

## Comparison of Translations from the Qur'an

M.A.R. Habib

### Sura 91: Shams or The Sun

وَالشَّمْسِ وَضُحَاهَا ﴿١﴾

وَالْقَمَرِ إِذَا تَلَّهَا ﴿٢﴾

وَالنَّهَارِ إِذَا جَلَّهَا ﴿٣﴾

وَاللَّيْلِ إِذَا يَغْشَاهَا ﴿٤﴾

وَالسَّمَاءِ وَمَا بَنَاهَا ﴿٥﴾

وَالْأَرْضِ وَمَا طَحَاهَا ﴿٦﴾

وَنَفْسٍ وَمَا سَوَّاهَا ﴿٧﴾

فَأَلْهَمَهَا فُجُورَهَا وَتَقْوَاهَا ﴿٨﴾

قَدْ أَفْلَحَ مَنْ زَكَّاهَا ﴿٩﴾

وَقَدْ خَابَ مَنْ دَسَّاهَا ﴿١٠﴾

**Marmaduke Pickthall:**

1. By the sun and his brightness,
2. And the moon when she followeth him,
3. And the day when it revealeth him,
4. And the night when it enshroudeth him,
5. And the heaven and Him Who built it,
6. And the earth and Him Who spread it,
7. And a soul and Him Who perfected it
8. And inspired it (with conscience of) what is wrong for it and (what is) right for it.
9. He is indeed successful who causeth it to grow,
10. And he is indeed a failure who stunteth it

**Thomas Cleary:**

1. By the sun and its brilliance
2. and the moon, following it,
3. and the day, revealing it,
4. and the night, concealing it;
5. by the sky and its construction,
6. and the earth and its extension;
7. by the self and its balance,
8. and its inspiration  
with its depravity and its conscience;
9. whoever purifies it is triumphant
10. and whoever corrupts it is a failure.

**Michael Sells:**

1. By the sun and her morning light
2. By the moon when it follows her
3. By the day when it displays her
4. By the night when it veils her
5. By the sky and what constructed her
6. By the earth and what spread her out
7. By a soul and what shaped her
8. And revealed to her her degradation and her faithfulness
9. Whoever honors her will prosper
10. Whoever degrades her will find failure.

**M.A.R. Habib & Bruce Lawrence:**

1. By the sun  
and her splendor;

2. by the moon  
as he trails her;

3. by the day as he  
displays her;

4. by the night as she  
veils her;

5. by the heaven and He  
Who framed her;

6. by the earth and He  
Who extended her;

7. by the soul and He  
Who perfected her;

8. for He inspired her  
to know her [own] evil  
and the piety within her;

9. he surely succeeds  
who purifies her,

10. and he surely fails  
who defiles her.

[[11. The nation of Thamud  
denied [her prophet Salih],<sup>1</sup>  
for she was a transgressor,]]

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<sup>1</sup> A more extended account of this incident is provided in Q7: 73-79, where the prophet Salih urges the people of Thamud to serve God alone and explains to them that God's she-camel, which was sent as a sign to them, should be left unharmed and allowed to pasture. But the leader of the most rebellious and proud faction in Thamud denounced the believers and the disbelieving faction slaughtered the camel, thereby bringing Divine retribution.

Sura 93: Dhuha or the Morning Light

وَالضُّحَىٰ ﴿١﴾

وَاللَّيْلِ إِذَا سَجَىٰ ﴿٢﴾

مَا وَدَّعَكَ رَبُّكَ وَمَا قَلَىٰ ﴿٣﴾

وَلَلْآخِرَةُ خَيْرٌ لَّكَ مِنَ الْأُولَىٰ ﴿٤﴾

وَلَسَوْفَ يُعْطِيكَ رَبُّكَ فَتَرْضَىٰ ﴿٥﴾

أَلَمْ يَجِدْكَ يَتِيمًا فَآوَىٰ ﴿٦﴾

وَوَجَدَكَ ضَالًّا فَهَدَىٰ ﴿٧﴾

وَوَجَدَكَ عَائِلًا فَأَغْنَىٰ ﴿٨﴾

فَأَمَّا الْيَتِيمَ فَلَا تَقْهَرْ ﴿٩﴾

وَأَمَّا السَّائِلَ فَلَا تَنْهَرْ ﴿١٠﴾

وَأَمَّا بِنِعْمَةِ رَبِّكَ فَحَدِّثْ ﴿١١﴾

**M.A.R. Habib & Bruce Lawrence:**

By the morning light  
in its brilliance;<sup>2</sup>  
by the darkening night  
in its stillness;  
your Lord has not  
abandoned you, nor  
does He abhor.<sup>3</sup>  
for truly, your ending<sup>4</sup>  
will be better  
than your beginning;  
and your Lord will provide,  
gladdening you.  
did He not find you orphaned  
and give shelter?  
find you seeking  
and give guidance?  
find you needing  
and suffice you?  
then, do not oppress<sup>5</sup>  
the orphan,  
nor reproach the one  
who asks;  
but rather proclaim  
the Grace of your Lord.

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<sup>2</sup> The word *dhuha* literally refers to the period of time from after sunrise until before noon. In Q 91:1 and 79:29 it indicates the full brightness of the sun.

<sup>3</sup> According to Ibn ‘Abbas, as reported by Ibn Kathir, this verse was revealed after a lapse in the revelations given to the Prophet, which caused him great anxiety and which prompted the polytheists to taunt “His Lord has abandoned him and hates him.” The verse is hence intended to reassure the Prophet.

<sup>4</sup> The words *aqirah* and *ula* are sometimes translated as “hereafter” and “the present” (as in the worldly present); this is how Ibn Kathir interprets them. But the Arabic words can also mean, respectively, “the ending” or “outcome” and “beginning.” Given the circumstances of this revelation, it is likely that the prophet is being told that things will improve for his worldly mission in this life, as well as being given a promise of bliss in the hereafter. Our translation attempts to encompass the multiple meanings and word play in the Arabic.

<sup>5</sup> Lit. “So as for the orphan, do not oppress,” etc. But this structure does not sound natural in English.

**Shawkat M. Toorawa:**

By the morning light  
And by the darkening night,  
Your Lord has not forsaken you – there is no slight  
The Hereafter is far better for you than this first life.  
Your Lord will lavish bounties upon you, and you will know delight.  
Did he not find you an orphan, then give you respite?  
Find you unaware, then guide you aright?  
Find you wanting, and then provide?  
So, as for the orphan, do not oppress!  
And, as for the supplicant, do not suppress!  
And as for the bounty of your Lord, proclaim it!

**Tarif Khalidi:**

By prime of morning, and night when it settles!  
Your Lord has not abandoned you, nor disdains!  
The Last is better for you than the First.  
Your Lord shall give you, and you shall be content.  
Did He not find you an orphan,  
And sheltered you?  
And found you erring,  
and guided you?  
And found you dependent,  
and enriched you?  
The orphan you must not aggrieve,  
And the beggar you must not revile,  
And your Lord's blessings proclaim.