The Translation of “عَسَى” in the Glorious Qur’ān into English

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Abstract:

This research investigates the translation of “عَسَى” in the Glorious Qur’ān into English. It attempts to show the way translators have rendered it, and then, based on the accredited Qur’ānic interpretations, correcting the translations of the ayas concerned. The research hypothesizes that treating single “عَسَى” the same way as the collocated “عَسَى” leads to erroneous translation. From analyzing five translations of “عَسَى” in the Glorious Qur’ān, it has been found that the translators produced inaccurate translations as far as collocated “عَسَى” is concerned. In order to achieve better understanding on the part of the TL reader, revising these translations is recommended.

ترجمة "عَسَى" في القرآن الكريم إلى الإنجليزية

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ملخص البحث:

يتَحرى البحث ترجمة "عَسَى" في القرآن الكريم إلى اللغة الإنجليزية ويحاول إظهار طريقة ترجمتها من قبل المترجمين، تُنصح بالأيات المعنوية إعتماداً على التفسير القرآني الموثوق. يفترض البحث أن "عَسَى" المتفرد("عَسَى" المعنوية) تحول إلى ترجمة خاطئة. ويُحلل خمس ترجمات للقرآن الكريم وجد أن المترجمين خرجوا بترجمات غير دقيقة على قدر تتعلق الأمر باستخدام "عَسَى" المتصلة، ولتحقيقهم أفضل لدى القرائي الهدف يوصى بتفتيح هذه الترجمات.
1-1- Statement of the Problem

This research investigates the translation of "عسي" in the Glorious Qur'an into English. "عسي" comes in two cases, either single or collocated. What we mean by "single" is that "عسي" occurs without collocating with Allah or His terms of majesty; otherwise, it is collocated. According to scholars, in the first case, i.e. single "عسي", it denotes hope and uncertainty, whereas in the second one, i.e. collocated "عسي", it denotes obligation.

Since there is a big difference between hope and uncertainty on the one hand and obligation on the other, then mistranslating "عسي" will definitely and inevitably lead to misunderstanding on the part of the TL readers.

1-2- Aims of the Research

This research attempts to show the way translators have rendered "عسي" in the Qur'anic ayas, where it has collocated with the utterances of "ربنا", "رب", "ربي", "ربكم", "الله", "زم"; and then, based on the accredited Qur'anic interpretations, correcting the translations of the ayas concerned.

1-3- Hypothesis

It is hypothesized that, treating single "عسي" the same way as the collocated "عسي" leads to erroneous translation, since, according to Qur'ân scholars and interpreters, the first one gives the meaning of hope and probability, while the second one refers to certainty.

1-4- Procedure and Data Collection

The following procedure will be carried out:

1- Selecting the ayas from different Qur'anic suras, which comprise the total 13 occurrences of the collocated "عسي" in the Glorious Qur'an.

2- Presenting the authoritative interpretations for the selected ayas, on which the TL text analysis will be based.

3- Presenting 5 translations for each of the selected ayas.

4- Analyzing the English translations of the selected ayas, based on the authoritative interpretations mentioned in (2).

5- Suggesting a new translation in the light of the analyses achieved, in case no accurate translation is found.

2. Definition of "عسي"

Before defining "عسي", it is useful to have a look at the following table, which shows its occurrences in the Glorious Qur'an:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>&quot;عسي&quot; Construction</th>
<th>No. of Occurrences</th>
<th>Sura</th>
<th>Ayas no.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Single &quot;عسي&quot;</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>Al-Baqara</td>
<td>216 (twice)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>An-Nisâ'</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Al-A'raf</td>
<td>185</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The Translation of ....

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>At-Tawba</th>
<th>Yousuf</th>
<th>Al-Isrā'</th>
<th>Al-Qahf</th>
<th>Mariam</th>
<th>An-Naml</th>
<th>Al-Qasas</th>
<th>Al-Hujurat</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>18</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>51,79</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>9,67</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Table above shows that the total no. of occurrences of "عسى" in the Glorious Qur'an is 27, with different constructions, either single or collocated. Single "عسى" has 14 occurrences, whereas collocated "عسى" has 13 occurrences comprising "عسى ربي", "عسى ربي", "عسى ربي", "عسى الله", and "عسى رينا" with 6,3,2,1,1 occurrences respectively.

It is worth noting that in aya no. 79 of the sura of Al-Isrā': "وعن الليل فتهجذبه نافلة لك عسى أن يبعثك ربك مقامًا محمودًا (79) سورة الإسراء" "عسى" is also considered to be, although indirectly, a collocated one, here "عسى رينا". Yet in this aya we have foregrounding and backgrounding.

Defining "عسى", Ibn Mandhūr (1993:15/54), Ar-Rāziyy (1997:113) and Ar-Rāziyy (1999:209) write that "عسى" refers to appropinquation "المقاربة". Wright (1996:106,107) puts it under the category of appropinquation verbs "أفعال المقاربة" that imply hope of occurrence. Among
many other scholars, Al-Farāhīdiyy (n.d.:200), Ar-Rāziyy (1979:4/317), Al-Mursīyy (2000:2/220), Al- Harawīyy (2001:3/55), and Al-Fairūzabādiyy (2005:1311) argue that if "عَسَى" is collocated with Allah or His terms of majesty then it refers to certainty and obligation on His part, otherwise it refers to hope and uncertainty.

Accordingly, we can propose the following diagram as a model for translating "عَسَى" in the glorious Qurʾān:

![Diagram](image)

### 3. Probability in English and Arabic

Quirk et al. (1985:588) state that to imply probability we can use unmodified *well* preceded by *can, could, may, or might*; provided that they are put in a positive declarative clause. They give the following example:

\[
\{ \begin{align*}
\text{may} \\
\text{might} \\
\text{can} \\
\text{could}
\end{align*} \}
\text{ It can well be true that he beat her}
\]

Aziz (1989:77) says that probability is realized in English by means of the modal verbs; although being also expressed non-verbally by certain nouns (there is a probability that ...), adjectives (it is probable that...), and adverbs (probably he is ...). Greenbaum (1996:80) puts probability under modality that refers to the factuality of what is said; the judgment is then grammaticalized through modal auxiliaries.

Aziz (1989: 84) discusses probability in Arabic, saying that the main lexical items used to express it are the verb *يَرَجَحُ*, the prepositional phrase حَيْثُ, and the constructions *الأَرْجَحُ* and الأَرْجَحُ . He gives the following examples:

- *يَرَجَحُ أنْ يَكُونُ عَلَيْهِ في الدَّارْ*:
  - It is probable that Ali is at home
- *مَن الأَرْجَحُ أنْ يَصِلَ أَحَدَهَا من بَغْدَادَ*:
  - My brother will probably arrive from Baghdad tomorrow
- *الأَرْجَحُ*:
  - The match will most probably have finished by now
For more details on English and Arabic probability, see Al-Tamimi (2012).

3. Text Analysis

In this research five translations of the Glorious Qur'an have been considered to analyze the way translators have rendered the Qur'anic ayas that contain "عَمِّى" in its two forms, the single and the collocated. The translations chosen are those of Pickthall (1930), Daryabadi (1957), Ali (1984), Ahmed & Ahmed (1995), and Qaribullah & Darwish (2001).

SL Text (1):

وَفَلَّتْنِي فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ لَا تَكْلَفْنَا إِلَّا نَفْسَكُ وَخَرَّضَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ عَمِّى اللَّهِ أَنْ يَكْفُفَنَّ بَيْنَ الْقَرْوَةِ وَاللَّهَ أَحَدُ بَاتِثٍ

And Allah is stronger in might, and stronger in punishment.

Discussion:

In this aya Allah the Almighty orders the Prophet and his companions to fight the disbelievers for the sake of Allah, and that the Prophet has to encourage the believers to do so (Al-Balkhiyy (2002: 393/1)). Then Allah the Almighty guarantees that the triumph will be on the side of the believers through mentioning the phrase "عَمِّى اللَّهِ" in the aya, which refers to obligation...
or compulsiveness on the part of Allah, because Allah the Almighty once promises something, He fulfills it (Al-Ālūsiyy(n.d.:5/97), Al-Nisabori (1994:2/88), As-Samʿāniyy (1997:1/454), and Al-Baidhāwiyy (1997:2/87)). The following table shows the translations of “عَسَى اللَّهُ” in this aya:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Translator</th>
<th>Translation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pickthall</td>
<td>Peradventure Allah will...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daryabadi</td>
<td>Belike Allah will...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ali</td>
<td>It may well be that God...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ahmed &amp; Ahmed</td>
<td>maybe that God...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Qaribullah &amp; Darwish</td>
<td>Allah may...</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As shown in the table above, all translators fail to give a meaning for “عَسَى اللَّهُ” that confirms with the interpretation of this aya.

Suggested Translation: “Allah shall ward off the might of the disbelievers…”

**SL Text (2):**

Lo! as for those whom the angels take (in death) while they wrong themselves, (the angels) will ask: In what were ye engaged? They will say: We were oppressed in the land. (The angels) will say: Was not Allah's earth spacious that ye could have migrated therein? As for such, their habitation will be hell, an evil journey's end. * Except the feeble among men, and the women, and the children, who are unable to devise a plan and are not shown a way. * As for such, it may be that Allah will pardon them. Allah is ever Clement, Forgiving.

**TL Texts:**

1- **Pickthall (1930)**

Lo! as for those whom the angels take (in death) while they wrong themselves, (the angels) will ask: In what were ye engaged? They will say: We were oppressed in the land. (The angels) will say: Was not Allah's earth spacious that ye could have migrated therein? As for such, their habitation will be hell, an evil journey's end. * Except the feeble among men, and the women, and the children, who are unable to devise a plan and are not shown a way. * As for such, it may be that Allah will pardon them. Allah is ever Clement, Forgiving.

2- **Daryabadi (1957)**

Verily unto those whom the angels carry off in death, while they are yet oppressors of their souls, they will say: what were ye in? They will say: Weakened were we in the land. They Will say: was not Allah's land wide so that ye could migrate thereto. These: their resort is hell an evil retreat! * Excepting the weak ones among men, women and children, unable to find a stratagem and not guided to a way. * These: belike Allah will pardon them, and Allah is ever Pardoning, Forgiving.
As for those whose souls are taken by the angels (at death) while in a state of unbelief, they will be asked by the angels: "What (state) were you in?" They will answer: "We were oppressed in the land." And the angels will say: "Was not God's earth large enough for you to migrate?" Their abode will be Hell, and what an evil destination! * But those who are helpless, men, women and children, who can neither contrive a plan nor do they know the way, * May well hope for the mercy of God; and God is full of mercy and grace.

That those the angels make them die, unjust (to) themselves, they said: "In what you were/have been?" They said: "We were weakened in the Earth/land." They said: "Was not God's Earth/land wide/spacious you emigrate in it." So those, their shelter/refuge (is) Hell, and it was a bad/evil end/destination. * Except the weakened from the men, and the women, and the children, they are not able (of a) solution (means) and nor they be guided a way/path. * So those, maybe God that He forgives/pardons on them, and God was/is often forgiving, (a) forgiver.

5- Qaribullah & Darwish (2001)
And the angels who take those who wronged themselves will say: 'In what condition were you? ' They will reply 'We were oppressed in the land. ' They (the angels) will say: 'Was not the earth of Allah wide enough for you in order that you migrate in it? ' Those, their shelter will be Gehennam (Hell), an evil arrival. * Except the men, women, and children, who, being abased have no means and they are unable to guide themselves to a way. * Those, Allah may pardon them, He is the Pardoner, the Forgiver.

**Discussion:**

In this aya, Allah the Almighty blames and severely threatens those who did not embark on emigrating from Mecca, where they were oppressed by disbelievers, to Medina or Abyssinia, where they could have established their religion properly. Allah the Almighty exempts those weak people who were unable to emigrate, such as the elderly and the children, whom Allah shall forgive (As-Sâbûniyy (1997:276) and As-Sa’dîyy (2000:195)).

The following table shows the translations of "عِمَّي اَللّه " in this aya:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Translator</th>
<th>Translation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pickthall</td>
<td>it may be that Allah will ...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daryabadi</td>
<td>belike Allah will ...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ali</td>
<td>May well hope for ... God</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ahmed &amp; Ahmed</td>
<td>maybe God ...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Qaribullah &amp; Darwish</td>
<td>Allah may ...</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The table above shows that all translators fail to translate “عَسَى الله” in a way that confirms with the interpretation of this aya.
Suggested Translation: “Allah shall forgive them …”.

**SL Text (3):**

> عَسَى الْحَرُّاءِ وَالْهَالِدِينَ وَالْمُزَهَّرِينَ وَالشَّيَامِينَ

**TL Texts:**

1- **Pickthall (1930)**

And thou seest those in whose heart is a disease race toward them, saying: We fear lest a change of fortune befall us. And it may happen that Allah will vouchsafe (unto thee) the victory, or a commandment from His presence. Then will they repent of their secret thoughts.

2- **Daryabadi (1957)**

Wherefore thou seest those in whose hearts is a disease hasten toward them saying: we fear lest there may befall us a reverse. But belike Allah may bring a victory or some affair from Himself; then they shall find themselves, for which they hide in their souls, remorseful.

3- **Ali (1984)**

You will notice that those whose hearts are afflicted with sickness (of doubt) only hasten to join them and say: "We fear lest misfortune should surround us." It may well be that God may soon send (you) success, or other command of His. Then will they be repentant of what they had concealed in their hearts.

4- **Ahmed & Ahmed (1995)**

So you see those who in their hearts/minds (is) sickness/disease, they rush/speed in (to) them, they say: "We fear that disaster strikes/hits us, so maybe that God comes with the victory or an order/matter from at Him." So they become on what they kept secret in themselves regretful.

5- **Qaribullah & Darwish (2001)**

You see those in whose hearts is sickness racing with one another to come to them. They say: 'We fear lest a change of fortune should befall us.' May Allah bring victory or make known His ordinance, then, they shall regret what they had hidden in themselves.

**Discussion:**

In this aya, Allah the Almighty informs about those hypocrites who used to seek intimacy from Jews and Christians, explaining their stance that they are afraid that those disbelievers one day might have the upper hand over the Muslims, so the hypocrites would be on the safe side. On the contrary to the latter's expectations; Allah the Almighty makes the Muslims victorious over the disbelievers (Az-Zajjāj (1988:2/181), Al-Baghawiyy (1997:3/67), and As-Sa'diyy (2000:235)).
The following table shows the translations of “عُسِمُ الله” in this aya:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Translator</th>
<th>Translation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pickthall</td>
<td>and it may happen that Allah will …</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daryabadi</td>
<td>But belike Allah may …</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ali</td>
<td>It may well be that God may …</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ahmed &amp; Ahmed</td>
<td>maybe that God …</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Qaribullah &amp; Darwish</td>
<td>May Allah …</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The table above shows that all translators fail to give a meaning for “عُسِمُ الله” that confirms with the interpretation of this aya. Suggested Translation: “Allah shall bring victory …”.

SL Text (4):

(102) سورة التوبة

TL Texts:

1- Pickthall (1930)
   And (there are) others who have acknowledged their faults. They mixed a righteous action with another that was bad. It may be that Allah will relent toward them. Lo! Allah is Relenting, Merciful.

2- Daryabadi (1957)
   And others have confessed their faults; they have mixed up a righteous work with a not her vicious. Belike Allah will relent toward them; verily Allah is Forgiving, Merciful.

   But there are others who admit their sins of mixing good deeds with evil. It may be that God will accept their repentance, for God is forgiving and kind.

   And others confessed/acknowledged because of their crimes, they mixed/mingled correct/righteous deeds work and other bad/evil, maybe/perhaps God that He forgives on them, that God (is) forgiving, merciful.

5- Qaribullah & Darwish (2001)
   There are others who have confessed their sins; they intermixed good deeds with another evil. It may be that Allah will turn towards them in mercy. Allah is Forgiving, Merciful.
Discussion:

This aya was revealed when some people lagged behind the Prophet Muhammad (P.B.U.H) and did not accompany him in Tabûk raid. They addressed themselves saying: “How come! We are staying here with women, while the Prophet and his companions are fighting the disbelievers”. Therefore, they repented from their mistake and tied themselves to a column in the mosque saying: “no one shall untie us except the Prophet Muhammad”. The Prophet did not accept to untie them until Allah the Almighty accepted their repentance and forgave them as this aya was revealed (Az-Zamakhshariyy (1987:2/306-307), Al-Baghawiyy (1997: 4/90), and Al-Baidhāwiyy (1997:3/96)).

The following table shows the translations of “عسى الله” in this aya:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Translator</th>
<th>Translation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pickthall</td>
<td>It may be that Allah will …</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daryabadi</td>
<td>Belike Allah will …</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ali</td>
<td>It may be that God will …</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ahmed &amp; Ahmed</td>
<td>maybe/perhaps God that …</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Qaribullah &amp; Darwish</td>
<td>It may be that Allah will …</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As shown in the table above, all translators fail to give a meaning for “عسى الله” that confirms with the interpretation of this aya. Suggested Translation: “Allah shall accept their repentance …”.

SL Text (5):

(And when they came unto their father and had spoken thus to him) he said: Nay, but your minds have beguiled you into something. (My course is) comely patience! It may be that Allah will bring them all unto me. Lo! He, only He, is the Knower, the Wise.

TL Texts:

1- Pickthall (1930)
(And when they came unto their father and had spoken thus to him) he said: Nay, but your minds have beguiled you into something. (My course is) comely patience! It may be that Allah will bring them all unto me. Lo! He, only He, is the Knower, the Wise.

2- Daryabadi (1957)
He said: nay! yourselves have embellished for you an affair; so seemly patience! Belike Allah may bring them all unto me; verily He! only He Is the Knowing, the Wise.

"No," said (the father). "You have made up the story; but patience is best; God may bring them back to me. He is all-knowing and all-wise."
He (their father) said: "But your selves enticed/tolerated for you an order/command/matter/affair, so graceful patience, perhaps God that (He) brings them to me all together, that He (is) the knowledgeable, the wise/judicious."

5- Qaribullah & Darwish (2001)
'No' he (Jacob) said, 'your souls have tempted you to do something. But come sweet patience. Allah may bring them all to me. He alone is the Knowing, the Wise.'

Discussion:
In this aya, Prophet Jacob addresses his sons telling them that they were hiding something with regard to his sons Benjamin and Robel, in addition to Joseph whom he had lost previously. Then he asks Allah the Almighty to bring them all back using "عسى" (Al-Baghawiyy (1997:4/267), Al-Qasimiyy (1997:6/209), and Ibnu Kathîr (1998:4/347)).

That was actually fulfilled as all were finally brought together. Their reunion is mentioned in ayas number 99 and 100 the sura of Joseph:

The following table shows the translations of "عسى" in this aya:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Translator</th>
<th>Translation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pickthall</td>
<td>It may be that Allah will …</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daryabadi</td>
<td>Belike Allah may …</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ali</td>
<td>God may …</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ahmed &amp; Ahmed</td>
<td>perhaps God that …</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Qaribullah &amp; Darwish</td>
<td>Allah may …</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The table above shows that all translators fail to translate "عسى الله" in a way that confirms with the interpretation of this aya.

Suggested Translation: “Allah shall bring them all to me …”.

SL Text (6):

TL Texts:
1- Pickthall (1930)
It may be that Allah will ordain love between you and those of them with whom ye are at enmity. Allah is Mighty, and Allah is Forgiving, Merciful.
2- Daryabadi (1957)
Belike Allah may appoint between you and those of them whom ye hold as enemies affection. And Allah is Potent, and Allah is Forgiving, Merciful.

It maybe that God will create love between you and your enemies. God is all-powerful, and God is forgiving, ever-merciful.

Maybe/perhaps that God makes/puts between you, and between those whom you made animosity with, from them, love/affection/friendship, and God (is) capable/able and God (is) forgiving, merciful.

5- Qaribullah & Darwish (2001)
It may be that Allah establishes love between you and those with whom you are at enmity. Allah is the Powerful, Allah is the Forgiving and the Most Merciful.

Discussion:
Since the early companions of the Prophet were very steadfast in their faith and stood firmly against the idolaters, even if they were their siblings and relatives, Allah the Almighty was calming the companions down that those, whom they were at dispute with, will one day embrace Islam and mix with them in kinship (Al-Âlusiyy (n.d.:20/462), Al-Baghawiyy (1997:8/95), and An-Nasafiyy (2005:4/195)).

The following table shows the translations of “عَصِيُّ الله” in this aya:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Translator</th>
<th>Translation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pickthall</td>
<td>It may be that Allah will …</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daryabadi</td>
<td>Belike Allah may …</td>
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<td>It may be that God will …</td>
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<td>Maybe/perhaps that God …</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Qaribullah &amp; Darwish</td>
<td>It may be that Allah …</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As shown in the table above, all translators fail to translate عَصِيُّ الله in a way that confirms with the interpretation of this aya.
Suggested Translation: “Allah shall make intimacy between you and …”. 

SL Text (7):
كَيْفَ تَعْمَلُونَ ؟ (129) سورة الأعراف

TL Texts:
1- Pickthall (1930)
They said : We suffered hurt before thou camest unto us, `and since thou hast come unto us. He said: it may be that your Lord is going to destroy your
adversary and make you viceroys in the earth, that He may see how ye behave.

2- Daryabadi (1957)
They said: oppressed we have been ere thou camest unto us and since thou hast come unto us. He said: belike your Lord will destroy your enemy and establish you in their stead in the land, that he may see what wise ye act.

They said: "We were oppressed before you came, and have been since you have come to us." He answered: "It may well be that soon God may destroy your enemy and make you inherit the land, and then see how you behave".

They said: "We were mildly harmed from before that you came to us, and from after what you came to us." He said: "Maybe/perhaps (hopefully) your Lord, that He destroys/perishes your enemy and He makes you successors in the earth/Planet Earth/land, so He sees/watches how you do/work".

5- Qaribullah & Darwish (2001)
They replied: 'We were hurt before you came to us, and after you came to us. 'He said: 'Your Lord may destroy your enemies and make you inheritors in the land. Then He will see how you conduct yourselves'.

Discussion:
In this aya, the Children of Israel address Prophet Moses saying that they have been grieved before and after he has come to them, as Pharaoh used to afflict them with grievous torment, slaying their sons and sparing their women. Then Prophet Moses pacifies them that Allah shall terminate their adversary. That was actually fulfilled when they ruled the reign of Egypt in the period of the Prophets David and Solomon, controlling Jerusalem. Their foe, Pharaoh, was drowned in the sea with his soldiers (Al-Qurtubiyy (1964:7/263), Al-Qasimiyy (1997:5/170), and As-Sa'diyy (2000:300)).

The following table shows the translations of “عسي ريمك” in this aya:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Translator</th>
<th>Translation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pickthall</td>
<td>it may be that your Lord is going to …</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daryabadi</td>
<td>belike your Lord will …</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ali</td>
<td>It may well be that soon God may …</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ahmed &amp; Ahmed</td>
<td>Maybe/perhaps (hopefully) your Lord, that …</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Qaribullah &amp; Darwish</td>
<td>'Your Lord may …</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The table above shows that all translators fail to translate “عسي ريمك” in a way that confirms with the interpretation of this aya.
Suggested Translation: “Allah shall devastate your enemy …”.
SL Text (8):

٨٠٠ - ٨٠٩

Yaṣīr and Oṣāma

**Discussion:**

In this aya Allah the Almighty addresses the Children of Israel saying that He shall show mercy unto them by saving them from Pharaoh and making them kings and rulers, but once they return to sins, He shall return to punishment and make Hell a prison for the disbelievers. This fact is expressed utilizing the phrase “عَسِي رَبِّكَ مُرَحَمَةٍ” What happened actually is that, Allah sent the Prophet Mohammed to them. They paid the Jizyah to him with willing submission (Al-Qurtubiyy (1964:10/223), Ibnu ‘Āshūr (1984:15/38), and As-Sam’āniyy (1997:3/221)).

The following table shows the translations of “عَسِي رَبِّكَ” in this aya:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Translator</th>
<th>Translation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pickthall</td>
<td>It may be that your Lord will …</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daryabadi</td>
<td>Belike your Lord may yet …</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ali</td>
<td>Your Lord may haply be …</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ahmed &amp; Ahmed</td>
<td>Maybe/perhaps that your Lord has …</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Qaribullah &amp; Darwish</td>
<td>Perhaps Allah will …</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As shown in the table above, all translators fail to give a meaning for “عَسِي رَبِّكَ” that confirms with the interpretation of this aya.

Suggested Translation: “Your God shall have mercy on you … .”
The Translation of ...

SL Text (9):

O ye who believe! Turn unto Allah in sincere repentance! It may be that your Lord will remit from you your evil deeds and bring you into Gardens underneath which rivers flow, on the day when Allah will not abase the Prophet and those who believe with him. Their light will run before them and on their right hands: they will say: Our Lord! Perfect our light for us, and forgive us! Lo! Thou art Able to do all things.

TL Texts:

1- Pickthall (1930)
O ye who believe! Turn unto Allah in sincere repentance! It may be that your Lord will remit from you your evil deeds and bring you into Gardens underneath which rivers flow, on the day when Allah will not abase the Prophet and those who believe with him. Their light will run before them and on their right hands: they will say: Our Lord! Perfect our light for us, and forgive us! Lo! Thou art Able to do all things.

2- Daryabadi (1957)
O ye who believe! turn Unto Allah with a sincere repentance. Belike your Lord will expiate from you your misdeeds and cause you to enter Gardens whereunder rivers flow, on the Day whereon Allah will not humiliate the prophet and those who believe with him. Their light will be running before them and on their right hands, and they will say: our Lord! perfect for us our light, and forgive us; verily Thou art over everything Potent.

O you who believe, turn to God truly in repentance. Perhaps your Lord may forgive your ills and admit you to gardens with rivers flowing by on the day when God will not humiliate the Prophet and those who believe with him. Their light will move in front of them and to their right, and they will say: "O Lord, complete for us our light, and forgive us. You have power over every thing."

You, you those who believed, repent to God, a sincere/honest repentance, maybe/perhaps your Lord that He covers/substitutes from you your sins/crimes, and He makes you enter treed gardens/paradises, the rivers/waterways flow from beneath it, a day/time God does not shame/scandalize (disappoint) the prophet and those who believed with Him, their light strives/moves quickly between their hands, and at their rights they say: "Our Lord complete for us our light, and forgive for us, that You are on everything capable/able".

5- Qaribullah & Darwish (2001)
Believers, turn to Allah in sincere repentance. Your Lord may acquit you of your sins, and admit you to Gardens underneath which rivers flow on a Day when Allah will not degrade the Prophet and those who believe with him. Their light will run before them and on their right hands, and they will say: 'Our Lord, complete our light for us and forgive us. Surely, You have power over all things'.

1025
Discussion:

In the beginning of this aya Allah the Almighty addresses the believers, sermonizing them to turn to Him with sincere repentance, so that He could definitely forgive them their sins and admit them to gardens under which rivers flow (Al-Qurtubiyy (1964:18/200), Ash-Shawkāniyy (1993:5/303), and Ibnu Kathīr (1998:8/191)).

The following table shows the translations of “عسى ربك” in this aya:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Translator</th>
<th>Translation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pickthall</td>
<td>It may be that your Lord will …</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daryabadi</td>
<td>Belike your Lord will …</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ali</td>
<td>Perhaps your Lord may …</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ahmed &amp; Ahmed</td>
<td>maybe/perhaps your Lord that …</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Qaribullah &amp; Darwish</td>
<td>Your Lord may …</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The table above shows that all translators fail to give a meaning for “عسى ربك” that confirms with the interpretation of this aya.

Suggested Translation: “Your God shall acquit your sins …”.

SL Text (10):

1- **Pickthall (1930)**
Yet it may be that my Lord will give me better than thy garden, and will send on it a bolt from heaven, and some morning it will be a smooth hillside.

2- **Daryabadi (1957)**
Then belike my Lord will vouchsafe unto me something better than thy garden and send thereon a belt from the heaven that it becomes a plane slippery.

3- **Ali (1984)**
Yet, my Lord may haply give me a garden better than yours, and He may send a thunder-bolt, from the skies and in the morning it will be a barren plain.

4- **Ahmed & Ahmed (1995)**
So maybe/perhaps my Lord that He gives/brings me better than your treed garden and He sends on it thunder storms/small arrows from the sky/space, so it becomes/becomes in the morning slippery/slithery dust.

5- **Qaribullah & Darwish (2001)**
Maybe my Lord will give me a garden better than yours, and send down a thunderbolt from heaven, so that in the morning it will be a slope of dust.
Discussion:
This aya and its eight antecedent ayas tell the story of two men, a believer and a disbeliever, who both inherit a fortune. One of them, the believer, spends his money for the sake of Allah through doing good deeds, whereas the other buys lands and gardens. The disbeliever debates with the believer. He starts to be arrogant and proud of himself and the wealth he has as compared to the believer. The latter asks Allah the Almighty to reward him in the hereafter with a reward better than the disbeliever’s gardens and lands. Through using “عدء” the believer is confident that Allah the Almighty will respond to his request. He also asks Allah to devastate the disbeliever’s gardens with a punishment from the heaven, so that they become barren (Az-Zamakhshariyy (1987:2/720-723), Al-Baidawiyy (1997:3/280-282), and As-Saidiy (2000:476,477)).

The following table shows the translations of “عدء” in this aya:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Translator</th>
<th>Translation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pickthall</td>
<td>it may be that my Lord will …</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daryabadi</td>
<td>belike my Lord will …</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ali</td>
<td>my Lord may haply …</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ahmed &amp; Ahmed</td>
<td>maybe/perhaps my Lord that …</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Qaribullah &amp; Darwish</td>
<td>Maybe my Lord will …</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As shown in the table above, all translators fail to give a meaning for “عدء” that confirms with the interpretation of this aya.

Suggested Translation: “My God shall give me a garden better than yours …”

SL Text (11):

1- Pickthall (1930)
And when he turned his face toward Midian, he said: Peradventure my Lord will guide me in the right road.

2- Daryabadi (1957)
And when he betook himself toward Madyan, he said: belike my Lord will guide me even way.

Then as he turned his face to Midian, he said: "Maybe my Lord will show me the right way."

And when he aimed/turned towards Madyan, he said: "Maybe/perhaps my Lord that He guides me the road's/path's straightness."

5- Qaribullah & Darwish (2001)
And when he turned his face towards Midian, he said: 'It may be that my Lord will guide me on the right way.

Discussion:
This aya tells about Prophet Moses who was heading to Madian, a town near Egypt, after having mistakenly killed somebody in Egypt. Moses asks Allah the Almighty to guide him through his way to Madian. He uses "غمسي ربي" seeking definite fulfillment. Allah the Almighty guides Moses until he reaches his destination. Although Moses was barefooted, with no food and no money, he managed to reach Madian alone through Allah’s guidance (Al-Qurtubiyy (1964:13/266), Az-Zamakhshariyy (1987:3/400), Al-Baidhawiyy (1997:4/174), and Ibnu Kathîr (1998:6/203,204)).

The following table shows the translations of “غمسي ربي” in this aya:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Translator</th>
<th>Translation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pickthall</td>
<td>Peradventure my Lord will …</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daryabadi</td>
<td>belike my Lord will …</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ali</td>
<td>Maybe my Lord will …</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ahmed &amp; Ahmed</td>
<td>Maybe/perhaps my Lord that …</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Qaribullah &amp; Darwish</td>
<td>It may be that my Lord will …</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The table above shows that all translators fail to give a meaning for “غمسي ربي” that confirms with the interpretation of this aya.
Suggested Translation: “My God shall guide me to the right road …”.

SL Text (12):
وعَمِسَ رَبِّي إِنَّ مَلَكَكَ أَنْ تَفْتَكَرَ فَنَفَّدُ أَزْوَاجَكَ خَوْرًا مَّنْ هُمُّ مُهْمَّثُ مُؤْمِنَاتٌ مُّؤْمِنُاتٌ عِبَادَاتٌ غَيْبَاتٌ عَضَبَاتٌ كَبِيَاتٌ (5) سُورَةَ الْتَحْرِيم

TL Texts:
1- Pickthall (1930)
It may happen that his Lord, if he divorces you, will give him in your stead wives better than you, submissive (to Allah), believing, pious, penitent, inclined to fasting, widows and maids.

2- Daryabadi (1957)
Belike his Lord, if he divorces you, will give him in exchange wives better than you, Muslims, believers, devout, penitent, worshippers, given to fasting, both non-virgins and virgins.

In case he divorces you, his Lord will give him better wives in return, who will be modest, true believers, obedient to God, repentant, observant of prayer and fasting, both widows and virgins.

Maybe/perhaps his Lord if he divorced you that He exchanges/replaces for him wives better than you, Moslems/submitters, believers, worshipping humbly, repentant, worshipping, fasting and secluded in mosques (devout), divorced/widowed/non-virgin, and first borns/virgins.

5- Qaribullah & Darwish (2001)
It may be that if he divorces you his Lord will give him in your place better wives than yourselves, women who have surrendered, believing, obedient, penitent worshippers and given to fasting; who were (previously) married, and virgins too.

Discussion:
In this aya, Allah the Almighty addresses the Prophet’s wives preaching them that He is to replace them in case the Prophet divorces them. However, the wives had never been replaced because they had not been divorced. The mentioning of divorce in this aya is preceded by "عسي ربه". Some Qur'ān interpreters say that in the whole Qur'ān all occurrences of "عسي", which is collocated with "الله", "ربكم", "ربه", or "ربه", refer to obligation by Allah, except in this aya it refers to probability. Other interpreters argue that it refers to obligation in this aya too, provided that it is connected with divorcing them. It is to be mentioned that the Prophet had not divorced them at all (Al-Qurtubiyy (1964:18/193), Ibnu 'Ashūr (1984:28/361), and Ash-Shawkāniyy (1993:5/299)).

The following table shows the translations of “عسي ربه” in this aya:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Translator</th>
<th>Translation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pickthall</td>
<td>It may happen that his Lord, … ,will …</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daryabadi</td>
<td>Belike his Lord, … , will …</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ali</td>
<td>his Lord will …</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ahmed &amp; Ahmed</td>
<td>Maybe/perhaps his Lord … that …</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Qaribullah &amp; Darwish</td>
<td>It may be that … his Lord will …</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As shown in the table above, all translators, except for Ali, fail to give a meaning for “عسي ربه” that confirms with the interpretation of this aya. Ali uses "his Lord will give him…” which denotes certainty, however; using "shall" gives more emphasis on certainty.

Suggested Translation: “His God shall replace him with better wives in case he divorces you…”

SL Text (13):

عسي ربنا أَن يَنْبِلَّنَا خِيْرًا مِنْهَا إِنَّا إِلَيْهِ رَابِعًا (۳۲) سورة النحل
**TL Texts:**

1. **Pickthall (1930)**
   It may be that our Lord will give us better than this in place thereof. Lo! we beseech our Lord.

2. **Daryabadi (1957)**
   Belike our Lord may exchange for us better garden than this; verily we are Unto our Lord beseechers.

   Maybe our Lord will give us better than this. We turn to our Lord in supplication”.

   "Maybe/perhaps that our Lord exchanges/substitutes (for) us better than it, that we are to our Lord desiring/wishing."

5. **Qaribullah & Darwish (2001)**
   It may be that our Lord will give us better than it in exchange. To our Lord we humbly turn.

**Discussion:**

This aya tells the story of those people who owned a garden of colorful fruits. Allah the Almighty tested them to see whether they give charity out of this garden or not, but they did not. Allah devastated their garden. Afterwards they repented to Allah, asking him to replace their devastated garden by introducing their supplication with "عسى زينا". Their repentance was actually accepted, as Allah replaced their garden with a better one (Al-Baidhaniyy (1997:5/236), Al-Baghawiyy (1997:8/197), and As-Saidiy (2000:880)).

The following table shows the translations of "عسى زينا" in this aya:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Translator</th>
<th>Translation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pickthall</td>
<td>It may be that our Lord will …</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daryabadi</td>
<td>Belike our Lord may …</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ali</td>
<td>Maybe our Lord will …</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ahmed &amp; Ahmed</td>
<td>Maybe/perhaps that our Lord …</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Qaribullah &amp; Darwish</td>
<td>It may be that our Lord will …</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As shown in the table above, all translators fail to give a meaning for "عسى زينا" that confirms with the interpretation of this aya.

Suggested Translation: “Our God shall replace us with …”.

**4. Conclusion**

From analyzing the translations of the Glorious Qur'an by Pickthall, Daryabadi, Ali, Ahmed & Ahmed, and Qaribullah & Darwish, for 13 sample ayas, it is found that the translators were unaware of the different denotations
of "عسى" in its two cases, the single, which shows probability, and the collocated, which shows certainty.

The following table shows the denotations, i.e. probability vs. certainty, given to the collocated "عسى" in the 13 Qur'anic ayas translations:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Translator</th>
<th>SL Text no.</th>
<th>Pickthall</th>
<th>Daryabadi</th>
<th>Ali</th>
<th>Ahmed &amp; Ahmed</th>
<th>Qaribullah &amp; Darwish</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>probability</td>
<td>probability</td>
<td>probability</td>
<td>probability</td>
<td>probability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>probability</td>
<td>probability</td>
<td>probability</td>
<td>probability</td>
<td>probability</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>probability</td>
<td>probability</td>
<td>probability</td>
<td>probability</td>
<td>probability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
<td>probability</td>
<td>probability</td>
<td>probability</td>
<td>probability</td>
<td>probability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
<td>probability</td>
<td>probability</td>
<td>probability</td>
<td>probability</td>
<td>probability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6</td>
<td>probability</td>
<td>probability</td>
<td>probability</td>
<td>probability</td>
<td>probability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7</td>
<td>probability</td>
<td>probability</td>
<td>probability</td>
<td>probability</td>
<td>probability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>8</td>
<td>probability</td>
<td>probability</td>
<td>probability</td>
<td>probability</td>
<td>probability</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>9</td>
<td>probability</td>
<td>probability</td>
<td>probability</td>
<td>probability</td>
<td>probability</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>10</td>
<td>probability</td>
<td>probability</td>
<td>probability</td>
<td>probability</td>
<td>probability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>11</td>
<td>probability</td>
<td>probability</td>
<td>probability</td>
<td>probability</td>
<td>probability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>12</td>
<td>probability</td>
<td>probability</td>
<td>certainty</td>
<td>probability</td>
<td>probability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>13</td>
<td>probability</td>
<td>probability</td>
<td>probability</td>
<td>probability</td>
<td>probability</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From the table above it becomes evident that collocated "عسى" has been incorrectly rendered in a way that denotes probability, instead of denoting certainty. The percentage of probability denotation is (100%) for four translations under study, the other translation, i.e. Ali’s, achieved (92.3%). The following table shows the percentage for each translator:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Translator</th>
<th>Collocated &quot;عسى&quot; Denotation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Probability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pickthall</td>
<td>100 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daryabadi</td>
<td>100 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ali</td>
<td>92.3 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ahmed &amp; Ahmed</td>
<td>100 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Qaribullah &amp; Darwish</td>
<td>100 %</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Finally, it can be concluded that paying attention to the translation of "عسى" in its different forms in the Glorious Qur'an plays a significant role in attaining better understanding on the part of the TL reader. Hence, revising the translations under study is strongly recommended.
References


The Translation of...


