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The Prophet Suleyman and Horses: The Controversy of Rendering Q 38:30-3 in Modern Qur'an translations into Russian.

Introduction

As a post-imperial legacy, similar to the English language, modern Russian language can be fully recognised as an authoritative language of Islam for the large and multicultural Muslim communities living in the post-Soviet spaces and beyond. This being said, the new Islamic texts produced in this language demonstrate the wide range of contemporary theological debates, positions and arguments produced by variegated Russian speaking Muslim communities. One of the advantageous ways for understanding these theological discourses is to analyse Qur'an translations as a central medium through which modern Russian speaking Muslims approach their faith.[1] Specifically, after the fall of the Soviet Union there has been a blossom of producing the Qur'an translations by Muslims. The debates over the "proper" and "the most correct" Qur'an translation in Russia became the ongoing space for challenging, arguing and contesting the Islamic authority. There are different ways of 'rooting' one's legitimacy in order to persuade the audience as it can be seen through existing Qur'an translations' claims. For certain readers a claim to represent a specific "traditional" world-view deep-rooted in the certain social-historical milieu of Muslims living in Russia might be a decisive factor for a Qur'an translation choice. Alternatively, it might be the purported assertion that the Qur'an translation corresponds to the beliefs of the righteous generations of believers' i.e., *al-salaf al- ṣāliḥ*, which is another prominent argument among Muslim translators. It can also be a unique and authoritative charisma of a certain Muslim preacher that rendered his new Qur'an translation.

There are diverse ways to present one's work and how to situate it in the existing 'market' of sacred meanings. These kinds of public debates are illustrative in understanding the existing concerns in the Muslim public sphere in Russia. When it comes to the texts themselves, the internal dynamics, the sources of authority and the way for opting specific words choices open a valuable avenue for studying various Russian Muslim trends. This chapter aims to understand how they differ in the practices of translating the Qur'an. By focusing on a case-study of polarising ways of translating the story of the Prophet Suleyman and horses Q 38:30-3, this chapter asks what kind of justification, deliberation and translation strategies Muslim translators employ in order to support their interpretations? There are two opposing translations of *masaḥa* as stroking by hand with love and striking by a sword that have been both inspired by Muslim classical exegetical traditions. This chapter approaches Q 38:30-3 through one of the most debated and disputed theological theme of Prophetic infallibility (*ʿiṣma*) and it aims to demonstrate the wide range of contemporary ways to translate and comment over the Muslim scripture.

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[1] The idea is inspired by the slogan of the Global Qur'an project.

It begins by introducing the classical theological conceptualisation over *ʿiṣma* and then presents the overview of the main public debates surrounding the selected Qur'an translations and summarises the background of its translators or/and institutions involved. I primarily examine four popular Qur'an translations, which are widely used and that represent different approaches in Qur'an translation and that caused wide public discussions. Further, the chapter it provides a synopsis of the related Muslim theological opinions in relation to Q 38:30-3. Following this, I will analyse how these translations differ specifically in relation to Q 38:30-3 and I connect the classical debates to these contemporary Qur'an translations. This chapter does not seek to provide an extensive coverage of all cases related to *ʿiṣma* in the Qur'an, nor to cover exhaustive interpretations of Q 38:30-3 from the vast Islamic interpretative tradition. Rather, the case-study based on four contemporary translations is an attempt to demonstrate how the historically controversial theological issue finds its way in the modern genre of exegesis, i.e., Qur'an translations and specifically in the context of Russian language. In this chapter, I argue that the usage of authoritative *tafsīr* for the purpose of Qur'an translation often goes beyond the process of finding correspondence to one's pre-supposed theological dogma. The outcome of translation is inspired by a variety of issues that lead Muslim translators to creatively negotiate their sources of authority. The refinement and formulation of their exegetical decisions that would fit to the modern sensibilities make the actuality of a creative and critical encounter with tradition for the purpose of the modern Qur'an translation genre.

Prophetic infallibility (ʿiṣma)
The high esteem and reverence towards the prophets are the wide-spread social reality among Muslims across the world. Prophetic stories mentioned in the Qur'an are perceived to be the examples of a good conduct, forbearance and strong faith by which Muslim readers across time and space can take moral lessons. This attitude has theological underpinnings known as a concept of prophetic infallibility or impeccability (*ʿiṣma*), the verbal form of which linguistically means 'to prevent'. The prophets in Islam have a quality of being *maʿṣūmūn (*sing. *maʿṣūm)*, i.e., in its general sense to be free or 'prevented' from committing sins, errors, and mistakes. This flawlessness differentiates the prophets from ordinary people, making them the ideals for emulation. It points out their exceptional personalities proving that they qualified for the prophetic mission.
While *ʿiṣma* is widely accepted among Muslim theologians it is a vague concept as the meanings it implies vary considerably. The origin of the development of this theological concept can be traced back to Shia doctrine of *Imāmāt* constituting the cornerstone of Shia tenets. In accordance with it, Allah granted to Shia *imāms* the right for authority and leadership based on their unique kindship as members of the prophetic family, who are infallible and therefore deserving to rule over people. Perhaps, the fact that Ashʿarī–Matūridī branches of Sunnism further elaborated on the conceptual understanding of *ʿiṣma* in relation exclusively to Prophets, came up as a result of the polemical

engagement with Shia.[2] Apart from Shia, the branch of Sunni Islam that largely perceived to be outside of the mainstream today, i.e., Muʿtazila widely accepted *ʿiṣma* of the prophets even before Ashʿarī-Matūridī schools of theology[3]. While in all three of these schools of Sunni Islam, it is possible to find inner disagreements, Muʿtazila were more decisive in inclining that Prophets were perfect and did not sin or err and were not mistaken in any case. Matūridīs followed closely in a way of denying the possibility of Prophets to sin, or mistakes, allowing only to interpret something reprehensible as "slips" (*zallāt*), though there were those who completely rejected anything that contradicted perfection.[4] Muslim scholars associated themselves with the Ashʿarī school[5] provided the widest range of possible opinions complicating the conceptual understanding of *ʿiṣma.* Largely Ashʿarīs would defend the concept but often specify it in regards to the period before or after the Prophetic mission, they would also avoid the term "sin", or/and justify *ʿiṣma* through the notion of forgetfulness (*nisyān*), unintentionality and some other details. Especially, the forgetfulness was often used as a reasonable and justifying factor inherently applicable to all humans, even the Prophets.[6] There are various tensions surrounding *nisyān*, for example since Prophets were protected from Satan's whisper and his provoking of them, their forgetfulness was explained as just distraction by other thoughts in their minds. However, being destructed by worldly affairs by those whose hearts are in a deeper and stronger connection with Allah than ordinary people was still seen problematic by many Muslim theologians. Moreover, many Muslim theologians saw a connection between memory and morality and since the Prophets were the best in their moral qualities thus *nisyān* was an option for *ʿiṣma* but not a fully exhaustive one. For that some Muslim theologians and especially Sufis often applied other explanations than forgetfulness to fully maintain infallibility.

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[2] Ahmad Hasan, "The Concept of Infallibility in Islam," *Islamic Studies* 11, no. 1 (1972): 2. http://www.jstor.org/stable/20833049, accessed November 5, 2021.

[3] Madelung provides a short glimpse to the disagreements within the Muʿtazila school: "While al-Naẓẓām held that the sins of prophets reported in the Ḳurʾān could arise only from inadvertence or erroneous interpretation (*taʾwīl*) of God's commands, al-Djāḥiẓ maintained that they must have been committed knowingly, since unconscious infraction of the divine law in his view was not sinful. In the classical doctrine since the two al-Djubbāʾīs the extent of the immunity was defined as including all major sins and minor sins "causing aversion" (*munaffira*)." See: W. Madelung, E. Tyan, "ʿIṣma", in *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, *Second Edition*, consulted online on 24 July 2021, http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/1573-3912_islam_SIM_3643, accessed November 5, 2021.

[4] Ibid; See also Ulrich Rudolph, Rudolph and Adem, *Al-Māturīdī and the Development of Sunnī Theology in Samarqand,* trans. Rodrigo Adem (Leiden: Brill, 2015), 326.

[5] Ahmad Hasan points that since the concept is the later development is it not traceable in the works of Ashʿarī himself, see: Hasan, "The Concept of Infallibility in Islam," *Islamic Studies* 11, 2.

[6] Among the early authors who elaborated on infallibility and forgetfulness along other related issues related to prophethood was al-Qāḍī ʿIyāḍ (d. 1149), see: al-Qāḍī ʿIyāḍ, *Muhammad Messenger of Allah, trans.* Aisha Abdurrahman Bewley (Norwich: Diwan Press, 2011); Among the contemporaries see: Muḥammad ʿAlī aṣ-Ṣābūnī, *The Infallibility of Prophets,* trans. Rayshaud Jammer (UK: Beacon Books, 2018). Some scholars also elaborated on the connection between morality and memory see for example: Nir Shafir, "The Art of Forgetfulness: ʿAbd Al-Ghanī Al-Nābulusī On Memory and Morality," *Early Modern Trends in Islamic Theology* 2019: 263-276.

The main problem related with the application of the concept is the outward contradiction with the literal reading of the Qur'anic verses. There are various examples in the Qur'an where the Prophets repented or performed actions signifying their regret after some 'erroneous' acts.[7] Here, the interpretation comes into the play as the exegete tries to be faithful towards the apparent/exterior (*ẓāhir*) meaning of the text and attempts to interpret *ẓāhir* of the verses in congruence with prophetic perfection. In comparison to Jewish or Christian religious tradition, many Muslim theologians elaborated on *'iṣma* as the logical necessity since how one can be persuaded, obeyed and follow someone whose morality is not par excellence in comparison to ordinary people? While Jewish and Christian description of Prophets portray the image where Prophets could drink, fornicate and etc, the majority of Muslim theologians rejected these narrations, known as *isrā'īliyyāt*, as they do not correspond to *'iṣma* and their level of trustworthiness was considered to be weak. Nevertheless, it is still possible to observe the influence and penetration of *isrā'īliyyāt* into Muslim exegesis. In fact, the Qur'an in Q 10:94 instructs: "So if you [Prophet] are in doubt about what We have revealed to you, ask those who have been reading the scriptures before you. The Truth has come to you from your Lord, so be in no doubt and do not deny God's signs".[8] Following this instruction some of the *mufassirūn* were more flexible in using them as a source of knowledge for clarifying the ambiguities and gaps in understanding, others spent efforts in refuting the adoption of Jewish or Christian tales as well as some sectarian positions appropriated *isrā'īliyyāt*. The case of Q 38:30-3 tells the story of the prophet Suleyman and thus the *mufassirūn* were inevitably connected with the vast repertoire of Jewish and Christian literary traditions that were circulating in Muslim lands. This in turn, affected the way how the contemporary Muslim translators select the authoritative meanings for their renderings of the Qur'anic text.

1. Selected Russian Qur'an Translations

Among the varieties of existing Russian Qur'an translations, this chapter is focusing on the four cases that are largely used today in Russian Muslim communities and those translators that are often in the implicit or explicit polemical stance towards each other. In this section I provide a short background about each of these translations in the order of its first date of publication. All cases are unsatisfied with being described as just translations and their translators point to the fact that it is not the exhausting meanings of the original Qur'an but only some of its meanings which the translators were able to understand and translate. Moreover, it is possible to notice the 'tafsirisation'[9] of the genre itself as for overwhelming majority of Muslim translations it is impossible to accomplish a Qur'an translation without using existing exegetical works. All of the translators analysed here, relied on the Muslim interpretative tradition apart from using the existing translations done

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[7] As an example of regret the story of Story of Prophet Yunus inside the whale mentioned in Q 21:87.

[8] *The Qur'an: a New Translation,* trans. M.A.S. Abdel Haleem, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014).

[9] Mykhaylo Yakubovych, <mark>in which article it was mentioned?</mark>

previously. The use of *tafsīr* became inseparable from the craft of doing an authoritative Qur'an translation.[10]

1.a "Qur'an: Translation of Meanings and Commentaries" by Elmir Kuliev ([2002] 2020)

The most well-known and largely sold Qur'an translation is by Elmir Kuliev that was first published in 2002 and has been followed by no less that fifty editions in Russia and beyond. Dr. Elmir Kuliev (b. 1975) is Azerbaijani translator and Islamicist, whose name is known to the Russian-speaking public mostly as a translator of the Qur'an. Perhaps, the popularity of Kuliev's translator can be partially explained by the fact that it was the first translation into Russian done by a Muslim whose work would be in line with today's commonly spread maxim that the translation of the Qur'an cannot be neither a poetry nor a translation of the Qur'an itself but only the "translation of meanings". In his Arabic publications, Kuliev emphasized that he aimed to render a translation, printed by KFQPC corresponding to the "correct *ʿaqīda*" (creed) and his special attention was the correct rendering of Allah's Names and Attributes".[11] Kuliev's translation was widely spread among different kinds of Muslims but especially it was and it is admirable among Russian speaking Salafi communities because of this approach.[12] It is manifested in avoiding the figurative interpretations and in giving the preference to the literal translation of such words as *sāq* (lit. shin), *yad* (lit. hand) and others. One of the important features of Kuliev's approach to the Qur'an translation is his vision of the role of the endnotes that work as commentaries. According to the controversial Damascene scholar Ibn Taymiyya (d. 728/1328), who is considered one of the main authorities for modern Salafism, the craft of *tafsīr* must be based on only the reliable knowledge which can be extracted from the explanation of the Qur'an through Qur'an itself, interpretations provided by the Prophet, the Companions and the

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[10] Recently there have been produced the translation of the Qur'an (2019) into Russian by Kazakh translator Serik Ryszhanov (b. 1971), whose approach resembles Quranism movement, popularized by such representatives as Rashad Khalifa (1935–1990) Edip Yüksel (b.1957) and which disregard the sources of Islamic authority except the Qur'an itself. About Quranists in Russia see: Renat Bekkin, "The Renovationist Movement in Contemporary Russian Islam," *Časopis za interdisciplinarne studije* 6, no. 1 (2019): 65-90.

[11] Elmir Kuliev, "Tārīkh Tarjamāt maʿānī al-Qurʾān al-Karīm ilā al-lugha al-rūsiyya," *Al-Majalla al-Buhūth wa al-Dirā sāt al-Qurʾān* (), 157.

[12] While some of the translations are deemed to be associated with Salafism, it is important to not generalize Salafism as a unified community, in fact, it is globally as well as in Russia consists of various often in conflict with each other communities, see more on Salafism: Jonathan A. C. Brown, "Is Islam Easy to Understand or Not?: Salafis, The Democratization of interpretation and the Need for the Ulema," *Journal of Islamic Studies* 26, no. 2 (2015): 117-144; Gibril F. Haddad, *Albani and His Friends: A Concise Guide to the Salafi Movement* (Birmingham, UK: Aqsa Publications, 2004); Henri Lauziere, 'The Construction of Salafi yya: Reconsidering Salafi sm from the Perspective of Conceptual History', *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, 42 (2010):369–89.

Successors.[13] Kuliev's commentaries are almost entirely the narrations (*aḥādīth*) of the Prophet Muhammad and Companions related to certain Qur'anic verses. The translator's voice is not visible in these commentaries which often does not form a meaningful connection without some editorial clarifying sentences that are absent in this translation. Perhaps, it can be explained that Kuliev tried to avoid any kind of editorial interference and followed Ibn Taymiyya's *tafsīr* methodology, that is the "tafsīr should simply be the recording of the material coming from the early generations without any additions or commentary".[14] So, while for the renderings of Qur'anic meanings Kuliev nevertheless used some commentaries such as al-Ṭabarī (d. 310/923), al-Qurṭubī (d. 671/1272-3), Ibn Kathīr (d. 774/1373), al-Shawqānī (d. 1250/1834), al-Saʿadī (d.1957), al-Shanqīṭī (d. 1966) and other,[15] his inserted clarificatory commentaries are based only on what is considered to be the reliable narrations. There is no special focus on *iṣma* in his translation and the literal renderings to some wording related to Prophetic stories does not have clarificatory justifications neither in the interpolations nor in the commentaries. Kuliev completed his translation hand in hand with the *tafsīr* al-Saʿadī in which his Qur'an translation is used, thus both are taken here together in the analysis. In 2013 the work acquired additional notorious fame because of being banned and included in a list of extremist materials by a Russian court which was subsequently overruled.[16] Despite this negative fame and polemical debates over Kuliev's translation, this work continues to be popular and Kuliev is actively participating in academic conferences, social web preaching and public talks. Moreover, he does not publicly endorse or associate himself with Salafi identity and his translation was supported by the head of state-religious organisation DUMRF *muftī* Rawil Gaynutdin (b. 1959)[17].

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[13] Walid Saleh, "Ibn Taymiyya and the Rise of Radical Hermeneutics: An Analysis of an Introduction to the Foundations of Qurʾānic Exegesis," in *Ibn Taymiyya and His Times*, eds. Yossef Rapoport & Shahab Ahmed (Oxford University Press, 2010), 123-162.

[14] Ibid, 149.

[15] Kuliev, "Tārīkh Tarjamāt maʿānī al-Qurʾān al-Karīm ilā al-lugha al-rūsiyya," *Al-Majalla al-Buhūth wa al-Dirā sāt al-Qurʾān*, 157. Most of these sources are considered to be methodologically and dogmatically respected and recommended in the Salafi circles; Significantly, Kuliev's emphasis on specific sources differed depending on the audience for example, in his interview to DUMRF's website, he mentioned another set of authorities: at-Ṭabarī, al-Qurṭubī, al-Suyuṭī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Tustarī, al-Alusī. This kind of shift can be explained through the various editions that his Qur'an translation has undergone as well as the strong anti-Salafi discourse accepted among Russian DUM(s).

[16] It is important to mention the unpredictable nature of Russian federal "list of extremist literature" which includes the variety of Muslim strains and does not represent any consistency, including premodern and modern writings, Sufi or Jihadi oriented works as well as "pacifistic" translations of as Turkish Said Nursi, for more information about censure
Bulat Akhmetkarimov, "Islamic practice and state policies towards religion in post-Soviet Russia," *Religion, State and Society* 47, no. 2 (2019), 180-197, DOI: 10.1080/09637494.2019.1582209

[17] On the Russian muftiyat system see: Renat Bekkin, "Narratives on the Origin of the Institution of the Muftiate among Tatars in Soviet times," *Istoricheskaya etnologiya* 5, no. 2 (2020): 225–242; Michael Kemper, "Religious political technology: Damir Mukhetdinov's 'Russian Islam," *Religion, State and Society* 47, no. 2 (2019): 214-233, DOI: 10.1080/09637494.2019.1571331

1.b A Translation of The Meaning of The Qur'an, Accompanied by Concise Interpretation, by Abu Adel (2008)

Another translation was made by the teknonymic name Abu Adel in 2008 and subsequently passed four editions. It is an individual project that allies itself with the Saudi-produced *al-Tafsīr al-Muyassar* ('Simplified tafsīr') and represents translations and in-text interpolations based on *al-Tafsīr al-Muyassar* as well as some other works preferred by Salafi communities, among them such names as al-Shawkānī and al-'Uthaymīn. Seeing the imperfections of the existing Qur'an translations, including Kuliev's work, and the absence of interest from Russian speaking laymen Muslims to the works of Muslim commentators, Abu Adel rendered his new translation. The separated interpolations from the main text allowed to deliver unambiguous 'normative' renderings that make engagement with the scripture easier for the layman. Considering the post-Soviet context and the specificities of its audience, Abu Adel's provision of succinct commentaries is a way to avoid possible confusions and uncertainties, and thus can be seen as an important strategy for post-Soviet Qur'an translations. At the cost of polyvalence, this is a book of guidance that is accessible to a general post-Soviet readership and not require additional input from the scholarly elite during one's daily engagement with the Qur'an. The translation is careful towards literal rendering of God's attributes, i.e. His 'hand' (*yad*), eyes (*a'yun*) or 'ascension to the throne' (*istawā 'ala l-'arsh*). For quite some time, Abu Adel's translation was overshadowed by another Russian Qur'an translation commonly associated with the Salafi trend, authored by Elmir Kuliev. However, in recent years, Abu Adel's translation has won wider readership and recognition, because of its concise juxtaposition of direct translation and short *tafsīr*-based interpolations. [will add more]

1.c "The Holy Qur'an. Meanings. In the Context of Modernity at the Beginning of the 21st Century" by Shamil Aliautdinov (2012)

The third case is a voluminous work by well-known preacher and imam Shamil Alautdinov (b. 1974) that was first published in 2011. He holds various titles in the Muslim Spiritual Administration of the European Part of Russia (DAMER). Moreover, he is the author of more than thirty books and, quite distinctively for an imam, is also a popular Muslim financial coach. Aliautdinov likes to emphasize his educational background of Azhari trained theologian, the fact that differentiates him from the old generation of Soviet and post-Soviet Islamic spokesmen that received their religious training in the USSR. Within the vast Muslim interpretative legal tradition, Aliautdinov tries to prefer the most "tolerant and possibly liberal legal standpoints."[18] While he is using a wide range of sources in his sermons, he gives priority to such contemporary scholars as Yusuf Qardawi (b. 1926) and Mohammed Ghazali (d.1996). This

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[18] Alfrid Bustanov, "Beyond the Ethnic Traditions: Shamil' Aliautdinov's Muslim Guide to Success," in *Islamic Authority and the Russian Language: Studies on Texts from European Russia, the North Caucasus and West Siberia*, eds. Alfrid K. Bustanov and Michael Kemper (Amsterdam: Uitgeverij Pegasus, 2012), 146.

approach led scholars to classify him as "a major representative of a new modernist trend in Russian Islam."[19] His political agenda however, is similar to other representatives of state-supported religious institutions (*muftiyats*), i.e., uncritical support of the existing regime. While some of his Islamic legal opinions (sing. *fatwā*, pl. *fatāwā*) aimed to reduce the tension in multicultural society, they led him to be marginalised and criticised by more conservative Muslims groups in Russia.[20] His modernist inclinations are mostly about the style of the sermons, controversial *fatwā* and giving more significance to the modern scholars over the classical legacy.

In regard to his Qur'an translation, Aliautdinov cites classical and modern sources and tries to situate the Qur'anic meanings specifically in the today's world of post-Soviet Russian speaking Muslims. In this sense, it is not surprising to find many references to common humanistic legacy such as films, poetry, and prose produced even by non-Muslims. Concerning the theological aspect of *ʿiṣma,* he generally tries to follow the Ashʿarī frame that the Prophets are sinless. In order to achieve that, he manoeuvres the wording of the target text or he inserts supplementary notes to clarify some of the ambiguities verses often specifying that the prophets are protected. However, at the same time Aliautdinov does not fully avoid the word 'sin' (*грех*) in his work[21] and he points to the beginning of the prophetic mission as a turning point in acquiring the *ʿiṣma.*[22] The infallibility is important for him; however, it does not represent an issue that needs to be repeatedly restated throughout his commentaries and it can be understood that he does not advocate for *ʿiṣma* before the Prophethood. In some cases, Aliautdinov assumes the clarity of the translation and short interpolations and does not add the specific comments such as in the story of Prophet Yūsuf in Q 12:24. In regard to Q 38:30-3, however he prioritises the most justifying interpretation among the four works analysed here as will be shown further.

1.d "Kalam Sharif (2019)

Kalam Sharif is the most recent Qur'an translation made by DUMRT which was ambitiously presented in media as a timely needed work as "Sunni Muslims did not have their own translation" in Russia.[23] This gap was explained as the previous works have been done by various sectarian strains which did not represent the DUMRT interpretative approach to the ambiguities verses.

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[19] Ibid.

[20] For example, see the criticism on Aliautdinov's the legal decision about disbelief, see https://darulfikr.ru/articles/fikh/razjasnenie-istiny-o-treh-vidah-kufra/, accessed on November 4, 2021.

[21] For instance, in the case of the Prophet Adam in Q 2:37, he comments "Although Satan contributed to Adam and Eve's misdemeanor, it was nevertheless their own choice. After having repented of their sin, they received the forgiveness of God. God did not create man aimlessly and meaninglessly." Šamil' Aljautdinov, *Perevod smyslov Cvjaščenogo Korana: v kontekste sovremennosti načala XXI veka. Tom 1* (Moscow: Dilya, 2020), 33.

[22] For example see his comments to Q 20:122 and Q 28:15.

[23] https://www.business-gazeta.ru/article/449291, accessed November 4, 2021.

DUMRT consists of the generation of young Muslims, whose agenda represents a new theological turn. It is distinctive from the existing Russian *muftiyats*[24] as its various activities and initiatives emphasise the role of the theological dimension of Islam and prefers to be in line with the conservative canon.[25] Among these initiatives are the Bolghar Islamic Academy, publishing houses that work under DUMRT such as Huzur and some other that are closely affiliated with it[26], various outreach efforts such as online and in place courses. Its recent Qur'an translations in Tatar and Russian languages were well-promoted and available in print and online.[27]

The Russian Qur'an translation by DUMRT stands in clear polemics with the previous works, as can be noted from the preface of the *Kalam Sharif*. It opposes the translation by renowned Russian Orientalist Ignaty Krachkovsky (d. 1951), by saying that Qur'an is a "guidance for life and not a literary monument". The description of the Qur'an as a "literary monument" became closely associated and popularized in non-confessional settings which DUMRT sees critically. It is also in clear disagreement with the poetic translations and with those that used church-Slavonic lexicon. However, its main antagonistic interlocuters are the translations associated with the Salafi trend, those "canonical mistakes" *Kalam Sharif* intended to rectify in accordance with its creed. Its reticence towards Aliautdinov's work is significant too, while their sources of theological authorities are quite similar, i.e., some selected works of the classical *tafasīr*, they nevertheless represent two very different intellectual projects.[28] *Kalam Sharif's* spokesman nevertheless prefers to avoid the clear opposition and just does not mention the critique towards Aliautdinov's translation neither in the book itself nor in the presentational videos.[29]

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[24] Chechen Muftiyat also represents the same theological outlook, however the scope of initiatives by DUMRT is broader in terms of the publications, media and grass-root level activities. About Chechen controversial *fatwā* see: Kaarina Aitamurto, "Discussions about Indigenous, National and Transnational Islam in Russia," *Religion, State & Society* 47, no.2 (2019), 208-209.

[25] By the conservative canon many contemporary scholars imply the approach of DUMRT which corresponds to what is known in Russian historiography as Qadimits (In historiography Qadimits were seen as the opposite trend to Jadids, the reformists). See: Lili Di Puppo, "The Paradoxes of a Localised Islamic Orthodoxy: Rethinking Tatar Traditional Islam in Russia," *Ethnicities* 19, no. 2 (April 2019): 311–34, at 4. https://doi.org/10.1177/1468796819828754.

[26] For example madrasa Muhammdiyya, Mahmudiyya publishing house, Darul Fikr internet portal.

[27] There were various controversies and public critique around the publication, for example: https://islam-today.ru/novosti/2021/02/21/abu-ali-al-asari-otvetil-na-kritiku-smyslovogo-perevoda-korana-dum-rt/; https://reltoday.com/news/strasti-vokrug-tafsira-korana-kaljam-sharif/. accessed November 4, 2021

[28] In addition, *Kalam Sharif's* team is associated with DUMRT, which is a competing institution with DUMRF, with which Aliautdinov is associated. Both *muftiyats* are in the critical oppositions to each other, see https://sntat.ru/news/istinnye-prichiny-napisaniya-pisma-znaet-lish-allah-muftiy-rt-otvetil-na-obvineniya-v-sektantstve, accessed November 4, 2021.

[29] On the muftiyats competition see Michael Kemper, "Mufti Ravil' Gainutdin: The Translation of Islam into a Language of Patriotism and Humanism," in *Islamic authority and the Russian language: studies on texts from European Russia, the North Caucasus and West Siberia,* eds Alfrid Bustanov and Michael Kemper (Amsterdam: Pegasus, 2012), 105-141; For presentation of *Kalam Sharif* by one of its team members and the polemical stance towards other translations, see: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=csHBoPKKfx0, accessed November 4, 2021.

In regard to *ʿiṣma, Kalam Sharif* in overarching majority of its footnotes related to Prophetic stories, tries to maintain and emphasise prophetic infallibility. *ʿIṣma* in *Kalam Sharif* can be described as adopting the most justifying theological position that the Prophets were sinless and preserved before and after prophecy from both: disbelief as well as committing indiscretions.[30] Throughout the translation, the persistent caution about "correct" understanding is a guiding trop appearing in various places related to prophets.

However, as was noted by Di Puppo in her anthropological study about DUMRT, the constructing of "localised Islamic orthodoxy" means handling various "confl icting positions" within.[31] This broad understanding can be also noted in terms of *ʿiṣma* where the emphasised Prophetic infallibility in the translation of the Qur'an coexists with the publication of such books by Huzur as translation of *Svetoch Lubvi (Envârüʾl- ʿâşıkîn),* by Ottoman Sufi scholar Ahmad Bican Yazicioglu (d. 1466), where the popular interpretation of Prophetic stories takes more flexible approach to *isrāʾīliyyāt*. For example, in the story of Prophet Ayyūb, Yazicioglu described the Prophetic disease in such a way that his body was eaten by worms.[32] Many theologians linked such issues to the attributes of infallibility that Allah protected His Prophets and made their appearance free from physical diseases which may be abhorrent to people. The book was presented by DUMTR as a manual for *imān*, Islam and *iḥsān* of Tatar imams in the pre-revolutionary time. However, in the commentaries to *Kalam Sharif,* it is written that such interpretations "do not correspond to our [DUMRT] *aqīdaʾ*".[33] These types of examples show that the construction of "localised Islamic orthodoxy" in DUMRT's theological outlook led by its chief representatives such as the *mufti* Kamil Samigullin and his team is a challenging enterprise. It is based on rediscovering the Tatar religious legacy, emphasizing Māturīdī creed and Ḥanafī *mazhhab* as an integrated unity. [34] However, due to the complex history of Islam in Russia, this constructing and rediscovery inevitable has certain internal discrepancies and disagreements as the vast Tatar Muslim legacy and the contemporary Muslim practices can hardly be just placed within one theological interpretation. The analysis of Q 38:30-3 will demonstrate that the sources of authority and the practicality sometimes play a decisive role in word choices rather than seemingly the most suitable interpretation of the particular creedal frame.

2. *"To Kill or not to Kill" in the selected Tafsīr works*

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[30] See for example the commentary for the story of the Prophet of Musa: *Kalam Sharif. Perevod Smyslov*, (Kazan, Huzur, 2019), 367.

[31] Lili Di Puppo, "The paradoxes of a localised Islamic orthodoxy: Rethinking Tatar traditional Islam in Russia," *Ethnicities* 19, no. 2 (April 2019):5.

[32] Yazicioglu Ahmad Bijan, *Svetoch lubvi*, trans. (Kazan: Huzur, 2019)117.

[33] *Kalam Sharif,* 328.

[34] Matteo Benussi, "'Sovereign' Islam and Tatar "Aqīdah": normative religious narratives and grassroots criticism amongst Tatarstan's Muslims," *Contemporary Islam* 14, (2020): 111–134. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11562-018-0428-8.

The presentation of all the differences in *tafasīr* is beyond the scope of this chapter, thus I will mention only those opinions within some *tafasīr* that are particularly relevant to these translations. Some classical *mufassirūn* were concerned about the interpretation of Suleyman's leaving the remembrance of his Lord in the certain time-period (ʿ*ashiiyy*) because of the distraction by beautiful horses (*aḥbabtu ḥubba al-khayri ʿan thikri robbī ḥattā tawārat bi-alḥijāb*) that can be understood from the verse Q 38:32. From the early works of the formative period such as *tafsīr* al-Ṭabarī, we find various contradicting narrations.

Al-Ṭabarī is seen not only just as the central figure in the history of Muslim exegesis but often perceived to be by Muslims as a "bedrock" of the *tafsīr* genre itself.[36] Thus, if a translator considers the Muslim exegetical tradition as a source for authority, which is the case for all four translations used here, then surveying al-Ṭabarī is almost inevitably a part the Muslim translator's decision making. An important focus in al-Ṭabarī's *tafsīr* is his attention to the collection of selected reports with the chain of narrations.[37] In short, in regards to Q 38:32 he mentions various narrations, including some that goes back to ʾAlī ibn ʾAbī Ṭālib, about the afternoon prayer (*ṣalāt al-ʿaṣr)*[38] that the Prophet

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[35] This English translation is based on Saheeh International as it is suitable for close source-text approach. To link the text to the analysis in the chapter, I have added additional explanations, Arabic transliteration, and alternatives from the relevant Qur'anic commentaries in parentheses.

[36] Walid Saleh in his challenges this spread assumption, see: Walid Saleh, "Medieval Exegesis: The Golden Age of Tafsīr," in *The Oxford Handbook of Qur'anic Studies*, ed. Mustafa Shah and Muhammad Abdel Haleem (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020).

[37] It however does not mean that al-Ṭabarī was just a collector of reports lacking intellectual independence , see Mustafa Shah on al-Ṭabarī's *tafsīr* as a theological space for constructing sunni orthodoxy: Mustafa Shah, "Al-Ṭabarī and the Dynamics of Tafsīr: Theological Dimensions of a Legacy," *Journal of Qur'anic Studies* 15, no. 2 (2013): 83–139. http://www.jstor.org/stable/24280441.

[38] Paradoxically, the reoccurring position in *tafāsīr* about *ṣalāt al-ʿaṣr* was rarely questioned by the interpreters. The dominant position among the Muslim jurists was that the five daily prayers as they are known today, were made obligatory on the night of the Isra' and Mi'rāj (The night jorney). There is a difference of opinions about the way how Ḥanīfs (those who followed the pure monotheism of Prophet Ibrahim), some would say that there was no a specified time or that it was the before time of the sunset and the sunrise. In any case, it is quite puzzling why these steady reports about missing the specific obligatory prayer that were probably anachronistically applied to the time of the Prophet Suleiman have not been questioned from this perspective by large number of *mufassirūn*. (For example Ibn Juzay brings an opinion from Zujjāj who was stating about the absence of knowledge was is *ʿaṣr* obligatory for the Prophet

Suleyman missed it because he was captivated by the beautiful racehorses.[39] By *khayr,* it means horses or the wealth as its symbolic substitute, which was prioritized during the time of the prayer. The understanding of horses and wealth as the two sides of the same coin which is *khayr (good)* in the verse, is noticeable in al-Ṭabarī and even more clearly stated in the works of later *mufassirūn* and subsequently in the Qur'an translations. Al-Ṭabarī narrates that the preposition *t (ḥattā tawārat bi-alḥijāb)* refers to the sun that has gone.[40] The narrations tell that Prophet Suleyman became so occupied by his love towards the horses that they distructed his attention and led to overlooking the prayer that was due to in this specific time. Notably, the issue of missing the obligatory prayer from the perspective of *'iṣma*, does not seem to be a problematic case that needs exegetical manoeuvring.

رُدُّوهَا عَلَيَّ ۖ فَطَفِقَ مَسْحًا بِالسُّوقِ وَالْأَعْنَاقِ

Q 38:33 [He said], "Return them to me," and set about striking [their] legs and necks (or: stroking).

The second preposition *ha* in al-Ṭabarī's selection of reports refers to horses only, while this became a point of disagreement as some other *mufassirūn* related this *ha* to the Prophet Suleyman requesting to return the sun. Nevertheless, the four translations show a full agreement in regard to these prepositions that it means horses. The Prophet Suleyman after realizing what happened asked to return the horses to him. In further clarifying the Qur'anic story, al-Ṭabarī presents two opposing sets of narrations in regards what the Prophet Suleyman did to these houses.

According to the first set of reports, the word *masaḥa* means hamstringing the legs of the horses and then cutting their throats. Similarly, these polarising views about Sulayman's actions towards horses appear in encyclopaedic *tafsīr* by Andalusian *mufassir* al-Qurṭubī (d. 671/1272-3)[41]. Al-Qurṭubī is important here as he is recognised and respected by all of the analysed translators. Creedal polemics do not represent the governing ethos of his *tafsīr*, but he gathered in his work a lot of narrations which made it a valuable source of information and his work is generally used by different and even opposing Muslim groups. Al-Qurṭubī adds more meanings, such as it was possible that Suleyman first hamstrung the horses in order to then slaughter (*dhabḥ*) them as way of a charity for eating. *Dhabḥ* for eating as well as the form of this slaughtering including hamstringing in al- Qurṭubī's *tafsīr* is also emphasized as a time-specific action allowed in the Prophet Suleyman's *sharīa*.[42] For Ibn Juzayy (d. 741/1340), another Andalusian exegete used in *Kalam Sharif* pointed

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Suleyman or not), among the contemporaries, Ufi assumed that in Suleyman's *sharīa* it may not be obligatory).

[39] The interpreters were also providing are a variety of details and contradicting reports about the kind of horses the Prophet Suleyman saw.

[40] Other interpreters mentioned that it could mean horses too.

[41] Delfina Serrano Ruano, "al-Qurṭubī," in *Encyclopaedia of the Qur'ān*, Consulted online on 09 September 2021 http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/1875-3922_q3_EQCOM_050504.

[42] Eating horses is a disputed topic in the *sharīa* of the Prophet Muhammad, in his commentaries to *sūra* al-Naḥl, al-Qurṭubī goes into details of this issue, providing a long discussion about the disagreements in regard to the practice in *sharīa* of the Prophet Muhammad, Qurtubi's view on this issue was that it is permissible.

again to the time-specificity of *dhabḥ* and horsemeat eating as a sacrifice (*qurbān)* in Suleyman's time.[43]

According to the second set of reports, available in al-Ṭabarī, al-Qurṭubī and many other works of exegesis of classical and post-classical periods, Suleyman was stroking the horses with love as an act of honouring them. In case of al-Ṭabarī, he concludes by giving the preference to the opinion of Ibn ʿAbbās with was stroking with love, because it does not befit the Prophetic practice to torture animals by hamstringing them and there is no sense to punish the horses for being so beautiful that they caused Suleyman's distraction. He also finds it problematic to accept killing the horses, which represent the destruction of wealth as a correct practice for penance. In this early *tafsīr*, al-Tabārī does not problematise the issue of missing the prayer, i.e., he does not try to elaborate on *ʿiṣma* neither from the point of *nisyān* nor by problematizing the kind of prayer that was missed. Perhaps, it may signify that for early interpreters such as al-Ṭabarī *ʿiṣma* was not yet so pertinent issue that needs to be justified. Contrary to what can be observed in al-Qurṭubī as it is a more later source. In al-Qurṭubī *ʿiṣma* is a fundamental principle on the basis of which he emphasizes that Prophets do not do *ẓulm* and as they are *maʿṣūmūn.* The variety of narrations provided by al-Qurṭubī are looked by him through the lenses of infallibility. Just hamstringing and killing the animals sound problematic for him as how the Prophet could punish those who did not do any sin and why would he damage the wealth if he himself overlooked something. We find in al-Qurṭubī also the references to Sufi authority al-Qushayrī who elaborated on the two aspects namely the nature of prayer and punishment. *Nisyān* of obligatory prayer does not seem to be a fair justification fitting to the prophetic nature, thus that it was a supererogatory *nafl* prayer not the obligatory one. Moreover, the Sufi method of disciplining the self, manifests as a punishment of the Prophet towards himself by cutting himself from the things which were loved and cherished by him. We find these two ways of interpretations, namely the *nafl* and punishment towards himself to be repeated by later interpreters. Al-Qurṭubī's *tafsīr* gives a variety of options what was happening with Suleyman and his horses, and if *masaḥa* was not a gentle stroking of the racehorses, but striking, then there are necessarily ways how to justify Suleyman's action in accordance to his *ʿiṣma* status.

It is worth here to mention, *Taʾwīlat al-Qurʾān* by al-Māturīdī[44] (d. 333/944), another early source specifically mentioned by *Kalam Sharif*'s team for whom al-Māturīdī is not only one of the foundational sources for the translation but also represents an eponym for Tatars' "traditional" creed. The issue of missing the prayer takes a form of *ghafla* (negligence and heedlessness) and linguistically has much more reproaching connotations than the notion of

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[43] The opinion about Q 38:33 that eating horses as a time-specific practice allowed in the Prophet Suleyman's time seems to be widespread among Andalusian exegetes, which is quite peculiar for the multicultural context of Andalusia with its large Jewish population, which canonically does not consider horsemeat to be kosher see: Bernhard Rohrbacher, "Jewish Law and Medieval Logic: Why Eating Horse Meat is A Punishable Offense," *Journal of Law and Religion* 30, no. 2 (2015): 295–319. doi:10.1017/jlr.2015.18.

[44] Al-Māturīdī Abū Manṣūr Muḥammad b. Muḥammad al-Samarqandī al-Māturīdī, *Taʾwīlāt al-Qurʾān,* ed. Khālid ibn ʿAlī al-Marḍī al-Ghāmidī (Riyadh: Dār al-Aṭlas al-khuḍrāʾ, 2008), 245-249.

nisyān that became a solid justification for maintaining *ʿiṣma* for a large number of later theologians. Seemingly, missing the obligatory prayer does not represent a problem for al-Māturīdī despite being applied to the Prophet. What really makes al-Māturīdī unsettled is the commonly spread opinions from various narrators about killing the animals as a punishment for the Prophet Suleyman's distraction[45]. He increases the possibilities of interpretation by adding the following options. If it was really true, he writes, then killing as a punishment was either allowed in Suleyman's *sharīʿa,* which al-Māturīdī supports through using the "intraqur'anic method"[46] and refer to Suleymans's threatening of Hoopoe[47], or it had happened before the divine prohibition came down. However, it would be important to consider that threatening hoopoe for being late is a quite different case than killing/torturing horses who were innocent and whose only guilt was only to be created beautiful.[48] In any of these cases, al-Māturīdī states, killing for such a reason is not something that is allowed in current *sharīʿa.* Another perspective about *masaḥa* offered by al-Māturīdī, is that he gave these horses alive to people as a penance for himself (*kaffāra*) without slaughtering or killing and his *masaḥa* was touching their legs and necks as simply a farewell.

Some of the narrations supporting *masaḥa* as killing the animals can be tracible to figures like Kaʿb al-Aḥbār[49] whose name is often associated with the transmission of *israiliyyāt* tradition. Nevertheless, *masaḥa* as killing the animals was a very enduring trope appearing throughout the works of *tafsīr* of such respectful works as al-Baghawī (d. 516/1122), al-Bayḍāwī (d. c.719/1319), al-Nasafi (d. 710/1310) and Jalālayn.[50] Most would prioritize the opinion of *masaḥa* as killing over *masaḥa* as touching, but if the first was preferred there quite often would be a justification such as al-Baghawī would say that Suleyman did it because it was allowed (*mubāḥ*) for him as the Prophet do not do *ḥarām.* Al-Nasafī would point that the killing was for eating and was allowed specifically in Suleyman's *sharīʿa.*

The position of Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī (d. 606/1210), who is one of the most influential representatives of the Ashʿarī school of theology and who developed

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[45] He also mentions the opinion that the Prophet Suleyman killed these horses because they made him busy and Allah replaced them with smf better and more speedy that is the ability to rule over the wind.

[46] See more on this method of interpretation: Sohaib Saeed Bhutta, "Intraquranic Hermeneutics: Theories and Methods in Tafsir of the Qur'an through the Qur'an," (Unpublished PhD Dissertation: SOAS University of London, 2018), http://eprints.soas.ac.uk/30286, accessed November 5, 2021.

[47] See Q 27:21.

[48] More about hoopoe in the Qur'an: Sara Tlili, *Animals in the Qur'an* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 182.

[49] Roberto Tottoli*, "*The Corpora of *Isrāʾīliyyāt,"* in *The Oxford Handbook of Qur'anic Studies,* eds. Mustafa Shah and Muhammad Abdel Haleem (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020), 683.

[50] More information about the "theological *tafāsīr*" see: Tariq Jaffer, "Theological Commentaries," in *The Oxford Handbook of Qur'anic Studies,* eds. Mustafa Shah and Muhammad Abdel Haleem (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020), 755.

what Johns named as "a radical theory of prophetic impeccability"[51] provides a very original interpretation of Q 38:30-33. The theme of *ʿiṣma* became the topic of great importance for al-Razī, who is considered to be its prominent advocate. Apart from his exegetical work *Mafātih al-Ghayb*, he wrote a book specifically dedicated this theme *ʿAṣma al- ʾAnbiyāʾ* where he was tackling some of the ambiguities from the prophetic stories. One of the chapters in this book focused on the story of Suleyman and horses in regard to which there are differences in interpretation. In this story, al-Razī dispels misconceptions ascribed to so-called Ḥashawīya sect, which is a disparaging term to refer some traditionalists (*ashāb al-hadīth*) who were ascribed to anthropomorphic literal interpretations.[52] Al-Razī refers to Ḥashawīya, but some of the narrations are related also to *Isrāʾīliyyāt* tradition which were perceived by al-Razī as well as by many other later exegetes with "suspicion and even hostility".[53] Al-Razī provides multiple possibilities of how to understand the verses without falling into the trap of "wrong" interpretations and withstanding the concept of prophetic *ʿiṣma.* The love towards horses is justified as legitimate and praiseworthy feeling divinely prescribed in his scriptures. Thus, the Prophet Suleyman did something that was religiously required as horses are valued in the path of Allah. Al-Razī interprets *aḥbabtu ḥubba al-khayri ʿan thikri robbī* as Suleyman's conscious love towards horses which comes out (*ʿan*) from the remembrance of Allah. He dismisses all what can be jeopardizing for *ʿiṣma,* namely the excessive love, preoccupation with worldly matters, forgetting the prayer, and killing the horses with no reason as something that is alien to the true meaning of the apparent text and as something that groundlessly penetrated the works of other earlier exegets. There is no juxtaposition between the two, namely, love towards *khayr* by which Al-Razī understands horses and the remembrance of Allah. On the contrary, the first comes as the outcome of the second. Al-Razī clearly goes against the killing by the sword which was a largely spread opinion, since there is no "sword" is mentioned in the verse, neither in literal nor in metaphorical sense, thus there is nothing substantial that may support the meaning of "chopping" or "slashing", "hamstringing" i.e., ultimately killing. He negates the main narrative about forgetting the prayer as being far from the truth. The two prepositions for him both mean racehorses as they are clearly mentioned in the verse, he questions how the *maʿsūm* Prophet can forget *ṣalāt ʿaṣr* because of the *dunya* which is a great sin. Being disagreed with this he is wondering how these offence actions might not be followed then by a sincere crying and *tawba* but instead a demand to return the horses?! All actions performed by the Prophet are guided by Prophetic infallibility in which there is an example for emulation: preparing horses for *jihad,* loving them, honoring them by touching them, all are the acts of worship is a sign of someone who is greatly concerned about them despite his Prophetic elevated status. The meanings provided by al-Razī are clearly

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[51] Anthony H. Johns, "Prophets and Personalities of the Qur'an," in *The Oxford Handbook of Qur'anic Studies,* eds. Mustafa Shah and Muhammad Abdel Haleem (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020), 494.

[52] See more about the term: "Ḥashwīya," in *Encyclopaedia of Islam, First Edition*, Consulted online on 05 November 2021 http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/2214-871X_ei1_SIM_2757.

[53] Johns, "Prophets and Personalities of the Qur'an," 494.

opposite to other interpretations and he does not feel any discomfort in going against "majority" as for him the apparent meaning has no support to the odd narrations which clearly go against the image of infallible Prophet.

In some respects, Ibn Kathīr[54] Qur'anic commentary is often perceived as the opposite approach to al-Razī and is seen within the dichotomy of tafsir *bil-riwāya/bil-ra'y*.[55] For that Ibn Kathīr is an important source that should not be neglected in reviewing the opinions of classical exegetes used in these Qur'an translations. Ibn Kathīr is considered to be a student of one of the most controversial medieval scholars Ibn Taymiyya (d. 728/1328) who is seen by modern Salafis almost as an absolute religious authority especially in the sphere of theology (*kalam)* and exegesis. Ibn Kathīr's *tafsīr* often perceived to be a practical manifestation of his teacher's Qur'anic "radical hermeneutics"[56] that prioritizes scripturalism/*hadīth* and disregards philology, and any kind of editorial comments. While Ibn Kathīr generally followed Ibn Taymiyya's method, Waled Saleh called his *tafsīr* as a "transitional work between the encyclopedic method and the new radical hermeneutical method" of Ibn Taymiyya.[57] Ibn Kathīr also does not fully represent Ibn Taymiyya's position in regard to *'isma*. *'Isma* for Ibn Taymiyya is conceptualised around the notion of repentance, i.e., "prophets did in fact err but did not persist in sin", which is conflicting position *vis a vis* 'Asharī theology that would apply various interpretative tactics to justify Prophets and emphasise their perfection such was the most demonstrable in the case of al-Razī's *tafsīr*. Ibn Kathīr's approach to *'isma* that can be observed in his exegesis is closer to 'Asharī method of explaining the prophetic stories where Prophets do not sin because of Allah's continuous protection.[58] In terms of Q 38:30-33, Ibn Kathīr accept the issue of missing *'asr* prayer but he prudently justified it through *nisyān* and that it was not the intentional act of disobedience. He also allows the possibility that it could be a special allowance for his *shari'a* during the time of military campaign and Suleyman's checking the racehorse could be a part of it. Further, Ibn Kathīr prefers the opinions of hamstringing (*'aqara*) or killing the horses by a sword because of the missed prayer. He supports it since firstly it could be allowed in Suleyman's *shari'a*[59] and his actions were "a just anger" for the sake of Allah. Secondly, this interpretation fits well with some other narrations saying that since he deprived himself from these beautiful horses for the sake of Allah,

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[54] Younus Y. Mirza, "Was Ibn Kathīr the 'Spokesperson' for Ibn Taymiyya? Jonah as a Prophet of Obedience," *Journal of Qur'anic Studies* 16, no. 1 (2014): 1-19.

[55] On the history of the term and the problem of its analytical value see: Walid A. Saleh, "Preliminary Remarks on the Historiography of Tafsīr in Arabic: A History of the Book Approach," *Journal of Qur'anic Studies* 12 (October 2010): 6-40. https://doi.org/10.3366/E146535911000094X, accessed November 5, 2021.

[56] Walid Saleh, "Ibn Taymiyya and the Rise of Radical Hermeneutics: An Analysis of an Introduction to the Foundations of Qur'ānic Exegesis," in *Ibn Taymiyya and His Times*, eds. Yossef Rapoport & Shahab Ahmed (Oxford University Press, 2010), 123-162.

[57] Ibid, 135.

[58] Mirza, "Was Ibn Kathīr the 'Spokesperson' for Ibn Taymiyya? Jonah as a Prophet of Obedience," 13.

[59] Saleh, 'Preliminary Remarks on the Historiography of Tafsīr in Arabic: A History of the Book Approach', 420-421.

Allah replaced it with giving Suleyman the ability to control the wind and travel by it.[60]

In sum, these various medieval sources provided a polyvalent corpus of narrations which in many cases were not in agreement with the *mufassirūn* vision of what is meant in Q 38:30-33. They did not simply accept the commonly spread opinion of hamstringing and killing by its face value. Yet, they either problematised the case by elaborating on the context, or provided the alternative interpretation or chose what seems to be the correct explanation even if it went against the largely spread position of hamstringing and killing by a sword. It is important that the commonly spread position does not form a unified explanation as various exegets provided different interpretations elaborating on the reasons and aims of the Prophet Suleyman. The most important objection and discomfort that is notable in many of these works is that animals should not be punished by the virtuous Prophet for no reason.

3. Russian Rendering

The Muslim Qur'an translation represents a modern genre of Qur'anic exegesis in a way that the translator takes an active role in selecting the sources and actively making the translation choices in the target text often considering the audience in this process. These choices create an 'objective' new text, the meaning of which claims to represent an authoritative rendition. In this rendition the ambiguities of Arabic source-text which historically provoked multiple interpretations as was shown in the previous section are eliminated or significantly reduced. They often take the form of interpolations or endnotes/footnotes. In translating the Qur'an, the translator is confronted with a large body of Muslim exegetical tradition, with which most of Muslim translators are actively engaging, yet the new genre itself demands clarity, simplicity and accessibility; thus, a translator is consciously reducing and lightening the "structural characteristic"[61] of classical exegesis which was polyvalence in presenting selected opinions. The Qur'an translation are often perceived to be the gate to Islam which aims to bring "guidance" for modern Muslims. That implies bringing clarity about Islam as a way to live this life and understanding the hereafter. Therefore, ideally it should resolve the ambiguities not to display them, the feature which differs significantly from what the premodern *tafsīr* meant.

What are the factors that influence the translators when they are confronted with multiple possibilities? When it is the theological issues such as the Names

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[60] Ibid.

[61] Norman Calder, "Tafsīr from Ṭabarī to Ibn Kathīr: Problems in the Description of a Genre, Illustrated with Reference to the Story of Abraham," in *Approaches to the Qur'ān*, eds. G.R. Hawting and Abdul-Kader A. Shareef (London: Routledge, 1993), 101–140; More on polyvalence: Thomas Bauer, *A Culture of Ambiguity: An Alternative History of Islam,* trans. Hinrich Biesterfeldt and Tricia Tunstall (USA: Columbia University Press, 2021); Pieter Coppens, "Did Modernity End Polyvalence? Some Observations on Tolerance for Ambiguity in Sunni tafsīr," Journal of Qur'anic Studies 23.1 (2021): 36–70.

and Attributes of God (al-ʾAsmāʾ wa al-ṣifāt) or as in case of Q 38:30-33 ʿiṣma, the credal adherence and the particular set of respected tafāsīr are assumed to be the decisive factors in approaching the task of translation. I will further analyze whether this is the case in selected four translations in their approach to Q 38:30-33.

وَوَهَبْنَا لِدَاوُودَ سُلَيْمَانَ ۚ نِعْمَ الْعَبْدُ ۖ إِنَّهُ أَوَّاب

(Q 38:30 And to David We gave Solomon. An excellent servant, indeed he was **one repeatedly turning back [to Allah] (**awwāb**)**)

Q 38:30

Kalam Sharif: И Мы подарили Дауду Сулеймана. Как же прекрасен этот раб [Аллаха]! Поистине, он всегда обращался к Аллаху.

Aliautdinov: И даровали Мы [говорит Господь миров] Дауду (Давиду) Сулеймана (Соломона) [Сулейман был не единственным сыном Дауда, но именно он стал преемником дел отца, по воле Всевышнего и Его благословению]. Сколь прекрасный он раб [Божий]! Воистину, он (Сулейман) — авваб[25] [всегда был возвращающимся, то есть обращенным к Богу, стараясь делать от себя зависящее и ожидая довольства Господа миров].

*Когда мы говорим «возвращающийся к Богу очень набожный верующий» и «возвращающийся к Богу пророк» — разные вещи. Если в первом случае это можно понять как «забыл о Господе и вернулся; согрешил и вернулся», то в случае, когда это касается пророка, предполагать подобное недопустимо. Пророки несли людям Божественную чистоту, назидания и Слово Божье, и они — маʾсумун, то есть безгрешны, они никогда не совершали даже малых грехов, а обвинения и приписывание им тех или иных грехов — клевета и ложь. (38:17-20)

Kuliev (Saadi): Мы даровали Давуду (Да виду) Сулеймана (Соломона). Как прекрасен был этот раб! Воистину, он всегда обращался к Аллаху.
*… Одним из его качеств была искренняя преданность Аллаху. Он обожествлял только одного Аллаха, любил всей душой только Его одного, преклонялся и смирялся только перед Ним и обращался с мольбой о помощи только к Нему. Он усердно стремился снискать благоволение своего Господа и ставил эту цель превыше всего остального.

Abu Adel: И даровали Мы (пророку) Дауду (сына) Сулеймана. Как прекрасен этот раб (Сулейман)! Поистине, он – обращающийся (к Аллаху)!

3.a Awwāb and the issue of time

The story of Suleyman and the horses in Q 38:30 begins with the point of describing Suleyman as awwāb. It is a morphological form known as hyperbolic participle (sigha mubālagha). Sigha mubālagha in Arabic morphology gives the meaning of a constant state of being awwāb, i.e., the intensified state of "turning to Allah", not once but repeatedly. In one of the most respected dictionaries Lisān al-ʿArab written by Ibn Manẓūr (711/1311), awwāb is explained through the multiple meanings,[62] among them are: repentant (tāʾib); the possessor of mercy (rāḥim), and the one who praises Allah abundantly (sabbiḥ). It is also explained as someone who sins, then repents and afterwards the circle is repeated; the one who frequently turns to Allah in

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[62] Ibn Manẓūr, *Lisān al-ʿArab*, ed. Muḥammad ʿAbd al-Wahhāb (Beirut: Dār al-Iḥyāʾ al-Turāth al-ʿArabī, 1997), 1:257.

repentance and obedience.[63] All are seen as the positive qualities since Allah loves the one who does repentance. There is a spectrum for what one may ask forgiveness in Islam and it varies from different sins to even subtle moments of not being conscious in the "presence" of Allah. Aliautdinov opts for leaving the word *awwāb* in Arabic transliteration and makes so-called 'zero-translation', a quite regular approach that is used in his Qur'an translation. This means, he does not try to find the suitable wording for *awwāb* in Russian but prefers instead to provide an extensive footnote where he explains the linguistic feature of *sigha mubālagha* and adopts the explanation that it is the one who sins and then turns to Allah in repentance. He warns his readers about the difference of *awwāb* in relation to an ordinary human and a prophet and comments that since *awwāb* means repeatedly "turning to Allah", for human it implies as "forgetting then turning" and "sinning and turning". At the same time, according to Aliautdinov, such understanding is possible only for ordinary Muslims but impossible for prophets as they are ""*maʿṣūmūn*", i.e., sinless and they never committed even small sins, and accusations and attribution of certain sins to them are slander and lie." It is important that Prophets were among those who ask forgiveness through *dhikr* and prayers which overwhelmingly understood in Islamic tradition as not the act of turning after sinning but as an act of gratitude.[64]

The terminological feature explained by Aliautdinov of *sigha mubālagha* leaves the readers with ambiguity as the term is explained but its relation to the Prophet Suleyman is not applicable. One may still have a question as to why *awwāb* is used for Suleyman in the Qur'an and why Aliautdinov' interpretative strategy explains the feature of the term and choses the adopted meaning that cannot be applied to the verse.

Kalam Sharif in rendering Q 30:30 avoided the matter of *ʿiṣma* that is present in Arabic if one applies *awwāb* from the human perspective to the prophetic. *Sigha mubālagha* is partially explained just by the word "always" (*vsegda*) which is added to turning. In the Salafi translations, *awwāb* and *ʿiṣma* are not connected. Abu Adel does not add the specifics of *awwāb* in his translation and simply renders it as "turning" (обращающийся), while Kuliev is very similar to *Kalam Sharif* in a way of pointing to the permanency of being *awwāb* that is achieved again by the word always (*vsegda*). In Kuliev's translation of Saʿdī's commentary we find that *awwāb* has not been approached from the perspective of sinning/repenting but was used as an opportunity to emphasize Allah's Oneness (*tawḥīd*). Since *tawḥīd* is the main Muslim religious concept that is often used by Salafis to demonstrate the "imperfections" of religious interpretation by other Muslim groups, the emphasis was not on the process of

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[63] For an extended lexical and semantic survey of *tawba* (repentance) and its derivatives see: Atif Khalil, *Repentance and the Return to God: Tawba in Early Sufism* (USA: Suny Press, 2018), 13-22.

[64] ʿĀʾisha also reported: "When the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) prayed (the night prayers: Qiyam-ul-layl), he would stand until (the skin of) his feet swelled. So, I said: "O Prophet of Allah, do you do as such while Allah has forgiven you all mistakes?"He responded: "Should not I be a grateful servant of Allah?" (Muslim); Ibn Umar reported: The Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him, said, "O people, turn to Allah in repentance. Verily, I repent to Him one hundred times in a day." Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim 2702.

turning, but that Suleyman was "turning to Allah *only*, i.e., in his love, worship and humility." By inserting 'only' into the Russian rendering, which was absent in the original text of *tafsīr* al-Sa'dī, the reader's understanding is settled specifically on the proper way how a worshiper should address to his/her Lord. Perhaps, back then Kuliev's understanding on the contextual specificities of Russia made him imperative to particularly emphasize this issue in his rendering.

The translation of these verses will inevitably lead to a noticeable difference, which will depend on the range of synonyms that exist in the target language and how the author stylistically chooses among them. The strategy has to do with how closely one prefers to follow the source text when defining aspects of each particular word in the absence of its exact equivalents. Which meanings are important for the context of other related verses and which ones can be discarded without losing important details of the story? In Q 38:31 the story of the Prophet Suleyman and horses happens in the specific time, i.e., *'ashiiyy,* for Aliautdinov it means just evening (вечер)*,* for *Kalam Sharif* afternoon (the second half of the day - во второй половине дня), Abu Adel opts for late afternoon (предвечернее время) and Kuliev renders it as post meridiem/ afternoon (после полудня).

The difference may seem insignificant, however when the whole Qur'anic pericope of 30-33 is considered in the translation it is noticeable that the translators were unfolding the story in particular ways that imply particular choices from various *tafāsīr*, which in turn create four different assemblages in translations. All of the translators try to connect the verses in a meaningful and coherent way which will correspond to their understanding of the story.

3.b Aliautdinov and Muslim ethics

If the specific time that is connected to a certain period of the prayer is not mentioned in the text, then the issue of missing a prayer in that period does not represent an exegetical problem. This is exactly the case with Aliautdinov's approach, he points to just evening, therefore *ṣalāt al-'aṣr* has no substantial reference anymore. His endurance of *'iṣma* is also traceable through the renderings of ambiguous prepositions attached to the word "disappear" (*tawārāt*) in Q 38:32. All of the translators discussed here mentioned "sun" as the implied preposition, except Aliautdinov, who mentions both options, i.e., "horses" and "sun" in the brackets. Although in the footnotes he says that sun is mentioned more often in the commentaries it is still logical to understand that Aliautdinov gives more preference to "horses" as he inserted the interpolation within the verse not at the end as he did with the sun. It might be also seen as an attempt to lessen the reference to the missing prayer which is defined in *tafāsīr* by the sunset. Referring to prominent Syrian scholar Muḥammad 'Alī al-Ṣābūnī (d. 2021) who was the author of short and long Qur'an commentaries Aliautdinov points in the footnotes al-Ṣābūnī's position that the opinion of missing the prayer is weak [*ḍa'īf*], which Aliautdinov translates as "canonically unreliable". *Ḍa'īf* is a category of *hadīth* terminology and it signifies that it either problematic from the perspective of the chain of

narrators or the content of the text itself.[65] It nevertheless does not mean that it cannot be used, however with Aliautdinov's translation as "canonically unreliable" the issue of the omitted prayer was authoritatively removed. Al-Ṣābūnī as a contemporary conservative scholar with Azhari background, who is considered to be a trustworthy source especially for the recent *Kalam Sharif* translation as he was mentioned in the preface among the sources. Thus, both *Kalam Sharif* and Aliautdinov were aware about al-Ṣābūnī's representation of the story. While Aliautdinov refers to al-Ṣābūnī in respect to the issue of missing prayer, al-Ṣābūnī's further explanation of verses was not fully accepted by Aliautdinov.

Though al-Ṣābūnī is clearly against the idea that the Prophet can leave the prayer because of being destructed by *dunyā,* saying that *dhikr* needs to be interpreted as supererogatory devotional remembrance (*wird khaṣṣ*) not the obligatory prayer, he nevertheless prefers the opinion that the Prophet Suleyman did not touch the horses with love by *masaḥa.* Al-Ṣābūnī supports that the Prophet asked to return the horses and he slaughter (*zabaḥ*) them and cut (*qaṭaʿa*) their legs making it a food for poor in order to come closer to Allah. This interpretation continues that Prophet's atonement was a way of making himself free from the worldly affairs for the sake of Allah and further was accepted by Allah, who subjugated the wind as a reward for the Prophet Suleyman. This was the opinion most closely adopted by *Kalam Sharif* excluding the part about the wind. Aliautdinov however shows his position in going against this interpretation and he entirely avoided the preference of horses over the *dhikr* in the main text. For Aliautdinov, similarly to al-Razī's opinion, and the two Turkish Qur'an meali (by Ali Unal and Suad Yildirim[66]) that he used for his work, the Prophetic love for something good in general (and for these horses in particular) is connected to the remembrance of Allah, which in turn fills the Prophet with gratitude. In this way of interpretation, the beautiful horses function as the reminders of Allah and by avoiding the issue of preference, Aliautdinov therefore purportedly avoided the controversy in the translation that existed in *tafāsīr*.

For Aliautdinov verses should be read as a coherent passage that begins with the emphasis on *ʿiṣma* in describing *awwāb* in Q 38:30 and ends with a merciful Prophet who gently strokes the horses in Q 38:33. He opts for 'stroking' for *masaḥa* (as well as caressing and wiping the dust in the interpolation) these noble race horses. Aliautdinov is therefore eager to provide his rendering as an appropriate one for translation. In the footnote however he mentioned the alternative provided by al-Ṣābūnī and calls it not as an alternative version which is also based on the narrations but simply as an "assumption". Such an approach clearly marginalised the second possibility of slaughtering as food for the poor let alone the issue of just cutting the legs, or hamstringing as other earlier *tafāsīr* were mentioning.

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[65] More about *hadīth* terminology: Jonathan A.C. Brown, *Hadith: Muhammad's Legacy in the Medieval and Modern World* (USA: One World Academic, 2017).

[66] Kur'an-i Kerim Meali, trans. Suat Yildirim, http://www.ortakhatim.com/mukabele/MEAL/38.html, accessed November 5, 2021; Allah Kelâmi Kur'ân-I Kerîm ve Açiklamali Meali, trans. Ali Ünal (Izmir: Define Yayinlari, 2007), 991.

The word *masaḥa* in the analysed Qur'an translations appears as two options either *gladit'/poglazhivat'* (stroking) or *rubit'* (hacking). The second *rubit'* has very violent connotations and Aliautdinov uses his Qur'an translation as a place for critique other Muslim translators who opted for this second word. Through the various classical sources mentioned in his translations such as Ibn Kathīr, al-Qurṭubī or even the position of contemporary scholar al-Ṣābūnī, it is clear that he is well-aware about the *tafāsīr* debates. However, he clearly states in the footnote that such "harsh" rendering adopted in some Russian translations is "wrong, ignorant and unacceptable". What is the guiding principle for such an approach? The position that the Prophet Suleyman was striking horses with a sword[67] was an established view from early works of *tafāsīr,* which in some cases was either accepted or complicated by some added clarifications including the purpose of that striking or the conditions under which the stroking was acceptable. Simply putting the word *rubit'* in the rendering of Qur'anic words without any clarifications according to Aliautdinov goes against "Muslim ethics", the concept which is not clearly defined by Aliautdinov himself.

There are two main problems that are particularly demonstrative in this verse and that are intrinsic more generally to what Pink calls *educational* type of Qur'an translations, i.e the works written by Muslims and targeting Muslim audience that does not have sufficient knowledge Arabic for understanding the scriptural meanings.[68] The first problem is accepting the responsibility in picking up a certain word in the target language which would become a central medium through which Russian readers understand the Qur'an's original wording. The second is a conscious reduction of polarising understanding of the word *masaḥa* in *tafāsīr* tradition. In order to deals with this translator's challenges, Aliautdinov refers to the concept of Muslim ethics as a modern frame which govern the translator choice. We might understand this translator's choice from the two perspectives: practical and ethical. The practical implies that the target text should be coherent, understandable and the insertions should be limited. If one adopts the version of al-Ṣābūnī for example, it needs inclusion of extensive interpolations in order to make the story logical and having understandable edificatory value. As such it would include clarification of the type of *dhikr*, then *'iṣma* justification of the Prophet who has forgot it about the *dhikr*, further the nature of Prophetic atonement, the purpose of slaughtering and the story of Allah's replacement his penance with something what is better, namely the wind. This all was included in the additional footnote which Aliautdinov called a *mufassirūn* assumption, however the inclusion of such long interpolations within the main text would create an understory in parallel with the Qur'anic translation which is clearly not how the genre works.

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[67] The word sword *sayf* is present in various Qur'anic commentaries, while in the actual text of the Qur'anic verse it is absent, on *sayf* in the works of exegetes see: Majid Daneshgar, "Sword," in *Encyclopaedia of the Qur'ān,* Consulted online on 04 October 2021 http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/1875-3922_q3_EQCOM_051595.

[68] Johanna Pink, "Translation," in *The Routledge Companion to the Qur'an,* eds. George Archer, Maria M. Dakake, Daniel A. Madigan (New York: Routledge, 2021), 371.

Another way to understand this approach is through the ethical perspective. Since Aliautdinov recalls "Muslim ethics" as a way to criticize other translators' choices, it implies that his approach is the one that corresponds to the notion. Violent *rubit'* within the main text of Qur'an translation without inserting the large clarifying interpolations would not provide an image of a "righteous deed" performed by the Prophet for at least a modern readership and thus would challenge the Qur'anic massage where the Prophetic stories are the examples of the beautiful demeanour protected by *'iṣma*. Love and attraction towards something good which comes as a result of remembrance of Allah and being grateful to Him for these good things bestowed is the renderings that provide a clear ethical and moral teaching and could be viewed easily within the category of ethical verses (*āyāt al-akhlāq*).[69] Some parallels could be drawn between the modern Muslim scholars who see as imperative to examine contemporary legal issues through the lens of moral and ethical theory[70] and the appeal to "Muslim ethics" by Muslim translators as a frame through which the appropriate interpretation could be incorporating it within the target text.

3.c Kalam Sharif and the majority opinion

Kalam Sharif unfolds the story in a different way. The love towards good (horses) distracted the Prophet Suleyman from the remembrance (*pominaniye/поминание*) of Allah which was then followed by the sunset and the Prophet's request to bring the horses back to him. He then began to hack/chop (*rubit'/рубить*) their legs and necks. The format in which *Kalam Sharif* is written allows lesser possibilities of interpolations, which are restricted to just a few clarifications inside the text, as it is seen in the table []: slave of Allah, Suleyman, horses, sun, horizon and horses. Perhaps, assuming the violent connotation that might be understood from reading this translation, *Kalam Sharif*'s added a clarificatory footnote that supplies the translation with additional meanings. In accordance with it, the Prophet was examining the racehorses prepared for the war and it was a kind of worship in itself. This reference to the preparation to war correlates with views of some *mufassirūn* who referred to the military campaign (*ghazwa*), a battle guided by faith thus interpreted as a "worship in itself".[71] While *dhikr* in the translation was rendered as remembrance without any interpolation that would point to the prayer, from the footnote we understand that the Prophet missed *namâz,* a Persian word largely adopted in Russian and Turkic languages for a ritual Muslim prayer either obligatory or supererogatory. *Kalam Sharif* added that 'likely' (*veroyatno/вероятно*) was a supererogatory not the obligatory prayer but still the exact meaning was not settled in the translation. The following action of

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[69] On the devision of Qur'anic verses to juristic rulings (*āyāt al-aḥkām*) and ethics (*āyāt al-akhlāq*) see: Muʿtaz al-Khaṭīb, "Min al-muqāraba al-fiqhiyya ʾila al- muqāraba al-akhlāqiyya: al-Ijtihād al-muʿāṣir wa al-jīnūm namūdhijān," *Journal of Islamic Ethics* 1, 1-2 (2017): 83-121, doi: **https://doi.org/10.1163/24685542-12340005**

[70] See for example: Ibid; Khaled Abou El Fadl, "Qur'anic Ethics and Islamic Law," *Journal of Islamic Ethics* 1, no. 1-2 (2017): 7-28, doi: https://doi.org/10.1163/24685542-12340002.

[71] Elsaid M. Badawi, Muhammad Abdel Haleem, "Ghazwa," in *Arabic-English Dictionary of Qur'anic Usage (*Leiden: Brill, 2008*),* 665.

hacking/chopping (*rubit*) is explained that the Prophet made a sacrifice of nine hundred horses[72] and distributed the meat for those in need.

Kalam Sharif's approach in writing the footnotes does not represent a consistency in mentioning the references. Sometimes the names of the *mufassirūn* whose opinions have been adopted are mentioned. However, in some cases such as the case of the footnote for Q 38:33, we don't find any reference. This might signify the creative reconstruction of meanings which depend on a variety of sources for such a complex case as Q 38:30-33, thus the sources used are not given. *Kalam Sharif* mentioned many *tafāsīr* of the past throughout its footnotes, but its three main sources are the translation of Turkish Sufi shaykh Mahmud Ufi's *Qur'an Majīd*[73], *Tafsīr al-Jalalayn* and al-Ṣābunī's *al-Wāḍiḥ al-Muyassar*. These three main sources are reflecting the general outlook of *Kalam Sharif* that was briefly discussed earlier, yet the interpretations of Q 38:30-3 in these sources are not the same. Contemporary Turkish Sufi shaykh Mahmud Ufi in his translation-meali Q 38:32-3 mentions clearly in the interpolations about the time of the end of the *'aṣr* prayer and Suleyman's missing of it because of the beautiful horses.[74] Ufi nevertheless emphasized *'iṣma* in the comments by mentioning the possibility that it might be not an obligatory but a supererogatory prayer and he justified the Prophet Suleyman through his forgetfulness of the prayer and emphasizing that it is "not a sin at all". *Kalam Sharif* makes the translation briefer and while Ufi puts the controversy of the *'aṣr* prayer in the interpolations of the text, *Kalam Sharif* reduces it to the footnote. In both Ufi interpolation and *Kalam Sharif's* footnotes we find the word *namâz,* not just remembrance or recollection. *Tafsīr al-Jalalayn* unproblematically mentioned the *'aṣr* prayer too but Shaykh al-Ṣābunī's *tafsīr* takes a different stance as it does not accept the idea of missing the *'aṣr* prayer by the Prophet Suleyman. Al-Ṣābunī explains it by the two main objections. First, the Qur'anic word *dhikr* is mentioned not the word for ritual prayer (*ṣalā*), thus the version of obligatory prayer has a lesser basis and secondly that it is hard to believe that a Prophet will miss the obligatory prayer. Al-Ṣābunī's speaks about supererogatory *wird* as *dhikr* in the time of *'aṣr,* thus diminishing the controversy of *ṣalā/ namâz* altogether. For al-Ṣābunī the endurance of *'iṣma* is not connected to the issue of *nisyān* as for Ufi for example as he tends to avoid the issue of ritual prayer at all. *Kalam Sharif* despite this possibility turns to adopt the interpretation closer to Mahmud Ufi and *al-Jalalayn* that still retains the level of controversy because forgetfulness of *ṣalā* as a ritual is more problematic than a form of *dhikr*. *Kalam Sharif's*

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[72] This opinion of 900 horses was mentioned in the Qur'an commentaries by al-Qurṭubī.

[73] Despite the fact that Shaykh Ufi is known to be a Sufi shaykh, his translation-meali does not resembles the genre of *Ishārāt* and he rarely refers to Sufi associated figures. DUMTR's position towards Sufism can be described as tolerant and supportive towards its 'sober' interpretation of Sufism, in fact, muftii Kamil Samigullin, was known to be a follower of Ufi's teachings. See: Michael Kemper, Gulnaz Sibgatullina, "Liberal Islamic Theology in Conservative Russia: Taufik Ibragim's "Qur'ānic Humanism,"" *Die Welt des Islams* 61, 3 (2021): 301, doi: **https://doi.org/10.1163/15700607-61020002.** Nevertheless, the current conjuncture of anti-Salafi polemics, inevitably affects DUMTR's outlook and its avoidance of Sufi interpretation can be understood as a way to overcome Salafi criticism.

[74] Although later he also mentioned the possibility that during the time of the Prophet Suleyman it was not obligatory. A similar approach was taken by *Kalam Sharif* in the footnotes.

selectivity in creating Russian rendering is also demonstrative in avoidance of the minor positions. For example, Ufi's translation into Turkish has 'mysterious' interpolations mentioned in some earlier sources as a minor position about the preposition in the word *ruddūha.* For Ufi, the Prophet asked angels to bring sun back so that he could recompense the missed prayer which was then followed by slaughtering the horses. This miraculous and tendentious interpretation about the return of the sun was avoided in *Kalam Sharif,* as well as Ufi's cautious point that horse meat was permissible in the Prophet Suleyman's *sharīa.* In contemporary Turkish culture, which is the cultural setting of Ufi, the hippophagy is not a custom, while horse eating is a very strong and significant Tatar culinary tradition where horsemeat products play an important role for Tatars' identity.

In regards to *masaḥa,* Ufi renders it as *sıvazlamaya,* i.e a literal translation that corresponds to gently stroking but he inserts the additional meanings of *qurbān*, sword, slaughtering, atonement, all within the brackets, thus the literal meanings of the translation become understood metaphorically. *Kalam Sharif's* is direct in this sense, it goes for *rubit'* in the main text itself as a direct translation and only the footnotes clarify the meanings of *qurbān* and the meat distribution. Perhaps, it might be an example of the way how the context is influencing the translator's choice here and the acceptance of hippophagy in Tatar culture facilitates the preference of *rubit'.*[75] In the public clarification on the social platform Telegram about the choice for *rubit',* *Kalam Sharif's* representative and one of the team members, young preacher Ahmad Abu Yahya[76] provided the explanation of the translation choice. Abu Yahya's explanation consisted from the references to authoritative classical *mufassirūn,* representing the intellectual constellation of authority for *Kalam Sharif's* team and for similar minded Muslim translators around the world: al-Razī, al-Ṭabarī, al-Qurṭubī, ibn Kathīr, al-Bayḍāwī, *tafsīr* al-Jalalayn, al-Nasafī, Ibn Jawzī (d. 1201), Aḥmad al-Ṣāwī (d. 1825). The argument in support of *rubit'* is based on the classical and post-classical Muslim authorities. These "*tafsīr* heroes" are widely known and they constitute the main authority rather than specific to the DUMRT's "localised orthodoxy" of the "traditional" Islam. The "*tafsīr* heroes" are the standard set of sources which Asharī-Maturīdī-oriented Muslims would consult. The central factor that influenced the choice for *Kalam Sharif* team in this particular example was to establish the majority opinion (*al-jumhūr*) of these widely acknowledged representatives of Asharī-Maturīdī creed.

If we look more broadly to the whole translation, it is possible to find some rare mentioning of Tatar Muslim scholars of the past such as Shihāb al-dīn Marjānī (d. 1889) in a few places of the translation, the Tatar legacy in general clearly

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[75] *Kalam Sharif* in Tatar language has a wider commentary: it has a caution that horse meat was permissible for the Prophet, clarification about the preposition of the "return of the sun," the theme of forgetfulness and three references (al-Bayḍāwī, al- Nasafī, al-Ālūsī) were mentioned.

[76] Ahmad Abu Yahya (b. 1983) is a popular Muslim preacher and a Russian convert to Islam. He is in the close circle of DUMTR' muftiy Kamil Samigullin. Apart from his BA degree in Sharīa from RIU (2018), Ahmad Abu Yahya studied Islamic sciences in the various "tradition-oriented" settings among which are of Dagestan, Egypt and Turkey. For the detail biography see: http://annisa-today.ru/category/blogi/axmad-abu-yaxya/, accessed October 9, 2021; https://www.business-gazeta.ru/article/525960, accessed October 17, 2021.

does not represent the argumentative pillar of *Kalam Sharif's* Russian and even Tatar rendering. For example, one year earlier of *Kalam Sharif's* publication there was publication by Tatar scholar Alfrid Bustanov, a Tatar translation of the Qur'an by *mufti* Gabdelbari Isaev (d. 1982) in which, incidentally, the *masaḥa* as touching (сыйпарга) was chosen.[77] For DUMRT the main landmark for the reconstruction of the "traditional Islam" is pre-revolutionary Tatar habitus, so-called "*Qadimists*" (traditionalists), as opposed to "*Jadids*"(modernists) and most of the post-revolutionary Muslim figures. In such an imaginary Isaev's or other Tatar translations do not constitute the reference point on which *Kalam Sharif's* built upon. Moreover, there are no reference to the later Ottoman or local supra-commentaries/glosses on the Qur'an *tafsīr* (sing. *ḥāshiya*, pl. *ḥawāshī*) the use of which would be indeed a sign of the intellectual continuity of the tradition. We might understand from this way of referencing and translation choice a certain globally spread influence of the main "rediscovered Islamic classics"[78] that are constitutive for the genre of Qur'an translation. Despite the discursive attempt to situate a particular Islamic expression in one's cultural settings, it is usually the main "*tafsīr* heroes" whose manuscripts have been published and popularised in modernity that constitute the frame of references for various languages in producing Qur'an translation. As a next step from these main globally popularised references, the translator consequently makes his/her or as in case of *Kalam Sharif,* the group makes their localised choice. It is rare that the genre of Qur'an translations relies on the particular local tradition of Qur'an interpretation even if it is present in the discursive positioning of a group.

Another significant feature in making the translator choice here is the trope following of *al-jumhūr* which was tracible from Abu Yahya's explanation of the translation of Q 38:30-33*.*

The argumentation of *Kalam Sharif's* team is based on the references to these main "*tafsīr* heroes", however it is important that they are not hesitant to go against their positions and reject their argumentation in favour of supposed *al-jumhūr.* For example, al-Ṭabarī and al-Razī are despite being prevalently categorised among by Muslims as representing two different genres of *tafsīr*, i.e. *bil-riwāya/bil-ra'y*, both are the crucial references for the genre of modern Muslim Qur'an translations and were used in *Kalam Sharif* in order to justify the choice for *rubit'.* While both of them argued for *masaḥa* as touching not killing, they both mentioned the alternative versions against which they argued. In case of al-Ṭabarī we find more narrations for *masaḥa* as killing and hamstringing[79] (3 vs 1) instead of the gentle touching; and al-Razī was refuting the spread opinion (*al-aktharūn*) among the *mufassirūn* of his time. Thus, we

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[77] Qur'an Karīm, trans. Gabdelbari Isaev, ed. A. Bustanov (Kazan: Kazanskaya nedvizhimost', 2018) [Габделбари хәзрәт Низаметдин улы Исаев. Коръән Кәрим тәрҗемәсе/ Фәнни мөхәррире, ред. Ә.К. Бостанов. (Казан: Издательский дом «Казанская недвижимость», 2018)], 381.

[78] Ahmed el-Shamsy, *Rediscovering the Islamic Classics: How Editors and Print Culture Transformed an Intellectual Tradition* (Princeton University Press, 2020), 240.

[79] Significantly, in case of al-Ṭabarī, the set of narrations that oppose *masaḥa* as touching have no meanings of *qurbān* and food distribution for poor. This points to the creative compilation of modern Qur'an translators and their approach to the selection of meanings.

can understand that the reference to "*tafsīr* heroes" does not necessarily mean the acceptance of their positions. They do not always represent the main source of authority in making the choice for meanings but can be used as just a way to the larger debates where the modern Muslim Qur'an translators could prefer the opinion of sometimes indefinite *al-jumhūr* despite that it was contested or even denied by the "*tafsīr* heroes".

3.d The Salafi paradigm and Beyond in Kuliev and Abu Adel

In turning to the remaining two translations and their approach to Q 38:30-33, it is useful to sketch what the present-day Salafi approach to *tafsīr* implies. It is also significant to recall that the term Salafi which is used here in relation to Kuliev and Abu Adel translations is related to the interpretative methodology of their Qur'an translations that is approved largely by Russian speaking Salafi communities but it is not used as a marker of the translators themselves. Salafism as a social phenomenon has its own characteristics and defining features that are beyond the scope of this paper.[80] What is discussed here is the Salafi approach to hermeneutics and not Salafism as a social category. This distinction is important because both translators at the time of this research do not label themselves as Salafis and their intellectual trajectories have passed through several transformations that resulted in various writings and activities beyond the field of Qur'an and *tafsīr* studies and deserve a separate study.

The modern Salafi paradigm to Qur'an *tafsīr* has a number of central features which are also relevant to the Qur'an translations as a form of Muslim exegesis.[81] As was briefly discussed earlier the figure of Ibn Taymiyya is a crucial intellectual pillar for modern Salafism and his influence had far reaching consequences for modern Muslim hermeneutics. With the advent of the print and the spread of publishing activities by important Muslim actors in Syria, Saudi Arabia and Egypt, there was a rise of the Salafi publications based on the manuscript works where the driving force of this intellectual project was the publication of Ibn Taymiyya's *Muqaddima fī uṣūl al-tafsīr*.[82] The Taymiyyan approach to hermeneutics promoted in *Muqaddima* was based on the triad of sources that constituted certainty for a *mufassir:* the words of the Prophet, the Companions and the Successors. *Muqaddima* celebrated some works which were more or less adherent to this paradigm and disregarded those which were full of other discourses such as scholastic theology, philosophy and philology. The endorsement to the Taymiyyan paradigm influenced that certain works were preferred for being published and promoted, this in turn influenced which works penetrated to the educational curricula and eventually which works have been largely and globally translated to other languages from Arabic

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[80] Lauziere, "The Constructionof Salafi yya: Reconsidering Salafi sm from the Perspective of Conceptual History," 369–89.

[81] For the detailed genealogy of the Salafi paradigm and the modern Salafi examples of *tafsīr* see: Johanna Pink, *Muslim Qur'ānic Interpretation Today: Media, Genealogies and Interpretive Communities*, (Bristol, CT: Equinox Publishing Ltd, 2018), 48–80.

[82] Saleh, "Preliminary Remarks on the Historiography of Tafsīr in Arabic," 123-162.

and as well as used for the translations of the Qur'an.[83] Importantly, there is no available full *tafsīr* by Ibn Taymiyya himself[84], thus the Salafis have their own "*tafsīr* heroes" that purportedly fit to the *tafsīr* notions of *bil-riwāya* (or *bil-ma'thūr*) or the exegetical works that are known to in conformity to the Salafi trope of reading the Qur'an 'in accordance with the beliefs of the first, righteous generations of believers' i.e. *al-salaf al-sāliḥ*. Similarly, to the preference of anti-Salafi traditionalists (in example of *Kalam Sharif*'s team) some of "*tafsīr* heroes" of Salafis are the contemporaries such as Saudi-produced teamwork *al-Tafsīr al-Muyassar* ('Simplified *tafsīr*') or *Taysīr al-karīm al-raḥmān* by ʿAbd al-Raḥmān b. Nāṣir al-Saʿdī (1889–1956), and some of them are "rediscovered Islamic classics" of the premodern period.[85] The line between the authorities, of course, is not always straightforward and there are various converges like the figures al-Ṭabarī or Ibn Kathīr that are considered to be authoritative even for the opposite camps*.*

While Salafism was not alien to the Soviet spaces even before the fall of the Soviet Union, after the era of independence the transnational educational trips became possible and Russian speaking Muslims became more closely involved in various educational settings existing in the Muslim world. Thus, they became easily connected and more closely tied to Muslim educational institutions and private teachings in such countries as Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Syria, Yemen. There, they could learn Islamic sciences in the native Arabic environment, buy and subsequently translate various Arabic books. It happened to be that the Salafi settings provided more opportunities and together with the univocal and unambiguous appeal of its orthodoxy and orthopraxy focused on certainty, Salafism became extremely popular worldwide including post-Soviet Muslims. The Salafi approach provided a clear map for understanding the "truth", which was exclusively scripturalist. Religious certainty could be achieved by reading the scripture and understanding it through the triad of the Taymiyyan paradigm. It fit well with the modern sentiments that wanted to avoid confusion, complexity and the ambiguities in interpretation. Straightforward meanings were much more attractive to accept as it empowers an average Muslim to understand what "God really says" and in case of the translations without even the knowledge of Arabic. In fact, it could be said that the "ideal peak" of Salafi interpretation is embodied in the Qur'an translations since here the polyvalence does not represent the feature of the genre itself. The Salafi paradigm as applied to Qur'an translations would often manifest in the emphasis on *tawḥīd,* as we have seen in example of *'awwāb* in Kuliev's translation of Q 38:30. In some languages, the Salafi paradigm can be seen as the insertion of the differentiation of the types of *tawḥīd* into three categories 'the Oneness of Lordship (*tawḥīd al-rububiyya*), 'the Oneness of Godship' (*tawḥīd al-ilāhiyya*), and 'the Unity of Worship' (*tawḥīd al-ʿibāda*), which is the

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[83] Alfrid K. Bustanov, 'The Language of Moderate Salafism in Eastern Tatarstan', *Islam and Christian–Muslim Relations* 28, no. 2 (3 April 2017): 183–201.

[84] Sohaib Said made an important observation that Ibn Taymiyyah's opinions about certain specific verses are often neglected or his modern proponents are not simply aware of them. Thus, his opinions do not appear in Saudi commentaries such as in al-Muyassar.

[85] Ahmed el-Shamsy, *Rediscovering the Islamic Classics: How Editors and Print Culture Transformed an Intellectual Tradition* (Princeton University Press, 2020).

Taymiyyan influence and can be identified in comments or interpolations to some certain verses.[86] The theme of prophetic *ʿiṣma,* contrary to Asharī-Maturīdī-oriented translations, rarely represents an issue that deserves special comments or interpolations that would justify the Prophets. Since, Salafis favor the avoidance of the figurative interpretations, it could be said that, perhaps the main feature unifying the Salafi Qur'an translations is the particular approach towards *al-ʾAsmāʾ wa al- Ṣifāt* that are either left untranslated or translated literally to the target language. Usually *al-ʾAsmāʾ wa al- Ṣifāt* is the main feature that is meticulously checked by the Salafi readership in order to approve or disapprove a certain translation.

The Salafi paradigm is helpful for understanding the similarities between the translations labelled as Salafi. There are, however, a variety of specificities in each case that may tell us more about the reasonings and translation strategies beyond the set of the Salafi paradigm's features. The close look to the examples of Kuliev and Abu Adel's translations of Q 38:30-33 is particularly revealing because they adopt opposing interpretations of *masaḥa*.

Kuliev and the realisation of regret

Elmir Kuliev's translation of Q 38:30-33 demonstrates a closer connection to the supportive *tafsīr* (al-Saʿdī). Al-Saʿdī's succinct commentaries, repeat some of the early commentators in stating that *aḥbabtu* (loved) in this context means *athartu* (preferred). Kuliev's translation fully adopts the offered wording instead of the literal translation of the Qur'anic word by replacing it with the word 'preferred' (*predpochel/предпочел*). The close following of the *tafsīr* is in relation to the word *masaḥa* as well. The *tafsīr* of al-Saʿdī clarifies that *masaḥa* means *yaʿqarha* (hamstringing them), the position that was often mentioned by earlier *mufassirūn*. Among the *mufassirūn* there is a certain tendency with time to provide more explanation about the purposes of killing the horses, however al-Saʿdī is not very rich in terms of the specific details. Same is what is happening in Kuliev's translation of his *tafsīr*.

According to it, the Prophet Suleyman missed the evening prayer (*ṣalāt al-masā*) and *dhikr,* which gives the understanding of the ritual prayer but the type of it is unspecified. While we don't know whether it is obligatory or supererogatory, there is no discomfort in admitting that the Prophet could prefer 'continuingly' looking at horses with admiration instead of turning to worship. Realisation of what has happened, followed but a genuine regret and hamstringing the horses' legs and chop off/hacking their heads (*он начал подрезать им поджилки и рубить головы*). There is a slight difference between al-Saʿdī and Kuliev's translation. Al-Saʿdī mentioned *ʿaqara* (hamstringing) with the mentioning that it was done by a sword, so the Prophet hamstrung the legs and then necks. Kuliev left hamstringing but dropped the sword. In Russian, the sword is usually used with the verb *rubit'.* This might be

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[86] See the GloQur talk by Mykhaylo Yakubovych, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wKVsVHPu-tg&t=1603s, accessed November 05, 2021.

clarifying how precisely the word *rubit'* was adopted in Kuliev and appeared in the later translations.[87]

Since the word *'aqara* was often used by *mufassirūn* prior to al-Saʿdī, it is important to understand its semantic meanings. Ibn Manẓūr (d. 1311), the lexicographer and author of one of the most authoritative Arabic dictionaries, *Lisān al-ʿArab,* explains that when the word is used in relation to animals such as horses and camels it means to cut their legs with a sword, as a preventive actions of their running away. The animal falls down and becomes stable for the slaughterer. It is necessarily used in conjunction with slaughtering and the ultimate goal is the slaughtering for food where the animal is slaughtered in the name of Allah. The other cases of hamstringing were not seen as acceptable, for example, Ibn Manẓūr mentioned that blameworthy Arab practice of competition in which the rivalry sides would do hamstringing, competing who would kill a larger number of animals. He warns from eating the animals from such competitions because the purpose of this slaughtering was not for Allah but showing off. The hamstringing of legs is considered as a step of slaughtering which is followed by cutting the throats. Ibn Manẓūr, mentioned the narration saying that 'there is no hamstringing in Islam', meaning that slaughtering an animal for the purpose of obsequies is also wrong (when the relatives of a death person are obliged to slaughter an animal for the guests). Another point is that hamstringing is not allowed as an independent act without slaughtering because it is mutilation and brings torture to animals. Thus, when *'aqara* is mentioned in the work of *mufassirūn,* it prevalently meant the inclusion of the act of slaughtering in Arabic. It It is hard to say for sure what the word exactly meant for al-Saʿdī, who mentioned only one-word *'aqara* and then legs and necks but since the process of slaughtering through *'aqara* is established in the Arabic language as well as within the practice of Islamic slaughtering that permits hamstringing in case of such animals as camels or horses if there is a danger for the slaughterer and the risk of animal's running away, it is reasonable to assume that for Arabic reader the phrase implies slaughtering.

This is however not the case with the translation into Russian, as the meaning of hamstringing (*подрезать поджилки*) does not necessarily imply slaughtering. Moreover, for the general readership without prior-knowledge of this not widely-spread practice, the conjunction of hamstringing and then *rubit',* creates a confusing image of the whole narrative. Kuliev's translation of al-Saʿdī is close to the source text and there is no additional information added

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[87] Previous to Kuliev, the selection of *rubit'* as well as hamstringing (*podrezat' podzhilki/подрезать поджилки*) was used in Osmanov's translation which might be also the source for Kuliev's choice. Prior to him, Ignaty Krachkovsky and Valeria Porokhova translated *masaḥa* as touching. Osmanov's work provides a wide range of opinions and he used different sources outside of Sunni 'orthodoxy' including the translation by Ahmadiyya and some Shia commentaries. While, the work is known in academic circles and received generally positive reviews, it neither replaced popular Krachkovsky's translation in academia no was widely accepted by ordinary Muslim communities. *Koran*, trans. Magomed-Nuri Osmanov (Moscow: Dilya, 2014); *Koran: Perevod Smyslov I Kommentarii*, trans. Valeriya Iman Porokhova (Moscow: RIPOL klassik, 2005).

that would soften the explanation such as the food distribution for the poor for example. The justification for the action is to come closer to Allah and Kuliev's rendering more precisely even than the source text explains that it is a way of proving that the love towards Allah is above anything else that led the Prophet to the following actions. While for *Kalam Sharif*'s, despite opting for *rubit'*, the Prophetic *ʿiṣma* was an important issue which they tried to achieve by emphasising the related to *rubit'* actions such as the action of checking the horses was a worship, the *qurban* and meat distribution, this translation is instead emphasizing the point of regret and turning to Allah. This vision is much corresponding to the Taymiyyan perspective in which the Prophetic nature is manifested in rather in ability of sincere regret, repentance and non-persistence in err than in the essential perfection.[88]

In the Qur'an translation (not the al-Saʿdī's commentaries), *rubit'* comes without clarifications and interpolation, the verse is translated as "he began to slash (*rubit'*) their shins and necks", the strategy that clearly has been influenced either by *mufassirūn* who used the sword or by the previously made Russian translations. *Rubit'* fits well with an axe but also with a sword which is not inserted. It is not usual to use this verb for the slaughtering in Russian, especially in the Kuliev's Qur'an translation we don't get the word hamstringing, it is both the chins and necks that were slashed. Thus, the close reliance to the authoritative commentaries for the purpose of translating the Qur'an into another language does not always lead to more clarity of the translated text. The adopted word *rubit'* for the translation of the verse without the supporting clarification neither clearly represents the 'literal' translation nor effectively transfers the ideas from the commentaries that would represent an exemplary model.

In terms of the translation of al-Saʿdī's commentaries we notice the stronger importance in pointing to the strong regret of the Prophet and his sacrifice as a recompensation for the engrossing with the horses. In explaining his strategy, Kuliev referred to Ibn Kathīr, whose authority, compared to al-Saʿdī, is accepted by Ashʿarī-Māturīdī camp as well as Salafi-oriented circles[89] Ibn Kathīr preferred the opinion about killing the horses, finding the opinion about *masaḥa* as touching to be doubtful. It is important that, although, hamstringing was usually understood with the conjunction of slaughtering, we don't find the idea of slaughtering to be clearly expressed in Ibn Kathīr and al-Ṭabarī, instead the second was opposing killing, seeing it as an unjustified damage to wealth. Ibn Kathīr, in opposing al-Ṭabarī, states that there is no problem if it is assumed that such a practice was allowed in the Prophet Suleyman's *sharīʿa,* especially if it was inspired to leave this preoccupation for the sake of Allah. Ibn Kathīr's *ʿiṣma* is structured around the idea of restricted *sharīʿa* even if it implies the damage to wealth. This seems to be the position adopted by Kuliev and it may explain the absence of additional clarifying commentaries in the translation. Selecting the scenario in which the horses were killed seems consistent with the most part of the exegetical tradition and it also seems to represent a

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[88] Mirza, "Was Ibn Kathīr the "Spokesperson" for Ibn Taymiyya?," *Journal of Qur'anic Studies* 16, no. 1 (February 2014): 13.

[89] Personal communication with the translator.

coherent story that has a clear edificatory value that reads as a paradigm for general attitude towards worldly temptations. However, it raises a question, such as if one wants to extract guidance from the story, to what extent the analogy with other worldly temptations today is possible? Apparently, a large number of commentators and modern translators were not satisfied with such an exemplary model. The following example is demonstrable in this regard.

Abu Adel and the Prophetic model
Abu Adel, who used *Tafsīr al-Muyassar* as a main secondary source for his translation of the Qur'an, preferred to differ from the Saudi's interpretation in the story of the Prophet Suleyman. As was described above the Salafi paradigm is not usually sensitive towards *ʿiṣma* and *al-Muyassar* clarifies that the Prophet preferred love towards horses over the prayer (*ṣalā*) that happened to be during the time of *ʿaṣr.* Being a succinct commentary, which does not offer the variations some things are left unclear, specifically we don't understand for sure from *al-Muyassar* was it an obligatory prayer or supererogatory, the only information that it is given is that it was not just a remembrance but a ritual prayer the status of which is unspecified.

Abu Adel in doing his translation decided to make a literal translation instead and thus lessen the controversy of the Prophet's 'slip'. It is just a *dhikr* as remembrance (*pominanie/поминание*) and there is no interpolation or comments added that would clarify what this *dhikr* means. In this case the literal translation and the avoidance of *al-Muyassar* makes *ʿiṣma* more palpable. The horses do not pay a price for the Prophet Suleyman's preference and the story ends up with the stroking of the horses. The reasoning behind this choice according to the translator is based on the figure of the Prophet Muhammad. When confronted with such an interpretation provided by *al-Muyassar*, Abu Adel could not reconcile the saying of the Prophet "Those who are merciful will be shown mercy by the Most Merciful. Be merciful to those on the earth and the One in the heaven will be merciful to you"[90] with the interpretation of *al-Muyassar.* Abu Adel argument is constructed by the reference to the sayings of the Prophet Muhammad and his image shapes the translator's understanding that religion (*dīn*) is a mercy, where all the Prophets of Islam should be the manifestation of this mercy. He questioned the interpretation provided in his authoritative main secondary source "How could any of the Prophets just out of the blue begin to hack the legs of the animals only because they distracted him?!"[91] Such conundrum led Abu Adel to examine the sources beyond *al-Muyassar* and he concluded that since the narrations mentioning killing were not from the Prophet Muhammad himself but from the Companions or the Successors, thus the choice of stroking is much more reasonable and appropriate for the translation.

What is the source of knowledge in such a case? The epistemological reasoning for making the translator's choice is not restricted exclusively to the Salafi paradigm. It is not limited to the Taymiyyan triad of the narrations or the reliance on the peers with a "proper" *manhāj* (method of interpretation). There

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[90] https://hadeethenc.com/en/browse/hadith/8289, accessed November 5, 2021.
[91] Personal communication with the translator.

is a figure of the Prophet Muhammad who is considered to be quintessential representation of mercy and through whom the Qur'anic story of the Prophet Suleyman is understood and, in turn, translated. Abu Adel's case shows that at first, the translator consciously goes beyond the monovalent reading of the 'reliable' and chosen *tafsīr* and secondly selects from the polyvalent meanings of the classical sources what seems appropriate. The choice then is made through the image of Prophet Muhammad who acts as the modern 'translation frame' that governs what fits for the proper rendering.

One of the important roles which *al-Muyassar* plays in contemporary translation practices is to be a 'reliable medium' that makes things easier by 'faceting' the tradition for the translators. As it was shown in case of Abu Adel's translation is not necessarily always accepted and the practice shows that the negotiation between the Qur'anic text and the translation of it has other channels influencing the practice of interpretation.

Conclusion

The present chapter examined four popular Russian Qur'an translations through the case study of Q 38:30-33. The analysis demonstrated the various ways in which modern translators engage with the pre-modern sources and well with modern Qur'an interpreters. It is difficult to say for sure, but one may also arguably speculate that for some translators the political and multi religious context of modern Russia could be among the significant factors that influence the choice for 'non-violent' representation of Q 38:30-33 and the Qur'an as a whole. This is especially relevant due to the politicization of Qur'an translations as an entire enterprise, the presence in Russia of the list of prohibited literature and the court-cases against Qur'an translations. Another issue is the sensitivity of modern readership in terms of what can or cannot be an example for transhistorically objective and ethical action. Thus, translating "under the gaze" is a factor that is difficult if not impossible to measure but which should be taken into account when a particular Qur'anic narrative is presented as a coherent story. Turning to the issue of coherence more closely, it is important that in many cases the genre represents, what Johanna Pink observed as, "the shift to the center".[92] The shift basically implies empowerment and democratization of Muslims engagement with the ultimate source of Islam, the Qur'an. In many ways, this shift presupposed making Muslims conversant with the Qur'an and enabling direct access to the meanings of the scripture. Thus, the Qur'anic message that speaks to either theological, legal or ethical issues is presupposed to be understandable without additional intermediates, at least on its basic level as the Qur'an became to be viewed as the central source of guidance (*hidāya*).[93]

The process of rendering the story of the Prophet Suleyman and horses, in all of the analysed translations, shows very diverse subjectivity in understanding the transcendental Qur'anic narrative. While the theological dogma and chosen position towards *'iṣma* are important frames through which they selected their

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[92] Pink, *Muslim Qur'ānic Interpretation Today,* 17-21.
[93] Ibid, 19.

authoritative sources, the final translator's choice is far from being predetermined by them. In the case of Aliautdinov, the appeal to Muslim ethics is decisive for the translator's choice as well as the way to criticize other translators. *Kalam Sharif* critical selection from the interpretative as well as presenting it through the culturally acceptable customs demonstrates how the presented majority opinion is, in fact, a process of creative deliberation and negotiation. The translations deemed to be from the same interpretative Salafi-paradigm display opposing approaches in dealing with sources as well as understanding what befits the Prophetic model. The points of divergence are the cases of unexpressed methodologies of Muslim Qur'an translations which evidently go beyond the generally stated information about the sources used, the theological and stylistic approaches. They open a whole new arena for understanding how the classical (and post-classical) interpretative tradition is examined, negotiated and continues and through the probative lens of modern Muslim normativity.

Appendix:

Q 38:31-3

Kalam Sharif: Однажды во второй половине дня ему показали прекрасных, породистых коней. Он [Сулейман] сказал: «Любовь к этому добру [коням] отвлекала меня от поминания моего Господа, пока оно [солнце] не скрылось за завесой [за горизонтом]. Верните их ко мне!» И стал рубить им [коням] ноги и шеи.

*Однажды Сулейман захотел проверить тысячу породистых скакунов, подготовленных для войны. Он не заметил, как солнце село, и закончилось время намаза. Сама эта проверка была для царя одним из видов поклонения, но он посчитал неподобающим для пророка пропуск намаза (вероятно, это было желательный намаз). В итоге он приказал принести в жертву девятьсот коней и раздать их мясо нуждающимся.

Aliautdinov: Однажды демонстрировались ему вечером породистые скакуны. И сказал он (Сулейман): «Я испытал чувство влечения, которое появляется, когда человек любит нечто хорошее (изящное, прекрасное), [и это проистекает] от упоминания Господа [и наполняет человека благодарностью Творцу], пока не пропали они [прекрасные скакуны] из виду [в сумерках] (пока не зашло солнце). Верните мне их!» [Когда прискакали они] начал он гладить (ласкать, протирать)[29] ноги их и шеи [стряхивая, счищая пыль из любви к этим прекрасным животным и заботясь о них как о Божьем даровании][30][,] [31].

 * Оба перевода одинаково возможны, но второй чаще упоминается в комментариях к данному аяту. См., например: аль-Куртуби М. Аль-Джами‘ ли ахкям аль-кур’ан [Свод установлений Корана]. В 20 т. Бейрут: аль-Кутуб аль-’ильмийя, 1988. Т. 15. С. 128.
* Присутствующее в некоторых тафсирах (комментариях) мнение о том, что «любуясь великолепием коней, Сулейман отвлекся и забыл о послеполуденной молитве (‘Аср), пока не зашло солнце» канонически недостоверно (да’иф). См., например: ас-Сабуни М. Сафва ат-тафасир. Т. 3. С. 1206.
* Слово «масх», употребленное в аяте, переводится как «чистить, вытирать, тереть (рукой)». В тафсирах (комментариях) <mark>встречается предположение, что под этим словом подразумевается, будто он начал «резать их»</mark>. На основе данного предположения смысл таков: «Сулейман отвлекся на красоту и великолепие коней, забыл на некоторое время об упоминании Творца. Для обычного человека в этом нет ничего греховного, но для пророка — это некоторое понижение уровня пред Аллахом (пред Богом), ради восстановления которого и в искупление (на пророческом уровне) он приказывает пригнать к нему лошадей и зарезать их на мясо, раздав последнее бедным и неимущим. Данное пожертвование столь дорогим ему и ценным, с именем Всевышнего и на благо другим (бедным и нищим), оборачивается для Соломона намного большим- Всевышний подчиняет Своему пророку ветер, который в сотни раз быстрее даже самого лучшего скакуна: «И Мы [говорит Господь миров] подчинили ему (Сулейману) ветер, который мягко [комфортно перенося Сулеймана] двигался по приказу его, куда тот пожелает» (Св. Коран, 38:36).
* В некоторых переводах на русский язык, к сожалению, аят звучит следующим образом: «А затем он стал рубить им голени и шеи». Данный перевод дан как подстрочный (основной), хотя не является таковым, и может быть оговорен лишь в пояснении, комментарии. Использование таких грубых слов при характеристике одного из пророков и к тому же без пояснений — невежественно и в соответствии с мусульманской этикой недопустимо.

***Kuliev (Saadi):* Однажды после полудня ему показали коней, бьющих копытами, быстроногих** (или *породистых*)**.**
* Это были превосходные лошади удивительной красоты. Аллах назвал их бьющими копытами, потому что, стоя на месте, они приподнимали одну из ног. Короли и правители больше других нуждаются в таких прекрасных животных, и поэтому Сулейман рассматривал лошадей и получал удовольствие от их прекрасного вида. Он продолжал наслаждаться этим зрелищем, пока <mark>солнце не скрылось за горизонтом</mark>, и <mark>земные удовольствия отвлекли его от вечерней молитвы и поминания Аллаха.</mark> Опомнившись, Сулейман горько пожалел о том, что произошло. Он решил восполнить собственное упущение и доказать, что ставит любовь к Аллаху превыше всего остального.
Он сказал: «Я продолжал отдавать предпочтение любви к добру перед поминанием моего Господа, пока оно (*солнце*) **не скрылось за преградой.**

Abu Adel: Вот (однажды) представлены были ему [пророку Сулейману] в предвечернее время (кони) легко стоящие, породистые. И сказал он: «Поистине, (получилось так, что) я возжелал любовь к (земным) благам [к коням] больше, чем поминание Господа моего, (что отвлёкся на них), пока не скрылось оно [солнце] за преградой.
Верните их [коней] ко мне!» И начал он поглаживать (этих коней) по голеням и шеям.

Эльмир Кулиев:

Применительно к аяту из суры "Сад" скажу, что в основном тексте перевода я оставил одно мнение, потому что второе представилось мне мало убедительным. В тафсирах сообщается, что аль-Хасан аль-Басри, Катада и ас-Судди считали, что Сулейман приказал рубить им шеи и поджилки. Ибн Аббас считал, что Сулейман стал гладить коней из любви к ним. Этому мнению отдал предпочтение Ибн Джарир, полагая, что пророк Аллах не стал бы причинять страдания животным и губить имущество только из-за того, что они отвлекли его от молитвы.

Ибн Касир назвал доводы Ибн Джарира сомнительными. По его словам, пророк Сулейман вполне мог зарубить коней, чтобы показать Всевышнему, что его любовь к Нему превосходит любовь к мирским благам. В награду за такой поступок Аллах подчинил ему ветер, который нежно дул по его велению, куда бы он ни пожелал (38:36). Этот ветер был намного быстрее коней, ведь он пролетал месячный путь утром и месячный путь после полудня (34:12).

В целом же в некоторых местах перевода я указываю на два возможных истолкования, а иногда альтернативные переводы переношу в комментарии. Охватить все возможные и даже существующие интерпретации аятов просто невозможно.

Калям Шариф:

Поступил вопрос по поводу нашего перевода Куръана:

В Калям Шариф в суре Сод (38) аяте (30-33), упоминается история о пророке Сулеймане, алейхи салям, та история, где он пропустил молитву из-за любви к лошадям и затем приказал рубить им головы. Мы нашли, что у муфассиров есть разные толкования этой истории, например не рубить, а поглаживать например, то есть совсем полярное значение. Могли бы вы объяснить свой выбор?

Речь идет об этих аятах:

وَوَهَبْنَا لِدَاوُودَ سُلَيْمَانَ ۚ نِعْمَ الْعَبْدُ ۖ إِنَّهُ أَوَّابٌ
إِذْ عُرِضَ عَلَيْهِ بِالْعَشِيِّ الصَّافِنَاتُ الْجِيَادُ
فَقَالَ إِنِّي أَحْبَبْتُ حُبَّ الْخَيْرِ عَنْ ذِكْرِ رَبِّي حَتَّىٰ تَوَارَتْ بِالْحِجَابِ
رُدُّوهَا عَلَيَّ ۖ فَطَفِقَ مَسْحًا بِالسُّوقِ وَالْأَعْنَاقِ

30. И Мы подарили Дауду Сулеймана. Как же прекрасен этот раб (Аллаха)! Поистине, он всегда обращался к Аллаху. 31. Однажды во второй половине дня ему показали прекрасных, породистых коней. 32. Он (Сулейман) сказал: «Любовь к этому добру (коням) отвлекала меня от поминания моего Господа, пока оно (солнце) не скрылось за завесой (за горизонтом). 33. Верните их ко мне!» И стал рубить им (коням) ноги и шеи.

Вопрос относительно этого места в переводе тафсира: «فَطَفِقَ مَسْحًا بِالسُّوقِ وَالْأَعْنَاقِ» мы получаем не в первый раз. Спрашивают: почему вы перевели это место как «И стал рубить им (коням) ноги и шеи», тогда как в других переводах это место выглядит так: «И стал он поглаживать их с любовью по шеям и голеням».

Оба обозначенных в вопросе толкования ученые по тафсиру считают приемлемыми. Почему мы выбрали "зарубил", а не "гладил"?

Имам ар-Рази пишет в тафсире к этому аяту:

قال الأكثرون معناه أنه مسح السيف بسوقها وأعناقها أي قطعها، قالوا إنه عليه السلام لما فاتته صلاة العصر بسبب اشتغاله بالنظر إلى تلك الخيل استردها وعقر سوقها وأعناقها تقرباً إلى الله تعالى

«Большинство (ученых) сказало: начал гладить их мечом по голеням и шеям, то есть рубить их. Они говорят: он, мир ему, пропустив намаз аср, отвлекшись на созерцание этих коней, велел привести их обратно и стал рубить им ноги и шеи как курбан ради Аллаха». При этом сам имам ар-Рази не соглашается с этим толкованием, приводя аргументы в пользу толкования «гладил их».

Имам Ибн Джарир ат-Табари также указывает на разногласия в толкованиях этого места. Толкование «зарубил» он приводит от Катады, Хасана аль-Басри и ас-Судди. Сам он также предпочитает толкование «гладил».

Имам Куртуби также пишет, что у этого аята 2 толкования. Толкование «зарубил» он передает от Хасана аль-Басри, аль-Кальби и Мукатиля. Толкование "гладил" имам передает от аз-Зухри и как ривают от Ибн Аббаса, да будет Аллах доволен им и его отцом. Оба толкования он считает приемлемыми.

Ибн Касир спорит с имамом Табари, приводя аргументы в защиту толкования «зарубил», судя по всему предпочитая его. Аллаху а'лям. Это же толкование предпочитает кади аль-Байдави, автор «Джалялейн», ан-Насафи. Ибн аль-Джаузи – как и ар-Рази – также называет это толкование мнением большинства ученых. Шейх Ахмад Сави в «Хашия Джалялейн» называет толкование «зарубил» мнением большинства муфассиров.

Причем, правильно понимать это толкование нужно так: Сулейман, мир ему, приказал зарубить этих коней как курбан (жертвоприношение) и накормить их мясом нуждающихся, в чем, разумеется, нет ничего предосудительного. Речь не идет о намеренном уничтожении дорогого имущества, что не подобает высокой степени пророка.

Исходя из этого, после размышлений и изучения тафсиров мы выбрали именно это толкование из двух возможных в нашем переводе аята. И лишь от Аллаха тауфик.