

Regarding the “Clear Quran” by Dr. Mustafa Khattab

With regards to the English translation of the Quran by Dr. Mustafa Khattab, there are key points that need to be addressed and corrected by knowledgeable individuals. Although there must be a complete review of the translation and its commentary, below are some examples of these points.

Explanations that drastically limit verses as being applicable only to ‘that time and place.’

1. **Verse (v.) 9:29 – Footnote (fn.) 355: To fully understand this verse we need to bear in mind that Quranic verses are of two types. General verses talk about belief in Allah, good manners, and acts of worship. Specific verses, such as this verse, were revealed in regards to particular situations.**
 - a. In the introduction – on page xvii, noted below – MK details which verses this applies to by stating:
2. **pg. xvii – “We have to keep in mind that all violent passages in the Quran (including verses in chapters 2, 8, 9, 47, and 48) strictly concern conflicts between early Muslims and the pagans of Mecca over 1400 years ago. As such, all passages should be understood in their historical context.”**
 - a. With this single paragraph, MK has presented – without any proof – a new meaning for a great deal of verses “in chapters 2, 8, 9, 47, and 48.”
3. **v. 2:282 – fn. 114: To fully understand the context of this verse, we need to keep in mind that 1500 years ago women did not normally participate in business transactions or travel with trading caravans and, therefore, not every woman had the expertise to witness a debt contract.**
 - a. It is understood from MK that the rulings in the verse are for that period of 1500 years ago; the first woman is sufficient as a witness so long as she is reliable.
 - b. We should not have to explain that the intelligence and wisdom of an individual is not based on their gender; nor should we develop revisions or apologies for Quranic rulings.

Metaphorical translations for the attributes of Allah and for certain verses despite the fact that there is evidence that clarifies that the meaning is not metaphorical.

4. **v. 5:64 – Rather, He is open-handed, giving freely as He pleases.**
 - a. The verse specifically confirms the existence of two hands but MK omits this confirmation and instead opts for a metaphorical “open-handed[ness]”
 - b. Should be: “Rather, both His hands are...”
5. **v. 2:255 – fn. 106: The Arabic word kursi can either mean seat or knowledge.**
 - a. MK omits mentioning the narrations that actually describe the kursi.
6. **v. 68:42 – fn. 1215: Like the Face and the Hands, the Shin is believed by many to be one of the qualities of Allah, in a way befitting His Majesty and Greatness. Since baring the shin in the Arab culture is associated with the heat of battle, some interpret the verse metaphorically, so the meaning would be: “Beware of the Day when horror sets in.”**
 - a. MK does not refer to the evidence that conclusively clarifies the meaning of the verse but rather confuses the reader by adding an incorrect translation.
7. **v. 28:88 – Everything is bound to perish except He Himself.**

And
8. **v. 55:27 – Only your Lord Himself, full of Majesty and Honour, will remain.**
 - a. Given the other ‘metaphorical’ translations, MK must clarify the confirmation of the existence of a face in these verses. Then, he may further clarify what is the intended full meaning.
9. **v. 2:65 – fn. 24 – “...Be disgraced apes!” Although many scholars believe that these individuals were turned into real apes, others interpret this verse in a metaphorical sense. This style is not uncommon in the Quran. See 62:5 regarding the donkey that carries books and 2:18 regarding the deaf, dumb, and blind.**
 - a. Although MK references legitimate metaphors like 62:5, he fails to distinguish the occurrence of this specific event in the past, the types of people to whom it was done, or the fact that these people have no offspring: All clarified in authentic narrations.

Errors in translation due to an inaccurate explanation, terminology, or grammar and vocabulary.

10. v. 43:84 – It is He Who is ‘the only’ God in the heavens and ‘the only’ God on the earth.

- a. Allah is neither in the heavens nor on the earth; these are part of His creations which He is above; this must not be confused from the translation.
- b. Should be: “It is He Who is the only God to be worshipped in the heavens and the only God to be worshipped on the earth.”

11. v. 43:86 – ‘But’ those ‘objects of worship’ they invoke besides Him have no power to intercede, except those who testify to the truth knowingly.

- a. It is mistakenly understood that only “*those who testify to the truth*” (i.e. fn. 1009: Jesus, Ezra, and the angels) have power to intercede; as they are the only ‘exception’ that MK mentions in the translation.
- b. Should be: “And those they invoke besides Him do not possess [power of] intercession; but only those who testify to the truth [can benefit], and they know.”

12. v. 67:16-17 – Do you feel secure that the One Who is in heaven will not cause the earth to swallow you up as it quakes violently? Or do you feel secure that the One Who is in heaven will not unleash upon you a storm of stones. Only then would you know how ‘serious’ My warning was!

- a. Allah is not in heaven nor in the heavens; since it is commonly believed by others that God is in heaven or present throughout the heavens, this meaning should not be understood from the translation.
- b. Should be: “Do you feel secure that He who [holds authority] in the heavens ...?
“...Or do you feel secure that He who [holds authority] in the heavens...”

13. v. 3:7 – fn. 116: As for the elusive verses...and how Allah settles Himself on the Throne.”

- a. “Settles” is clearly problematic. This phrasing is far from any original term or idea used in Islam.

14. **v. 20:46 – I am with you, hearing and seeing.**

- a. Translated with its correct grammar, the verse should be: “I am with you both; I hear and I see.”
- b. The correct pronoun and punctuation should be used. The semi-colon also indicates that these are independent clauses: His hearing and sight are not dependent on a presence amongst them.

Errors that need to be simply clarified to avoid a serious misunderstanding

15. **v. 44:10 – fn. 1011: “...simply because once major apocalyptic signs arrive, no second chances will be given.**

- a. The error of generalization in this statement is clear and simply must be clarified since the acceptance of repentance is a major issue related specifically to the westerly sunrise.

16. **v. 20:114 – fn. 606: The Prophet was eager to recite the Quran while it was being revealed to him through the angel Gabriel. So he was told to take his time to learn it by heart once the verses are properly delivered to him.**

- a. This commentary gives the reader the understanding that, after receiving the revelation, the Prophet needed to “*take his time to learn it by heart*” lest that he forget.
- b. The opposite should be explained: The Prophet's memorization was guaranteed by Allah, and he did not need to take any time to memorize it by heart.

17. **v. 4:157 – fn. 229: The popular belief among Muslims is that a conspiracy was made to kill Jesus, Allah made the main culprit who betrayed Jesus look exactly like Jesus, then he was crucified in Jesus’ place. Jesus was raised safe and sound to the heavens. Muslims also believe in the second coming of Jesus.**

- a. MK puts the whole statement under the premise that it is all a “popular belief” held by Muslims; he uses the word “*also*” to connect the ideas.
- b. Though not intentionally, MK implies that there are other unpopular beliefs amongst Muslims, some of whom that may believe in the crucifixion and “*also believe in the second coming of Jesus.*”

Direct insertions of words into the translation without a clear distinction between the original text and the inserted-words.

18. It is a highlight of the translation that MK avoids the use of parentheses. MK has left the practice of previous translators who used different parentheses to identify an addition to the translation due to grammar and sentence structure, contained in round-brackets “(...)”; or addition that is helpful but not present in the text, contained in square-brackets “[...]”.
19. MK continues to insert words as he finds it necessary; however, the issue is that there is no way for the English reader to distinguish the author’s inserted-words apart from the actual text’s translation.
 - a. Inserted-words include sarcastically, mockingly, the wicked, Meccans, etc. Sometimes, like the below example:
20. **v. 68:42 – ‘Beware of’ the Day the Shin ‘of Allah’ will be bared, and the wicked will be asked to prostrate, but they will not be able to do so.**
 - a. MK provides no proof as to why he added “the wicked” as those spoken of in the verse.
 - b. On the contrary, there is a great deal of evidence that shows that the remaining group of people is full of believers.
21. Sometimes these inserted-words are accompanied by a type of parentheses that has no basis in English punctuation (i.e. ‘...’ half-brackets) which leaves the reader confused.
22. MK should avoid inserting words or – when necessary – use the proper punctuation which has been standard for all other previous English works.

Regarding the qualifications of the individuals involved with the MK translation

23. In relation to the translation, Mustafa Khattab acknowledges:

- a. 8 imams/shuyukh that provided valuable feedback.
- b. 3 Chief Editors
- c. 6 sub-editors
- d. 48 proof-readers

24. Certain verses are understood clearly with authentic narrations; and certain verses cannot simply be translated according to the best linguistic meaning. Someone who is knowledgeable in the tafsir would know when to ignore a linguistically-proper English translation and favor that which is simply a more correct translation; or he would know when to refer the meaning of certain verses to authentic narrations that clarify the issue. We must first consider the qualifications of all those involved – from the shuyukh to the simple proof-readers – before we can consider what they directly translated, edited, or otherwise modified.

With regards to the tafsir and overall qualifications, there are consequential examples:

- a. **v. 2:217 – fn. 78** or **v. 33:61 – fn. 864** wherein MK provides commentary on apostasy, without also mentioning the legislation from authentic narrations.
- b. **v: 5:33-38 – fn. 244-245** wherein MK discusses the Sharia and where it may be applied.

or

- c. The case wherein – though outside of this translation – one of the chief editors writes confusingly about the reality of the seven heavens and the scientific theories about multiple-dimensions.

Some other examples are barely noticeable:

- d. The many verses that mention specifically or like: **ثُمَّ اسْتَوَىٰ عَلَى الْعَرْشِ**
 - i. MK translates it as: “...then established Himself on the Throne”
 - ii. Linguistically, “on” is more limiting than above, so given the tafsir, it is more correct to use “above” instead because of the greater meaning. (e.g. *The stars are above us and not on us.*)

e. **v. 11:7 - He is the One Who created the heavens and the earth in six Days and His Throne was upon the waters.**

- i. Linguistically it is correct to keep the MK translation as "...upon the waters", but given the tafsir, it should be "...upon the *water*." It is a matter of countable and uncountable nouns; this noun ("*water*") clarifies that we do not know anything specific about it.

Regarding the translation of the words السَّمَاوَاتِ and السَّمَاءِ as "Heavens" and "Heaven"

25. In the English language, "heaven" is not necessarily the singular form of "heavens" because each is an entirely different word.
26. MK – unlike some other translators – correctly describes السَّمَاءِ in its correct context with terms that describe what is really meant.
- a. **v. 3:5 – Surely nothing on earth or in the heavens is hidden from Allah.**
 - b. **v. 17:92 – Or cause the sky to fall upon us in pieces, as you have claimed....**
 - c. **v. 34:2 – And whatever descends from the sky and whatever ascends into it....**
 - d. **v. 50:6 – the sky above them; how We built it and adorned it 'with stars'**
27. The only thing to emphasize is that MK should continue to clarify the correct translation of السَّمَاءِ as he still misses the meaning on some verses; giving the meaning of heaven; i.e. paradise.
- a. **v. 29:34 – We are certainly bringing down a punishment from heaven upon the people of this city for their rebelliousness.**
 - b. **v. 2:144 – Indeed, We see you 'O Prophet' turning your face towards heaven. Now we will make you turn towards a direction 'of prayer' that will please you.**
 - c. **v. 7:96 – Had the people of those societies been faithful and mindful 'of Allah', We would have overwhelmed them with blessings from heaven and earth.**
 - d. **v. 72:8 – 'Earlier' we tried to reach heaven 'for news', only to find it filled with stern guards and shooting stars.**

Regarding unnecessary explanations that will confuse the reader.

28. v. 7:54 – fn. 313: The word day is not always used in the Quran to mean a 24-hour period. According to 22:47, a heavenly Day is 1,000 years of our time. The Day of Judgment will be 50,000 years of our time (see 70:4). Hence, the six Days of creation refer to six eons of time, known only by Allah.

- a. MK later defines that these “six Days” as a newly-coined term of “six heavenly Days” (v. 41:9-11, fn. 972)
- b. By providing this 6,000-years time limit, MK needlessly forces an argument about the creation-timeline, and – logically – as it relates to our current timeline given all the scientific data available for people to argue with.
- c. It is sufficient for us to say that Allah knows best regarding the duration of those “Six Days” of creation.

29. v. 21:30 – fn. 616: “Do the disbelievers not realize that the heavens and earth were ‘once’ one mass then We split them apart?” - *fn. - This probably refers to the event commonly known as the Big Bang.*

- a. The Quran should not be translated with simple theories that – under Islamic teachings and the scientific data currently available – do not make sense.
- b. Some of the main questions being: What is the origin of the remaining six heavens; or what are the origins of the singularity, cosmic inflation, or the finely-tuned constant laws of physics.

30. MK references the Bible and similar works. Since some people have already turned away from the Bible due to all the discrepancies, it is not necessary to reference them back to the less-credible work that they have already rejected.

31. There are numerous examples of these types of unnecessary explanations; it is best to simply omit all these explanations since more questions of doubt might come to a hesitant reader.

Regarding the introduction pages of the MK translation

32. At the introduction, there are numerous statements that are inaccurate, misleading, unnecessarily appeasing or simply incomplete. If this is not clarified or corrected, it may taint the whole understanding of the MK translation. Some examples:

a. pg. xv – **“Because of differences in transmission and interpretation of the Bible, over time, the stories have changed. The Quranic narratives now appear slightly different....”**

i. This is inaccurate since the differences are also due to fabrications in the Bible that make the Quranic narratives greatly different.

b. pg. xvii – **“We have to keep in mind that all violent passages in the Quran (including verses in chapters 2, 8, 9, 47, and 48) strictly concern conflicts between early Muslims and the pagans of Mecca over 1400 years ago. As such, all passages should be understood in their historical context.”**

i. We are peaceful but we should not change the verses of the Quran to appease a frightened public.

c. pg. xvi – **“Sharia does not apply to non-Muslim minorities living in predominantly Muslim countries.”**

i. This is inaccurate and gives the impression that there is another set of “real laws” that are applied aside from the Sharia.

d. pg. xvi – **“Muslims living in the west follow the law of the land and maintain Sharia mainly in personal matters (such as prayers, marriage, inheritance.)**

i. This is an incomplete explanation that appeases some. This also implies that we believe in a separation between state and religion.

e. pg. xvi – **“The fundamental principles in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights are acceptable Islamically.”**

i. This is misleading because, fundamentally, the following articles of the Declaration may prove problematic: Articles 16, 18, 19, 21, and 29.

ii. The meaning of these articles is commonly known and stating that Islam fundamentally accepts these known articles means that we accept what is commonly known. (e.g. For example, that by popular vote, the States constitution can be changed. Etc.)

A further note:

- This translation has been distributed throughout the world and marketed as the “most accurate and eloquent translation” (*page v*) of the Quran.
- Given all the errors in the translation, qualified and knowledgeable individuals should review and correct the entirety of the book.
- After conducting a thorough review, the proper corrections must be made, or the public and the general Muslim population should be made aware of the errors in this translation.
- A great deal of the commentary and the introduction material is not necessary.
- On the other hand, there are many topics that could be discussed which would be beneficial to new Muslims and the general-public such as a clarification about the attributes of Allah and our view of these attributes.

جزاكم الله خيرا

