

## **Translating Iqbal: An Evaluation of Selections from Three English Translations of *Shikwa* and *Jawab-e-Shikwa***

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### **Abstract**

This article aims at investigating the lexical choices and syntactical strategies used by the translators in the selection from three English translations of Iqbal's 'Shikwa' and 'Jawab-e-Shikwa'. Moreover, it explores how these translations exhibit similarities and differences with the original text. The researchers have used Vinay and Darbelnet's model (2004) of stylistic analysis for examining the source text and the target texts. After analyzing the translations of the selected stanzas, it has been found that the translators have used a variety of approaches for rendering the Source Text (ST), which consequently resulted in different translation products. However, at some places, the translations also show some similarities. The study concludes that verse to verse translation, with absolute perfection is not possible, especially in the present case, where the languages involved are syntactically and culturally different. Moreover, the knowledge of the translator regarding technical aspects of poetry is also significant in the translation process. The study also indicates that loss and gain are likely to occur in the process of translation as sometimes the translator has to opt for either preserving the meaning of the original or maintaining the poetic beauty in the translation. Lastly, the study recommends that the translators should focus on creating a balance in transferring both content and form.

**Keywords:** Jawab-e-Shikwa; Shikwa; translation; translational strategies

### **Introduction**

Translation is a linguistic activity in which a translator tries to transfer the textual material of one language into another language. It is a bilingual process and is considered as an area of comparative linguistics. Although languages of the world are different from one another, they share some common properties, called language universals. One of these universal properties is translatability, which

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though varies in degree from language to language, but the fact that every language is translatable still holds.

All wise nations around the world utilize the translatability of languages to send out their great literature in different forms. Indeed, it would not be wrong to say that the act of translation among languages has gone a long way in bringing people from diverse cultures, living in different parts of the world together.

Translators deal with a variety of translations of the same source text to make them accessible and understandable to the readers of translating language in their own linguistic and cultural milieus. Though among all genres of literature, poetry is the most rhythmically pleasing and coherent in translation, but the most difficult to render at the same time. One of the main reasons for this difficulty is that the language of poetry involves various poetic devices that pose a much tougher challenge for the translator as compared to the rendition of other genres such as a novel or a drama.

Poetic text is predominantly expressive in function as it carries the poet's emotions and feelings organized in a certain metrical composition and rhyme pattern. Moreover, words are equally significant for their sounds as well as for their meanings, which gives musical quality to a poem. The holistic meaning of a poem depends upon different poetic devices such as rhythm, rhyme, and sound of words. Therefore, a translator should not only have the knowledge and awareness of these problems, but he needs to have almost the same artistic skills which are required for becoming a poet.

The translators can transform the source text into the target text that is equivalent with the source text only if they follow certain norms of translation. Consequently, the two texts have a closer association with each other in terms of their forms and meanings. However, a complete and exact correspondence in the forms and meanings of the two texts is hard to achieve as a translated text is mostly meant for the audience of a different language with possibly different culture, which turns the translated text into a by-product of the original text. Equivalence as a norm or strategy in translation studies has become a major field of research as it is mostly explored whenever a translated text is compared with the original text. The present study investigates how the three translations of a single source text (ST) have similarities with the original and how they differ from it.

## Research Questions

This study is guided by the following research questions:

1. What lexemes and phrasemes have been used by the translators in the target texts?
2. How far do the three translations correspond to the meaning of the original?

## Significance of the Study

Milton wrote the famous “Paradise Lost” in order to justify the “ways of God to men”; Iqbal wrote *Shikwah* and *Jabab-e-Shikwa* in order to do the same, but this time within the context of the woes of Muslims and their complaints. *Shikwa* (1909) exalts the legacy of Islam and its civilizing role in history, but it laments the fate of Muslims in the modern times. *Shikwa* arises from the anguish of the poet’s heart as the poetic plea to Allah on the pretext of the predicament of Muslims and *Jawab-e-Shikwa* foregrounds Allah’s response to the forceful voice of the poet. Moreover, it was not something unusual as even the prophets of Allah had complained to Allah Almighty--- the Only One Who could listen to their troubles and make solutions of their problems. The focal point of the present work is the comparative study of three English translations of the selected poems which Iqbal wrote after his return from Germany. About the poems, Arberry argues that they indicate the start of the outstanding career which became the chief reason for his ever-growing popularity as a philosopher and thinker which continued throughout the remaining period of his life (1987, p. iii)

## Literature Review

Translation practices kept changing from period to period and different theories emerged in different time periods. Horace and Cicero, who pioneered the field of translation, favoured the word-for-word and sense-for-sense translation. These founding dimensions of translation impacted the subsequent development of the field of translation studies (as cited in Ghanooni, 2012, p. 77). Today, the field of translation studies has diversified and become a specialized field of applied linguistics and the development of translation studies as a discipline can be seen in the form of separate departments not only at international level but also in various Pakistani universities such as National University of Modern Languages, Islamabad, International Islamic University, Islamabad, and the University of Gujrat.

The diverse ways in which translation studies have been conceptualized and explored have always held the interest of translation scholars. Gorp (1978)

holds that translation scholars have diverse opinions about the discipline (as cited in Baker, 2001). Moreover, he holds that despite the apparent similarities between interrelated concepts such as adaptation and rewriting, they are not distinctly clear or unvaryingly drawn, either synchronically or diachronically, not even within the same linguistic tradition. Accordingly, Venuti (1995) also supports a similar view as he claims that theorists are divided in their perspectives about the two popular pairs of words (as cited in Yang, 2010). Similarly, Munday (2001) refers to Venuti who argues that translators are generally inclined to translate the source text 'fluently' into English for producing an idiomatic and readable target text, jeopardizing transparency. He contends further that the publishers, reviewers as well as readers accept the transparent text which means that the lack of linguistic and stylistic features makes it seem fluent. In other words, it falsely gives the meaning of the foreign text in order to create the impression of the original sense. Another way is to take a conservative method and adhere to the canons of target language, culture, and adapt the translation project to support domestic norms (as cited in Baker, 1998). Venuti (1995) is of the view that the domesticating approach has been in vogue since ancient Rome, when translation was considered a form of conquest. He states that Latin poets like Horace and Propertius rendered Greek texts into Roman Present. For example, the focal point of Denham's rendition of Book 2 of Aeneid in heroic couplets was "if Virgil must need speak English, it were fit he should speak not only as a man of this nation, but as a man of this age" (as cited in Baker, 1998, pp. 240-241).

Translation studies have lately become an interesting area of research. The scope of translation studies has now broadened from purely language-oriented theories, especially in the latter half of the 20th century as translation scholars have taken a deep interest in incorporating culture in the translation research. According to Snell-Hornby (1990) 'the cultural turn', which refers to "the move from translation as text to translation as culture and politics", has brought theorists from various backgrounds together (as cited in Munday, 2008, p. 125).

Translation is fundamentally concerned with the transference of messages between two languages, the standard of translation, at large, depends on how efficiently the original message and meaning is transferred. Evaluating translation encompasses comparing it with the original with respect to its relationship, called equivalence, which has been discussed and interpreted by different translation scholars according to their own understanding. Catford, whose model presents sentence as a unit of equivalence, contends that the practice of translation necessarily involves "defining the nature and conditions of translation equivalence" (1965, p.21). Catford's concept of equivalence is suitable for machine translations (Baker, 2001). Vinay and Darbelnet (2004) noted that translational equivalence is the replication of the original situation by using different words. They came up with a comparatively comprehensive model,

giving the detailed description of the translational strategies and procedures. The main categories of these strategies are: direct translation and oblique translation. The direct translation comprises three more procedures that include borrowing, calque and literal translation. The oblique translation consists of transposition, modulation, equivalence and adaptation. This model provides a rich ground for the present work which deals with the evaluation of three English translations of Iqbal's two selected stanzas from his two Urdu poems *Shikwa* and *Jawab e Shikwa*.

Iqbal is difficult to translate mainly because of his very high intellectual caliber. His sharpness of feelings as well as his vastness and depth of thought is seldom captured by the translators. Even the likes of Arberry (1953, 1996), Kiernan (1955), Hussain (1954), Khalil (1997) who have done well in translating his verses, and their translations too have some blank areas. Moreover, Iqbal's abundant use of metaphors and the cultural and religious allusions make his poetry difficult to translate. He had vast knowledge of Persian and used Persian words and analogies even in his Urdu poetry which make the rendition of his works even more challenging for the translators.

Another reason for the difficulty in translating Iqbal's poetry is the linguistic and cultural differences of the source text and the target text. Arberry was an English translator whose culture and language differed from those of Iqbal. The second translation produced by Singh is accompanied by Hindi translation. Hindi is the mother tongue of the translator. Only Akhtar is the local translator in the study at hand. Different scholars have analyzed Iqbal's translations into English, but this study is unique in the sense that it is the first attempt to compare the different translations of Iqbal's selected verses with reference to the different dimensions of the translators, their culture, the source text and the target text.

## **Theoretical Framework**

It is generally agreed among the scholars that no discipline can flourish in true sense without a theory of its own. The same also holds true for translation studies which is governed by certain canons, both in theory and practice. As Newmark (1988) holds that translation as a discipline involves certain theories, strategies and methodologies for different genres of texts which, in turn, help and facilitate translation analysis, review and criticism. Toury (1995) also holds that translation is a norm governed activity. He holds that it is wrong to think of a translation as simple utterances which are created by the one whom we call translator. Toury, who based his work on Holme's map strongly favours the empirical side of the discipline and contends that descriptive translation studies can modify, and at times even refute a theory. However, he does not altogether reject the theoretical side as he holds that both make the integral part of the

discipline as a whole, which facilitates better understanding to which that science refers (Toury, 1995). This research involves an evaluation of poetry and, therefore, it constitutes a part of usual linguistic experience. Moreover, it also comprises a comparison between ST and TTs in terms of the strategies used by the translators using the paradigm of equivalence.

The translation of poetry is generally considered to be a challenging task as both form and content need to be transferred. Every word and line in a poem are important, not only in terms of meaning, but also their texture where a translator's knowledge, understanding and artistic skills are tested. According to Lefevere (1975), translation of poetry can help introduce the poet as a literary figure at both national and international levels. He further states that literary translation, particularly that of poetry is different from technical translation of manuals, instructions, reports, etc., because they are specifically translated for a particular target audience. Therefore, the use of just the correct vocabulary is significant in this case, and the aesthetics and style of the text are not as significant. Furthermore, in rendering technical texts, the translator's specialized knowledge in the field is required. Similar arguments come from Newmark (1998), who holds that in poetry translation, it is not only the word, which is the first unit of meaning, but also the complete line, which is the second unit of meaning, has to be preserved, hence showing "a unique double concentration of units" (p.163); the preservation both at word as well as at line levels has to be maintained "within a context of: (a) corresponding punctuation, which, essentially reproduces the tone of the original; and (b) accurate translation of metaphors" (p.163). The researchers also support the view that translating poetry is a challenging task because of its predominantly expressive function.

Moreover, in the rendition of literary texts, the translator is not only supposed to be creative and imaginative, but he/she should also have more stylistic skills and a comprehensive cultural knowledge. The great translators, irrespective of their TL, will have to follow a very challenging course of study, including literary studies, and probably, a university specialization in their mother tongue and/or the language (s) they will translate to. Nida cites Harry de Smith who states that "translation of literary work is as tasteless as a stewed strawberry" (1964, p.1)

It is argued that Smith's argument is more valid in poetry translation as compared to the translation of other genres of literature because at first, a translator must comprehend a poem in one language before he renders it in some other language. This involves several complications: Firstly, every word in a poem carries deeper meaning that lies beneath what it appears to be at the surface level. Secondly, not less important is the internal pattern of the text which links its several parts with one another. Thirdly, words are not only visible on the printed page with certain meaning, style and context, but their complete meaning

must be understood by the translator, and this is possible only if he/she has the awareness of the social and cultural traditions in which the poem was produced. Even at the text level, the language, meter, poetic devices such as metaphors, similes and rhyme scheme are some of the characteristic features of a poem for which the TL offers no equivalents. In the present case, Iqbal's two poems, *Shikwah* and *Jawab-e-Shikwa* have been written in *tarkeeb band*, which is a unique form in Urdu poetry and has no true corresponding form in English. This is perhaps why Jakobson holds that poetry rendition is "creative transposition" (as cited in Bassnett, 2002, p. 23).

## Research Methodology

The methodology which has been used in the current research is grounded in a qualitative framework. The analysis of TTs has been done using Vinay and Darbelnet's (2004) model. The researchers used this model because it is comparatively more comprehensive, describing the translational strategies and procedures in more detail. The different categories of these strategies include: borrowing, calque, literal translation, transposition, modulation, equivalence, and adaptation. Thus, this model provides a more appropriate ground for the study at hand.

At first, the text of the original stanzas has been given, followed by their brief introduction. Next, the three renderings have been given in a tabular form. Using the tools given in the subject model, the three translations have been juxtaposed with original text in order to see what translational strategies have been used in the three English translations of the Urdu poems *Shikwah* and *Jawab-e-Shikwa*. The focus remains on the detailed analysis and discussion of the lexical and syntactical choices used by the three translators. Moreover, the study focuses on the way these choices lead to the transfer of meaning in the three renditions has also been discussed.

## Analysis

This research includes the analysis of three stanzas taken from three English translations of *Shikwa* and *Jawab-e-Shikwa*. They have been analyzed in the light of Vinay and Darbelnet's (2004) model.

### Stanza-1

تھے ہمیں ایک ترے معرکہ آرا وں میں  
خشکیوں میں کبھی لڑتے کبھی صحرا وں میں  
دیں اذانیں کبھی یورپ کی کلیسا وں میں  
کبھی افریقہ کے تپتے ہوئے صحرا وں میں  
شان آنکھوں میں نہ جپتی تھی جہاں داروں کی  
کلمہ پڑھتے تھے ہم چھاؤں میں تلواروں کی

*Thē hamiṇ ēk tire ma'arakā ārā'on mēṇ*  
*Khushkiyōṇ mēṇ kabhi lartē kabhi daryā'on mēṇ*  
*Dīṇ adhānēnēṇ kabhi yōrap kē kalīs'on mēṇ*  
*Kabhī afriqa ke taptē hu'ē šehrā'on mēṇ*  
*Shān āṇkhōṇ mēṇ na jachtī thī jahāḥdārōr kī*  
*Kalimah paṛhtē thē ham chā'on mēṇ talwārōṇ kī*

### Brief Introduction

This stanza discusses the valour of the veteran Muslims warriors who carried all-conquering sword of Islam as they engaged themselves in various battles against the evil forces. They used their swords against non-believers in the battles which they fought on the land and on the sea. They fought against them amidst all odds and difficulties and made sacrifices even if it came at the cost of their own lives. Their *adhāns* (calls to prayers) echoed from the churches of European lands and travelled across the African deserts. Most significantly, they did not fight for earning fame or for any personal gain or to acquire wealth, but their only purpose was to glorify the name of Allah Almighty. Therefore, they did not shrink from giving sacrifices even of their own selves. Consequently, they were successful in ruling the world and preaching the name of the Creator. Moreover, as rulers, what distinguished them from the other rulers was that unlike the latter, their mission was not the acquisition of worldly ranks and glories; rather their sole purpose was to please Allah Almighty. The stanza begins with the word تھے (were) which shows that the Muslim warriors used their acts of valour in the past for which the poet is all praise. Moreover, he has repeatedly used the word کبھی -*kabhi* in lines 2 and 3 which also reinforces the deeds of bravery by Muslims of the past.



**Table 1**  
**English Translations of Stanza 4 of Shikwah**

| <b>A.J Arberry's Translation</b>   | <b>Khushwanth Singh's Translation</b>  | <b>Raja Sultan Zahoor Akhtar's Translation</b>  |
|--|--|---|
| It was we and we alone who marched Thy soldiers to the fight, Now upon the land engaging, now embattled on the sea, The triumphant Call to Prayer in Europe's churches to recite, Through the wastes of Africa to summon men to worship Thee. All the glittering splendor of great emperors we reckoned none; In the shadow of our glinting swords we shouted, "God is One!" | Of all the brave warriors, there were none but only we. Who fought your battles on land and often on the sea. Our calls to prayer rang out from the churches of European lands And floated across Africa's scorching desert sands. We ruled the world, but regal glories our eyes disdained. Under the shades of glittering sabers Your creed we proclaimed. | It was we who marched as warriors, none else but, we. And upon the land we also fought, And battled upon the sea. Our Azan's call rang out In churches of European lands. And made this magic tune, Over Africa's blazing sands. The glamour of our conquerors Regal glories were disdained. Under the shade of flashing swords The "kalima was proclaimed. |

## Analysis and Discussion

The very first line highlights the distinctive valor of the Muslims in the battlefield against their enemy. Arberry translates this line by using the first-person plural pronoun 'we' twice which is followed by the adjective 'alone'. This type of construction enables him to emphasize the idea that no one else could have performed such an arduous task of throwing themselves in danger. Moreover, he used the relative pronoun 'who,' "It was we and we alone who" and then the second person pronoun 'Thy' in the phrase, 'Thy soldiers'. This syntactical choice seems to be a creative transposition, one of the strategies of Vinay and Darbelnet's model, in order to fulfill the poetic requirement. In other words, the relative pronoun "Who" allows the translator to give further and explanation about 'We' (the Muslims) and list their different deeds of bravery. Similarly, the use of the possessive pronoun, 'Thy' is in keeping with the original text as the translator exclusively talks about Allah Almighty. Singh translates the same line using a different structure as he brings the adjectival phrase "of all the brave warriors" to the start of the line and taking the pronoun 'we' at the end of the line. Similarly,

he also uses the pronoun 'Who' at the beginning of line-2. The whole line is read as: "Who fought your battles on land and often on the sea". This translation seems adequate in terms of meaning, but the use of the pronoun 'Who' at the beginning of the sentence is a bit unusual as only interrogative sentences start with 'Who'. However, this could alternatively be an intelligent use on part of the translator as the entire first couplet seems to be an answer to an assumed interrogative by Iqbal as indicated by his praising the Muslims as God's only allies. Moreover, 'Who' clearly refers to a question about a person or people so here the translator follows the original text's technique of syntactically centralizing the subject by using the relative pronoun at the beginning of the second line.

Finally, the syntactic construction in Singh focuses more on cadence and coherence than on replicating the stress on the subject in the original text created by Iqbal by syntactically placing "we" or "hum" at the beginning of the line.

Akhtar uses four lines (quartet) in order to translate what Arberry and Singh render in a couplet. His rendition lacks both rhythm and rhyme due to considerable modification in form, as a result, only the words 'we' and 'sea', rhyme in the alternate lines. However, the lexical choices remain almost the same except for the use of the word 'battled' used in the phrase 'battled upon' instead of the noun 'battle' to which Vinay and Darbelnet refer as transposition in their model. Moreover, his translation of the first line: "It was we who marched as warriors" is unambiguous and is much closer to the meaning of the original.

Arberry's rendition of the second line is more adequate as compared to the previous case as the use of the adverb 'now' as the equivalent of the word 'کبھی -*kabhi*' in line-2 of the original text conveys the sense of continual fighting by the Muslims against the evil. On the contrary the appropriate equivalent for now in urdu is *abhi* not *kabhi*. *Kabhi* clearly gives the sense of an act done in the past which most probably is discontinued in the present. This was the genius of Iqbal that he left these loopholes of logic in *shikwa* so that in *jawab e shikwa* he could present the Almighty's argument.

Moreover, the use of the adjective 'triumphant' before the compound noun 'call to prayer' is debatable in terms of meaning. As the focus on the verb *dein adhanein* suggests that the victors/ Muslims were not triumphant but humble while the connotation of triumphant include arrogance which was an absent trait in the Muslim warriors of the past. Moreover, it indicated their humility before God and the fact that they fight in the cause and way of Allah only without having any greed/ desire of worldly gain.

Khushwanth Singh's translation presents a different picture not only in terms of his syntactical arrangement, but also his choice of different lexical and

phrasal choices. For example, Arberry's third line ends with the infinitival phrase 'to recite' where the word 'recite' rhymes with the word 'fight' at the end of the first line. Khushwanth Singh, on other hand, uses the word 'rang out' in the middle of the third line to mean the same. So, Arberry's use of the word recite lacks the connotations of conviction and thunderous echo given by Singh's use of rang out.

Secondly, whereas Arberry uses the possessive adjective, "Europe's churches" in the same line, Khushwanth Singh's translation contains a combination of noun, prepositional and adjectival phrases and reads like this: the churches of European lands. Here, the addition of the word 'lands' is the translator's own addition which is probably used to complete the first line of the second couplet as the second line concludes with the words "desert sands". Further, because the original stresses 'Europe'. Therefore, Arberry's Europe's churches only states the locus of the churches while Singh's 'churches of the European lands' is closer to the original as the translator preserves the stress on the European continent as a land conquered by the Muslim forefathers of the Indian Muslim who are themselves now enslaved by the European.

Sultan Zahoor Akhtar continues with his quartet form in translating the second couplet. His lexical choices remain nearly the same with the exception of the adjectival phrase 'magic tune' which he associates with *adhān*. Moreover, he uses the adjectival phrase 'blazing sands', where the adjective 'blazing' is similar in meaning to the word 'scorching' used by Khushwanth Singh, but unlike the former he avoids using the word 'desert' before the noun 'sands' which is adequate. Another feature of Sultan Zahoor Akhtar's translation is his retention of the word 'Azan' which he only transcribes in Roman Urdu probably to keep the meaning of the religious flavour and shades of meaning associated with it. Finally, one more notable feature of his rendition is his lopsided rhyming pattern in which the second and fourth-lines rhyme together, but the first- and fourth-lines end with different words having no sound similarity.

Finally, in rendering the last couplet, the three translators have used different strategies with different lexical and syntactical choices. This is not surprising in the context of their different requirements for concluding their lines. Arberry's style of translating the first line appears not only adequate, but it also seems to have a close resemblance with the original, شان آنکھوں میں نہ جچتی تھی - *Shān ānkhōṇ mēṇ na jachṭī thī jahāḥdārōṇ kī*, which he translates as "All the glittering splendor of great emperors we reckoned none".

Keeping in view the idiomatic Urdu phrasal expression, this translation looks quite adequate. However, Arberry's translation of the second line is debatable because it deviates from the meaning of the original as he translates it

as “In the shadow of our glinting swords, we shouted, “God is one!”. This translation deviates from the actual meaning because the chanters were Muslims and the swords were those of the enemies. But the use of the pronoun *our* makes confusion in conveying the actual sense and, therefore, it is incorrect.

Khushwanth Singh as usual uses his lengthy line in order to translate the final two lines of the original stanza. Moreover, he renders the idea of worldly disliking by the Muslims as “but regal glories our eyes disdained” where the word ‘disdained’ rhymes with the verb, ‘proclaimed’, used in the last line of the stanza. This is different from A.J Arberry’s rendition whose final couplet ends with the words ‘none’ and ‘One’. Another difference with Arberry’s is that he uses the adjectival phrase ‘glittering sabers’ which conveys the same meaning as that of Arberry’s ‘glinting swords’, but unlike Arberry he did not use the pronoun ‘our’ before swords which keeps the sense of the original intact. Consequently, the wrong use of the pronoun ‘our’ by Arberry deviates from the meaning of the original as the poet describes the situation where enemy’s swords were above the heads of the Muslim warriors, but they felt no fear in preaching the message of *tawhid*. In contrast, both Singh and Akhtar’s translations are better as they have used similar words/phrase without the pronoun ‘our’:

Under the shades of glittering sabers (Singh)

Under the shade of flashing swords (Akhtar)

Sultan Zahoor Akhtar’s translation of the final two lines of the original stanza creates confusion, particularly in the first two lines as he mixes up two different senses which does not convey the actual meaning. To make it further clear, he uses the phrase ‘the glamour’ and associates it with ‘our conquerors’ in the first line. And in the second line, his first argument turns on its head as he writes: “Regal glories were disdained”. Thus, the two lines become contradictory, as what is said in the first line gets confused with the second line, and as a result the final outcome is nothing. Moreover, he uses the single word ‘conquerors’ which is a shorter expression in contrast to Khushwanth Singh’s use of the longer expression in the form of a complete sentence: “we ruled the world”, although both convey the same meaning. But he leaves the first line incomplete in the form of a sentence fragment before he starts another line. This grammatical deviation is also one of the reasons of semantic confusion. In rendering the last line, he leaves the word “*Kalima*” untranslated which shows his understanding of religious connotations and the absolute nature of its actual loadedness of the term which does not afford itself to translation. The same is translated by Khushwanth Singh as “Your creed” which is not the true equivalent of “*Kalima*”. This leads to understanding of the importance of temporal location of the translator, that is, the time of translation is important in preserving the words like *azan* or *kalmia* in translation. Arberry is translating at a time when the west is translating and understanding the orient for the first time and Singh and Akhtar as more recent

translators from the orient translating for the west choose to preserve various words in order to make the point that here is a concept that cannot be rendered in translation and will require active understanding of the occidental reader.

## Stanza-2

بت صنم خانوں میں کہتے ہیں مسلمان گئے  
ہے خوشی ان کو کہ کعبے کے نگہبان گئے  
منزل دہرے اونٹوں کے حدی خواں گئے  
اپنی بغلوں میں دبائے ہوئے قرآن گئے  
خندہ زن کفر ہے احساس تجھے ہے کہ نہیں  
اپنی توحید کا کچھ پاس تجھے ہے کہ نہیں

*But ṣanam khānōṇ mēṇ kehtē haeṇ musalmān ga'ē*

*Hae khushī un ko ke ka'bē ke nigeḥbān ga'ē*

*Manzal-i-dahr sē ūṇtōṇ ke ḥudī khan ga'ē*

*Khandazan kufr hae, iḥsās tujhē ha eke nahīṇ*

*Apnī tawḥīd ka kuch pās tujhē ha eke nahīṇ*

## Brief Introduction

Keeping in view the overall structure of the poem, this stanza comes at number second in the third part which describes the worst conditions of the present-day Muslims. In the previous two parts of the poem, the poet has described the reason as to why he has embarked upon the subject of complaining to Allah Almighty. Moreover, he has also highlighted the role of the Muslims, particularly focusing on their introduction in terms of who they are and what their importance is in lightening the dark pages of history at the time when human beings used to worship idols and trees. Now, it is here when a reader finds himself almost in the middle of the poem and can easily feel the change in the tone as the poet seriously laments the wretched condition of the present-day Muslims. The poet feels depressed at the decline of the Muslims' power and consequently, he quotes the taunts that non-Muslims fling at Muslims. It is extremely pathetic that the disbelievers and idols in their temples rejoice that the Muslims, who were previously safeguarding their holy place Ka'ba, are no more there. They feel happy that the Muslims who used to travel in the scorching deserts on their camels in the past have vanished now, with their sacred book, Qur'an tucked under their

arms. The use of the verb گئے (gone) in the past form gives the sense of loss and deprivation as the poet clearly laments that the Muslims have lost the big treasure in the form of their holy book which provided them the true guidance towards the right path. In the last two lines, the poet shows more irritation at this sorry state of affairs and his tone becomes very bitter as he reacts to this dismal situation of the Muslims. Therefore, he turns to Allah Almighty, invoking Him that now it is the question of protecting the belief of *tawhid*, the oneness of Allah, which is the soul of this universe. The second person pronoun تجھے (You) is repeatedly used in these lines as he engages himself in a direct dialogue with the Creator.

**Table 2**

**English translations of Stanza 15 of Shikwa**

| <b>A.J Arberry's Translation</b>   | <b>Khushwanth Singh's Translation</b>   | <b>Raja Sultan Zahoor Akhtar's Translation</b>   |
|--|---|--|
| Hark, the idols in the temples shout, "The Muslims are no more."<br>Jubilant to see the guardians of the Kaaba's shrine depart;<br>The world's inn is emptied of those singing cameleers of yore,<br>Vanished is their caravan, Koran close to pressed reverent heart.<br>Disbelief is loud with laughter; art Thou deaf, indifferent?<br>Disregardest Thou Thy Unity, as if it nothing meant? | In the temples of idolatry, the idols say, 'The Muslims are gone!' They rejoice that the guardians of the Kaaba have withdrawn.<br>From the world's caravanserai singing camel-drivers have vanished;<br>The Koran tucked under their arms they have departed.<br>These infidels smirk and snigger at us, are you aware?<br>For the message of your oneness, do You anymore care? | Yell the idols in the temples<br>The Muslims are, for ever gone.<br>Triumphant, they are on their attainment<br>Guardians of Ka'ba are withdrawn.<br>From the canvas of the cosmos<br>The singing camel men have faded.<br>In the bosoms and their armpits<br>Clasping "Quran" have vacated.<br>Infidels smirk and snicker<br>Are Thou art even aware.<br>For the message of Thy "Tawhid"<br>Do Thou self even care. |

## Analysis and Discussion

The first line of the stanza gives the idea that Ka'ba, which remained the holy place for the Muslims to worship, has now become the place for idolatry. Arberry translates this line by putting the word 'hark' at the start of his translated line for which the possible reason is to bring the reader's attention towards

something important. Moreover, the verb phrase ‘مسلمان گئے’ - *musalmān ga’ē*, used at the end of the second half of the ST, is translated by him as “The Muslims are no more” where the word ‘more’ rhymes with the word ‘yore’ in the third line. Further, both the words create consonance, with the ‘m’ sound coming at their start. However, his translation of the second line is confusing as he seems to mistranslate and redundantly use the possessive compound “the Kaaba’s shrine”. It is clearly understandable to every Muslim that Kaaba is the holy place to which they turn their faces during prayers; it is the place where Muslims, coming from different parts of the world gather to perform *hajj*. But, the addition of the apostrophe makes the translation confusing, making the reader understand as if the shrine is some part of Kaaba. However, Arberry, being a later English translator, translating for the Europeans, might have thought the word *Kaaba* alone would not be understandable to his reader. His translation suits his audience and time.

Khushwanth Singh as usual adds some extra words such as the noun ‘idolatry’ in the first line and the verb ‘rejoice’ in the second line which not only lengthens his translation, but it also affects the rhythm. However, one reason for adding the word ‘idolatry’ is to create assonance through its initial sound which is similar to the word ‘idol’. Similarly, the word ‘rejoice’ makes a verb phrase with the pronoun ‘They’ which is different from Arberry and Akhtar’s who respectively use the adjectives ‘jubilant’ and ‘triumphant’ to convey the same idea. But, where Arberry uses the adverb ‘no more’ to express the departure of Muslims, Khushwanth Singh uses the verb ‘gone’, probably because of its sound similarity, particularly with the last syllable of the word ‘withdrawn’ in the second line. This shows his preference for keeping the rhyme scheme intact even if his line becomes redundant in terms of words. Moreover, in translating the verb گئے into adverb is a strategy which according to Vinay and Darbelnet’s model falls under the category of transposition. Sultan Zahoor Akhtar also goes for the same lexical choices which have been used by Khushwanth Singh as the words ‘gone’ and ‘withdrawn’ also exist in his quartet, but he fails to keep the rhythm intact. Moreover, in Khushwanth Singh’s translation these words respectively occur in the first couplet, but in Akhtar’s translation, they occur in the alternate lines without a regular rhyming pattern.

Arberry continues translating the apostrophe in the second couplet as he translates the word منزل دہر - *manzal-i-dahr* as the ‘world’s inn’ which makes him more economical as compared to Singh in terms of lexical and syntactical choices. Another indication of different words choice in the two translations can be found in translating the word حدی خوان - *hudī khan* in the original text for which Arberry uses a single word i.e. ‘cameleers’, whereas Singh uses the word ‘camel-drivers’, a hyphenated compound word. Moreover, Arberry’s use of the word ‘inn’ is shorter than the word ‘caravanserais’, but the latter is more adequate in terms of

conveying the local meaning because cameleers used to travel in the Arab world and in Asia. Therefore, both camel and cameleers are particularly associated with this part of the world. The *Oxford Dictionary* defines the word ‘caravanserais’ as the place where travelers could stay in the desert areas of Asia and North Africa (Caravanserais, 2020). Sultan Zahoor Akhtar uses the phrase ‘canvas of the cosmos’ for which the most probable reason is his interest in the acoustic impact of the words: the alliterative pattern of the expression. Moreover, it is closer to the meaning of the original word, *manzal-e-dahar* used by the poet where /k/ sound is repeated which creates consonance.

Likewise, the three translators use different lexical and syntactical strategies in translating the second half of the second couplet in the ST. Arberry uses the verb ‘vanished’ in the beginning of the fourth line, whereas Singh has used the same at the end of the third line where his key focus is to bring it together with the verb ‘departed’ in the fourth line for the sake of rhyme, although he fails to do so because these two are not fully rhyming words. Another technique of Arberry’s is the use of the word ‘heart’ at the end of the same line, in order to complete the rhyming pattern with the word ‘depart’ in the second line, although the pronoun phrase, ‘their’ or caravan, used as an antecedent seems to disagree with its singular anaphora, ‘heart’. But his poetic craft is beyond any doubt. On the other hand, Singh uses the prepositional phrase “under their arms” as the equivalent of the plural noun ‘بغلوں’ in the ST and Akhtar uses two words, ‘bosoms’ and ‘armpits’ to translate the same where one could have been enough.

Finally, in rendering the first line of the last couplet, Arberry uses the word ‘disbelief’ for the word کفر and his full translation reads like this: ‘disbelief is loud with laughter’, which is a word for word translation, but the translation fails to convey the sense of the original. In other words, Arberry fails to understand the cultural and religious connotations associated with the word کفر. In the present context, the use of the word ‘disbelief’ is not accurate even though it conveys the literal meaning. In contrast, both Singh and Akhtar respectively use the plural noun ‘infidels’ which is more adequate as compared to Arberry’s use of ‘disbelief’.

### Stanza- 3

عہد نو برق ہے آتش زن ہر خرمن ہے  
ایمن اس سے کوئی صحرا نہ کوئی گلشن ہے  
اس نئی آگ کا اقوام کہیں ایندھن ہے  
ملت ختم رسل شعلہ بہ پیرا بن ہے  
آج بھی ہو جو برا بیم کا ایماں پیدا  
آگ کر سکتی ہے انداز گلستاں پیدا



*Ēhd-i-naw barq hae, ātash zan-i-har khirman hae*

*Aeman is se kō'ī ṣeḥrā na kō'ī gulshan hae*

*Is na'ī āg ka aqwām-i-kuhan īndhan hae*

*Millat-i-khatm-i-rusul shu'la be perāhan hae*

*Āj bhi hō jō brāhim kā īmān paedā*

*Āg karsaktī he andāz-I gulistān pae*

### **Brief Introduction**

This is the 25<sup>th</sup> stanza of *Jawab-e-Shikwa* which contains both the elements of hope and disappointment. In the final two lines of the previous stanza, the poet asks the reader to stop making the complaint of cruelty because justice must be done. Similarly, here too the poet informs the reader about the destructive wave of modern civilization which has the capacity to set ablaze everything that comes in its way. It is like lightning which, because of its inflammable nature, burns every haystack that exists anywhere in a barren land or in a garden. The poet says that the new civilization is specifically dangerous for the orthodox Muslim states whose dwellers are the staunch believers in the unity of Muslim Ummah—the Ummah which is not bound by any caste, ethnicity or geographical boundaries. However, like the concluding couplet of the previous stanza, the poet seems to be optimistic as he hopes for the revival of the same old spirit which can thwart the evil forces of the new age. The last two lines allude to the famous story of the Prophet Ibrahim (Alaih-e-ssalam) who was thrown into a huge fire by Nimrod just because he preached Islam and destroyed the idols. His belief in accepting the absolute power of Allah Almighty was so strong that the huge fire did not strike any fear in his heart. He even refused to be helped by the angels who came at their own will to save him from what appeared to be a dangerously powerful fire. Allah Almighty directly ordered the fire to become cold and harmless for the Prophet Ibrahim. The same happened as the fire burnt everything, even the rope with which His hands were tied, but no harm was done to his body. It is narrated that the fire turned into a garden in which the prophet Ibrahim remained for forty days, enjoying eating and drinking, and not even feeling the fraction of heat. But what made all that possible was the prophet's strong belief in Allah Almighty, the Creator, the doer, and the controller of everything. So, Iqbal wishes that if today's Muslims become the carriers of a strong faith and belief like the prophet Ibrahim, they will become immune to evil forces that are raising their heads to weaken them.

**Table 3****English translations of Stanza 25 of Jawab-e-Shikwa**

| <b>A.J Arberry's Translation</b>   | <b>Khushwanth Singh's Translation</b>  | <b>Raja Sultan Zahoor Akhtar's Translation</b>   |
|--|--|--|
| <p>This new age is like a lightning, setting every stock ablaze;<br/>         Not a desert, not a garden is in safety from its blast;<br/>         The new fire elects for fuel peoples of the ancient days.<br/>         The communion of the prophet joins the general holocaust;<br/>         Ah, but if the faith of Abraham again would brightly show,<br/>         Where the flames are at their fiercest, there a garden fair would grow!</p> | <p>The new age is like lightning; inflammable is every haystack,<br/>         Neither wilderness nor garden is immune from its attack.<br/>         To this new flame old nations are like faggots on a pyre;<br/>         Followers of the last Messenger are consumed in its fire.<br/>         Even today if Abraham's faith could be made to glow;<br/>         Out of Nimrod's fire a garden of flowers would grow.</p> | <p>The new age is lightning, Inflamed is every haystack. Neither barren nor a garden Is secure, from its attack. To this new fire, are the fuel,<br/>         Old nations like faggots on a pyre<br/>         Disciples of the last "Messenger"<br/>         Are swilled in its fire. Even if today the faith Of "Abraham" is made to glow.<br/>         Out of the Infidels fire, A garden of blossoms will grow.</p> |

The three translations of the first line have similarities in the content as there seems no remarkable difference in the translation of the initial half of the line. But then in the second half, Arberry goes for a different word choice as he uses the verb phrase, "setting every stock ablaze" as the equivalent of the possessive compound آتش زن ہر خرمن - *ātash zan-i-har khirman* which according to Vinay and Darbelnet's model is the strategy of transposition. Khushwanth Singh and Sultan Zahoor Akhtar respectively use the adjectives 'inflammable' and 'inflamed' to translate the same. Similarly, in translating the second line Arberry and Khushwanth Singh have opted for different lexical choices as Arberry uses the word 'blast' at the end of line-2 which rhymes with the word 'holocaust' in the fourth line, whereas Khushwanth Singh uses the word 'attack' which completes the couplet with the word 'haystack' in the first line. Sultan Zahoor Akhtar also uses the same words as those used by Khushwanth Singh, but he adheres to the quartet form in contrast to Singh's lengthy couplet. In other words, what the former does in four lines, the latter uses only two lines to translate the same content, but the length of lines shows a lot of difference in the two translations.

In rendering the third line, Arberry and Khushwanth Singh have used different strategies because the clause اقوام کہن - *aqwām-i-kuhan*, has been

rendered by the former as ‘peoples of the ancient days’ whereas the later renders the same as ‘old nations.’ Moreover, Arberry uses the word *fuel* for the word *ايندھن* – *indhan*, whereas Singh uses the phrase ‘faggots on a pyre’ which is not only different in terms of lexemes, but it also shows his strategy of adaptation by making the translation understandable in their own context. It is customary in Hindi religion to place the dead body of a person on a pyre and then the ashes are thrown into the river *Ganga Jamna*. Sultan Zahoor Akhtar seems to imitate Singh as he does the same, but he renders it in two lines what Singh translates in a single line. Thus, the formal structure of the two translations is different.

The translation of the fourth line also shows variation as the three translators have applied lexical choices. The word *ملت* - *millat* has been rendered by Arberry as ‘communion’ once in stanza -8 of *Jawab-e-Shikwa* and now in the present stanza. According to *Oxford Learner’s Dictionary* the word ‘communion’ means a ceremony in the Christian Church during which people eat bread and drink wine in the memory of the last meal that Christ had with his disciples (Communion, 2020). Similarly, the word ‘holocaust’ means an act of killing or destruction, but it specifically refers to the historical events that took place in 1930s and 1940s in which millions of Jews were killed by the Nazis in Germany. However, through the use of holocaust, a word specific to the atrocities faced by Jews, Arberry adds connotations of oppression and torture absent in Iqbal’s verse.

Arberry’s complete line is reproduced here as under:  
 “The communion of the prophet joins the general holocaust”

Now, looking at the context of the poem, the poet means to say that the *Ummah* of the last Prophet (peace be upon him) is exposed to a serious threat of modern civilization. He compares it with the fire and cloth in the sense that when a cloth catches fire, it burns at once. Similarly, the unity of Muslim *Ummah* is at stake because the damaging power of modernism is likely to shake the very foundation of Islam. So, after having a close reading of the translation, a reader can find two observations in the translation: At first, the Muslims have no such festival as ‘communion’ or anything that is in vogue in Christianity. Moreover, they do not believe in the killing of Jesus Christ as according to the Quranic explanation (*tashrih*) and the saying of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) Jesus Christ was ascended alive to the heaven by Almighty Allah and would return to the earth in the capacity of an *ummati* (follower) of the last Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). So, by using the word ‘communion’, being a ceremony in which the Christians pledge their loyalty to Christ as their lord and savior--Arberry might be exploiting the analogy for his Christian audience for whom this translation was intended as Iqbal too is preaching loyalty to the messenger Abraham for miraculous come back and revival of Muslims--a second coming . Secondly, by associating the verb ‘join’ with the Muslims means that

the Muslims are responsible for the vast destruction or the ‘holocaust’ whereas Iqbal means that they are under threat because the new age is like inflammable lightning which is going to shake their beliefs.

The translation of the last couplet shows no remarkable difference in the words choice except for the word *Nimrud*, a proper noun, used by Khushwanth Singh which alludes to the huge fire made by him (Nimrud) to burn the Prophet Abraham (*Alaih-e-ssalam*). Thus, he completes the allusion to Abraham in relatively less words than the other two translators.

Likewise, both Arberry and Singh use the word ‘grow’ at the end of the last line, but Singh’s association of the word ‘glow’ with Abraham’s faith is more adequate than Arberry’s use of the word ‘show’ in terms of meaning. Akhtar uses the same quartet form in which the second- and fourth-line rhyme together.

The analysis of the texts has shown that the translators have used different lexical and syntactical strategies in rendering him original text. They have used transposition by changing the grammatical category of words and phrases for fulfilling the poetic requirement, a strategy given by Vinay and Darbelnet in their 2004 model. Their translations also look different in terms of the syntax as they have changed the order of lexemes and phrasemes for the sake of rhythm and rhyme. Both Arberry and Singh have translated Iqbal’s sextet into the same number of lines, but where Arberry’s language is more poetical, that of Singh is prosaic. Furthermore, the translators have also used adaptation as a technique in order to make their translations suitable as well as understandable to their target audience. Arberry, for example, uses the words ‘communions’ and ‘holocaust’ which are immediately understandable to the Western readers because of their religious and political connotations. Similarly, Singh uses the phrase ‘faggots on a pyre’ which shows his strategy of adaptation in order to make the translation understandable to the audience in Indian context. Another notable feature was the use of loan words such as *mehfil*, *bulbul* and *musalman* that went untranslated in Singh’s translation which shows his awareness of the cultural and religious specific meanings that he wanted to retain in the translation. This is missing in Arberry’s translation.

## Conclusion and Recommendations

The current research focused on evaluating the selections from the three English translations from Iqbal’s two popular poems *Shikwah* and *Jawab-e-Shikwa*. The translations have shown that the translators have opted for different lexical and syntactical choices based on their cultural, religious backgrounds and their personal understanding and interpretation of the ST. Moreover, the times of

translations and their preferences for transferring the content and form of the ST resulted in relatively different translation products.

Arberry, being a native English speaker, is fluent and perhaps prosodically more artistic than Singh and Akhtar. But, at the same time, his inadequate knowledge of Urdu and perhaps his failure to understand the contextual meaning are reflected at some places in his translation. But despite these occasional lapses, as a translator, he has made a good attempt to maintain the rhythm and rhyme, which in turn, makes his rendition, poetically and stylistically much better than the other two translators.

The next translation in the current study was that of Khushwanth Singh, who, like Arberry, was also a foreign translator. His translation was published in 1981, almost 25 years after that of Arberry. In this way, he became his successor. The analysis of his translation has shown that he has some similarities with Arberry in terms of the number of lines, though the length of his line is longer than his predecessor. Moreover, we have also found occasional lexical similarities between the two translators, but the distinguishing line between the two is that some of the terms are left untranslated by Singh, which shows his awareness of the cultural and religious specific meanings that he wanted to retain in the translation. In such cases, he has also provided the footnotes for further understanding of the target readers. Arberry, on the other hand, has made no use of the loan words. Singh's another major concern was to maintain the musical resonance in his translation as each couplet in his English stanzas has rhyming words at the end, forming a rhyme scheme of aa bb cc. But where Arberry's language is poetic, that of Singh is pseudo-poetic or more like a prose. The most probable reason for this is that he himself was not a poet. It seems as if he has closely read the text of Arberry and in his attempt to enforce his self-created poesy, he has somewhat distorted the poetic beauty that is the characteristic of Arberry's translation.

Our third translator in the present study was Sultan Zahoor Akhtar. His translation, titled 'Representation and Reply' (1998) is the latest of all translations of the two poems as no one has made further attempts after him. His approach was quite different from those of Arberry and Singh in the sense that he has rendered Iqbal's six lines stanzas into twelve lines which is double to the number of the ST. One of his drawbacks as a translator lies in his improper use of collocations at some places in the translation which looks incorrect in English usage.

Before coming to the final recommendations, we conclude that verse to verse translation with absolute perfectness is not possible, especially in the present case, where the languages involved are syntactically different. Moreover,

the translator's knowledge of technical aspects of poetry is also crucial in transferring the content and form of the ST to the target text. The study of the three translations has shown that loss and gain is likely to occur in the process of translation as sometimes the translators must opt between the two alternatives i.e. preserving the meaning of the original or maintaining the poetic beauty in the translation.

We have come up with the following recommendations after carrying out the analysis of the selected verses from the three English translations of Iqbal's *Shikwah* and *Jawab-e-Shikwa*:

- i. Because of the condensed and connotative nature of poetry, it is recommended that the translator has a sound knowledge of both languages and cultures in order to do justice in translating the source text.
- ii. Services of research scholars on Iqbal studies should be utilized in order to render his works faithfully, preserving the content and form as well as the sense and spirit of the original.
- iii. The translators should focus on creating a balance in transferring both content and form because it is not only the meaning which is significant, but equally significant are the rhythm and rhyme.
- iv. Lastly, the study will hopefully encourage other researchers to carry out their research works by comparing the translations of some selected poems of Iqbal by other translators such as V.J. Kiernan and Altaf Hussain.

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