

# On the Translation of Qur'anic Rhetorical Questions into English

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## Abstract

The purpose of this study is to shed some light on the secondary functions of interrogative sentences, known as rhetorical questions, both in English and Arabic. To fulfill this purpose, a lot of examples have been included to manifest the usage of such functions, whether in everyday life language, in literature; and most importantly, in The Glorious Qur'an - and how translators handled such a type of questions.

Due to the fact that rhetorical questions may display different functions in Arabic than those found in English, some problems are expected to appear when rendering them into English. It is hypothesized that many intricate functions are realized in The Glorious Qur'an which require great attention by the translator whose responsibility is to analyze such functions in order to arrive at the most suitable English counterpart.

The study has found out that translating rhetorical questions into English is somehow difficult because it necessitates the translator to have good knowledge of all their functions in Arabic in general, and in The Glorious Qur'an in particular.

## 1. Some Introductory Remarks

The basic function of asking a question is to seek some information. A question form is thus used by the speaker in order to get the information he is after. No real problems and/or difficulties are expected to accompany real questions, for the simple fact that there is some direct connection between ordinary form and function.

The real problem arises when dealing with a subtype of interrogative questions called rhetorical question which are defined as: "A forceful statement which has the form of a question but which does not expect an answer" (Richards & Schmidt, 2002:459). This is to indicate that such types of questions exhibit the usage of ordinary interrogative grammatical forms, but whose meaning is that of a non - question type: e.g., "Are you kidding me?", "Are you crazy?".

It is worthy to mention that rhetorical questions of the (yes /no question type) are not the only type to be found. Rather, there is also a wh – rhetorical question which is again equivalent to a statement. In such a case, the wh – element is to be replaced by a negative element:

“ **Who knows?**” (Nobody knows).

“ **What difference does it make?**” (It makes no difference).

“ **Who cares?**” (No one cares).

## **2. Function & Scope:**

When using a rhetorical question, the speaker is not after some information. He is not attempting to elicit replies. In many cases, however, no answer is even plausible. Rather, it might be argued that a rhetorical question is made use of merely for effect. The speaker has some purpose in mind - either to give a command, or to make a statement in an indirect way –to say but a few of the functions and/or purposes of a rhetorical question. No answer is expected for two reasons: it is either too obvious, or else, it has been immediately provided by the speaker and/or the questioner himself.

A rhetorical question may be looked upon as a device used by the speaker to assert or deny something, e.g., “**Why me?**”. It might be seen as a way to encourage the listener to think about what the (often obvious) answer to the question must be, and even to reflect on what the implied answer to the question should look like.

One of the results of the fact that there is no complete correspondence between sentence forms, i.e., the grammatically defined sentence types and their communicative functions is the appearance of rhetorical questions:

“ In practice, there is a much greater discrepancy between sentence forms and functions.....question forms are frequently used to make statements or comments or give commands.” (Chalker, 1984:13).

Many rhetorical questions have become idiomatic English expressions:

“ **What’s the matter with you?**”

“**Don’t you know any better?**”

“ **Have you no shame?**”

“ **What the hell?**”

“ **Are you crazy?**”

“ **Who cares?**”

“ **How should I know?**”

“ **Are you kidding me?**”

“ **Isn’t that nice?**”

“ **Are you serious?**”

“ How could you?”

“ What were you thinking?”

Arabic, on the other hand, is characterized by the various meanings a rhetorical question can have. It is the purpose of the context to make such meanings identified and understood on the part of the reader or listener. [See Yusuf (2000:19-169) & Abu Al-‘Adoos (2010:76-80)]

According to Motamadi (2008:190), “ rhetorical questions are frequently used in religious texts, Books of the Heaven.”

Reading The Glorious Qur'an with great attention will show an extensive usage of rhetorical questions. It has been described as “ a sea of rhetoric”, which exhibits not only a great frequency of rhetorical questions, but also a wide range of functions represented by this type of questions. Hence; it surpasses any other Arabic text – whether classical or modern, a matter which confirms its indisputable uniqueness. It is the only book of its kind in the whole world. Its literary style is different from that of all books, and it is not a literary work of the common conventional type. It adopts its own style to serve as guidance for the whole mankind.

### 3. Why problematic?

Each language having rhetorical questions will have its own inventory of functions and specific question forms which may be used rhetorically.

When realizing rhetorical questions, they may vary from one language to another or even from one version of a language to another due to the peculiar usage of the language or dialect, then problems are expected to arise. For instance, commonly used rhetorical questions in one language and/or dialect may sometimes sound confusing to people who may be fluent in that particular language, but unfamiliar with the localized meanings, and who may consequently attempt to answer those rhetorical questions occurring in an argument of any kind.

It might even be argued that not all languages may use rhetorical questions to deliver some messages. If translated literally, it might be argued, they might sometimes be understood not rhetorically, but as ordinary questions. Such being the case, the speaker's purpose would then be lost.

The translator must be able to analyze the kind of a question used in the source text. He has to decide whether it is a real question, or a rhetorical one. A real question is not expected to pose a serious problem. If, on the other hand, a rhetorical question is involved, he should discover the purpose behind such a question in order to succeed in arriving at the best way to translate it into the target language. Otherwise, the real purpose

behind using a rhetorical question will not be successfully communicated (see Larson, 1984: 235).

Sometimes it becomes of paramount importance for the translator to make few adjustments in order to convey the actual meaning behind using a rhetorical question of whatever function: "The translator will use the natural forms of the receptor language. Sometimes an interrogative sentence will be translated by a declarative sentence, sometimes by an imperative sentence." (Ibid: 237).

#### **4. Purposes of Rhetorical Questions:**

It has been agreed that a rhetorical question is used to serve some special purpose in the speaker's mind, other than asking for information. In other words, the form is the same as a normal question, but the function is not.

As a matter of fact, many versatile purposes can be achieved via using rhetorical questions in English – let alone Arabic:

##### **4.1 Exclamations:**

According to Aziz (1989:252), rhetorical questions are used to fulfill some other function than asking for information, such as exclamation. This is usually done via (yes / no question type):

**"Isn't she clever!"** (Surely she's very clever).

**"Isn't it a lovely day!"** (It is a quite lovely day).

**"Isn't that nice?"** (It is surely nice).

##### **4.2 Strong Assertion:**

Besides exclamation, a strong assertion can be regarded as another purpose of a rhetorical question. In this respect, Quirk & Greenbaum (1989:228), state that: "A positive rhetorical question is like a strong negative assertion, while a negative rhetorical question is like a strong positive one":

**"Is that a reason for despair?"** (Surely that is not a good reason for despair).

**"Are you serious?"** (You are definitely not serious).

**"Is no one going to defend me?"** (Surely someone will defend me).

**"Have you no shame?"** (I'm quite sure you have some shame).

Rhetorical questions of the wh – type also manifest that same purpose of implying some strong assertion:

**"Who wouldn't like to spend a holiday on a beach?"** (Everyone would like that).

**"Where can the children hide from me?"** (They can hide nowhere).

**"What has he ever done for me?"** (He has never done anything for me).

“ What’s the point of going on?”(There is no point of going on).

This purpose is widely used in The Holy Qur’an:

(الانعام : ١٤٨ ) ( قل هل عندكم من علم فتخرجوه لنا )

(Qul hel ‘indakum min ‘ilmin fatukhrijuhu lana)

( Say: Have you any knowledge, for you to bring forth for us?)

( Arberry, 2003:195)

( الرحمن:٦٠ ) ( هل جزاء الاحسان الا الاحسان )

(Hel jazaa? al-?hsaan illa al-?hsaan)

( Shall the recompense of goodness be other than goodness?)

(Arberry, 2003:707)

( الاحقاف:٣٥ ) ( بلاغ فهل يهلك الا القوم الفاسقون )

(Balagh fahal yahlak illa al-qawmu al-fasiqoon)

( A message to be delivered! And shall any be destroyed but the people of the ungodly? ) ( Arberry,2003:668)

(سبأ:١٧ ) ( ذلك جزينا هم بما كفروا وهل نجازي إلا الكفور )

(Thalika jazaynahum bima kafaru wa hal nujazy illa al-kafoor)

( That was the Requital

We gave them because

They ungratefully rejected Faith:

And never do We give (such) requital except to such

As are ungrateful rejecters) (Ali, 1989:1139)

It is to be noted here that the translator was not completely successful in conveying the purpose implied by the usage of the rhetorical question –that of strongly asserting a fact, which sounds more effective than mere negation. Such an effect has better been indicated by the following rendition: ( **Thus We recompensed them for their unbelief, and do We ever recompense any but the unbeliever?**) (Arberry, 2003:564).

Another point which should also be kept in mind in this regard is that the translator should not convey content at the expense of form. The original style and language need also to be taken into consideration on the part of the translator. Many aspects can be included in this respect: “ the author’s conscious choice of words and their overtones, his structural devices, figures of speech, and such stylistic subtleties” (Ilyas, 1989:65).

Furthermore, a rhetorical question functions as a negative assertion when it is intended as a challenge with the implication that the question is difficult or impossible to answer. In sarcastic contexts, in particular, negative assertions may function as positives to imply that the preceding statements are utterly obvious.

Arabic prose is some other area in which rhetorical questions have been utilized. Many examples have been found of such cases in two of the famous Arab novelist Najeeb Mahfooth's works: (Zuqaq Al-Madaq and Al-Lis wa Al-kilaab):

(من يدري؟ لعله يستأهل ما نزل به، ان الله لا يظلم احدا)

(Men yadry? La'alahu yasta?hil manazala bihy, inna Allaha la yazlimu ahadan)

(Who knows? He may deserve what came upon him; Allah will not do injustice to anyone).

( ترى ماذا حدث للعالم؟ وماذا وراء هذه الاعاجيب والاسرار؟ )

(Tura matha hadatha lildunya? Wa matha wara?a hathihy al-a'ajeb wa al-asraar?)

(What has happened to the world? And what is after these mysteries and secrets).

( ألا يعرف لسانك ما الادب؟ )

(Ala ya'rifu lisanaka ma al-adab?)

(Does not your tongue know how to say polite words?)

( هذه حياة وليست لعبة خشبية، يجب ان نعيش، ألا تفهم؟ )

(Hathihy hayat wa laysat lu'ba khashabiya, yajib an na'eesh, ala tafham?)

(This is a life, not a wooden toy, we have to live, do not you understand?).

( كيف انتهت الحرب بهذه السرعة؟! من كان يصدق هذا؟! )

(Kayfa intahat al-harbu bihathihy al-sur'a?! men kan yusadiqu hatha?!)

(How did the war end so fast? Who would believe this?).

Arab poets may sometimes resort to rhetorical questions, surely not to gain some information from their audience, but as a device of denial. A poet is undoubtedly fully aware of the fact that a question as a grammatical form has important rhetorical dimensions, and consequently, more effective and influential on his audience. A good example on this is the well-known poet Al – Mutanaby who said:

" هل من طبيب لداء الحب او راقى؟ يشفي عليلا اخا حزن وايراق "

"Hal min tabeebin lida?i al-hubi aw raqy? Yashfy 'alilan akha huznin wa\_eraqy"

It is to be noted that the poet used a question with some implicit intention to delude himself with the hope that someone may answer him for his question :( Is there a doctor, or a magician who can cure the illness of love...?) with (yes, there is), though he knew for sure that (there isn't). His

audience will eventually envisage the pain and bitterness implicitly implied by the poet, and when this is done, his message would be conveyed more effectively than by mere negation.

### 4.3 An introductory Function:

It is common also to ask a question as a method of beginning discourse, to introduce a new topic, or even a new aspect of a topic. Consider the following example taken from Larson (1948:236):

“ **Why is there so much unemployment these days?**”

In such cases, the speaker is not waiting to hear from his audience what these reasons are, but he will begin immediately telling them about the reasons. The question in this case should read as :( Iam going to tell you about the reasons for unemployment).

Shakespeare’s 18<sup>th</sup> sonnet begins with a rhetorical question:

“**Shall I compare thee to a summer’s day?**”

The meaning is a statement of fact in which the poet is expressing his own evaluation. It sounds as if he is asking the opinion or judgment of his audience. This kind of rhetorical question has a definite ethical dimension, owing to the fact that to ask in this way generally makes the speaker more appealing to his audience, and so improving his credibility.

The following Qur’anic sura starts with a rhetorical question which functions as an introduction to a new topic:

(الغاشية: ١) (هل اتاك حديث الغاشية)

(Hal ataka hadeethu al-ghashiyah)

(Has the story

Reached thee, of

The Overwhelming (Event)?) (Ali,1989:1727)

### 4.4 A Concluding Function:

It is also possible for a rhetorical question to be used in the opposite direction, i.e, not as a way to start some new topic, but to bring an end to a debate or to finalize a discussion. It is a tool people use to avoid making some straightforward declarations. The speaker may decide to end the debate with a simple,” **Eh, why not?**” or “**What the hell?**”

### 4.5 Giving a command:

Sometimes, a rhetorical question is used as a way of giving a command in the form of a suggestion. In this case, it will sound less strong than an imperative form:

“ **Why don’t you wash the dishes?**”

Larson (1984:234) argues that the proper response would sound something like: (okay, I will). If a real question is being asked, it is expected that

some reason has to be given in the answer – something like :( Because I'm just tired/busy).

**“ How many times have I told you not to chew gum?”**

This example indicates that a rhetorical question is sometimes used as a means of achieving an emphasis stronger than a direct imperative form. Many Qur'anic ayahs exhibit the usage of rhetorical questions as an indirect way to give a command:

(المائدة: ٩١) ( انما يريد الشيطان ان يوقع بينكم العداوة والبغضاء في الخمر والميسر ويصدكم عن ذكر الله وعن الصلاة فهل انتم منتهون)

(Inama yuridu al-shaytan an yuqi'a baynakum al-'adawata wa al-baghza? Fi al-khamri wa al-maysir wa yasudakum 'an thikr Allah wa 'an al-salat fahal antum muntahoon)

( Satan only desires to precipitate enmity and hatred between you in regard to wine and arrow-shuffling, and to bar you from the remembrance of God, and from prayer. Will you then desist?

)(Arberry,2003:162).

(يس:٣٥) ( لياكلوا من ثمره وما عملته ايديهم أفلا يشكرون)

(Liya?kulu min thamarihy wa ma 'amilathu aydyhim afala yashkuroon)

(That they may enjoy

The fruits of this (artistry):

It was not their hands

That made this:

Will they not then give thanks?) (Ali, 1989:1177)

(الفرقان: ٢٠) ( وجعلنا بعضكم لبعض فتنة أتصبرون وكان ربك بصيرا)

(Wa ja'alna ba'zakum li ba'zin fitna atasbirun wa kan rabuka baseera)

(and We appointed some of you to be a trial for others: Will you endure?

Thy Lord is ever All-seeing) (Arberry, 2003:474)

#### 4.6 Rebuke:

In English, a grammatical form of a question asking about time is often made use of in order to communicate some emotive meaning other than by resorting to a direct means to deliver the real meaning intended by the speaker:

**“ When are you going to empty the garbage?”**

**“ When are you going to tidy up your room?”**



In Arabic, it is more common to find such a purpose conveyed through the usage of the interrogative particle (كيف) (how) to make rebuke seem more impressive:

(البقرة: ٢٨) ( كيف تكفرون بالله وكنتم امواتا فاحياكم ثم يميتكم ثم يحييكم ثم اليه ترجعون )  
(Kayfa takfuruna bi Allah wa kuntum amwatan fa ahyakum thumma yumitukum thumma yuhyeekum thumma ilayhy turja'oon)

( How do you disbelieve in God? Seeing you were dead and He gave you life, then He shall make you dead, then He shall give you life, then unto Him you shall be returned) (Arberry, 2003:14).

However, yes-no questions are commonly used as well:

(الصافات: ٩٥-٩٦) ( قال اتعبدون ما تنحتون. والله خلقكم وما تعملون )  
(Qala ?ta'biduna ma tanhitoon. Wa Allahu khalaqakum wa ma ta'maloon)

(He said: "Worship ye

That which ye have

(Yourselves) carved?

But God has created you

And your handiwork!") (Ali, 1989:1203)

(النساء: ٩٧) ( ألم تكن ارض الله واسعة فتهاجروا فيها )  
(?alam takun arzu Allah wasi'a fatuhajiru feeha)

( But was not God's earth wide, so that you might have emigrated in it?) (Arberry, 2003:126).

#### 4.7 Surprise:

“ Are the guests here so soon?”

A rhetorical question is used in such cases by a housewife who is not ready yet to receive the guests who arrive earlier than expected. She is surely not asking a real

question, since she knew that they are already there, and she is just showing her surprise; as if to say “ I'm surprised that the guests are here so soon”.

It is worthy to mention that showing surprise is best represented via rhetorical questions. This has magnificently been achieved in the following Qur'anic examples:

(البقرة: ١١٤) ( ومن اظلم ممن منع مساجد الله ان يذكر فيها اسمه وسعى في خرابها )  
(Waman azlamu mimman mana'a masajida Allah an yuthkar feeha ismuhu wa sa'a fi kharabiha)

(And who does greater evil than he who bars God's places of worship, so that his name be not rehearsed in them, and strives to destroy them? ) ( Arberry, 2003:29)

(النمل: ٢٠) (مالي لا أرى الهدد أم كان من الغائبين)

(Maly la ara al-hudhud am kana mina al-gha?been)

(Why is it I see not

The Hoopoe? Or is he

Among the absentees? ) (Ali, 1989: 983)

(البقرة: ٦١) (قال أتستبدلون الذي هو أدنى بالذي هو خير)

(Qala ?tastabdiloona al-lathy huwa adna bi al-lathy huwa khayr)

(He said: “ Will ye exchange

The better for the worse?”) (Ali, 1989:32).

#### 4.8 Glorification:

A rhetorical question is a good means to show a sense of glory, elevation and magnificence. This is greatly displayed in Qur'anic ayahs:

(القدر: ١-٢) (انا انزلناه في ليلة القدر. وما أدراك ما ليلة القدر)

(?inna anzalnahu fi laylat al-Qadr. Wa ma adraka ma laylatu al-Qadr)

(We have indeed revealed

This(Message)

In the night of Power

And what will explain

To thee what the Night

Of Power is?)(Ali, 1989: 1765)

(الحاقة: ١-٣) (الحاقة. ما الحاقة. وما أدراك ما الحاقة)

(Al-Haqqa. Ma al-Haqqa. Wa ma adraka ma al-Haqqa)

(The Idubitable! What is the Indubitable?

And what will teach thee what is the

Indubitable?) (Arberry, 1989:753)

#### 4.9 Intimidation/ Threatening:

To intimidate implies inducing fear or a sense of inferiority into the others. Threatening, on the other hand, implies giving signs or warnings. There is some sort of a relation between the two, which is why they are put together under one heading. Once more, the Qur'anic verses are many in which a rhetorical question is utilized to express such purposes, due to the fact that a question form is more impressive than mere intimidating or threatening:

(المدثر: ٢٦-٢٧) (سأصليه سقر. وما أدراك ما سقر)

(Sa ?uslihy Saqar. Wa ma adraka ma Saqar)

(Soon will I

Cast him into Hell-fire!

And what explain

To thee what Hell-fire is?) (Ali, 1989:1642-1643)

(فكيف تتقون إن كفرتم يوما يجعل الولدان شيبا) (المزمل: ١٧)

(Fa kayfa tataqoona in kafartum yawman yaj'alu al-wildana sheeba)  
(If therefore you disbelieve, how will you guard yourselves against a  
day that shall make the children grey-headed?) (Arberry, 2003:766)

(يونس: ٥٠) (قل أرءيتم إن أتاكم عذابه بيّاتاً أو نهّاراً ماذا يستعجل منه المجرمون)

(Qul ?ara?ytum in atakum 'athabuhu bayatan aw naharan matha  
yasta'jilu minhu al- mujrimoon)

(Say: "Do ye see,--

If His punishment should come

To you by night or by day, ----

What portion of it

Would the Sinners

Wish to hasten?) (Ali, 1989:498)

#### 4.10 Wishing:

An indirect way to request in a humble manner is carried out via rhetorical  
questions:

(الاعراف: ٥٣) (فهل لنا من شفعاء فيشفعوا لنا أو نرد فنعمل غير الذي كنا نعمل...)

(Fahal lana min shufa'a?a fa yashfa'u lana aw nurada fana'mal  
ghayra al-lathy kunna na'mal....)

(Have we then any intercessors to intercede for us, or shall we be  
returned, to do other than that we have done?) (Arberry, 2003:207).

(غافر: ١١) (فاعترفنا بذنوبنا فهل الى خروج من سبيل)

(Fa'tarafna bi thunoobina fahal ila khuroojin min sabeel)

(Now we confess our sins is there any way to go forth?) (Arberry,  
2003:617).

(القيامة: ١٠) (يقول الانسان يومئذ اين المفر)

(Yaqulu al-insanu yawma?ithin ayna al-mafar)

(That day will Man say:

"Where is the refuge?") (Ali, 1989:1650)

#### 4.11 Blaming:

To show disapproval or reproach is best implied by the usage of rhetorical  
questions; simply because it will sound more effective than being stated  
directly:

(الحديد: ١٦) (ألم يأن للذين آمنوا أن تخشع قلوبهم لذكر الله وما نزل من الحق....)

(Alam ya?in lilatheena aamanu an takhsha'a qulubuhum li thikri  
Allah wa ma nazala mina al-haq)

(Is it not time that the hearts of those who believe should be humbled  
to the Remembrance of God and the Truth which He has sent down!)

(Arberry, 2003:716).

(الكهف: ٧٢) ( قال ألم أقل انك لن تستطيع معي صبرا )

(Qala alam aqul annaka lan tastaty'a ma'i sabra)

(Said he, Did I not say that thou couldst never bear with me patiently?)

(Arberry, 2003:394).

It is worthy to mention that this verse has been repeated with some minor change in verse 75, so as to confirm the purpose behind it, namely that of blaming for not keeping a promise.

#### 4.12 Arousing Eagerness:

A rhetorical question can perfectly be meant to arouse the interests, desires, enthusiasm, yearning and quick responsiveness in action:

(النور: ٢٢) ( ألا تحبون أن يغفر الله لكم والله غفور رحيم )

(Ala tuhiboona an yaghfira Allahu lakum wa Allahu ghafoorun raheem)

(Do you not wish

That God should forgive you?

For God is Oft-Forgiving,

Most Merciful.) (Ali, 1989:902)

(الصف: ١٠) ( ياأيها الذين آمنوا هل أدلكم على تجارة تنجيكم من عذاب أليم )

(Ya ayuha al-latheena amanu hal adulukum 'ala tijaratin tunjeekum min 'athabin aleem)

(O believers, shall I direct you to a commerce that shall deliver you from a painful chastisement?) (Arberry, 2003:733)

(طه: ١٢٠) ( قال يا آدم هل أدلك على شجرة الخلد وملك لا يبلى )

(Qala ya Adam hal aduluka 'ala shajarat al-khuld wa mulkin la yabla)

(he said, " O Adam!

Shall I lead thee to

The Tree of Eternity

And to a kingdom

That never decays?) (Ali, 1989:815)

(الانفطار: ٦) ( ياأيها الانسان ما غرك بربك الكريم )

(Ya ayuha al-insaan ma gharaka bi rabika al-kareem)

(O man! What has

Seduced thee from

Thy Lord Most Beneficant?) (Ali, 1989:1700)

#### 4.12 Stating a known fact:

Well-known facts are more effectively represented by a rhetorical question which functions as a way to emphasize and to remind those who might have forgotten the existence of such factual events:

(البقرة: ٨٧) ( أفكلما جاءكم رسول بما لا تهوى أنفسكم أستكبرتم ففريقا كذبتهم وفريقا تقتلون)  
(Afakulama ja?akum rasoolun bima la tahwa anfusukum istakbartum  
fafareeqan kathabtum wa fareeqan taqtuloon)

(and whensoever there came to you a Messenger with that your souls  
had not desire for, did you become arrogant, and some cry lies to, and  
some slay?)

(Arberry, 2003:24)

(الزمر: ٣٦) (أليس الله بكاف عبده)

(Alaysa Allahu bi kafin 'abdah)

(Shall not God suffice His servant) (Arberry, 2003:609)

(الشرح: ١) ( ألم نشرح لك صدرك)

(Alam nashrah laka sadrak)

(Have We not

Expanded thee thy breast?) (Ali, 1989:1755)

(الضحى: ٦) ( ألم يجدك يتيما فآوى)

(Alam yajidka yateeman fa aawa)

(Did He not find thee an orphan, and shelter thee?) (Arberry, 2003:804)

A very distinctive instance of a Qur'anic rhetorical question is found in  
Sura Ar-Rahman, where one verse is repeated 31 times among its 78  
verses:

(الرحمن: ١٣) (فبأي آلاء ربكما تكذبان)

(Fa bi?ayi aala?i rabikuma tukathiban)

(Then which of the favours

Of your Lord will ye deny?) (Ali, 1989:1473)

It has been argued that this particular verse serves not a single purpose, but  
multiple purposes in one time. Yusuf (2000:145) stated that the purpose in  
this verse is that of denial, rebuke, reproof, and stating a known fact. The  
innumerable favours bestowed by Allah upon man are presented. So how  
come for man to deny them?

It is necessary to mention here that many instances have been traced in the  
Glorious Qur'an in which more than one rhetorical question is utilized so  
as to present different emotional purposes at one time:

(البقرة: ٤٤) ( أتأمرون الناس بالبر وتنسون أنفسكم وانتم تتلون الكتاب أفلا تعقلون)

(Ata?muruna al-nasa bi al-biri wa tansawna anfusakum wa antum  
tatluna al-kitaab afala ta'qiloon)

(Will you bid others to piety, and forget yourselves while you recite the  
Book? Do you not understand?) (Arberry, 2003:16).

Two purposes are realized: showing surprise at the beginning, then giving  
a command at the end.

(آل عمران: ٦٥) (يا أهل الكتاب لم تحاجون في إبراهيم وما انزلت التوراة والانجيل إلا من بعده أفلا تعقلون)

(Ya ahla al-kitaab lima tuhajoona fi Ibraheem wa ma unzilal al-Tawraat wa al-Injeel illa min ba'dihi afala ta'qiloon)

(People of the Book! Why you dispute concerning Abraham? The Torah was not sent down, neither the Gospel, but after him. What have you no reason?)

(Arberry, 2003:80)

Again, two different purposes have been achieved, showing rebuke, and then giving a command.

## Conclusions and Recommendations

Rhetorical questions which are characterized by their question formation and non-questioning meaning are extensively used in English – let alone Arabic – with the purpose of serving as an indirect way of suggesting an idea that might be challenged if asserted directly.

It is very helpful for the translator to have good knowledge of the functions of rhetorical questions in English as well as Arabic in order to be able to transfer such functions from one language into the other successfully. Sometimes, question forms in the two languages do not necessarily match. If the receptor language does not use a specific question form to convey a specific function, a different and appropriate form will need to be used; so adjustments in such a case are inevitable. It is important to focus not only on the functions, but on the form of rhetorical questions as well. Different forms can have different secondary functions.

Special care and tremendous attention should be given when attempting to translate the rhetorical questions which are enormously found in The Glorious Qur'an. Many intricate functions can be traced, and if not analyzed and treated with intensive carefulness may lead to introduce different notions than those originally intended.

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## الخلاصة

تهدف هذه الدراسة الى تسليط الضوء على العديد من الوظائف الثانوية للجمل الاستفهامية ، والمعروفة باسم الاسئلة البلاغية، في اللغتين الانكليزية والعربية. ولغرض تحقيق هذا الهدف، تضمنت الدراسة عددا وفيرا من الامثلة ليتم من خلالها التعرف على إستخدام الوظائف تلك، سواء في لغة الحياة اليومية أو الادب أو في القرآن الكريم على وجه الخصوص، وكيفية تعامل المترجمين مع هكذا نمط من الاسئلة.

ولحقيقة ان الاسئلة البلاغية قد يكون لها في العربية وظائف تختلف عن تلك الموجودة في الانكليزية، فمن المتوقع بروز بعض المشكلات اثناء ترجمتها الى الانكليزية. تفترض هذه الدراسة ان القرآن الكريم تتجسد فيه العديد من الوظائف الدقيقة للاسئلة البلاغية والتي تتطلب انتباها كبيرا من جانب المترجم الذي يقع على عاتقه تحليل تلك الوظائف كي يتمكن من إعطاء النظير الانكليزي الاكثر ملائمة.

وجدت الدراسة ان ترجمة الاسئلة البلاغية الى الانكليزية هي عملية صعبة نوعا ما وذلك لانها توجب على المترجم ان يمتلك معرفة وافية بكل وظائفها في اللغة العربية على وجه العموم، وفي لغة القرآن الكريم على وجه الخصوص.