



Analysis of the Application of the Technique of Waqf and Ibtida in Contemporary Translations of the Holy Quran (Case Study of Surah Anam)

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Abstract

Contemporary translators of the Holy Quran have utilized Sajavandi waqf signs to better understand and interpret God's intentions within the sacred text. It is important to note that Sajavandi waqf signs are not part of the original Quranic punctuation but were introduced by Sajavandi in the 6th century AH. Contemporary translators can interpret Quranic verses without solely relying on Sajavandi's waqf signs by referring to the verses' structure, the infallible Imams' narrations, and literary and linguistic scholars' works. However, employing waqf (stop) and ibtida (start) as complementary reliable tools can protect translators from errors and provide an easier, more secure path for accurate Quran translation. This research uses a descriptive-analytical method through a case study in Surah An'am to answer the question of how contemporary translators of the Quran have been influenced by the Sajavandi waqf signs. Investigations show that signs such as "م" (M), "لَا" (Lā), "ج" (J), "ز" (Z), and "ط" (Ṭ) have been placed in Quranic manuscripts as waqf and ibtida signs. Contemporary translators of the Holy Quran have indirectly applied these signs in their translations. In cases where waqf should be used, they have respected it, and where both waqf and wasl (continuation) are permissible, they have translated selectively, treating the verse as a continuous text where waqf is not required.

Keywords: *Sajavandi Waqf; Contemporary Translations; Waqf and Ibtida; Surah An'am*

1. Introduction

The science of waqf and ibtida is one of the important techniques of reciting the Holy Quran, which has been of particular interest to scholars of Quranic sciences since the beginning of the revelation of the Quran. The Holy Prophet (PBUH) was extremely sensitive to the issue of waqf and ibtida. The companions also taught the recitation of the Quran to their students based on the Prophet's teachings and emphases. However, the important point is that the science of waqf is not confined because the narrations that describe the type of waqf of Prophet in all cases have not been fully narrated. Moreover, even in the few cases of narrative documentation that exist in this field, there is no conclusive evidence to support the necessity of waqf in these instances (Fatemi, 1382:21). With the expansion of the science of recitation and

increased attention from Islamic scholars in the sixth century, Sajavandi introduced a new method for categorizing places of stopping based on a conceptual and semantic approach. Although Sajavandi's method of waqf and ibtida is an independent interpretation (ijtihadi), it is possible to achieve a correct translation without referring to it. However, this approach is difficult and risky, and Sajavandi's signs provide a simpler and more reliable path for translators, leading to a deeper understanding of the divine words.

Waqf between verses is an essential aspect of Quranic recitation that cannot be disregarded. It is imperative for the esteemed reciters of the Holy Quran, who impart the divine message by reciting its verses, to meticulously adhere to the rules of this science, thereby ensuring the audience's accurate comprehension of the Quranic message and preventing the dissemination of incorrect concepts among them.

The first step towards acquiring guidance from the celestial book, the Quran, is the individual's contemplation and reflection to comprehend God's intent. The subject of waqf and ibtida is one of the important topics of Quranic recitation, and the manner of executing waqf and ibtida significantly influences the correct or incorrect understanding of Quranic verses. It is quite possible that incorrect waqf or ibtida, stemming from superficial knowledge or reliance on unsubstantiated interpretations, may lead to a misinterpretation of God's message and pave the way for deviating from accurate interpretation. Therefore, the significance of considering the subjects of waqf and ibtida in understanding the Quran lies in the fact that many Qur'an reciters have not paid sufficient attention to these matters or consider them insignificant, thus easily neglecting the crucial role of waqf and ibtida in accurately comprehending the Holy Quran. However, these indicators are closely related to interpretation, and strict adherence to and careful consideration of them will considerably contribute to the accurate understanding of Quranic verses. Ibn Anbari states, "Comprehensive knowledge of the Quran includes knowledge of waqf and ibtida within it" (Ashmuni, 1429 AH, 1/13).

A contemporary discussion within the field of waqf and ibtida pertains to its connection with Quranic translation knowledge. The degree of translators' adherence to waqf indicators must be examined by analyzing different translations. The present study aims to present these indicators in contemporary translations for the first time by relying on Sajavandi's Waqf indicators in Surah Al-An'am. In this context, the primary research question explores the extent to which contemporary translators are influenced by Sajavandi's Waqf indicators in this blessed Surah. It is worth mentioning that the translations utilized in this research are from contemporary scholars, including Makarem Shirazi, Ansarian, Foladvand, Elahi Qomshei, Meshkini, Hojjati, Safavi, Misbah Zadeh, and Rahnama.

2. Research Background

Numerous books have been written about waqf and ibtida, but it should be noted that limited research has been conducted on the role of Sajavandi waqf indicators in understanding the Qur'an. Relevant works include:

- Hosseini, Shams al-Sadat (2016), *The Role of Contemporary Punctuation Marks in Understanding Quranic Verses*, Master's Thesis, Lorestan University, Supervisor: Ali Nazari
- Zamani Rad, Ali (2017), *The Importance and Role of Waqf and Ibtida in Understanding the Meanings of the Holy Quran*, Master's Thesis, Usul al-Din University, Supervisor: Mohammad Hossein Lotfi
- Falah, Ibrahim; Khalili, Maitham; Salehpour, Rasul (2019), *The Role of Waqf and Ibtida Indicators in Understanding the Qur'an (A Case Study of Compulsory Waqf)*, *Journal of Qur'anic Reading Studies*, No. 15

To date, no independent research has been conducted on the application of Sajavandi waqf indicators in the translation of the Holy Quran or the relationship between these two areas of knowledge.

3. Methods

3.1 Definition of Waqf and Ibtida

In the Arabic language, the term "waqf" carries various meanings, such as holding, stopping, separating, and falling silent, while "ibtida" relates to starting or initiating. In the terminology of the predecessors and early centuries, the terms qat'a (cut) and sakt (silence) were used interchangeably alongside waqf. However, with the development of this field and the writing of more concise books, each term acquired a specific meaning. Ibn al-Jarzi defines these terms: "qat'a signifies the completion of recitation and transitioning to another state or work. Waqf refers to momentarily stopping the voice during Quranic recitation and taking a breath to continue. Ibtida represents the initiation of recitation either at the beginning or after a waqf".

In general, the science of waqf and ibtida enables reciters of the divine text to identify appropriate pauses and starts during Quranic recitation (Ibn Al-Jarzi, 1414: 1/24).

3.2 Criteria for Waqf and Ibtida

Scholars of Quranic sciences have generally proposed three theories regarding waqf and ibtida criteria:

1. **Breath Termination:** Some scholars believe that the reciter can comfortably continue reading and stop for breath wherever necessary, without considering whether the stop occurs at the beginning or middle of a verse, or if the sentence is complete, incomplete, meaningful, or meaningless. Abu Yusuf, a Sunni jurist, categorized waqf as complete (tam), sufficient (kafi), good (hasan), or repulsive (qabih), and viewed any other division as an innovation in religion. He stated, "The Quran is a miracle, and its entirety is like a single piece" (Sakhavi, 1419 AH: 386).
2. **Verse Conclusion:** Some scholars assert that waqf is only permissible at the beginning of verses due to the contrast between the final words of consecutive verses, such as مصيتر (controller) and مذكر (reminder) in Surah Ghashiyah verses 21 and 22 (Sakhavi, 1419 AH: 386).
3. **Meaning Completion:** Most scholars of Quranic sciences and recitation science believe that waqf and the completeness or incompleteness of waqf depend on the completion or incompleteness of meaning, whether it is at the beginning or middle of a verse. It has been narrated from Naf' Madani that he considered the observance of waqf and ibtida according to the meaning as desirable (Ibn al-Jarzi, 1414: 1/224).

Considering the verses of the Holy Quran, the third view can be chosen as the most suitable approach. In the process of reflection, the reciter's goal is to obtain the correct meaning from the Quran to act upon its teachings. With this objective in mind, the criterion for waqf and ibtida will be based on the completion or incompleteness of meaning within the verses.

3-3 -The Role of Waqf and Ibtida signs in Quranic Translation

Translating the Quran into other languages is a religious necessity, and every Muslim has a duty to pay attention to this matter, which is connected to the foundation of Islam and aims to spread the message of Islam worldwide. Proper translation of the Quran requires the translator to be fully aware of all translation conditions and Quranic concepts to accurately convey the meanings of the Quran into another language. One-sided opinions and interpretations should never interfere with the understanding of the Qur'an. Recognizing waqf and ibtida signs plays a crucial role in the correct translation of the Qur'an, and translators must take these aspects into account.

3-4 -Sajavandi and Quranic Waqf Signs

Allama Sheikh Abdullah Abu Ja'far Muhammad ibn Abi Yazid Tifur Sajavandi, born in 506 AH and nicknamed Shams al-Din, was a renowned Quranic reciter and scholar of the 6th century AH. He was the first to introduce Waqf signs to guide the correct recitation of the Quran. These signs were named "Sajavandi" after him, and the Qurans in which these signs were used became known as "Sajavandi Qurans." Sajavandi's proposed categorization of waqf signs gained wide acceptance across Islamic countries and remains in use today. He outlined five types of waqf: compulsory stop (waqf laazim) (م), absolute stop (waqf mutlaq) (ط), permissible stop (waqf jā'iz) (ج), permitted stop (waqf mujawwaz) (ز), and licensed stop (waqf murakh-khas) (ص) (Siyuti, 1421 AH, 1/184). If the prohibited stop sign (waqf mamnu'a) (لا) is considered, the total number of Sajavandi waqf signs increases to six types.

1. compulsory stop (م): A compulsory stop (waqf laazim) necessitates a stop between its components, as connecting them would create an illogical sentence and convey an inappropriate meaning (Sajavandi, 2001: 62).
2. Absolute stop (ط): This type of waqf applies to instances where initiating recitation from the subsequent phrase is favorable, such as a noun situated at the beginning of a sentence, e.g., "كَبُرَ عَلَى الْمُشْرِكِينَ مَا تَدْعُوهُمْ إِلَيْهِ اللَّهُ يَجْتَبِي إِلَيْهِ مَنْ يَشَاءُ..." (Qur'an 42:13). According to Sajavandi, stopping before a phrase is appropriate when beginning the recitation from that point is advantageous.
3. Permissible stop (ج): A Permissible stop (waqf jā'iz) occurs when two phrases can either be connected or separated (stopped), as there are valid reasons for both options.
4. Permitted stop (ز): A Permitted stop (waqf mujawwaz) applies to instances where the factors promoting connection (wasl) are stronger, but there is also a reason for a stop. For example, in the following verse:

"أُولَئِكَ الَّذِينَ اشْتَرُوا الْحَيَاةَ الدُّنْيَا بِالْآخِرَةِ فَلَا يُخَفَّفُ عَنْهُمْ الْعَذَابُ وَلَا هُمْ يُنصَرُونَ"

"They are those who have bought the life of this world at the price of the Hereafter. Their punishment will not be lightened, nor will they be supported." (Qur'an 2:86). The causal fa' (fa' al-Sabbabiya) and the conjunction of consequence (jaza') in فَلَا يُخَفَّفُ عَنْهُمْ (will not be lightened) necessitate connection. However, the sentence structure in the context of resumptive justifies the use of a Permitted stop."

5. Licensed stop for Necessity (ص): The Licensed stop for Necessity (waqf al-murakhkhas li-l-darurah) is employed when stopping before the subsequent phrase is not required, but may be necessary for regulating one's breath or preserving the flow of recitation. The reciter does not need to return to the preceding phrase in this case because both the paused phrase and the subsequent sentence retain the intended meaning (Sajavandi, 2001: 184).
6. Prohibited stop (لا): A comprehensive definition for this stop has not been provided, but it is more general than the Repulsive stop (waqf qabih). The "لا" sign is used in several instances of good stop (waqf hasan)¹ and even in some instances of Sufficient stop (waqf kafi)² according to Sajavandi (Ibn al-Jazari, 1414: 1/327). Siyuti classifies waqf on a conditional statement without mentioning its answer and waqf at the beginning without mentioning news as examples of the prohibited stop based on Sajavandi's perspective.

¹ This refers to cases where the first phrase is complete and independent, while the second phrase is incomplete and requires the first phrase to become complete.

² This applies to instances where each of the two phrases is a useful sentence on its own, and they do not need each other in terms of words, but they are semantically dependent.

4 . Observations

4.1 . Compulsory Stop (م)

The presence of this waqf symbol necessitates a stop to maintain the intended meaning. Neglecting this stop may lead to misinterpretations that deviate from the original divine intent.

Example 1: In verse 20 of Surah Al-An'am (6:20) in the Qur'an, the application of the compulsory waqf symbol (م) can be observed.

"الَّذِينَ آتَيْنَاهُمُ الْكِتَابَ يَعْرِفُونَهُ كَمَا يَعْرِفُونَ أَبْنَاءَهُمْ (م) الَّذِينَ خَسِرُوا أَنفُسَهُمْ فَهُمْ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ"

The verse consists of two propositions. The first serves as a reminder of the comprehensive knowledge possessed by the People of the Book regarding the Holy Prophet (PBUH), while the second presents a general ruling concerning the condemnation of those who have lost their souls. In both propositions, the term "الذين" (Those whom) is utilized.

At the beginning of the verse, the first instance of "الذين" refers to Jews and Christians, collectively known as the People of the Book (Ahl al-Kitāb), who received prophecies about the Holy Prophet (PBUH) in their scriptures (Fakhr Razi, 1420 AH: 500/12). The second "الذين," which commences the subsequent verse, encompasses both polytheists and the People of the Book (Zamakhshari, 1407 AH: 2/11).

As such, the first instance of "الذين" (those) describes the People of the Book, while the second instance broadly addresses an audience consisting of polytheists and the People of the Book. Both "الذين" are in the initial and nominative case (marfū') (Daas, Qasim, and Hamidan, 1425 AH: 295/1), meaning that each use of "الذين" in the verse starts a new proposition. The compulsory stop sign plays a significant role in understanding the verse. Observing the compulsory stop sign, the verse's meaning becomes: "Those to whom We have given the Holy Book know Him well, just as they know their own children; only those who are spiritually blind do not understand".

If the waqf sign is disregarded, the meaning of the verse becomes contrary to the divine intent, and the second proposition, which has a general address, becomes inverted, resulting in the following interpretation: "Those to whom We have given the Holy Book know Him well, just as they know the children who have lost the essence of their existence and do not believe."

Contemporary translators have paid good attention to this issue and they have made the necessary waqf sign a part of their translation methodology. For example, in the Ansariyan translation, it is stated as follows: "Those to whom We have given the Holy Book know the Prophet just as they know their own children [based on the attributes mentioned in their books]; only those who have ruined the essence of their existence will not believe" (Ansariyan, 2004: 1/130).

Hajati, in the translation of the verse, says: "Those to whom We have given the Holy Book (Jews and Christians) know the Prophet by the signs mentioned in those books, just as they know their own children, but those who have sold their right with concealment and become sinners will not believe." (Hajati, 2006: 1/130).

In Fuladwand's translation, it is stated: 'Those to whom We have given the Book (Holy Book), just as they know their own children, know Him (the Prophet). Those who have sinned against themselves do not believe.' (Fuladwand, 1997: 1/130).

Example 2: In the second example, verse 36 of Surah An'am (Al-An'am) is discussed:

"إِنَّمَا يَسْتَجِيبُ الَّذِينَ يَسْمَعُونَ (م) وَ الْمَوْتَى يَبْعَثُهُمُ اللَّهُ ثُمَّ إِلَيْهِ يُرْجَعُونَ"

This verse consists of two parts, and a compulsory stop sign is placed between them. The subject of the first part is the believers who respond to God's invitation to monotheism, and the subject of the second part is the polytheists who resist the invitation to monotheism and do not listen to the divine (Ibn Abi Hatim, 1419AH: 4/1285; Tusi, Bey-ta: 4/125). In the two Quranic verses under discussion, the verse is formed by presenting a conceptual contrast and opposition. The last word of the first verse, the present tense verb "يسمعون" (they hear), and the first word of the second verse, "والموتى" (the dead), are crucial elements of this contrast. In this semantic contrast, the term "يسمعون" (they hear) refers to the believers who respond to God's call for monotheism, while the term "الموتى" (the dead) represents the polytheists who resist answering the call for monotheism, do not listen to the divine word, and do not follow it. Consequently, God will resurrect them on the Day of Judgment in the same state of spiritual deafness they exhibited in life (Zamakhshari, 1407 AH: 2/20). In the second verse, the use of resumptive wāw (wāw istināf) signals a new statement, as noted by Salih (1998 AD: 2/211). The sign of compulsory stop plays a crucial role in understanding the meaning of the verse. If a stop is applied, the meaning of the verse changes to: "Only those who hear respond to the divine call, while those who do not hear, God will resurrect them on the Day of Resurrection, and they will return to Him." Neglecting the compulsory stop results in a shift in the meaning of the verse and a misinterpretation when the second proposition is combined with the first proposition. In the absence of this stop, the meaning of the verse becomes: "Only those who accept your invitation, and whom God presents as resurrected, respond to God." Translators have given special consideration to the compulsory Waqf in this verse and have translated it in a manner that conveys its meaning fully. For example, Makarem Shirazi's translation reads:

"Only those with attentively listen will accept (your invitation); yet the deceased (and those who have relinquished their human essence, lacking faith) shall be resurrected by God; thereafter, they shall return to Him." (Makarem Shirazi, 1994: 1/132)

Ansari's translation offers:

"Only those enlightened souls who hear shall respond, while God shall resurrect the dead; subsequently, all beings shall return to the Truth." (Ansari, 2004: 1/132)

Mesbahzadeh's translation states:

"None respond save those who hear, and God shall raise the dead; thus, they shall be returned to Him." (Mesbahzadeh, 2001: 1/132)

Example 3: In verse 124 of the Quran's chapter Al-An'am, a compulsory stop is employed using the symbol "(م)". The verse reads:

"وَ إِذَا جَاءَهُمْ آيَةٌ قَالُوا لَنْ نُؤْمِنَ حَتَّى نُؤْتَىٰ مِثْلَ مَا أُوتِيَ رُسُلُ اللَّهِ (م) اللَّهُ أَعْلَمُ حَيْثُ يَجْعَلُ رِسَالَتَهُ سَيُصِيبُ الَّذِينَ أَجْرَمُوا صَغَارٌ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ وَ عَذَابٌ شَدِيدٌ بِمَا كَانُوا يَمْكُرُونَ"

The noble verse consists of two distinct segments. In the first part, the idolaters' defiant stance is conveyed as they declare, "We shall not believe unless we experience what the divine messengers encountered" (Tabatabai, 1995: 7/470). The second part features God's response to this belittling perspective, emphasizing His supreme wisdom in appointing prophets and asserting the inevitability of divine punishment for the words and actions of the idolaters. In the noble verse, the compulsory stop is placed between the two instances of the exalted word "Allah." In the verse, the second occurrence of the word "Allah" is in the nominative case, functioning as the subject (mubtada), with the subsequent clause serving as its predicate (khabar), as explained by Darwish (1994: 3/218). Observing the compulsory stop sign, the two propositions within the verse take on distinct meanings: the first represents the viewpoint of the polytheists, while the second presents a critique of their stance. When the stop is observed, the divinely intended meaning is realized; however, if disregarded, a contradictory interpretation emerges, combining the polytheists' speech and its critique. In this case, the divine discourse continues the

polytheists' speech, yielding the following interpretation of the verse: "When a sign comes to them, they say, 'We will not believe until we are given what was given to the messengers of God.'" Modern translators, too, have considered this sign in the verse, translating it in a manner that maintains the integrity of the verse's meaning. An example of such a translation is Elahi Qumshei, which reads:

"When a sign came to them, they said, 'We will not believe until we are given what was given to the messengers of God.' God knows best where to place His message. Soon the criminals will be humiliated, and a severe punishment will befall them due to their intrigues." (Elahi Qumshei, 2001: 143)

As stated in Fuladwand's translation of the verse:

"When a sign comes to them, they say, 'We will never believe until we are given what was given to the messengers of God.' God knows best where to place His message. Soon, those who have committed sins will be brought low and will receive a severe punishment due to their hostility.' (Fuladwand, 1997: 143)

4-2. Absolute Waqf (ط)

The symbol "Tā" (ط) is a significant sign for waqf in Sajavandi's recitation style. When encountering this symbol, it is advisable to apply a stop. Although connecting is an option, applying a stop is considered more appropriate.

Example 1: In verse 21 of Surah Al-An'am, the symbol (ط) has been used as a waqf sign:

"وَمَنْ أَظْلَمُ مِمَّنْ افْتَرَىٰ عَلَى اللَّهِ كَذِبًا أَوْ كَذَّبَ بِآيَاتِهِ (ط) إِنَّهُ لَا يُفْلِحُ الظَّالِمُونَ"

The waqf sign have divided the verse into two propositions. The first proposition speaks of the slander against the Almighty God, which equates to attributing a partner to Him, even though He does not have a partner. Additionally, claiming prophethood and attributing judgment to Him through falsehood, heresy, and distortion of the verses are considered as evidence against Him (Tabataba'i, 1995: 7/61). In the second proposition, starting with verb-like particles, a new sentence is expressed, which is indeed connected to the previous one. *إِنَّ* (surly) is one of the verb-like particles, *هُ* (he) is the noun of the verb-like particle, and the sentence *لَا يُفْلِحُ الظَّالِمُونَ* (the wrongdoers will not be successful) is its predicate. Considering this matter, contemporary translators have also divided the verse into two separate propositions and translated them, preserving the related content of the verse at the same time. Due to the presence of *إِنَّ* in the second proposition, translators have initiated the second proposition with terms such as "undoubtedly" (Fouladwand, 1997: 1/130), "certainly" (Makarem Shirazi, 1994: 1/130), and "surely" (Ansarian, 2004: 1/130). These terms indicate the semantic independence of the proposition following the sign "ط". However, despite this semantic independence, the connection between the two propositions has also been considered. As an example, Fouladwand has rendered the verse thusly: "And who could be more unjust than the one who fabricates falsehood against God, or denies His signs? Surely, the unjust shall not prosper" (Fouladwand, 1997: 1/130).

The verse emphasizes the act of wrongdoing and its consequences, asserting that whoever engages in such actions shall not succeed. The translator has skillfully rendered the verse to convey that anyone who behaves unjustly or commits transgressions will not prosper.

Example 2: the waqf sign "ط" is employed in verse 39 of Surah Al-An'am:

"وَالَّذِينَ كَذَّبُوا بِآيَاتِنَا صُمْ وَ بُكُمْ فِي الظُّلُمَاتِ (ط) مَنْ يَشَأْ اللَّهُ يُضِلَّهُ وَ مَنْ يَشَأْ يَجْعَلُهُ عَلَىٰ صِرَاطٍ مُسْتَقِيمٍ"

The waqf sign have divided the verse into two propositions. The first proposition highlights that those who deny divine revelations are deprived of the blessings of hearing and understanding. This deprivation results from the injustice inflicted upon them. Those who reject divine revelations, as a result

of their inner deafness, are unable to grasp the truth even when they hear it, let alone embrace it. This inability extends to their incapacity to speak the truth due to their feebleness, and their entrapment in injustice hampers their discernment between the path of righteousness and falsehood (Tabatabai, 1995: 7/118). In the second proposition, the Almighty states that He allows those whom He chooses to go astray in their own state, while bestowing His mercy upon those who are deserving of it, in accordance with their situation. (Tabarsi, 1996: 2/180)

Considering the aforementioned points, the two categories have independent meanings, which can be explained as follows: 1. Those who denied divine signs become trapped in spiritual blindness and ignorance and fall into darkness. 2. God allows whoever He wills to be misguided and guides whoever He wills. Since these two categories, and in fact the entire verse, describe the manner of misguidance, these two categories are also connected to each other. In addition to their semantic independence, the word "من" (whoever) at the beginning of the second proposition serves as both an initial term and a nominative subject, which is grammatically independent from the first proposition (Karbasi, 2001: 2/438). This initial position and nominative case of "من" provide additional evidence for the second proposition's semantic independence.

Contemporary translators have taken note of the fact that, despite their semantic independence, the two propositions are interconnected. For example, in Makarem Shirazi's translation, while explaining the semantic independence, phrases are included within parentheses to indicate the connection between the two propositions. For example, after explaining the fate of those who deny the divine revelations in the first proposition, the second proposition, in parentheses, refers to their "deserving" to be in darkness, indicating a connection between the two propositions. This connection is further emphasized by the phrase 'those who have denied Our signs are devious and misguided individuals dwelling in darkness; whoever God wills (and deserves) will mislead; and whoever He wills (and is worthy) will be guided on the right path.' (Makarem Shirazi, 1994: 1/132).

In Fouladvand's translation, this aspect has also been observed: "And those who have considered Our signs to be lies are crooked and misguided in the darkness of disbelief; God causes to go astray whomsoever He wills, and guides on the straight path whomsoever He wills." (Fouladvand, 1997: 1/132).

Example 3: In verse 83 of Surah An'am, the punctuation mark "ط" has been used.

"و تِلْكَ حُجَّتُنَا آتَيْنَاهَا إِبْرَاهِيمَ عَلَى قَوْمِهِ نَرْفَعُ دَرَجَاتٍ مَن نَّشَاءُ (ط) إِنَّ رَبَّكَ حَكِيمٌ عَلِيمٌ"

This verse unequivocally conveys that the prophets and scholars, who have been instrumental in imparting divine guidance, are essentially the language and expression of God. Consequently, any rejection of their teachings effectively amounts to rejecting God Himself. (Moghnieh, 1999: 3/338). The inclusion of the terms "حَكِيمٌ" (wise) and "عَلِيمٌ" (knowledgeable) at the end of the verse signifies that God's intentions align with His infinite wisdom and knowledge. Moreover, the verse suggests that God does not elevate an individual's rank without just cause, thus underscoring the importance of reason and purpose in His divine plan. (Rezaee Isfahani, 2008: 6/144). The waqf symbol "ط" has divided the verse into two parts, each possessing an independent meaning, while simultaneously maintaining a connection between them. The connection between the independent meanings of the verses is as follows:

1. God elevates the rank of those He wills, like Prophet Abraham (peace be upon him).
2. God possesses wisdom and knowledge. Taking into account the two independent concepts conveyed in the verse and the absence of any disruption when a pause is introduced, it would be more suitable to apply a waqf (stop) on the sacred verse. However, it is also acceptable to maintain a connection between the two parts. When the two parts of the verse are joined, it conveys the meaning that God, in His infinite wisdom and knowledge, elevates the rank of those whom He chooses. In addition to this, the use of the letter "نَّ" at the beginning of the second clause is a

verb-like particle (da'as, Qasim and Hamidan, 2004: 1/318), which also indicates the independence of meaning in this clause.

Contemporary translators, in their translations, have rendered the verse in a way that preserves both the independence and semantic connection of its meaning. For instance, in Fouladvand's translation, by using the term 'since' in the second clause, he attempts to establish a link between the two clauses while maintaining their semantic independence. This is evident in his translation: "And it was Our proof that We gave to Abraham against his people. We raise in degree whom We will, since Thou art All-wise, All-knowing" (Fouladvand, 1997: 1/138).

In Meshkini and Irfa's translations, semantic independence is observed within the existing connection. Their translations read: "These were the reasons which We gave to Abraham against his people, and We raise in degree whom We will, for Thou art the All-wise, the All-knowing" (Fouladvand, 1997: 1/138) and "And these were the reasons that We gave to Abraham against his people. We raise in degree whom We will, since Thou art All-wise, All-knowing" (Irfa', 2002: 1/138).

4-3. The Permitted Stop (ج)

Another significant indication of the optional stop is the waqf sign (ج). In addressing this waqf sign, it is recommended to employ a form that preserves the connection of ideas, ensuring a more accurate representation of the divine intent and meaning.

Example 1: The (ج) waqf sign can be found in verse 31 of Surah Al-An'am.

"فَذُخْرِهِمُ الَّذِي كَذَّبُوا بِلِقَاءِ اللَّهِ (ج) حَتَّىٰ إِذَا جَاءَتْهُمْ السَّاعَةُ بَغْتَةً قَالُوا يَا حَسْرَتَنَا عَلَىٰ مَا فَرَّطْنَا فِيهَا وَهُمْ يَحْمِلُونَ أَوْزَارَهُمْ عَلَىٰ ظُهُورِهِمْ أَلَا سَاءَ مَا يَزُرُونَ"

As the Day of Resurrection arrives unexpectedly, people witness the terror of that day and the difference between those who will be rewarded and those who will be punished. They lament, "What a loss! We have wasted our lives in this world and have not done anything for the hereafter" (Tabarsi, 1993, 8/64). The word "حَتَّىٰ" after the waqf sign is highly emphasized to express "refutation" in the first predicate (Saleh, 1988, 3/206). Therefore, these two predicates are conceptually related and should be examined together. Some translators have successfully conveyed this connection, translating the verse in a way that preserves its coherence. For example, in Makarem Shirazi's translation (vol. 1, p. 131), using the phrase "until," and in Fouladvand's translation (vol. 1, p. 131), using the phrase "until then" for the word "حَتَّىٰ," they convey that the events preceding and following this phrase are interconnected. It continuously emphasizes the perpetual loss of those who deny and waste their lives, from this world to the hereafter.

Example 2: In verse 85 of Surah Al-An'am, the waqf sign 'ز' is present:

"وَزَكَرِيَّا وَيَحْيَىٰ وَعِيسَىٰ وَإِيلَاسَ (ز) كُلُّ مِّنَ الصَّالِحِينَ"

These prophets not only exemplified righteousness through their roles as prophets and messengers, but also served as role models in practicing asceticism and detachment from worldly matters. The phrase "كُلُّ مِّنَ الصَّالِحِينَ," as stated after their names, might emphasize this significant truth (Makarem Shirazi, 1995, p. 5/330). The statement after the waqf sign ز, 'all of them were of the righteous,' conveys that they were all regarded as virtuous individuals, encompassing prophets, messengers, and righteous people. This explanation provides a more in-depth understanding compared to the previous passage (Khosravani, 2011, p. 3/113). To provide more clarity, the first passage mentions several prophets in brief, whereas the second passage characterizes them as "righteous." Considering the connection between the qualified noun (prophets) and the adjective (righteous), it is beneficial to examine and interpret these two passages together. Only when taking a complete pause for breath should one pause at this passage.

This matter has been considered by contemporary translators, and none of them have interpreted the two passages independently. For instance, in Meshkini's translation, the verse has been translated as follows: "And we guided Zachariah, John, Jesus, and Elias, they were all righteous" (Meshkini, 2002, 1/138).

In this translation, and also in the translations by Fuladwand (2001), Safavi (2002), Makarem (1995), and Ayati (1995), it is stated that all the mentioned prophets were guided by God due to their righteousness. As a result, the connection between the two passages in the verse and its translation is clear and appropriate. Therefore, it is better to establish a connection rather than pausing at the verse, which ultimately validates the use of waqf.

Example 3: In the third example, we will analyze the usage of the waqf 'ز' in verse 100 of Surah Al-An'am:

"وَجَعَلُوا لِلَّهِ شُرَكَاءَ الْجِنَّ وَخَلَقَهُمْ (ز) وَخَرَقُوا لَهُ بَنِينَ وَبَنَاتٍ بِغَيْرِ عِلْمٍ سُبْحَانَہُ وَتَعَالَى عَمَّا يَصِفُونَ"

The first passage serves to refute the polytheists, explaining that they have attributed jinn as partners to the Almighty God. However, jinn are also creations of God, and it is not possible for a created being to share divinity with its own Creator (Tabatabai, 1995, p. 7/401). The waqf sign "ز" divides the verse into two parts. The second passage begins with the conjunctive "واو" (and), connecting it to the preceding text (Karbasi, 2003, p. 2/510). As a result, the phrase "وخرقوا له" (and they have attributed to him) is directly connected to the first passage, making it essential to preserve the connection between the two parts. Although the meaning of the verse becomes apparent when divided into two parts at the waqf sign, its overall message is as follows: 1. Polytheists, despite being created by God, have ascribed partners to Him. 2. Polytheists have ignorantly attributed partners to God; however, God transcends such associations. Notably, the connection between the two parts of the verse is evident as the description of polytheistic behavior continues from the first part to the second. This connection signifies that there should be no stop (waqf) within the verse. Contemporary translators have recognized this aspect and have translated the verse in a way that maintains its semantic coherence and content integrity.

4-4. Licensed Stop (ص)

The licensed stop allows for a stop due to the length of a sentence or the need to take a breath, although it is generally preferable to connect the phrases without pausing. This type of waqf can be observed in the Qur'an, as noted by Mesbāh's translation.

Example 1: In verse 108 of Surah Al-An'am, we find an instance of licensed stop (ص):

"وَلَا تَسُبُّوا الَّذِينَ يَدْعُونَ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ فَيَسُبُّوا اللَّهَ عَدْوًا بِغَيْرِ عِلْمٍ كَذَلِكَ زَيْنًا لِكُلِّ أُمَّةٍ عَمَلُهُمْ (ص) ثُمَّ إِلَىٰ رَبِّهِمْ مَرْجِعُهُمْ فَيُنَبِّئُهُمْ بِمَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ"

Verse 108 of Surah Al-An'am instructs Muslims to refrain from using derogatory language toward the idols of polytheists. By doing so, Muslims avoid contributing to the humiliation that polytheists experience from their own deities (Ḥaqī, 1705, 3/83). This verse highlights that God embellishes human actions and will disclose their genuine essence on the Day of Resurrection (Tabatabai, 1995: 323/7). The term "insulting without knowledge" signifies individuals inadvertently disrespecting God Almighty (Alusi, 1994: 4/236). The waqf (ص) in the second part of the verse links it to the first part, ensuring a cohesive narrative. In light of the second part of verse 108 from Surah Al-An'am, it becomes apparent that God enables people to perceive their actions as aesthetically appealing. This part serves as the explanation for the first part of the verse. The fact that polytheists act ignorantly and perceive their actions as beautiful signifies that appealing appearances do not necessarily indicate truth or righteousness.

Ansariyan's translation states, "And do not insult the idols that the unbelievers worship instead of God, because they, driven by enmity and ignorance, will also insult God. This is how We embellish their

actions for every nation [so that they will think that what they are doing is good because of the punishment for their stubbornness and obstinacy], then the return of all of them will be to their Lord, so He will inform them of the deeds that they used to do."

Rahnama's translation says, "Do not insult those whom they invoke besides God, for they will ignorantly insult God in retaliation and out of ignorance." (Rehman, 1975, 1/553)

Example 2: In the second example, verse 156 from Surah Al-An'am, the waqf sign "ص" is utilized to denote a stop when reciting.

"أَنْ تَقُولُوا إِنَّمَا أَنْزَلَ الْكِتَابَ عَلَى طَائِفَتَيْنِ مِنْ قَبْلِنَا (ص) وَإِنْ كُنَّا عَنْ دِرَاسَتِهِمْ لَغَافِلِينَ"

Regarding verse 156 of Surah Al-An'am, Tafsir Majma' al-Bayan states: "We have revealed the Qur'an so that you don't have any excuses and say, 'The Scripture was also revealed to the Jews and Christians before us, but we were unaware of their books.' The reason they had books revealed to them while we did not is due to their qualification which we did not possess. If God had desired the same from us, He would have also revealed a book to us, just as He did to them." (Tabarsi, 1996, 9/22) Both parts of the verse are semantically connected, which is evident in contemporary translations such as: Fouladvand's translation: "So that you may not say, 'The Scripture [Heavenly] was revealed only to two groups before us, and we were unaware of studying them.'" (Fouladvand, 1997, 1/149) Makarem Shirazi's translation: "(We revealed this book with these distinctions) so that you do not say: 'The Scripture was revealed only to two groups before us [Jews and Christians]; and we were unaware of studying them.'" (Makarem Shirazi, 1994, 1/149) Mesbahzadeh's translation: "So that you may not say: 'The Book was only revealed to two groups before us, and we are indeed ignorant of reading them.'" (Mesbahzadeh, 2001, 1/149)

4-5. Prohibited Stop (لا)

Among the significant signs of Sajavandi's waqf is the waqf sign "لا", which indicates that one should not apply a stop in front of this sign.

Example 1: This waqf is exemplified in Surah Al-An'am, verse 51.

"وَ أَنْذَرِ بِهِ الَّذِينَ يَخَافُونَ أَنْ يُحْشَرُوا إِلَىٰ رَبِّهِمْ (لا) لَيْسَ لَهُمْ مِنْ دُونِهِ وَلِيٌّ وَ لَا شَفِيعٌ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَتَّقُونَ"

the pronoun 'به' refers to 'ما يوحى' (what is revealed to you), which was in the previous verse, wherein the Prophet is instructed to warn, through the Qur'an, those who dread being assembled before their Lord on the Day of Judgment. These individuals, who recognize their inevitable return to the Divine Presence (Tabrizi, 1996: 2/186). Imam Sadiq (peace be upon him) commands: "With the Qur'an, warn those who hope to attain the pleasure of their Lord." (Hawizi, 1994: 1/720) In the first segment, the discussion addresses the warning intended for those who fear God, yet the precise subject of this warning remains undisclosed. However, the second segment offers clarification by emphasizing that the subject in question is the fact that they have no protector or intercessor apart from God. If a pause were to occur after "رَبِّهِمْ" (their Lord), the verse's meaning would be incomplete, as the essence of the warning has not yet been elucidated. Therefore, a pause at this point is deemed repulsive. Furthermore, the second segment, "ليس لهم ولي ولا شفيع" (they have no protector or intercessor...) serves as a circumstantial adverb for the sentence "يحشروا الى ربهم" (they will be gathered to their Lord), indicating a connection between the two segments (Saleh, 1988: 3/227). Some contemporary translators have employed explanatory phrases in their translations to indicate the continuation of the verse and the preference for reading without a pause. For instance, some translators have used analytical phrases such as "because" to demonstrate the connection between the segments. As an example: "And use [the Qur'an] to warn those who have fear [of their Lord] to gather towards their Lord, because there is no protector or intercessor for them besides Him, so that they may be mindful." (Fouladvand, 1997: 1/133) Some exegetes, by including phrases like "on that day," have ascribed an independent meaning to the second segment, which does not seem

appropriate. For example, in Hajati's translation of the verse, it reads: "O Messenger, through the Qur'an, warn those who fear the Day of Resurrection and Accountability, perhaps on that day, when they have no helper, protector, or intercessor other than God, perhaps they will become cautious." (Hajati, 2006: 1/131) Similarly, Makarem Shirazi's translation states: "And through it (the Qur'an), warn those who fear the Day of Resurrection! (On that day,) they will have no helper, protector, or intercessor but Him; perhaps they will be cautious!" (Makarem Shirazi 1994: 1/133)

Example 2: In verse 56 of Surah Al-An'am, a repulsive waqf sign can be found, indicated by the particle "لا" (lā).

"قُلْ إِنِّي نُهِيتُ أَنْ أَعْبُدَ الَّذِينَ تَدْعُونَ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ قُلْ لَا اتَّبِعُ أَهْوَاءَكُمْ (لَا) فَذُصِّلْتُ إِذَا وَ مَا أَنَا مِنَ الْمُهْتَدِينَ"

This verse strongly condemns idol worship, stating that worshipping idols is a misguided and straying path. It explains the reason for forbidding idol worship: idol worship leads to misguidance and deviation from the guidance of God (Tabataba'i, 1995: 7/162).

In the second sentence, the word "إِذَا" is an adverb that indicates a response or consequence, while the following sentence is a resumptive clause and does not require any grammatical inflection (i'rab). (Da'as & Hamidan, 2004: 1/307) The word "إِذَا" signifies the meaning of "at this time" and shows that the sentence after it is connected to the one before it. In the first sentence, it is emphasized that the Prophet has been forbidden from following those who worship gods other than Allah. In the second sentence, it is stated that if such following occurs, the result will be misguidance. The two sentences are semantically and conceptually connected and should not be separated. Contemporary translators have not neglected this issue. These translators have attempted to convey this connection using phrases such as "if I do so" (Makarem Shirazi, 1994), "unless otherwise" (Elhe Qomshe'i, 2001), and "because in this case" (Safoui, 2009).

4-6. Permissible Stop (ج)

One of the widely used stop signs in Quranic manuscripts is the permissible stop sign. When encountering this sign, both stopping and continuing are permitted.

Example 1: In verse 66 of Surah Al-An'am, a permissible waqf sign is utilized.

"وَ كَذَّبَ بِهِ قَوْمُكَ وَ هُوَ الْحَقُّ (ج) قُلْ لَسْتُ عَلَيْكُمْ بِوَكِيلٍ"

This verse illustrates the might of God's wrath and punishment (Qaraati, 2009: 2/481). The statement "قُلْ لَا اتَّبِعُ أَهْوَاءَكُمْ" decisively addresses their baseless proposition, asserting that idolatry is devoid of logical reasoning and irreconcilable with sound judgment and wisdom. Because the intellect acknowledges that humans are the pinnacle of creation, making it unthinkable for humans to bow before other creatures, let alone those inferior to them. Furthermore, idols are often man-made, raising the question of how something crafted by humans can become their deity and the solution to their problems. In essence, the roots of idolatry lie in blind imitation, adherence to superstitions, and the worship of false idols (Makaram Shirazi, 2014: 5/262).

The permissible waqf divides the verse into two independent parts, each possessing its own unique meaning. The first part depicts how the Prophet's people, also known as pagans, confront the promise of divine punishment through denial. On the other hand, the second part focuses on the Prophet's reaction to this denial. Both parts possess distinct meanings, which can be explained as follows: 1. The pagans consider the promised divine punishment to be a falsehood. 2. The Prophet is not accountable for the affairs of the pagans and is only obligated to deliver the message of Islam.

Contemporary translations have also maintained the semantic independence of the two propositions while preserving the connection and coherence within the verse. For instance, Hojjati's

translation highlights the conceptual independence of the two propositions while emphasizing the key term "truth" (haqq) that connects them: "Your people and community have rejected and denied your invitation to truth and God, even though it is indeed the truth. Tell them: I am not accountable for the acceptance of the truth; my duty is solely to convey the message, not to compel you" (Hujjati, 2006: 136).

In Meshkini's translation, it is stated: "Your people have refuted the truth, even though it is the truth. Say: I am not accountable for you (to compel or punish transgressors, nor to reward the obedient, for my role is solely to deliver the message as a messenger)" (Hujjati, 2002: 136).

Example 2: In verse 132 of Surah An'am, a permissible waqf sign has been used:

"وَ لِكُلِّ دَرَجَاتٍ مِمَّا عَمِلُوا (ج) وَ مَا رُبُّكَ بَغَافِلٍ عَمَّا يَعْمَلُونَ"

In this verse, one meaning is expressed in two propositions, emphasizing the meticulous judgment of God. The first proposition asserts that each individual's rank is determined by their actions and the second proposition affirms God's complete knowledge and awareness of human (Qomi, 1984: 1/217), implying that nothing remains hidden from Him (Kashani, 1994: 2/159).

Each proposition conveys one meaning, with a permissible waqf sign between the two propositions. The concept of "levels" or "ranks" is clarified within parentheses in some translations, exemplifying God's judgment process. For instance, in Meshkini's translation, the verse reads: "And for each one (human, jinn, believer, disbeliever, righteous, or evildoer) there are levels and ranks based on their actions (ranks in terms of their deeds, spiritual perfection, and stations in the afterlife), and your Lord is not unaware of what they do." (Meshkini, 2002: 1/145)

Discussion and Conclusion

Contemporary translators of the Holy Quran have utilized Sajavandi waqf signs to better understand and interpret God's intentions within the sacred text. It is important to note that Sajavandi waqf signs are not part of the original Quranic punctuation but were introduced by Sajavandi in the 6th century AH. Contemporary translators can interpret Quranic verses without solely relying on Sajavandi's waqf signs by referring to the verses' structure, the infallible Imams' narrations, and literary and linguistic scholars' works. However, employing waqf and ibtida as complementary reliable tools can protect translators from errors and provide an easier, more secure path for accurate Quran translation.

One of the significant Sajavandi's waqf signs is the compulsory waqf sign "م". Translators must observe the waqf when encountering this sign. Contemporary translators have been aware of this aspect and applied it when translating verses that employ the compulsory waqf sign. In the case of Surah An'am, where the compulsory waqf sign is used, translators have divided the verses into two parts, ensuring each part is translated independently.

One of the important Sajavandi's waqf signs in the Holy Quran is the sign "ط". When encountering this sign, waqf (stop) is preferred over wasl (continuation). Contemporary translators have been aware of this and have translated verses containing the waqf sign "ط" in such a way that waqf is preferred. This can be observed in the verses of Surah An'am. As an example, in Surah An'am, two doctrinal themes that are conceptually connected are presented within a single verse, with the Sajavandi waqf sign "ط" placed between the two propositions. The translator, upon encountering this sign, has carefully translated the verse to ensure no semantic disruption occurs.

The Sajavandi waqf sign "ز" like "ص" waqf sign indicates that continuation is preferable over stopping, though stopping is not incorrect. This sign is frequently employed in the verses of Surah An'am. Contemporary translators have given attention to this sign and, since connection is favored when there is

no breathing pause, they have attempted to translate the verses containing the "ج" sign as a single cohesive passage.

The "repulsive stop" sign means that one should not stop at the proposition where this sign is present. Examples of this sign can be found in Surah An'am. Contemporary translators have been aware of this sign and have translated verses containing the "ل" sign in a way that preserves the continuity of the verse, maintaining the intended reading as a single cohesive passage.

One of the most commonly used waqf and ibtida signs in the Holy Quran is the "permissible stop" sign. Upon encountering this sign, both stopping and continuation are permissible, and neither choice disrupts the intended meaning. Contemporary translators, when dealing with the "permissible stop" sign, have translated verses as single propositions or occasionally as two propositions or multiple parts, each conveying a distinct yet interconnected meaning.

Conflicts of Interest

There are no conflicts of interest.

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