read the Qur'an," in *The Study Quran: A New Translation and Commentary*, ed. Seyyed Hossein Nasr et al. (New York: HarperCollins Religious, 2015), 1592. See also pp. 130-132 for the interpretation of verse 3:7.

²⁷ This pausing is mainly based on Sajāwandī's view. See Abū 'Abd Allāh Muḥammad b. Ṭayfūr al-Sajāwandī, *Ilal al-wuqūf* [Rational for Qur'anic Pauses] (Riyadh: Maktabat al-rushd, 2006), I.218-19.

²⁸ Niẓām al-Dīn al-Naysābūrī, *Gharā'ib al-Qur'ān wa raghā'ib al-Furqān* [Curiousness – Distinctiveness - of the Qur'an and Encouragement of the Reading of the Furqān] (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyya, 1995), vol. 1, 334-5.

²⁹ See Nasr et al., *The Study Quran*, 45, fn. 96.

that Jewish people, as believers in the hereafter, should not fear life after death. However, it appears their fear is beyond that of idolaters who have no such faith. From Muqātil b. Sulaymān (d. 767) to the contemporary exegetes, this is the main meaning of the verse. Rodwell, Yusuf Ali, Pickthall, Bell, Muhammad Ali, Asad, Dawood, Ahmed Ali, Hilālī and Khān, Ali Ünal, Abdel-Haleem, Nasr et al. and Droge prefer this meaning. Although it is not directly related to the notion of the *waqf*, there are some nuances among their translations in conveying the Qur'ān's message. For example, instead of translating the word *أَحَدُهُمْ* as "each one of them" (Yusuf Ali, Pickthall, Dawood, Ahmed Ali and Nasr et al.), "every one of them" (Zafrulla Khān and Fakhry) or "any of them" (Abdel-Haleem), others (i.e. Rodwell, Bell, Arberry and Droge) translate it as "one of them." Further, Khalidi explains it as "one who..." This causes misunderstanding, although it is literally correct.

Nevertheless, some translators prefer the second meaning. For example, Zafrulla Khān translates the verse:

Thou shalt surely find them and some of those who set up partners with Allah, the most covetous of life, of all people. Every one of them desires that he may be granted a span extending over a thousand years, but his being granted a long life will not rescue him from his doom.³⁰

This interesting translation does not take the pause into consideration or represent the general view of the exegetes, although it is still possible to give this meaning. The main confusion likely arises from observing both punctuation marks after the words *hayat* and *ashrakū* (*waqf al-mu'ānaqa*, literally the embracing stops). This type of *waqf* requires one to stop on one of the words but not the other.³¹ But Zafrulla Khān, using commas, prefers to stop at both locations. Interestingly, considering the punctuation, both translators (Zafrulla Khān and Muhammad Ali) use the same Arabic text but reach different conclusions. Arberry's translation also give the second meaning: "And thou shalt find them the eagerest of men for life. And of the idolaters; there is one of them wishes if he might be spared a thousand years."³² Khalidi is another translator who chooses the second meaning:

You will find them, of all mankind, those most attached to life. Among the polytheists you will find one who longs for a lifespan of a thousand years. Yet even such a life span will nudge him not a jot from punishment.³³

³⁰ Khān, *The Qur'an*, 17.

³¹ Muḥammad Sādiq al-Hindī identifies 34 places for *waqf al-mu'ānaqa* whereas Muḥammad Makkī Naṣr mentions 35 places. But some of the places they point to differ. When these differences are also calculated and the verse of Surah Yusuf 12:24 is evaluated among the verses that are the subject of the *waqf al-mu'ānaqa* are added, the number of *al-mu'ānaqa* stops increases to 42, including verse 2:96. See 'Abd al-'Azīz b. 'Alī al-Ḥarb, *Waqf al-tajādhub (al-mu'ānaqa) fī al-Qur'ān al-Karīm* [Embracing stops in the Qur'an], 14-16, www.quranicthought.com/about-us/; Mücella Hacımsıroğlu, "Vakf-ı Muānaka Ve Kur'an Tefsirine Etkisi" [Embracing Stops and its Contribution to Qur'anic Exegesis] (unpublished master's diss., Marmara University, Istanbul, 2015), 26-30, 165-168; Muhammed Ersöz, "Vakf-ı Murākabe Ve Kur'an'ı Anlamaya Etkileri: Secâvendî'nin İlelü'l-Vukûf Adlı Eserindeki Açıklamalar Özelinde" [Embracing Stops and its Contribution to Qur'anic Exegesis: With Special Refences to al-Sajāwandî's Book *İlal al-wuqūf*], *Necmettin Erbakan University Divinity Faculty Journal* 40 (2015): 166-7.

³² Arberry, *The Koran Interpreted*, 40.

³³ Khalidi, *The Qur'an*, 13.

Bell, despite having given the correct meaning, provides an extra explanation in a footnote and states “the clause is grammatically uneven, and is perhaps a later insertion.”³⁴ This clearly indicates he did not consider the notion of the *waqf*.

Verse 3:36

The second example is the verse 3:36:

فَلَمَّا وَضَعَتْهَا قَالَتْ رَبِّ إِنِّي وَضَعْتُهَا أُنْثَىٰ وَاللَّهُ أَعْلَمُ بِمَا وَضَعْتَ ط وَلَا يَسَّ الذَّكَرُ كَالْأُنْثَىٰ ۖ وَإِنِّي سَمَّيْتُهَا مَرْيَمَ وَإِنِّي
أَعِيدُهَا بِكَ وَدُرَيْتَهَا مِنَ الشَّيْطَانِ الرَّجِيمِ

One of the best translations for this verse is provided by Muhammad Asad:

But when she had given birth to the child, she said: ‘O my Sustainer! Behold, I have given birth to a female’ – the while God had been fully aware of what she would give birth to, and [fully aware] that no male child [she might have hoped for] could ever have been this female – and I have named her Mary. And, verily, I seek Thy protection for her and her offspring against Satan, the accursed.³⁵

Before analysing the translations, it is wise to consider some important issues raised by the classical exegetes regarding this verse. There are three main points here. First, to define the exact placement of the punctuation marks. Second, the variant readings of the expression *wa Allāhu ‘alamu bimā waḍa‘at* (or *waḍa‘tu*). Third, to analyse to whom the statements “God had been fully aware of what she would give birth to” and “that no male child [she might have hoped for] could ever have been this female” belong. According to Ibn Qutayba (d. 889), if one reads with *sukūn* (*waḍa‘at*),³⁶ there should be a transposition here (*taqdīm* and *ta’khīr*). Thus, the verse runs: *إِنِّي وَضَعْتُهَا أُنْثَىٰ وَلَا يَسَّ الذَّكَرُ كَالْأُنْثَىٰ*. This means these expressions belong to Mary’s mother; thus, the pauses should remain as they are in the original text above. Classical exegetes have discussed many details and alternative readings. Although they have not made their preference clear, it can be discerned from their presentation that there are two different pauses and meanings in this verse. Zamakhsharī’s (d. 1144) reading, which is preferred by Asad and many other translators, is the first way. Another way of reading appears to be supported by Rāzī (d. 1210) and was also adopted by many others. According to Zamakhsharī’s interpretation, *ط* *وَاللَّهُ أَعْلَمُ بِمَا وَضَعْتَ* was the discourse of God and there was no need to punctuate *ط* (necessary *waqf*) after the expression *ط* *وَاللَّهُ أَعْلَمُ بِمَا وَضَعْتَ*. Instead of *ط*, Zamakhsharī advocates it can be a pause of ج, which refers to *jawāz* (no matter whether one stops or not). For Zamakhsharī, the two sentences *ط* *وَاللَّهُ أَعْلَمُ بِمَا وَضَعْتَ* *وَلَا يَسَّ الذَّكَرُ كَالْأُنْثَىٰ* are *al-jumla al-mu’tariḍa* (the parenthetic sentence), relating to God’s knowledge, and he explains them as “the male [child] which she had prayed for could not have been like the female which was granted.” This implies

³⁴ Bell, *The Qur’an: Translated*, 13.

³⁵ Asad, *The Message of the Qur’an*, 71.

³⁶ Ibn ‘Āmir, ‘Āsim (not the version of Ḥaḥṣ), Ya’qūb read it as *waḍa‘tu*, whereas the rest (e.g. Abū Ja’far, Nāfi’, Abū ‘Amr, Hamza and Kisā’ī) read it as *waḍa‘at*. See Abū al-Faraj ‘Abd al-Raḥmān b. ‘Alī b. Muḥammad al-Jawzī, *Zād al-masār fi ‘ilm al-tafsīr* [Sustenance for the Path to the Disciplines of Qur’anic Exegesis], ed. ‘Abd al-Razzāq al-Mahdī (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-‘Arabī, 2001), vol. 1, 276.

that Mary's excellence would go far beyond any hopes her mother had ever entertained.³⁷ Moreover, Zamakhsharī considers the definite articles ال before the words male and female for 'ahd³⁸ (specification), which indirectly supports this kind of reading.

According to Rāzī's reading, the punctuation of ط should follow the expression وَاللَّهِ أَعْلَمُ بِمَا وَضَعْتَ. This is the only parenthetical expression and وَلَيْسَ الذَّكَرُ كَالْأُنثَى is an independent clause that belongs to Mary's mother. According to this punctuation, the translation is: "I have brought it forth a female – and Allah knew best what she brought forth – and the male is not like the female." This translation emphasises Mary's mother's unexpected frustration because, for her, a female could not do priestly work or serve in the temple.³⁹ Her statements clearly indicate the preference of a male over a female. However, although Rāzī gives an alternative meaning, he first mentions that this expression belongs to Mary's mother, so it can be assumed this was his preference.

There are significant differences in punctuation marks when translating the Qur'ānic text into another language. Of 17 translators (Muslim and non-Muslim), 12 gave the meaning prioritised by Zamakhsharī. To indicate punctuation marks, some use a hyphen (-), between brackets, parentheses or hyphen (-) and colon (:), together, while others prefer to use an apostrophe/single quotation marks (') or double quotation marks ("). Generally, translators use these marks successfully. Ali Ünal's translation is similar to but more interpretative than Asad's and conveys the exact meaning of what Zamakhsharī had intended to say.⁴⁰ Nasr et al. gives detailed information regarding their translation in a footnote.⁴¹ Zafrulla Khān, however, reverses the meaning of the verse but remains true to the original text:

Lord, I am delivered of it a female child, and I have named her Mary, and I commit her and her offspring to Thy protection against the mischief of Satan, the rejected. Allah knows best what she had brought forth and the male child of her fancy was not like the female child she brought forth.⁴²

This is an extraordinary effort to change the order of the verse without losing its general meaning. Even more interesting is that the pause marks of Arabic text in this translation support Rāzī's preference. In addition, Muhammad Ali, who uses the same Arabic text, prefers Rāzī's preference over Zamakhsharī's. Droge, who prefers Zamakhsharī's meaning and uses hyphens (-) properly, includes a strange footnote that reads the phrase "God knew..." looks like "a later insertion."⁴³ If one considers the location of the pauses, the verse would be no problem to

³⁷ Maḥmūd b. 'Amr b. Aḥmad al-Zamakhsharī, *al-Kashshāf 'an ḥaqā'iq ghawāmiḍ al-tanzīl* [Discovering the Realities of the Delicate Revelation] (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-'Arabī, 1986), vol. 1, 356; Asad, *The Message of the Qur'an*, 71, fn. 25. See also Yunus Ekin and Hüseyin Akyüzoğlu, *Kur'an tercüme teknikleri* [Techniques for the Translation of the Qur'an] (Istanbul: Işık Pub, 2012), 62.

³⁸ Zamakhsharī, *al-Kashshāf*, vol. 1, 356.

³⁹ Rāzī noted she felt (scared) of the fact her devotional offering is not accepted, so she is trying to express (for her Lord) how sorry she is about this situation. Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī, *Maḥāṣin al-ghayb* [Knowledge (Keys) of the Unseen] (Beirut: Dār Iḥyā al-Turāth al-'Arabī, 1999), 8, 208-210.

⁴⁰ Ünal, *The Qur'an with Annotated Interpretation*, 131. See Zamakhsharī, *al-Kashshāf*, vol. 1, 356.

⁴¹ Nasr et al., *The Study Quran*, 141-142.

⁴² Khān, *The Qur'an*, 52.

⁴³ Droge, *The Qur'an*, 34.

translate. Even Richard Bell did not discuss insertions or deletions in the translation of this verse. Others who chose Zamakhshari's reading include Rodwell, Bell, Zafrulla Khān, Arberry, Dawood, Asad, Ahmad Ali,⁴⁴ Fakhry, Haleem, Droge, Ünal and Nasr et al. Although these translators consider the expression "the male is not like female" to belong to God, they did not convey the same meaning as Asad and Ünal. Simply, many translators understand from this expression what Mary's mother had intended to say – namely, "it is difficult for a girl to carry out the same responsibilities as a boy in the temple."

Five translators – Yusuf Ali, Pickthall, Muhammad Ali, Khalidi and Hilālī, and Khān – prefer Rāzī's approach. According to these translators, only the expression "God had been fully aware of what she would give birth to" was parenthetical and belonged to God. One of the good examples in this group is provided by Khalidi: "When she gave birth to a female, she said: 'My Lord, I have given birth and it is a female' – and God knew best what she had given birth to – 'and a male is not like a female.'"⁴⁵ Yusuf Ali gives information in a footnote that appears to indicate he had also considered the meaning given by the previous group. Nevertheless, his translation of "And no wise is the male like the female" is curious.⁴⁶

Pauses are not limited to the middle of the verses, but there are important punctuation marks at the end of many verses. In principle, the reader should stop at the end of each verse, whereas when translating, one should consider the *waqf* marks. Disregarding this type of pause causes serious problems in conveying the message of the Qur'an and this problem is also apparent in the publications of many classical Qur'anic exegesis. Currently, editors generally divide the verses into passages and, in accordance with these passages, they comment on the Qur'anic text. Since many of the exegetes' original manuscripts no longer exist, I could not analyse the authenticity of this type of modern division of Qur'anic passages and insertion of punctuation marks in the classical exegeses. Nevertheless, by considering the importance and determining the features of *waqf* marks, one can easily discern the seriousness of the critical edition of exegetical works.

Verse 26:87-89

The examples discussed in this section include verses 26:87–89:

وَلَا تُخْزِنِي يَوْمَ يُبْعَثُونَ ۚ (87) يَوْمَ لَا يَنْفَعُ مَالٌ وَلَا بَنُونَ ۚ (88) إِلَّا مَنْ أَتَى اللَّهَ بِقَلْبٍ سَلِيمٍ ۝ (89)

And do not disgrace me on the Day they are resurrected, the day when neither wealth nor children can help, except for him who comes to Allah with a sound heart.⁴⁷

⁴⁴ Ahmed's punctuation is problematic. Although it is clear he prefers Zamakhshari's reading, his usage of a hyphen, colon and full stop is slightly complicated. See Ali, *al-Qur'an*, 54-55.

⁴⁵ Khalidi, *The Qur'an*, 45.

⁴⁶ Ali, *The Meaning of the Holy Qur'an*, 136.

⁴⁷ Ali, *The Meaning of the Holy Qur'an*, 919. Most of the translators prefer the meaning 'sound' rather than 'whole' (Pickthall), 'pure' (Arberry, Fakhry, Khalidi), 'submissive' (Khān), 'clean' (Hilālī and Khān), 'devoted' (Abdel-Haleem) or 'free of evil' (Asad).

At the end of verses 87 and 88 are لا pauses and at the end of verse 89 is a ط pause. The former implies the meaning is incomplete, whereas the latter indicates the meaning is complete. The abovementioned verse-by-verse translation is generally the accepted version by many translators, but it is problematic. The relationship between these passages and the previous verses is not being addressed; however, some translators are aware of this strong relationship.⁴⁸ Translators try to avoid this burden by using punctuation marks such as full stops and commas. Interestingly, most translations begin with a capital letter for verse 26:87, followed by a comma at 26:88 and finally a full stop at the end of 26:89.⁴⁹ Others use different punctuation, such as a full stop after verse 87⁵⁰ and semicolons, the conjunction “and”⁵¹ or no punctuation marks⁵² after verse 88. Grammatically, the expression مَنْ أَتَى اللَّهَ بِقَلْبٍ سَلِيمٍ (relative pronouns/*ism mawṣūl*⁵³ and adjunct clause/*jumla ṣila*) that follows the particle of exception إِلَّا is the object (*mafʿūl*) of the verb لَا يَنْفَعُ. Many exegetes highlight that because of this exception article إِلَّا in the verse and many prophetic reports indicate the believers would benefit from their good deeds in the hereafter, such as *ṣadaqa jāriya* (e.g. building mosques, hospitals) and raising faithful children without disregarding the importance of the sound heart. The translation of the verse should be aligned with this kind of meaning: “on that day the wealth and children will only be beneficial for those who come to God with sound/pure heart” or “only those who come with sound heart to God will benefit from wealth and offspring on that day.”⁵⁴ If one looks at the translations, the given meanings generally imply that “neither wealth nor children will avail one except a sound heart.”

Verse 29:26

There are some examples where many translators are confused about the identity of the speakers in the text. One of the main reasons for this confusion is neglecting to connect the significance of the *waqf* to the textual context of the verses. The verse 29:26 is a good illustration. The original is:

⁴⁸ Especially see Khān, Arberry, Asad, Khalidi and Haleem.

⁴⁹ See Bell, Droge, Khalidi and Nasr et al. Yusuf Ali uses a semicolon at the end, whereas Asad uses an exclamation mark.

⁵⁰ See Pickthall, Hilālī and Khān, and Ünal. I am not sure whether the translation by Abū Layth al-Samarqandī (whose comments are frequently repeated by following generations of exegetes) has any role in this full stop. For Samarqandī, the Prophet Abraham’s speech ends in verse 87 then God begins to talk in verses 88 and 89. See Abū Layth al-Samarqandī, *Baḥr al-ʿulūm* [Ocean of Knowledge] (n.p.: Maktaba Shamila, n.d.), vol. 2, 558, <https://al-maktaba.org>.

⁵¹ Dawood, *The Koran*, 204.

⁵² See Arberry, Ahmad Ali and Pickthall.

⁵³ The relative pronoun *man* (which refers to conscious being) was translated by many as ‘him’ or ‘he’ (see Rodwell, Khān, Bell, Arberry, Yusuf Ali, Ahmed Ali, Pickthall, Fakhry, Muhammad Ali, Dawood and Ünal). This gender-free term should be translated as ‘who etc.’ Regarding the meaning of this pronoun, Asad, Haleem, Droge, Hilālī and Khān, and Khalidi’s translations are more appropriate than others.

⁵⁴ وقد جعل مَنْ مفعولا لينفع، أي: لا ينفع مال ولا بنون، إلا رجلا سلم قلبه مع ماله حيث أنفق في طاعة الله، ومع: *Ghayb*, vol. 24, 517; *Zamakhsharī, al-Kashshāf*, vol. 3, 321; *Maḥmūd al-ʿĀlūsī, Rūḥ al-maʿānī* [Soul of the Meanings] (Beirut: ‘Alī ‘Abd al-Bārī ‘Atīyya, 1995), vol. 7, 287; *Muḥammad al-Ṭāhir Ibn ‘Āshūr, Taḥṣīr al-tahrīr wa al-tanwīr* [Exegesis of Eearch and Enlightening] (Tunisia: al-Dār al-Tūnisiyya li al-Nashr, 1984), vol. 19, 48.

فَأَمَّنَ لَهُ لُوطٌ ۖ وَقَالَ إِنِّي مُهَاجِرٌ إِلَىٰ رَبِّي ۖ إِنَّهُ هُوَ الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ

Its translation, taken from Ali Ünal's work, is: "Lot believed in him, and he (Abraham) said: 'I am emigrating to my Lord (leaving my land and people for a place where I can practice my Religion).'" There are two *waqfs*: one is the strongest one م (*waqf lāzim*) and follows the word *lūt*, whereas the other ط follows the expression *rabbī*. This straightforward division indicates the first sentence finishes after the word 'Lot' and another sentence begins with *wa-qāla*. Darwīsh notes it was necessary to stop after the word *lūt*, otherwise the impression was as if Lot was the speaker when it was said "I am emigrating to my Lord." Actually, the subject of the verb *wa-qāla* (he said) is hidden and refers to Prophet Abraham.⁵⁵ Abū Bilāl al-Kharrāt, however, considers the expression *wa-qāla* a new beginning (*musta'nafa*) and attributes the expression *fa-'āmana lahū lūt* to earlier verses.⁵⁶ However, at first glance, the letter *waw* after *lūt* appears to connect the previous sentence to the one following, but from the harmony of the meanings of the passage, it is more appropriate to have attributed *wa-qāla* (he said) to Abraham. There is also other intra-Qur'ānic evidence such as 37:99: وَقَالَ إِنِّي ذَاهِبٌ إِلَىٰ رَبِّي سَيَهْدِينِ: 37:99, meaning, "And he (Abraham) said: 'Now I am going to my Lord.'"⁵⁷

When examining early, classical and modern exegeses,⁵⁸ it is observed they have identified the speaker after the *waqf lāzim* as the Prophet Ibrāhīm. Rāzī discusses two possibilities (Abraham and Lot),⁵⁹ and Ibn Kathīr⁶⁰ – according to this research – is the only exegete who directly connects this verse to Prophet Lot.⁶¹ Nevertheless, the most precise summary of the verse is given by the authors of *Jalālayn*:

{فَأَمَّنَ لَهُ} صدق بإبراهيم {لوط} وهو بن أخيه هاران {وقال} إبراهيم {إني مهاجر} من قومي {إلى ربِّي}.⁶²

Regarding this verse, the translators can generally be divided into two groups. The majority either directly or indirectly identify the subject of the expression *wa-qāla* as Lot (see Rodwell, Bell, Yusuf Ali, Pickthall, Arberry, Dawood, Abdel-Haleem, Droge, Khalidi and Nasr et al.).

⁵⁵ Muḥy al-Dīn b. Aḥmad Muṣṭafā al-Darwīsh, *I'rāb al-Qur'ān wa bayānuhū* [Grammar of the Qur'an] (Damascus-Beirut: Dār al-Yamāma-Dār Ibn Kathīr, 1995), vol. 7, 420.

⁵⁶ Abū Bilāl Aḥmad b. Muḥammad al-Kharrāt, *al-Muḥtabā min mushkil i'rāb al-Qur'ān* [The Selections from the Difficult Grammars of the Qur'an] (Madina: Majma' al-Malik Fahd, 2005), vol. 3, 26.

⁵⁷ See also Qur'an 19:48.

⁵⁸ Muqātil b. Sulaymān, *Tafsīr Muqātil* [Exegesis of Muqātil] (Beirut: Dār Iḥyā al-Turāth, 2002), vol. 3, 379; Abū Ja'far Muḥammad b. Jarīr al-Ṭabarī, *Jāmi' al-bayān 'an ta'wīl āy al-Qur'ān* [Compilation of the Statements in the Interpretation of the Qur'anic Verses], ed. Aḥmad Muḥammad Shākir (Beirut: Muassasat al-Risālah, 2000), vol. 20, 26; Samarqandī, *Baḥr al-'Ulūm*, 2.630; Zamakhsharī, *al-Kashshāf*, 3.451; Ibn 'Āshūr, *Tafsīr al-Taḥrīr*, vol. 20, 238; Muhammed Hamdi Yazır, *Hak dini Kur'an dili* [The Religion of the Truth and the Language of the Qur'an] (Istanbul: Eser Pub., 1971), vol. 5, 3772.

⁵⁹ Rāzī, *Mafātīḥ al-Ghayb*, vol. 25, 47.

⁶⁰ Ibn Kathīr, *Tafsīr al-Qur'ān al-'azīm* [Exegesis of the Glorious Qur'an] (Riyadh: Dār Ṭayba li al-Nashr wa al-Tawzī', 1999) vol. 6, p. 246.

⁶¹ There are also some exegetes, like Ibn 'Aṭīyya, who connect the subject of *wa-qāla* to Abraham, who also did not neglect an alternative meaning. Additionally, in his final analysis, Ibn 'Aṭīyya tried to reconcile between these two meanings by saying Abraham and Lot immigrated together. See Ibn 'Aṭīyya, *al-Muḥarrar al-wajīz fī tafsīr al-kitāb al-'azīm* [A Precise Work of the Exegesis of Glorious Qur'an] (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyya, 2002), vol. 3, 314).

⁶² Jalāl al-Dīn al-Maḥallī and Jalāl al-Dīn al-Suyūṭī, *Tafsīr al-jalālayn* [Exegesis of the Two Jalāls] (Cairo: Dār al-Hadīth, n.d.), vol. 1, 524.

Interestingly, in Pickthall's translation, the original text has a written expression *waqf lāzim* at the margin beside the existence of *mīm*.⁶³ Others, such as Zafrulla Khān,⁶⁴ Ahmed Ali, Hilālī and Khān, Fakhry and Ali Ünal, openly state Abraham's name, whereas Muhammad Ali and Asad refer to him only in the footnote.

Verse 36:34-5

Another example of the location of the *waqf* in translations is in verses 36:34-5:

وَجَعَلْنَا فِيهَا جَنَّاتٍ مِنْ نَخِيلٍ وَأَعْنَابٍ وَفَجَّرْنَا فِيهَا مِنَ الْعُيُونِ لَا (34)

لِيَأْكُلُوا مِنْ ثَمَرِهِ لَا وَمَا عَمِلَتْهُ أَيْدِيهِمْ ط أَفَلَا يَشْكُرُونَ (35)

Depending on the locations of the *waqf*, the translators generally give two different meanings and the location also relates to the grammar. This is a good illustration of how grammar and the notion of the *waqf* are interrelated and how human intervention is decisive in determining the meaning, as suggested by Amr Osman. These two meanings are also supported by the interpretations of classical scholars. Briefly, there is either لا after the word ثَمَرِهِ to connect the following words or a ج pause to stop here. According to the first reading, one should not stop at the word *thamarihi* and the following *wa-mā* 'amilathu is the *ism mawṣūl* (relative pronouns) and *ṣila* sentence (adjunct clause). Considering this explanation, the meaning of the verse is: "In it We planted gardens of palms and vines, and caused fountains to burst forth, that they may eat of its fruits and the work of their hands- will they not render thanks?" This translation is taken from Khalidi's work.⁶⁵ Interestingly, commentators sometimes discuss this meaning first but other times discuss the second meaning first.⁶⁶ Droge's translation is more aligned with the first reading, which include the pause: "so that they may eat from its fruit and what their hands have made, will they not be thankful?" Both لا and ط pauses are considered with punctuation. Six translators – Rodwell, Bell, Arberry, Droge, Khalidi and Nasr et al. – prefer this meaning. Although it is unclear why they prefer this translation, this meaning appears more explicit than the second from an exegetical perspective.

According to the second meaning, there is a ج pause after *thamarihi* and the following expression *wa-mā* is *nāfiya/jahd* (negation), rather than a relative pronoun. The meaning changes depending on this pause and negation. Asad's translation demonstrates quite well the nuances in accordance with this pause system:

⁶³ Pickthall, *The Meaning of the Glorious Qur'an*, 426.

⁶⁴ Zafrulla Khān implies the word 'Abraham' was directly mentioned in the main text when he openly stated 'Abraham declared...' He should have at least enclosed the word 'Abraham' in parentheses to avoid this confusion. See Khān, *The Qur'an*, 390.

⁶⁵ Khalidi, *The Qur'an*, 358.

⁶⁶ See Abū Ishāq al-Tha'labī, *al-Kashf wa al-bayān 'an tafsīr al-Qur'ān* [Discovering the Statement from the Exegesis of the Qur'an] (Beirut: Dār Iḥyā at-Turāth al-'Arabī, 2002), vol. 8, 123; Samarqandī, *Baḥr al-'Ulūm*, vol. 3, 122; al-Baghawī, *Ma'ālim al-tanzīl fī tafsīr al-Qur'ān* [Milestones of the Revelations in the Exegesis of the Qur'an], ed. Abd al-Razzāq al-Mahdī (Beirut: Dār Iḥyā al-Turāth al-'Arabī, 1999), VII.17; Ibn 'Aṭīyya, *al-Muḥarrar*, vol. 4, 453.

And [how] We make gardens of date-palms and vines [grow] thereon, and cause springs to gush (forth) within it, so that they may eat of the fruit thereof, though it was not their hands that made it. Will they not, then, be grateful?

Other translators who support this meaning include Yusuf Ali, Pickthall, Zafrulla Khān, Muhammad Ali, Dawood, Asad, Ahmed Ali, Hilālī and Khān, Fakhry, Abdel-Haleem and Ünal. Ironically, Pickthall, Zafrulla Khān and Muhammad Ali's original Arabic text contain the letter *W* as a pause, but they all prefer the meaning that depended on the *ḥ* pause.

Verse 57:19

It is observed that translators sometimes do not completely consider the pause; instead, they only focus on one meaning of the verse and disregard alternative meanings based on the location of pauses. Verse 57:19 illustrates this attitude well:

وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا بِاللَّهِ وَرُسُلِهِ أُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الصَّادِقُونَ وَالشَّهَدَاءُ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِمْ لَهُمْ أَجْرُهُمْ وَنُورُهُمْ ۗ

There are two pause systems in this part of the verse and the meaning changes in accordance with these pauses. According to the first meaning, there is a pause after the word *الصَّادِقُونَ* and the sentence ends there. The following sentence is the new beginning (*isti'nāf*) and separate sentence (*mafsūla*). The expression *وَالشَّهَدَاءُ* is a *mubtadā* (the first part in the noun phrase), *لَهُمْ* *أَجْرُهُمْ وَنُورُهُمْ* is a *khabar* (the second part of the phrase) and all the pronouns (three *هُمْ*) refer to *الشَّهَدَاءُ*. Considering this explanation, the meaning is: “Those who believe in God and His messengers, they are the truthful. And those who are witnesses before their Lord shall have their reward and their light.” Ṭabarī (d. 923), Tha‘labī (d. 1035) and Ibn Kathīr (d. 1373) appear to favour this meaning.⁶⁷

According to the second meaning, there is no pause between *الصَّادِقُونَ* and *الشَّهَدَاءُ*. In fact, the letter *waw* is *‘atf* (conjunction) to connect the sentences before and after. Thus, the ‘pious’ or ‘truthful’ people are the same as the ‘witnesses’ or ‘martyrs.’ The meaning is, “Those, who believe in God and His messengers, are truthful and witnesses in their Lord’s sight. They have their reward and their light.” Zamakhsharī, Ibn ‘Aṭīyya (d. 1147), Qurṭubī (d. 1273) and some other exegetes appear to prefer this meaning (this is according to the *qaf* sign: *al-waṣlu awlā wa al-waqf jā‘iz*, passing is better and pausing is permissible).⁶⁸ It is difficult to know the exegetes’ exact choice. However, it appears they have attempted to give both meanings and choose their preferences in the interpretation of the verse by giving the preferred meaning first or the secondary meaning by the formula of *qīla* (it is said that). The opinion that supports the first meaning (*ṣiddīqūn* is separated from *shuhadā*) is from authorities such as Ibn ‘Abbās,

⁶⁷ Ṭabarī, *Jāmi‘ al-Bayān*, vol. 23, 191; Tha‘labī, *al-Kashf wa al-Bayān*, vol. 9, 243; Ibn Kathīr, *Tafsīr al-Qur‘ān*, vol. 8, 55.

⁶⁸ Zamakhsharī, *al-Kashshāf*, vol. 4, 478; Ibn ‘Aṭīyya, *al-Muḥarrar*, vol. 5, 266; Abū ‘Abd Allāh Muḥammad b. Aḥmad al-Qurṭubī, *al-Tafsīr li-aḥkām al-Qur‘ān* [Exegesis for the Jurisprudence of the Qur’an] (Cairo: Dār al-Kutub al-Miṣriyya, 1964), vol. 17, 253; Ibn ‘Ashūr, *Tafsīr al-Tahrīr*, vol. 27, 397.

Masrūq, Dahhāk and Muqātil b. Ḥayyān, whereas the second meaning that connects these two is given by ‘Abd Allāh b. Mas‘ūd, Mujāhid and Zayd b. Aslam.⁶⁹

Regarding the translations that were selected for this research, almost all translators prefer the second meaning (i.e. they consider the letter *waw* a conjunction) and connect the sentences. Interestingly, many of the translators use correct punctuation marks;⁷⁰ however, all imply that they support the second meaning. Further, Nasr et al. and Yusuf Ali give the alternative meaning in a footnote. Finally, the meaning of the expression *shuhadā* is given by some as ‘witnesses,’⁷¹ while others give the meaning as ‘martyrs,’⁷² ‘faithful’⁷³ or ‘testify.’⁷⁴

Verse 102:5-6

An interesting example of the notion of the *waqf* exists in *Surah Takāthur* (102:5-6):

كَلَّا لَوْ تَعْلَمُونَ عِلْمَ الْيَقِينِ (5) لَ تَرَوُنَّ الْجَحِيمَ (6)

1. “No; If you only knew with certainty (5), you would surely have perceived Hellfire (6)” (this translation disregards the pauses in these two verses).
2. “No; if you only knew with certainty (then vying for increase would not distract you). You would surely have perceived Hellfire...” (this translation observes the pauses).

Problems with punctuation and pauses in these two verses exist in the relationship between them. There is a ۞ pause at the end of verse 5 and ۞ in verse 6. This means, while reciting these verses, one can stop at the end of the verse; however, when giving meaning, it is important to know these two verses are disconnected from each other. Unfortunately, the main problem with the translation of these verses is that many translators consider them linked. Most translators do not consider the pause; therefore, they make a mistake in their translation. Verse 5 constitutes a sentence of *sharṭ* (conditional clause), but the reply or consequence (*jawāb al-sharṭ*) is not expressed openly for rhetorical purposes in this verse. Translators should allow readers to understand the implied meaning (*jawāb al-sharṭ*) by using extra details in their translation. Therefore, these two verses are generally translated as: “No; If you only knew with certainty (5), you would surely have perceived Hellfire (6).”

This type of translation implies that verse 6 is the answer to verse 5. According to this understanding, the meaning would be misleading: “if there is no certainty, the Hellfire will be not perceived.” This is in opposition to the original meaning of this verse. Although these verses do not discuss why the Hellfire is not being observed in the world, they explain it will be observed in the future. Thus, the letter *lam* (*la-tarawunna*) at the beginning of verse 6 is not

⁶⁹ See Ṭabarī, *Jāmi‘ al-Bayān*, vol. 23, 191; Tha‘labī, *al-Kashf wa al-Bayān*, vol. 9, 243; Zamakhsharī, *al-Kashshāf*, vol. 4, 478; Ibn ‘Atīyya, *al-Muḥarrar*, vol. 5, 266; Qurṭubī, *al-Tafsīr li-ahkām*, vol. 17, 253; Ibn Kathīr, *Tafsīr al-Qur‘ān*, vol. 8, 55; Ibn ‘Ashūr, *Tafsīr al-Tahrīr*, vol. 27, 397.

⁷⁰ See Rodwell, Pickthall, Asad, Ahmed Ali and Khalidī.

⁷¹ See Rodwell, Bell, Yusuf Ali, Asad, Abdel-Haleem, Ünal and Nasr et al.

⁷² See Pickthall, Arberry, Fakhry, Hilālī and Khān, Droge (in a footnote, Droge also mentions the meaning of ‘witnesses’) and Khalidī.

⁷³ Ali, *The Holy Qur‘an*, 1062; Khān, *The Qur‘an*, 548.

⁷⁴ Dawood, *The Koran*, 108; Ali, *al-Qur‘an*, 470-1.

an answer to *law* (if) in verse 5; instead, this *lam* is for *qasam* (oath) and verse 6 is a new and independent sentence. Therefore, verse 6 is not directly related to verse 5, but it is connected to the following verses (i.e. 7 and 8).⁷⁵ Considering this explanation, the meaning of verse 5 should be: “No; if you only knew with certainty (then vying for increase would not distract you).” After this full stop, the next verse would then begin. Yusuf Ali, Ünal and Hilālī and Khān’s translations convey the meaning of this implied or omitted (*maḥzūf*) answer,⁷⁶ and Asad and Nasr et al. give an alternative but authentic meaning in a footnote.⁷⁷

In this translation, the punctuation marks are given correctly by few translators (Abdel-Haleem, Ali Ünal and Hilālī and Khān). Regarding meaning, most translators use a comma after verse 5 to indicate the connection (disregarding the *waqf*) to verse 6.⁷⁸ Many also use a full stop after verse 6.⁷⁹ Interestingly, the Arabic text used by Pickthall, Zafrulla Khān and Muhammad Ali clearly demonstrates the *waqf*, but none of them consider the pauses.

Curiously, the first two verses of this *surah* (verse 1 and 2) are heavily connected. There is a √ pause at the end of the first verse and a ط pause at the end of the second verse. All translators properly translate these verses and correctly position the punctuation marks. However, it is difficult to understand why the translators did not show this sensitivity to punctuation marks in other places in the same *surah*. Interestingly, many translators interpret the second verse literally: “until you visit the graveyards (or tombs).” This is an idiom and means “until you die.”⁸⁰ Also, worth mentioning is the plethora of different meanings given to the expression *takāthur*: desire of increase (Rodwell and Zafrulla Khān), emulation (Bell), the abundance of wealth (Maulana Ali), the piling up and mutual rivalry (Yusuf Ali), worldly gain (Dawood), greed for more and more (Asad), covetousness (Fakhry), striving for more (Abdel-Haleem), the avarice of plenitude (Ahmed Ali), the piling up – the emulous desire or mutual rivalry (Hilālī and Khān), vying for increase (Nasr et al.) and rivalry (Pickthall, Arberry, Khalidi, Droge and Ünal).

CONCLUSION

Notably, although it appears many translators are aware of the concept of the *waqf*, most of them do not refer to this important hermeneutical device in their introductions and follow unspecific patterns. Nevertheless, regarding practical applications of this notion, sometimes translators do not focus enough on the nuances that pausing creates in the verses of the Qur’ān.

⁷⁵ Tha‘labī, *al-Kashf wa al-Bayān*, vol. 10, 276-7; Zamakhsharī, *al-Kashshāf*, vol. 4, 792; ‘Ālūsī, *Rūḥ al-Ma‘ānī*, vol. 10, 503; Yazır, *Hak Dini Kur’an Dili*, 6059.

⁷⁶ “Nay, were ye to know with certainty of mind, (Ye would beware!)” – Ali, *The Meaning of the Holy Qur’an*, 1690; “No indeed! If only you knew with certainty of knowledge (then you would not disorder priorities)” – Ünal, *The Qur’an with Annotated Interpretation*, 1194; “Nay! If you knew with a sure knowledge (the end result of piling up, you would not have been occupied yourself with worldly things” – Hilālī and Khān, *Translation of the Noble Qur’an*, 848.

⁷⁷ Asad, *The Message of the Qur’an*, 1240; Nasr et al., *The Study Quran*, 1555. Although it is not clear, Bell also alluded to an alternative meaning in a footnote. See Bell, *The Qur’an*, vol. 2, 675.

⁷⁸ See Bell, Yusuf Ali, Khān, Arberry, Dawood, Asad, Ahmed Ali, Khalidi, Droge and Fakhry.

⁷⁹ See Rodwell, Bell, Khān, Pickthall, Droge, Fakhry and Nasr et al.

⁸⁰ Tha‘labī, *al-Kashf wa al-Bayān*, vol. 10, 276; Maḥallī and Suyūtī, *Tafsīr al-jalālayn*, vol. 1, 820.

Another important point regarding my analysis of these translations is that some translators provide alternative meanings based on the placement of punctuation marks. However, verse-by-verse translation of the Qur'ān and using common English punctuation marks to try to close the gap in the meaning of the verses created by this approach is not always enough to convey the exact meaning of the verses. Additionally, recent translations reflect this concept better than their classical counterparts. Paradoxically, in their translations, some translators use certain Arabic texts that have clear punctuation marks, but the meaning given to these verses is contrary to these texts. Some translators might not have used these Arabic texts, but others use them in their translation; at this stage, it is very difficult to explain this dichotomy.

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