

Interpreting Divine Creation: Translation of Names in the Holy Qur'an

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Abstract

This paper examines the intricate task of translating the Divine Names attributed to Allah's act of creation within the Holy Qur'an. The study focuses on six specific Divine names, exploring their meanings and interpretations in Arabic, and scrutinising their translations in three well-known English translations of the Qur'an by Yusuf Ali, Pickthall and Sahih International. The analysis reveals that while these names may appear synonymous, they actually denote distinct aspects of the Divine Act of Creation. The paper highlights the challenges translators face in faithfully conveying the profound depth and richness of these Divine names' meanings, given their unique attributes. The study underscores the complexity inherent in accurately conveying the comprehensive meaning of the Divine Names of Allah in Translation, emphasising the indispensable role of supplementary elucidatory mechanisms in bridging the gap between the Divine Names and their adaptations in translations.

Keyword: *Divine Names, Qur'an, Translation*

1. Introduction

The Holy Qur'an is a highly sensitive religious text that necessitates utmost precision in understanding its meaning and interpretation. It was revealed in the Arabic language. According to Islam, this holy text is God's word revealed to mankind through the agency of the Prophet. For Muslims, the Qur'an is a guide for life. It teaches them how to be good people

and worship God. Muslims read and listen to the Qur'an in their prayers and during special occasions. They believe it has answers to life's questions and can give them comfort and guidance. It extends guidance to all individuals, irrespective of their geographic or temporal context. It stands as an indispensable resource for Muslims in all aspects of life - social, personal, political, and economic - continuously offering guidance and enlightenment. To know about Islam, one must fully understand the meaning and interpretation of this Divine scripture. However, many people do not know Arabic, the original language of the Qur'an. Only about twenty per cent of Muslims are Arabic speakers, with the majority residing outside of the Middle East and not identifying as ethnically Arab. Presently, the Muslim community is highly diverse, comprising numerous cultural groups and encompassing over 2300 language or ethnic subgroups dispersed globally. These non-Arab speakers rely on translations to understand the meanings and messages of the Holy Qur'an. They often choose English translations as English is now a global language of communication and serves as the primary medium of instruction in many educational settings. Since the Holy Qur'an is the foundation of Islam, the second-largest religion in the world, followed by over 1.9 billion people, and the source of its teachings provides guidance, it is necessary to study the correctness and accuracy of its translations.

The Holy Qur'an is neither a poetry nor a prose. In terms of style, it distinguishes itself from any other known Arabic literature and has remained inimitable. Translating the Holy Qur'an is exceptionally challenging due to the lack of equivalents and the difficulty in faithfully expressing interpretations of the holy verses. It involves words that almost appear synonymous or interchangeable but vary in their denotation, connotation, emphasis and similar factors. The holy verses convey profound meanings and complex concepts using a concise and economical choice of words, often packing multiple layers of meanings into single words or phrases.

One of the areas that pose difficulties for translators when rendering the Holy Qur'an is the translation of Divine names in the scripture.

Divine names are titles or designations employed to invoke or address Divine entities, deities, or the Divine in diverse religious and spiritual practices. These names hold sacred significance and are integral to prayers, rituals, and acts of worship. Their meanings and importance may vary significantly across religious or cultural settings.

In Islam, the concept revolves around the belief in a singular God, who is referred to by various names, each of which evokes a distinct attribute of God. Among these names, “Allah” is the personal proper name of God. The other names serve as nominal descriptive terms, reflecting different attributes of God and carrying distinct meanings. These names can be identified by the presence of the Arabic prefix for the definite form *Al-*, which indicates that these names refer to the one and only God ‘Allah’.

The Qur'an mentions numerous names of Allah, referring to the various attributes and qualities ascribed to Him. Each name highlights a particular aspect of His Divine attributes, such as Divine mercy, Divine power, Divine knowledge, Divine acts, etc. These names serve to describe different aspects of Allah's nature and are used to invoke His presence, seek His guidance, and express devotion in Islamic worship. Each name carries deep significance and serves as a reflection of the Almighty's infinite perfection and greatness. Hence, those who want to understand the concept of God in Islam are encouraged to learn and understand their meaning.

Among the numerous names of the Almighty in Islam, there is a special group of ninety-nine Divine names, which is referred to as “Al-Asmā Al-Ḥusnā”, meaning “the Most Beautiful Names”. Out of these ninety-nine names, eighty-one names are mentioned in the Holy Qur'an. The other names are found in the record of sayings of the Prophet Muhammad. Many of these names may exhibit great similarity in their meaning. However, Al-Ghazālī (1992) claims that no two names of the Almighty from the set of ninety names can have exactly the same meaning. It is highly improbable that limited enumeration consists of repeating names with a single meaning, as the merit of these names is in the meanings which underlie them. It is rather more likely that either a specific meaning underlies each name or that one of them is outside this set of ninety-nine (Al-Ghazālī, 1992). This principle is widely adopted in the study of the meaning of Divine names, including the present study.

As the Divine names of Allah encapsulate profound concepts and meanings that may not have direct equivalents in other languages, translators need to carefully navigate the intricacies of both Arabic and the target language in order to accurately convey the profound depth and richness of their meanings to the best of their ability. This study examines the translation of six names of Allah mentioned in the Holy Qur'an referring to His act of creation in three well-known English translations.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Translation of the Holy Qur'an

Translation of the Holy Qur'an has always been a difficult topic of discussion for translators, linguists and researchers in terms of accuracy and translatability. The language used in the Qur'an is incredibly precise, with each word carefully chosen to convey specific meanings. There are no unnecessary or random words, and everything serves a purpose. This precision makes translating the Qur'an a complex task. Because the language of the Qur'an is extremely delicate, as it is considered the word of God, even a small alteration in the words can lead to a change in meaning, and thereby ruin the original intended meaning. As a result, translators, linguists and researchers approach the translation of the Qur'an with great care and attention to detail.

As Sara (2004) puts it, the goal of a translator is to convey information from one language to another faithfully without compromising the original language to fit the target language. According to Shakir (1926), when it comes to translating the Holy Qur'an into foreign languages, there is a lack of certainty regarding the preservation of its true meaning. Therefore, only exegetical translation, which is based on commentaries and explanations of the Qur'anic text, is permissible (Shakira, 1926, as cited in Abdul-Raof 2004). Khalaf & Yusoff (2012) state that the unique style of the Qur'anic language, along with its inherent sensitivities, gives rise to various challenges of untranslatability, and there is no unified technique used in the translation of the Qur'an.

Abdul-Raof (2004) notes that Qur'anic discourse exhibits some specific and unique semantic features, which often create syntactic, lexical, stylistic, rhetorical and cultural voids in translation. Abdul-Raof states that these unique aspects are specific to the Qur'an and cannot be accurately replicated in another language in terms of its structure, spiritual impact on the reader, and intended message. Without these features, the Qur'an would lose its exceptional quality and become just like any other ordinary text (Abdul-Raof, 2004).

Hidaya & Solihin (2019) claim that there are certain linguistic and theological elements which challenge the possibility of the Qur'an's translation, and a perfect translation of the Divine speech is impossible, as the word of God cannot be replicated by human language. Therefore,

any translation of the Qur'an's meaning can never replace the original revealed text (Hidaya & Solihin, 2019).

2.2 Translation of Divine Names in the Holy Qur'an

As mentioned before, translating the names of Allah is one of the most challenging tasks for every Qur'an translator. There have been a few studies examining the translation of Divine names in the Holy Qur'an.

Amjad & Farahani (2013) examined how Qur'anic Divine names were translated into English by three professional translators: Shakir (1985), Qarai (2003), and Nikayin (2006), who presented their translations in prose, phrase-by-phrase, and poetry forms, respectively. The results showed that the lexical compression of the original Divine names and their emotive overtones and effects caused major problems for the translators. Additionally, it was observed that the translators utilised the strategies of 'near-synonymy' and 'expansion'.

Al Ghamdi (2015) investigated the accuracy and consistency of the English renderings of the root-sharing near-synonymous Divine names in the Holy Qur'an in five well-known English translations - Pickthall (1930), A. Y. Ali (1936/1986), Arberry (1955), Hilali- Khan (1985) and Abdel-Haleem (2004). Al Ghamdi (2015) claims that translators have a great deal of uncertainty and confusion with regard to the morphological and semantic features of the root-sharing divine names. Hence, these Divine names in the Qur'an suffer many shortcomings and discrepancies.

Alturki (2021) explores the translation of some selected God's names in the Qur'an and examines various semantic relations these names enter into, such as near synonymy and polysemy. Alturki's investigation focuses on how translators handle near-synonymous and polysemous terms among the chosen Divine names. The study finds that translators included in the research often fail to adequately convey the distinctions between near-synonymous names and the full spectrum of meanings inherent in polysemous names. Consequently, they may not fully capture the richness of the Qur'anic text. Alturki argues that Qur'an translators tend to prioritise "structural fidelity," potentially overlooking the nuanced secondary meanings of Divine names, thus compromising the accuracy of their translations.

The current research investigates the six names of Allah, referring to His act of creation, a topic that has received limited attention in prior studies. This study bridges this gap and contributes to the growing body of literature in this field.

3. Methodology

The study focuses on the six Divine names of the Almighty mentioned in the Holy Qur'an, indicating the Divine attribute of creation. The meanings of these names are first examined using Arabic-English Dictionaries, exegeses and commentary books. Then, the translation of the selected Divine names is traced in the three well-known English translations of the Qur'an. After reviewing the meanings and their interpretation in some Qur'anic exegeses, the English equivalents of these Divine names are examined to determine the most successful translation in terms of accuracy and faithfulness to the meaning.

The following section analyses the translation of these six names of Allah in the three popular English translations by Yusuf Ali (2001), Pickthall (1997) and Sahih International (1997).

4. Analysis and Discussion

Al-Khāliq is one of the names of Allah, signifying the Divine act of creation. Derived from the verb stem *khalaqa*, which basically means “to create”, it underscores the profound concept of God as the ultimate Creator of everything and everyone. *Khāliq* is the active participle of the verb *khalaqa*. It designates the doer of the action indicated by the verb *khalaqa*. Arabic-English dictionaries define *khalaqa* as follows:

1. “To create, to make, originate; to mold, fashion, shape, form, work; to produce, bring into being, engender, generate, bring about, cause, give rise to” (Baalbaki, 1995).
2. To create, to form a thing out of nothing (Hava, 1899; Al-Nadwi, 1986).
3. “Create; invent; determine according to weight and measure; polish a speech; smoothe level; fit to one another, adapt; sew together” (Steingass, 1884).
4. “To measure accurately, and define the dimensions of anything, to create, to produce” (Penrice, 1991).
5. “To measure, proportion, determine, fashion, create, form a thing, be fit, apt to a thing, behave kindly” (Omar, 2005).
6. “To create out of nothing; to originate. To measure. Fabricate, forge a lie” (Wortabet et al., 1984).

As an epithet applied to God, *Khāliq* signifies the One “who brings into existence according to proper measure, or proportion, or adaptation; or “the Originator, not after the similitude of anything pre-existing” or the One “who hath brought in existence all things after they had not been in existence (Lane, 1863). The name emphasises the act of creating or forming things from nothing according to proper measure or proportion without any model.

The Qur’an exegete Ibn Kathir (n.d./2003) suggests that *Al-Khāliq* denotes the One who measures and proportions. In the exegesis *Tafsir-ul-Qur’an* (Daryabadi, 1985), *Al-Khāliq* is interpreted as the One “who produces a thing entirely new, without any pre-existing material”. According to Ali (1989), *khalaqa* is a general term for the act of creation, and *Khāliq* is the “Author of all creation”. Al-Ghazali (n.d./1992) and Mawdudi (1972/2006) describe *Khāliq* as a Planner who designs and determines creation, akin to an engineer conceiving the blueprint of a building intended for a specific purpose, meticulously planning its detailed diagram and model. According to many other scholars and commentators, *Al-Khāliq* signifies Allah's creation of things in perfect proportion, and His ability to create without the need to refer to any model (Muhajir Madani, n.d./2005).

The renditions of *Khāliq* in the selected English translations are illustrated in Table 1.

Table 1

Al-Khāliq الخالق			
(Chapter:Verse)	Ali	Pickthall	Sahih International
6:102	there is no god but He, the Creator of all things: then worship ye Him:	There is no Allah save Him, the Creator of all things, so worship Him.	There is no deity except Him, the Creator of all things, so worship Him.
13:16	Say: “Allah is the Creator of all things: He is the One, the Supreme and Irresistible.”	Say: Allah is the Creator of all things, and He is the One, the Almighty.	Say, “Allah is the Creator of all things, and He is the One, the Prevailing.”
39:62	Allah is the Creator of all things	Allah is the Creator of all things	Allah is the Creator of all things
40:62	Such is Allah, your Lord, the Creator of all things, there is no god but He:	Such is Allah, your Lord, the Creator of all things, There is no Allah save Him.	That is Allah , your Lord, Creator of all things; there is no deity except Him,
59:24	He is Allah, the Creator , the Evolver, the Bestower of Forms (or Colours).	He is Allah, the Creator , the Shaper out of naught, the Fashioner.	He is Allah, the Creator , the Inventor, the Fashioner;

The name *Al-Khāliq* is translated as “the Creator” by all translators in all verses. Dictionaries define ‘creator’ as follows:

1. “One that creates usually by bringing something new or original into being”; God (Merriam-Webster, n.d.)
2. “A divine being who created someone or something or created everything; God” (Cambridge Dictionary, n.d).

Generally, the verb ‘create’ denotes the act of bringing something into existence, and often implies that the production involves unique skills, imagination, or processes, such as in the case of an invention or an artwork. Its agentive form, ‘Creator’, is commonly used to refer to ‘God’, signifying the One who brings all things into being and plans their creation with precision and intention. Through the analysis of dictionaries and exegeses, *khāliq* emerges as the most encompassing term for the act of creation and the ultimate source of all existence. The term ‘Creator’, therefore, seems to be most suited among the selected translations for the Divine name ‘*khāliq*’.

The second Divine name referring to Allah’s act of creation is *Al-Bāri*’. The form *Bāri*’ is mentioned thrice in the Holy Qur’an (<https://corpus.Qur’an.com/>). It is derived from the verb *bara’a*. *Bāri*’ is the active participle form of the verb *Bara’a*. It denotes the doer of the action signified by the verb *bara’a*. Arabic-English dictionaries define *bara’a* as follows:

1. “To create (said of God)” (Baalbaki, 1995).
2. “To create” (Al-Nadwi, 1986; Penrice, 1991).
3. “To create, to form out of nothing (God) (Hava, 1899).
4. “To create, from nothing or from pre-existing matter (God)” (Wortabet et al., 1984).
5. The primary meaning of the root *Bara’a* is “to denote a thing becoming clear or free of or from another thing; either by being released therefrom or by production” (Farid, 2006).

As an epithet of God, *Bāri*’ describes the One “who has created things that are created, not after any similitude, or model” or the One “who has created those things free from any incongruity or faultiness, and distinguished, one from another, by various forms and outward appearances (Lane, 1863). *Al-Bāri*’ emphasises the act of bringing things into reality (Qutb, 2018).

According to Ali (1989), the verb *bara’a* indicates “a process of evolving from previously created matter or state,” and *bāri*’ is “the Author of this process.” Al-Ghazali (n.d./1992) and Mawdudi (1972/2006) interpret *Al-Bāri*’ as a Producer in the sense that He originates and actually brings out things from non-existence to existence, akin to the role of a builder who executes the work by which the buildings actually come into existence. Ibn Kathir (n.d./2003) explains *Al-Bāri*’ as the One invents and brings into existence what He has created and measured. Some commentators have also interpreted *Al-Bāri*’ as the One who is able to create

many things in the same manner without any differences between them (Muhajir Madani, n.d./2005).

The renditions of *Bāri*’ in the selected English translations are shown in Table 2.

Table 2

Al-Bāri’ الباري			
(Chapter:Verse)	Ali	Pickthall	Sahih International
2:54	So turn (in repentance) to your Maker , and slay yourselves (the wrong-doers); that will be better for you in the sight of your Maker ."	so turn in penitence to your Creator , and kill (the guilty) yourselves. That will be best for you with your Creator	So repent to your Creator and kill yourselves. That is best for [all of] you in the sight of your Creator ."
59:24	He is Allah, the Creator, the Evolver , the Bestower of Forms (or Colours).	He is Allah, the Creator, the Shaper out of naught , the Fashioner.	He is Allah, the Creator, the Inventor , the Fashioner;

The name *Bāri*’ has been variously translated as ‘Maker’ or ‘Evolver’ by Ali, ‘Creator’ or ‘Shaper out of naught’ by Pickthall, ‘Creator’ and ‘Inventor’ by Sahih International. The dictionary definitions of ‘Maker’ (make), ‘Evolver’ (evolve), ‘Creator’ (create), ‘Shaper’ (shape) and Inventor (invent) are shown in Table 3.

Table 3

Translation Equivalent	Merriam-Webster	Cambridge Dictionary
Make	“To bring into being by forming, shaping or altering material”; “To put together from components; to cause to exist, occur or” appear. Maker: “God”	“To produce something, often using a particular substance or material.” Maker: “God”
Evolve	“To develop”; “To produce by natural evolutionary processes.”	“To develop gradually, or to cause something or someone to develop gradually.”
Shape	“To give a particular form or shape to.”	“To make something become a particular shape; to make an object from a physical substance.”
Invent	“To produce (something, such as a useful devise or process) for the first time through the use of imagination or of ingenious thinking and experiment.”	“To design and/or create something that has never been made before.”
Create	“To bring into existence” Creator: “God”	“To make something new, or invent something.”

The fundamental meaning of the verb *bara‘a* is to denote the process of becoming clear or free from another entity, either through release or production (Lane, 1863). It involves separating one thing away from others that are similar (Parwez, 2015). When God intends to create something, He meticulously plans and determines the right proportion and measure for His creation, and brings it into reality. Thus, *Al-Bāri*’ refers to His actual bringing of things into existence and developing them into their final state, probably by separating them from other elements of His creation. Although *Al-Bāri*’ is often used as somewhat synonymous with *Al-Khāliq*, as evident from their translation as ‘Creator’ in different contexts, these names emphasise different aspects of the Divine act of creation. *Al-Khāliq* plans and determines his

creation, and *Al-Bāri* brings them into existence and develops them. According to some scholars, it also denotes the One who is able to create many things in the same manner or from pre-existing matter. Based on the analysis of dictionaries and exegeses, the translation ‘Maker’ seems to be the better translation among all the selected renditions because ‘make’ generally means to produce, build or prepare something through a production process. The verb emphasises the actual production process, whereas ‘shape’ and ‘invent’ emphasise giving forms or shapes and creating something for the first time, respectively. Furthermore, Pickthall’s rendition ‘Shaper out of naught’ for ‘*Badī*’ actually blurs the distinction in meaning between the Divine Names *Badī* and *Muṣawwir*.

Additionally, all the translators have used two different English equivalents to translate the same Divine name, *Bāri*, in the two different verses. It is debatable if the lack of consistency in rendering *Bāri* can be attributed to a careless lexical choice or if translators preferred different terms due to the different contexts. The Qur’anic verse 59:24 intends to explicitly state the different aspects of the Divine Act of creation as all three names referring to the Divine act of creation occur together in the same verse as Divine names. All the translators have maintained the distinction between these names in their rendering of this verse. However, in verse 2:54, *Bāri* is somewhat treated as synonymous with *Khāliq*, particularly by Pickthall and Sahih International, when they used the English equivalent ‘Creator’ for both names. Even though Ali did not use ‘Creator’, he chose different English equivalents, i.e. ‘Maker’ and ‘Evolver’ for *Bāri* in verses 59:24 and 2:54, respectively.

The third Divine name referring to Allah’s act of creation is *Al-Muṣawwir*. This name appears only once in the Holy Qur’an. *Muṣawwir* is the active participle of the verb *ṣawwara*, designating the doer of the action. Arabic-English dictionaries define *ṣawwara* as follows:

1. “To shape, form, fashion, mold, create, make” (Baalbaki, 1995).
2. “To shape out anything; To paint, to picture” (Hava, 1899).
3. “To form, to give shape to, to fashion” (Badawi & Haleem, 2008).
4. “To shape, form, fashion mark, picture, adorn, prepare, make” (Omar, 2005).

As an epithet of God, *Muṣawwir* means “The Former, or Fashioner, of all existing things, who has established them, and given to every one of them a special form and a particular manner of being whereby it is distinguished, with their variety and multitude” (Lane, 1863).

According to Ali (1989), *Muṣawwir* is the One who provides definite colour or form, ensuring that something is perfectly suited for a particular purpose or objective. Ibn Kathir (n.d./2003) explains in his exegesis that Allah describes himself as *Al-Muṣawwir*, who brings into existence anything He wills in the shape and form He decides. *Al-Muṣawwir* is the real Maker of forms and shapes, granting each creation a unique and incomparable shape and never repeating exactly the same shape or form (Mawdudi, 1972/2006; Muhajir Madani, n.d./2005; Shafi, n.d./2011). *Muṣawwir* arranges the form of things in the finest order and forms them in the finest way (Al-Ghazali, n.d./1992). Al-Ghazali compares this to the role of a decorator or designer in improving the appearance of a building in its construction.

The renditions of *Muṣawwir* in the selected English translations are shown in Table 4.

Table 4

Al-Musawwir المصوّر			
(Chapter:Verse)	Ali	Pickthall	Sahih International
59:24	He is Allah, the Creator, the Evolver, the Bestower of Forms (or Colours).	He is Allah, the Creator, the Shaper out of naught, the Fashioner.	He is Allah, the Creator, the Inventor, the Fashioner;

Muṣawwir is translated as “the Bestower of Forms (or Colours)” and “the Fashioner”. The dictionary definition of the rendition is shown in Table 5.

Table 5

Translation Equivalent	Merriam-Webster	Cambridge Dictionary
Bestow	“To convey as a gift”	“To give something as an honour or present.”
Fashion	“To give shaper or form to; to make, construct or create (something) usually with careful attention or by the use of imagination and ingenuity.”	“To make something using your hands.”

Although both renditions are suitable, “the Bestower of Form (or Colours) seem to be the most fitting among the selected translations as it conveys a sense of superiority associated with God in giving forms and shapes to His creations as He wills.

Another Divine Name referring to creation is *Al-Badī’*. It is mentioned twice in the Holy Qur’an. This noun is derived from the verb *bada’a*. Arabic-English dictionaries define *bada’a* as follows:

1. “To produce something new” (Penrice, 1991).
2. “To begin anything, to produce, to find out a new thing (Hava, 1899).
3. To produce or bring a thing into existence for the first time, that thing not having existed before and not after the similitude of anything pre-existing (Farid, 2006).

4. To introduce, originate, start, do something for the first time, be the first to do something; To devise, invent, contrive something (Wehr, 1976).

Badī' is the intensified active participle of the verb *bada'a*, indicating the doer of the action. As an epithet applied to God, *Al-Badī'* means “The Originator of the creation, according to his own will, not after the similitude of anything pre-existing” (Lane, 1863).

Ibn Kathir (n.d./2003), in his exegesis, explains that Allah is the Originator of the heavens and the earth, interpreting *Badī'* as the One who originated, created, invented and brought them into existence without any precedence or support. *Al-Badī'* is the absolute Cause and Originator, the One who is prior to all, with no parallel in the past, present or future in respect of his essence, attributes, actions, or anything ascribed to Him (Al-Ghazali, n.d./1992). Nothing exists that shares eternity with Him or possesses any independent self-existence, and all things come into being solely by His will (Daryabadi, 1985). His mere intention to create anything would bring it instantaneously, without the need for any pre-model, assistance, tools or materials of any kind (As-Sa'di, n.d./2018; Daryabadi, 1985; Qutb n.d./2018; Usmani, 1989/1991). Thus, as Aḥmad (2018) puts it, *Badī'* describes God, who originates or brings all beings or things into existence for the first time. He is “the Unique Originator” because He is unique, unprecedented and without peer or equal (Nasr et al. (2015). The name combines the idea of originating and creating.

The renditions of *Badī'* in the selected English translations are shown in Table 6.

Table 6

Al-Badī' البديع			
(Chapter:Verse)	Ali	Pickthall	Sahih International
2:117	To Him is due the primal origin of the heavens and the earth:	The Originator of the heavens and the earth!	The originator of the heavens and the earth.
6:101	To Him is due the primal origin of the heavens and the earth:	The Originator of the heavens and the earth!	[He is] Originator of the heavens and the earth.

Pickthall and Sahih International have translated *Badī'* as ‘Originator’, while Ali has used an expanded phrase, ‘to Him is due the primal origin,’ to indicate that God is the Originator of the universe and human life. Although these translations convey the idea that God is the True Cause of everything, they do not fully capture the notion that this Originator is Unique and Incomparable, as the Divine Name *Badī'* inherently implies.

The last two Divine names under consideration concerning God’s act of creation are *Al-Mubdi'* and *Al-Mu'īd*. They are derived from the verb '*bada'a*' and '*a'āda*', respectively. Although not

explicitly stated in the Holy Qur'an, *Al-Mubdi'* and *Al-Mu'īd* are referred to in their imperfect verbal forms *yubdi'u* and *yu'īdu*, respectively. The names are commonly cited together or placed in juxtaposition in the text.

Mubdi is the active participle of the verb form '*abda'a*'. It signifies the doer of the verb '*abda'a*'. Arabic-English dictionaries define '*abda'a*' as follows:

1. "To create, originate, make, bring into being; To bring out something new, do first time, introduce, open, begin, start, commence" (Baalbaki, 1995).
2. "Make a beginning; be the first to do; create; emigrate" (Steingass 1884)
3. "To originate, to cause to begin" (Kassis, 1983).
4. "To initiate, to start something" (Badawi & Haleem, 2008).
5. To do or produce something first, to bring out something new (Wehr, 1976).

As an epithet applied to God, *Al-Mubdi'* means "The Creator, or Originator, of the things (that exist), who has produced them at the beginning, not after the similitude of anything pre-existing (Lane, 1863, p. 165). The name describes "the One Who initiated the creation of everything from nothing" (Saleh, 2011, p. 152).

The Divine name *Al-Mubdi'* implies that all things, beings, and creatures are first originated by the Almighty God, and this act of creation is without precedence (Al-Ghazali, n.d./1992). The translations of verses containing its imperfect verbal form, *yubdi'u*, are given in Table 7.

Table 7

Al-Mubdi' المبدئ (yubdi' يبدي)			
(Chapter:Verse)	Ali	Pickthall	Sahih International
29:19	See they not how Allah originates creation, then repeats it	See they not how Allah produceth creation, then reproduceth it?	Have they not considered how Allah begins creation and then repeats it?
85:13	It is He Who creates from the very beginning , and He can restore (life).	Lo! He it is Who produceth , then reproduceth,	Indeed, it is He who originates [creation] and repeats.

Ali's translations 'originates creation' and 'He Who creates from the very beginning' in 29:19 and 85:13 convey that Allah is the One who initiated the creation of everything. Similarly, Sahih International employs the phrases 'Allah begins creation' and 'He who originates

[creation]’ to convey the same concept. However, Pickthall’s rendition, ‘Produceth creation,’ does not fully capture this idea.

The other closely related Divine name is *Al-Mu‘īd*. *Mu‘īd* is the active participle of the verb *a‘āda*, indicating the doer of the action. Arabic-English dictionaries define the verb *a‘āda* as follows:

1. To cause to return; Restore (Penrice, 1992; Omar, 2005).
2. “To repeat (a word); To restore anyone to a former state” (Hava, 1899, p. 499).
3. “To cause something or someone to return, to repeat, to be restored” (Al-Nadwi, 1986, p. 441).
4. “To bring back, to restore; To return, to send back; To repeat, to reproduce” (Badwi & Haleem, 2008, p. 652)
5. “To repeat, do a second time” (Wortabet et al., 1984)

As an epithet applied to God, *Al-Mu‘īd* means “the One Who returns the living to their former existence and gives life to the dead” (Saleh, 2011).

The name refers to Allah’s ability to recreate His creation after it has perished. It indicates that Allah is capable of giving life to the dead on the Day of Judgment and restoring His creation, just as He originally created them (Muhajir Madani, n.d./2005).

The translations of verses containing its imperfect verbal form, *yu‘īd*, are given in Table 8.

Table 8

Al-Mu'īd المعيد (yu'īd يعيد)			
(Chapter:Verse)	Ali	Pickthall	Sahih International
10:4	It is He Who beginneth the process of creation, and repeateth it,	Lo! He produceth creation, then reproduceth it,	He begins the [process of] creation and then repeats it
10:34	Say: "Of your 'partners', can any originate creation and repeat it?" Say: "It is Allah Who originates creation and repeats it:	Say: Is there of your partners (whom ye ascribe unto Allah) one that produceth Creation and then reproduceth it? Say: Allah produceth Creation, then reproduceth it.	Say, "Are there of your 'partners' any who begins creation and then repeats it?" Say, " Allah begins creation and then repeats it,
27:64	Or, Who originates creation, then repeats it,	Is not He (best) Who produceth creation, then reproduceth it,	Is He [not best] who begins creation and then repeats it
29:19	See they not how Allah originates creation, then repeats it	See they not how Allah produceth creation, then reproduceth it?	Have they not considered how Allah begins creation and then repeats it?
30:11	It is Allah Who begins (the process of) creation; then repeats it;	Allah produceth creation, then He reproduceth it,	Allah begins creation; then He will repeat it;
30:27	It is He Who begins (the process of) creation; then repeats it;	He it is Who produceth creation, then reproduceth it,	And it is He who begins creation; then He repeats it,
85:13	It is He Who creates from the very beginning, and He can restore (life) .	Lo! He it is Who produceth, then reproduceth ,	Indeed, it is He who originates [creation] and repeats .

Even though all the translations in Table 8 do convey the idea associated with the Divine name *Mu'īd*, Ali's lexical choice in 85:13, 'restore', seems to offer a more direct interpretation

5. Conclusion

In conclusion, the examination of the Divine Names attributed to Allah's act of creation within the Holy Qur'an reveals a subtle understanding of the various aspects involved in this divine process. All these names may appear to be synonymous. However, they denote various aspects of the Divine Act of Creation. Bringing something from non-existence to existence involves planning and evaluation, then creation, and then shape formation. The name *Khāliq* denotes God's role as the Creator as far as planning and evaluation are concerned. *Al-Bāri'* denotes His role of bringing the planned things into existence. The name *Al-Muṣawwir* describes His role of bringing the planned things into existence and giving them a definite form, shape and colours aligning with their purpose (Roushdy, n.d.). These names are followed in this exact sequence based on their meaning in the Holy Qur'an verse 59:28. The name *Al-Badī* emphasises Allah's attribute as the Unique and Incomparable Originator. It highlights His unique ability to create and innovate in a manner that is beyond human comprehension and comparison. The name emphasised the Almighty's creativity and originality in bringing about new and wondrous creations. *Al-Mubdi'* underscores Allah's role as the Ultimate Source of all beginnings,

initiating the creation of everything and everyone. The name *Al-Mu'īd* highlights Allah's ability to bring back or reproduce life or existence after it has been destroyed or ended.

The complexity and depth of these meanings pose significant challenges for translators seeking to convey them accurately in other languages. While some adopt strategies of near synonymy to approximate the original nuances, others, such as Ali, tend to opt for expansive strategies when encountering a lack of suitable equivalent. Nevertheless, the inherent richness of the Divine Names necessitates supplementary explanatory aids, such as footnotes, to fully appreciate their theological significance in translation efforts. Thus, the study underscores the inherent difficulties in conveying the comprehensive meaning of the Divine Names of Allah in translation without recourse to additional elucidatory mechanisms.

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