

Passive Verbs in Three Translations of the Qur'an

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Section One:

Introduction

A transitive verb has two forms active and passive. The active form is the one that is followed by the direct object. It can be made as (SVO, or SVOO), for example:

(\a) *The waiter poured the coffee.* (Active)

(\b) *The coffee was poured (by the waiter).* (Passive). (Quirk et.al : ١٩٨٥:٢٣).

Since passive sentences are found in the Quran, these sentences need to be studied with close reference to their translation. The question here is whether the passive sentences in the Arabic version of the Holy Quran are kept passive when translated into English, and if so is it helping in transferring the closest meaning of the original text.

The study aims at investigating the passive voice construction in both English and Arabic and exploring the passive verbs found in part ٣٠ of the Qur'an to find out how these verbs can be rendered into English to be as efficient as it is in Arabic.

The data of the study comprise the passive verbs in part ٣٠ of the Qur'an. The Arabic version as well as three English translated versions will be closely examined to find out the degree of similarity between the original and the translated texts with regard to passive verbs only. Three English translations of the Qur'an will be adopted for the study: these are Abdullah Yusuf Ali, Salman Tawhidi and Muhammad Shakir. These three translations are chosen because these are the most famous and widely spread translations of the Holy Qur'an and they belong to different religious schools on Al Islam.

In order to achieve the aims of the study, the following procedures are adopted:

- \- Presenting a theoretical background that sheds some light upon the passive voice in English and Arabic including definitions, forms, types of passive sentences (agentive/nonagentive passives, adjective passive and the passive with *get* instead of *be*) and uses of passive voice in addition to the semantic features of the passive sentences trying to explain the semantic reasons after using them.
- ٢- Giving a brief idea about the notions of translation and interpretation as well as some notes about the translation of the Qur'an.
- ٣- Investigating the translation of the passive sentences in three different translations of the Qur'an by Abdullah Yusuf Ali, Muhammad Shakir and Salman Tawhidi.

The study limits itself to the investigation of passive verbs in part ٣٠ of the Qur'an both in the Arabic version as well as three translations into English. This study is not an attempt to translate this part of the Qur'an, it only presents suggested translations for the passive sentences in the Arabic text which are not translated into passive in the three translations cited.

Section Two:

Theoretical background

٢.١. Definitions of passive both in English and Arabic

The word passive (passivisation) is a term used in the grammatical analysis of voice referring to a sentence, clause or verb form where the grammatical subject is typically the recipient of the action:

(٢a) e.g. *The letter was written by a boy.* (passive)

(٢b) *A boy wrote the letter.* (Active)

In English there are active sentences that do not have passive counterparts, as in (٣) below:

(٣) *The boy fell.*

The passive sentence is a sentence in which the verbal complex contains a form of *to be* followed by a verb in its past participle form:

(٤) *The robbers were not seen.*

In a passive sentence, the direct object of a transitive verb in the deep structure functions as the subject in surface structure. (Fromkin et.al., ٢٠٠٣: ٥٩٠).

Clearly what comes first is the most important part of the information wanted to be conveyed, so the passive voice sentences concentrate more on what happen to the object as a result of the action done, with no or little attention to who or what is the agent of the action i.e. the subject of the active counter part of the passive sentence.

Quirk and Greenbaum (١٩٧٣: ١٦٨) state that the passive sentences draw more attention to the result than to the action or the agency. And they (ibid) add that the result is sometimes expressed by replacing *be* by *get*, for example:

(٥) *The window was broken by my younger son.*

(٦) *I know how the window got broken.*

A more gradually achieved result can be sometimes expressed by *become*:

(٧) *With the passage of time, the furniture became covered with dust.*

Here the concentration is on the result as well but with a hint that the result is achieved within the duration or a period of time.

In Arabic, the passive is defined almost in the same way; Beha'a Aldeen (١٩٦٤: ٤٩٨) and Al Ghalaiyini (٢٠٠٤: ٣٩), among others, state that the verb has two forms : active and passive. The active is the form for which the subject of the verb is mentioned in the sentence. While the passive form of

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the verb is the form for which the subject is not mentioned in the sentence but the subject is omitted for certain reasons:

(active) مَصَّرَ الْمَنْصُورَ بَغْدَادَ (٨a)

(passive) مُصِرَّتْ بَغْدَادَ (٨b)

In example (٨a) above the subject is a separate noun. The subject could be a pronoun attached to the verb itself as in:

نَلِثَ الْخَيْرَ وَ خَفِثُ اللَّهُ وَ قُدْتُ الْجَيْشَ (٩a)

نِيلَ الْخَيْرَ وَ خِيفَ اللَّهُ وَ قَيِدَ الْجَيْشَ (٩b)

So it is clear that the passive has the same definition in both Arabic and English which agrees with the linguistic fact of the universality of language.

٢.٢ Forms of the passive voice in English and Arabic ٢

Stageberg (١٩٨١:٢٠٨) states that in the process of forming the passive form from the active there are four things to be considered:

١- The object of the active form becomes the subject of the passive. As in example (١٠b) below:

(١٠a) *The waiter poured the coffee*

(١٠b) *The coffee was poured (by the waiter)*

٢- The passive is made up of a form of the verb *be* plus the past participle of the main verb.

٣- The subject of the active verb may be made the object of the preposition *by*.

٤- In the passive, two grammatical meanings are shifted around. The performer of the action, (*waiter* in sentence (١٠a) above), is now the object of the preposition, and the receiver, (*coffee*), is the subject.

Cook and Newson (١٩٩٦:٥) agree with Stageberg saying that passive sentences are formed from active sentences by moving various elements of the sentence around as in the following example:

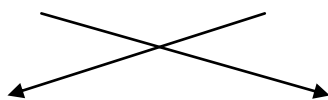
(١١a) *Barnes was fired by the manger.*

They state that the passive sentence (١١a) is taken to be related to the active sentence (١١b) below:

(١١b) *The manger fired Barnes.*

The object *Barnes* in the active sentence moves to be the subject of the passive; the active subject *the manger* moves after the verb in the passive and gains a preposition *by* and the verb changes from the active form *fired* to the passive form *was fired*:

The manger fired Barnes.



Barnes was fired by the manger

The same is stated by (Thomson and Martinet, ١٩٨٦:٢٦٣) that the passive form of an active sentence is formed by putting one form of the verb *to be* in the same tense as the active sentence and adding the past participle of the main verb in the active sentence.

Al Anssary (١٩٨٨:١٨٩) as well as Al Ghalaiyni (٢٠٠٤: ١٤٤) mention that there are four things that can be the subject of the passive sentence, these are :

١- The object of the active sentence. It is emphasized here that when we have a clear object in the active sentence it is the object that is used and nothing else as in the example below:

(١٢) وَفُتِحَتِ السَّمَاءُ فَكَانَتْ أَبْوَابًا (النبأ: ١٩)

٢- Preposition as in the example below:

(١٣) (يَوْمٌ يُنْفَخُ فِي الصُّورِ فَتَأْتُونَ أَفْوَاجًا (النبأ: ١٨)

٣- Some adverbs like "*day, night, month, decade, in front of, behind, side, direction, etc.*"

(١٤) مُشِيٍّ يَوْمٌ كَامِلٌ وَ صِيَمِ رَمَضَانَ

٤- Infinitive derived from the form of the verb:

(١٥) (الحاقة: ١٣) فَإِذَا نُفِخَ فِي الصُّورِ نَفْخَةٌ وَاحِدَةٌ

٢.٣ Types of the passive voice:

٢.٣.١ Agentive /none Agentive Passive

Passive constructions which take an agent are agentive passives, example (١٦) below, as opposed to non-agentive or agentless passives, where there is no need to (and sometimes no possibility of) an agentive phrase being added when the speaker does not have a performer of the action in mind as in (١٧) below:

(١٦) *He was kicked (by the dog),*

(١٧) *The city is industrialized now.*

This type is also found in Arabic as in the example below:

(١٨) قَتَلَ هَابِيلٌ عَلَى يَدِ قَابِيلٍ

, is mentioned. Sentence (١٨) above represent an example of agentive passive because the agent,

جارومجرور. Here the agent is a prepositional phrase (

٢.٣.٢ Adjective Passive

The *verb* plus the *past participle* construction are used in variety of ways such as a passive form with complete interchangeability with the active:

(١٩) *He was interested in astrology,*

Through deep examination of sentence (١٩) above, we can notice that it has both passive and adjectival properties. The adjectival construction can be differentiated from the pure passive in that *very* can be added to it:

(٢٠) *He was (very) interested in astrology.*

Cook and Newson (١٩٩٦:٢٩٨) state that adjectival passives are treated as adjectives formed by adding

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-ed in the lexicon rather than as part of the verb involved in syntax. Their lexical entries may differ from those of their verbal homophones.

In Arabic there is no such an equivalent, there is a clear cut line between adjectives like (مستمتع) () . So possible translations of examples (١٩) and (٢٠) above is (٢١) and (٢٢) below: أمتع and verbs like ()
(٢١) هو مستمتع (مهتم) بعلم التنجيم
(٢٢) أمتعته (أثاره) علم التنجيم

٣.٣ Passive with the Verb Get

English also has a passive with *get* instead of *be*, for example:

- (٢٣a) *The teacher excused Bill*
(٢٣b) *Bill got excused by the teacher*
(٢٤a) *Helen rewarded him.*
(٢٤b) *He got rewarded.*

Get-passive is used when the result of the action is the most important thing to be stated as in examples (٢٣b and ٢٤b) above (Quirk and Greenbaum, ١٩٧٣:١٦٨).

Stageberg (١٩٨١:٢٠٩) adds that *get*-passive is useful in avoiding the occasional ambiguity of the *be* passive , as in:

- (٢٥a) *The gate was closed at ten o'clock.*

This can mean either 'someone closed the gate at ten' or 'the gate was not open at ten'. With *got*, only the first meaning is possible:

- (٢٥b) *The gate got closed at ten.*

It is important to note that not all verbs accept *get*-passive, e.g.

- (٢٦) **The fiesta got enjoyed by the guests* (Stageberg, ١٩٨١:٢٠٩)

Murphy (١٩٩٤:٨٦) states that *get* can only be used when things happen or change. For example, we cannot use *get* in these sentences:

(٢٧) *He was a mystery man. Nothing was known about him.* (not *got known*, because this is not a happening).

Murphy (ibid) states that *get* is mainly used in informal spoken English. And *be* can be used in all situations.

In Arabic there is no such an equivalent type. The possible translation of the verb *get* is أصبح and it is not followed by an object. The فعل ناقص which is not a transitive verb but an incomplete verb (construction here is totally different as in the example below:

- (٢٨) أصبح النهر جافا

٢.٤ Uses of the passive voice.

Regarding the reasons behind using passive sentences it is the same reasons in both English and Arabic. Bloomberg (٢٠٠٥:٤) states that passive voice is used when the speaker/writer wants to

place more emphasis on the object(s) or receiver(s) of an action. as is the following example:

(٢٩) *The door is broken*

It is also used when the speaker does not know who is the performer of the action, or it is not apparent who is performing the action. An animate or inanimate object could be performing the action as well:

(٣٠) *It was announced that*

Thomson and Martinet (١٩٨٦:٢٦٦) state that passive voice is used in the following cases:

١. when it is not necessary to mention the doer of the action as it is obvious who he is/ was/will be:

(٣١) *The streets are swept every day.*

- ٢- When we do not know, or do not know exactly, or have forgotten who did the action:

(٣٢) *The minister was murdered.*

- ٣- When the subject of the active verb would be 'people'

(٣٣) *He is suspected of receiving stolen goods. (People suspect him of...)*

- ٤- When the subject of the active sentence would be the indefinite pronoun 'one':

(٣٤) *This sort of advertisement is seen everywhere. (One sees...)*

In colloquial speech the indefinite pronoun *you* and an active verb are used:

(٣٥) *You see this sort of advertisement everywhere.*

But more formal English requires *one* plus active verb or the more usual passive form.

- ٥- When we are more interested in the action than the person who does it:

(٣٦) *The house next door has been bought (by a Mr. Jones)*

- ٦- The passive may be used to avoid any awkward or ungrammatical sentence. This is usually done by avoiding a change of subject. Sentence (٣٧a) would be better expressed as (٣٧b):

(٣٧a) *When he arrived home a detective arrested him .*

(٣٧b) *When he arrived home he was arrested (by a detective)*

- ٧- The passive is sometimes preferred for psychological reasons. A speaker may use it to disclaim responsibility for disagreeable announcements. The speaker may know who performed the action but wish to avoid giving the name. For example ,*Tom*, who suspects *Bill* of opening his letters , may say tactfully:

(٣٨) *This letter has been opened! (instead of You've opened this letter!)*

As for Arabic, reasons for using passive are the same as in English. The Al-Ansary

(١٩٨٨:١٨٧) states that the passive form is used for certain reasons or cases as mentioned below:

- ١- when the subject of the verb is too clear or known to the extent that there is no need to mention it as in:

(٣٩) وَخُلِقَ الْاِنْسَانُ ضَعِيفاً (النساء ٢٨)

- ٢- when the subject (agent) is unknown at all as in

سُرِقَ المتاعُ (٤٠)

In example (٤٠) above the subject is unknown and if one uses the active form (٤٠) below there will be no benefit of mentioning it:

سرق اللص متاعي (٤١)

٣- when the subject is known but the speaker does not want to mention his name for one reason or another such as the speaker is afraid of the subject.

٤- when there is no benefit from mentioning the name of the subject as in:

(٤٢) *We were not informed that today we have an exam.*

وَإِذَا حُيِّتُمْ بِتَحِيَّةٍ فَحَيُّوا بِأَحْسَنَ مِنْهَا أَوْ رُدُّوهَا (النساء: ٨٦) (٤٣)

Finally when the speaker highly respects the subject to the extent that he doesn't want to mention his name or doesn't want to mention the name of the subject by himself or in a context in which an unrespected object is mentioned as in (٤٢) below: (ibid: ٥٠١)

خُلِقَ الخنزير (٤٣)

Section Three :

The Notion of Translation

٣-١ Translation and Interpretation

House (٢٠٠٩:٩) defines translation as a process of replacing a text in one language by a text in another. Tytler (١٩٩٧: ١٥), believes that translation should meet the following conditions:

- ١- The translation should give a complete transcript of the ideas of the original work.
- ٢- The style and manner of writing should be of the same character with that of the original.
- ٣- The translation should have all the ease of the original composition.

Of course, it is not possible to fulfill this condition in the case of the Quran.

According to Newmark (١٩٨٨: ١٩٠), if a linguist is to have a social function, he has to translate his skills. This interlingual transference includes all activities involving the transfer of sense from one language to another, including paraphrase, summary, précis, explanation abstracting, definition and so on.

It is important to mention here that for interpretation is it wildly understood as a transition of oral text. House (٢٠٠٩:٩) states that translation of a written form is known as translation and the oral form is known as interpreting. A term distinct from the type of interpretation used in the present study: here interpretation means understanding and explicating the meaning of a text.

٣-٢ The Translation of the Holy Quran

Any translation of the Qur'an is a human effort, hence it cannot substitute the original "Qur'an"; the actual word of God, revealed in Arabic upon prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) during twenty three years of his prophetic mission, ١٤٠٠ years ago. (Asad: ٢٠١٠)

The translation of the Qur'an means the expression of the meaning of its text in a language different from the language of the Qur'an, for the understanding of those who are not familiar with

Arabic. It is customary to quote the original Arabic Qur’anic text (*ayah*, verses) along with the translation.

There is an agreement among Muslim scholars that it is humanly impossible to transfer the meanings of the original Qur’an word by word in an identical mode into another language. This is due to two reasons:

- Firstly, the Qur’an itself is a miracle and cannot be imitated by man. As a consequence of this, the translation of Qur’an is not considered as Qur’an. The translations of the Qur’an into English, for example, or any other language, are regarded as paraphrases, interpretation or translation of the interpretation of the original Qur’an. These translations cannot be used in place of original Arabic Qur’an for ritual purposes.
- Secondly, the words of different languages do not express all the shades of meanings of their original Arabic word, though they may express specific concepts. Hence narrowing down the meaning of the Qur’an to specific concepts in a foreign language would mean missing out other important dimensions.

To summarize, it is always said that a translator is a second author who should enjoy almost exactly the same qualifications of the original writer. Putting this in mind explains why it is impossible to efficiently translate the Holy Qur’an.

Section Four:

Data Analysis and Conclusions

٤.١. Data Analysis

In this part of the study, the whole verbs in part ٣٠ of the Qur’an are examined to find out the total number of the passive as well as the active verbs and it was found that the number of the active verbs is ٤٦٠, including transitive and intransitive verbs. The number of the transitive verbs is ٢٧٩ including passive and active while the number of the intransitive verbs is ١٨١. The passive verbs are only ٥٢ forming ٢٢.٩٠٧% of the transitive verbs, as shown in table (١) below:

Table (١) Total verbs in part ٣٠ of the Holy Quran

Total number of verbs	
٤٦٠	
Transitive	Intransitive
٢٧٩	١٨١
Passive	Active
٥٢	٢٢٧

Being the core of this study, only the passive verbs are deeply examined with close reference to the three translations of Abullah Yusuf Ali, Muhammad Shakir and Salman Tawhidi making a comparison of the passive verbs in these three translations.

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There are certain reasons for using passive construction, and since the Qur'an text is a perfect text being a divine language, the researcher believes that it would be much better if the passive sentences of the Qur'anic text are translated into passive English in order not to lose part of the messages wanted to be conveyed. Therefore, the passive sentences found in part ٣٠ which are not translated into passive are given a suggested translation in which they are kept passive.

٤-٢ A Comparison of the Three Translations

In the following pages, a comparison between the three translations by Abdullah Yusuf Ali, Muhammad Shakir and Salman Tawhidi is presented. In Table (٢) below the original passive sentences are cited followed by the translations of Yusuf Ali, Muhammad Shakir and Salman Tawhidi. The last column is devoted for the notes and the suggested translations. It is important here to draw the attention that only the passive sentences which are not translated into passive in all the three translations are given a suggested translation. The suggested translation is built upon the interpretation of Al Shirazi (٢٠٠٩) and Abdullah Shubber (١٩٩٩).

Table (٢) The passive Sentences in part ٣٠ of the Holy Qur'an

	The original Arabic text	Yusuf Ali Translation	Shakir's Translation	Salman Tawhidi	Notes and/or suggested translation
١	يَوْمَ يُنْفَخُ فِي الصُّورِ فَتَأْتُونَ أَفْوَاجًا (النبا: ١٨)	The Day that the Trumpet <u>shall be sounded</u> , and ye shall come forth in crowds;	The day on which the trumpet <u>shall be blown</u> so you shall come forth in hosts	The day the trumpet <u>is blown</u> and ye shall come in troops	All are passive
٢	وَفُتِحَتِ السَّمَاءُ فَكَانَتْ أَبْوَابًا (النبا: ١٩)	And the heaven <u>shall be opened</u> as if there were doors,	And the heaven <u>shall be opened</u> so that it shall be all openings,	And the sky <u>shall open</u> and be gated	All are passive
٣	وَسُيِّرَتِ الْجِبَالُ فَكَانَتْ سَرَابًا (النبا: ٢٠)	And the mountains <u>shall vanish</u> , as if they were a mirage	And the mountain <u>shall be moved off</u> so that they shall remain a mere semblance,	And the mountains <u>shall be put in</u> motion and then become a mirage;	The verb is kept passive in the translation of Shakir and Tawhidi while that of Yusuf Ali is active; but it is important to note that the whole verb was changed from <i>move</i> into <i>vanish</i>

٤	وَبُرِّزَتِ الْجَحِيمُ لِمَنْ يَرَى (النازعات: ٣٦)	And Hell-Fire <u>shall be placed</u> in full view for (all) to see,	And hell shall <u>be made</u> manifest to him who sees,	And the ragin fire <u>is made</u> to appear for whosoever sees;	All are passive
٥	قَتِيلَ الْإِنْسَانِ مَا أَكْفَرَهُ (عبس: ١٧)	<u>Woe to man!</u> What hath made him reject Allah;	<u>Cursed be man!</u> how ungrateful is he,	May man <u>be killed!</u> How he disbelieves!	Only Tawhidi translation is kept passive. In Ali and Shakir's translations, the whole verb is changed, it is changed into adjectives.
٦	إِذَا الشَّمْسُ كُوِّرَتْ (التكوير: ١)	When the sun (with its spacious light) <u>is folded up</u> ;	When the sun <u>is covered</u> ,	When the sun <u>is rolled up</u> ,	All are passive
٧	وَإِذَا الْجِبَالُ سُيِّرَتْ (التكوير: ٣)	When the mountains <u>vanish</u> (like a mirage),	When the mountains <u>are made</u> to pass away,	And when the mountains <u>are set in</u> motion,	The verb in Ali's translation is changed into intransitive verb. While the other two translations keep the passive form of the verb.
٨	وَإِذَا الْعِشَارُ عُطِّلَتْ (التكوير: ٤)	when the she-camels, ten months with young, <u>are left</u> untended,	And when the camels <u>are left</u> untended.	And when the pregnant camels <u>are abandoned</u> ,	All are passive
٩	وَإِذَا الْوُحُوشُ حُشِرَتْ (التكوير: ٥)	When the wild beasts <u>are herded</u>	And when the wild animals <u>are made</u> to go forth	And when the beasts <u>are assembled</u> ,	All are passive
١٠	وَإِذَا الْبِحَارُ سُجِّرَتْ (التكوير: ٦)	When the oceans <u>boil over</u> with a swell,	And when the seas <u>are set on</u> fire	And when the seas <u>are blazed</u> ,	Only the translation of Yusuf Ali is active
١١	وَإِذَا النُّفُوسُ زُوِّجَتْ (التكوير: ٧)	When the souls <u>are sorted out</u> , (being joined, like with like),	When the souls <u>are united</u>	And when the souls <u>are paired</u> ,	All are passive
١٢	وَإِذَا الْمَوْءُودَةُ سُئِلَتْ (التكوير: ٨)	When the female (infant), buried alive, <u>is questioned</u> ,	When the female infant buried alive <u>is asked</u>	And when the girl buried alive <u>is asked</u> ,	All are passive
١٣	بِأَيِّ ذَنْبٍ قُتِلَتْ (التكوير: ٩)	For what crime she <u>was killed</u> ,	For what sin she <u>was killed</u>	For what crime she <u>was killed?</u>	All are passive

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١٤	وَإِذَا الصُّحُفُ نُشِرَتْ (التكوير: ١٠)	When the scrolls <u>are laid open</u>	And when the books <u>are spread</u>	And when the scrolls <u>are dispersed</u> ,	All are passive
١٥	وَإِذَا السَّمَاءُ كُشِطَتْ (التكوير: ١١)	When the world on High <u>is unveiled</u> ,	And when the heaven has its covering <u>removed</u> ,	And when the sky <u>is ripped away</u> ,	In the translation of Shakir the verb is changed into a causative verb
١٦	وَإِذَا الْجَحِيمُ سُعِرَتْ (التكوير: ١٢)	When the Blazing Fire <u>is kindled</u> to fierce heat,	And when the hell <u>is kindled up</u> ,	And when the Inferno <u>is fired up</u> ,	All are passive
١٧	وَإِذَا الْجَنَّةُ أُنزِلَتْ (التكوير: ١٣)	And when the Garden <u>is brought</u> near,	And when the garden <u>is brought</u> high,	And when the Paradise <u>is brought</u> near,	All are passive
١٨	وَإِذَا الْبِحَارُ فُجِرَتْ (الانفطار: ٣)	When the Oceans <u>are suffered</u> to burst forth,	And when the seas <u>are made</u> to flow forth,	And when the seas <u>are burst</u> forth,	All are passive
١٩	وَإِذَا الْقُبُورُ بُعْثِرَتْ (الانفطار: ٤)	And when the Graves <u>are turned</u> upside down	And when the graves <u>are laid</u> open	And when the graves <u>are turned</u> ,	All are passive
٢٠	إِذَا تَتْلَىٰ عَلَيْهِ آيَاتُنَا قَالَ أَسَاطِيرُ الْأُولِينَ (المطففين: ١٣)	When Our Signs are rehearsed to him, he says, "Tales of the ancients!"	When Our communications <u>are recited</u> to him, he says: Stories of those of yore	When Our signs <u>are recited</u> to him he say: 'fables of the ancients',	All are passive
٢١	ثُمَّ يُقَالُ هَذَا الَّذِي كُنْتُمْ بِهِ تَكْذِبُونَ (المطففين: ١٧)	Further, it <u>will be said</u> to them: "This is the (reality) which ye rejected as false!	Then <u>shall it be said</u> : This is what you gave the lie to.	Then it <u>is said</u> , 'This is what ye used to belie'.	All are passive
٢٢	يُسْقَوْنَ مِنْ رَحِيقٍ مَخْنُومٍ (المطففين: ٢٥)	Their thirst will be slaked with Pure Wine sealed,	They are made to quaff a pure drink that is sealed (to others).	They <u>are given</u> the drink of a nectar sealed,	All are passive
٢٣	هَلْ تُؤْتَوْنَ الْكُفَّارَ مَا كَانُوا يَفْعَلُونَ (المطففين: ٣٦)	Will not the Unbelievers <u>have been paid</u> back for what they did?	Surely the disbelieves <u>are rewarded</u> as they did.	Are the disbelievers <u>rewarded</u> for what they were doing?	All are passive

٢٤	وَأَدْنَتْ لِرَبِّهَا وَحَفَّتْ (الانشقاق: ٢)	And hearkens to (the Command of) its Lord, <u>and it must need (do so)</u> ,	And obeys its Lord and <u>it must</u> .	And listened to its Lord; and <u>rightly so</u> ,	All are not passive. In Tawhidi translation, the verb is not even translated as a verb. (suggested translation is <i>And it was given the right (permission, choice) to listen and obey</i>)
٢٥	وَإِذَا الْأَرْضُ مُدَّتْ (الانشقاق: ٣)	And when the earth <u>is flattened out</u> ,	And when the earth <u>is stretched</u> ,	And when the earth <u>is stretched</u> ,	All are passive
٢٦	وَأَدْنَتْ لِرَبِّهَا وَحَفَّتْ (الانشقاق: ٥)	And hearkens to (the Command of) its Lord, and it must need (do so):- (then will come Home the full reality).	And obeys its Lord and it must.	And listened to its Lord; and <u>rightly so</u> ,	All are not passive. (suggested translation is <i>And it was given the right (permission, choice) to listen and obey</i>)
٢٧	فَأَمَّا مَنْ أُوتِيَ كِتَابَهُ بِيَمِينِهِ (الانشقاق: ٧)	Then he who <u>is given</u> his Record in his right hand,	Then as to him who <u>is given</u> his book in his right hand,	So as for whosoever <u>is given</u> his book in his right,	All are passive
٢٨	وَأَمَّا مَنْ أُوتِيَ كِتَابَهُ وَرَاءَ ظَهْرِهِ (الانشقاق: ١٠)	But he who <u>is given</u> his Record behind his back,	And as to him who <u>is given</u> his book behind his back,	But as for whosoever <u>is given</u> his book behind his back.	All are passive
٢٩	وَإِذَا قُرِئَ عَلَيْهِمُ الْقُرْآنُ لَا يَسْجُدُونَ (الانشقاق: ٢١)	And when the Qur'an <u>is read</u> to them, they fall not prostrate,	And when the Qur'an <u>is recited</u> to them they do not make ovesiance?	And when the Qur'an <u>is recited</u> to them, they prostrate not?	All are passive

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٣٠	قَتِيلَ أَصْحَابِ الْأَخْدُودِ (البروج:٤)	Woe to the makers of the pit (of fire),	Cursed be the makers of the pit,	<u>Killed be</u> the companions of the trench!	Only Ali had not translated it into passive verb while Shakir and Tawhidi used passive form of the verb
٣١	فَلْيَنْظُرِ الْإِنْسَانُ مِمَّ خُلِقَ (الطارق:٥)	Now let man but think from what he <u>is</u> <u>created!</u>	So let man consider of what he <u>is</u> <u>created,</u>	So let man reflect; from what he <u>was</u> <u>created,</u>	All are passive
٣٢	خُلِقَ مِنْ مَّاءٍ دَافِقٍ (الطارق:٦)	He <u>was created</u> from a drop emitted,	He <u>is created</u> of water pouring forth.	He <u>was created</u> form a spurting liquid,	All are passive
٣٣	يَوْمَ تُبْلَى السَّرَائِرُ (الطارق:٩)	The Day that (all) things secret <u>will be</u> <u>tested,</u>	On the day when hidden things <u>shall</u> <u>be made</u> manifest,	The day the secrets <u>are tried,</u>	All are passive
٤٣	تُسْقَى مِنْ عَيْنٍ آتِيَةٍ (الغاشية:٥)	The while they <u>are</u> <u>given,</u> to drink, of a boiling hot spring.	<u>Made to drink</u> from a boiling spring.	<u>Given to drink</u> at a boiling spring	All are passive
٥٣	أَفَلَا يَنْظُرُونَ إِلَى الْإِبِلِ كَيْفَ خُلِقَتْ (الغاشية:١٧)	Do they not look at the Camels, how they <u>are made?</u>	Will they not then consider the camels, how they_ <u>are created?</u>	Have they not looked to the camel, how it <u>is</u> <u>created?</u>	All are passive
٦٣	وَإِلَى السَّمَاءِ كَيْفَ رُفِعَتْ (الغاشية:١٨)	And at the Sky, how it <u>is raised</u> high?	And the heaven, how it <u>is reared</u> aloft,	And at the sky, how it <u>is elevated?</u>	All are passive
٧٣	وَإِلَى الْجِبَالِ كَيْفَ نُصِبَتْ (الغاشية: ١٩)	And at the Mountains, how they <u>are fixed</u> firm?	And the mountains, how they <u>are firmly</u> fixed,	And at the mountains, how they <u>are fixed?</u>	All are passive
٨٣	وَإِلَى الْأَرْضِ كَيْفَ سُطِحَتْ (الغاشية: ٢٠)	And at the Earth, how it <u>is spread</u> out?	And the earth, how it <u>is made</u> vast expanse?	And at the earth, how it <u>is laid?</u>	All are passive

٣٩	الَّتِي لَمْ يُخْلَقْ مِثْلُهَا فِي الْبِلَادِ (الفجر: ٨)	The like of which <u>were not produced</u> in (all) the land?	The like of which <u>were not created</u> in the (other) cities;	Whose like <u>had not</u> <u>been created</u> in the lands.	All are passive
٠٤	كَلَّا إِذَا دُكَّتِ الْأَرْضُ دَكًّا دَكًّا (الفجر: ٢١)	Nay! When the earth <u>is pounded to powder</u> ,	Nay! When the earth <u>is made to</u> crumble to pieces,	Nay, when the earth <u>is flattened</u> ; flat, flat,	All are passive
١٤	وَجِيءَ يَوْمَئِذٍ بِجَهَنَّمَ يَوْمَئِذٍ يَتَذَكَّرُ الْإِنْسَانُ وَأَنَّى لَهُ الذِّكْرَى (الفجر: ٢٣)	And Hell, that Day, <u>is</u> <u>brought</u> (face to face), on that Day will man remember, but how will that remembrance profit him?	And hell <u>is made to</u> appear on that day. On that day shall man be mindful, and what shall being mindfull (then) avail him?	And hell <u>will be</u> <u>brought</u> that day, the day when the human remembers; but how will remembrance be for him?	All are passive
٢٤	فَيَوْمَئِذٍ لَا يُعَذِّبُ عَذَابَهُ أَحَدٌ (الفجر: ٢٥)	For, that Day, His Chastisement will be such as none (else) can inflict,	But on that day no one chastises with (anything like) His chastisement,	That day, no one chastises as His chastisement,	In all the translations there is no passive verb. The suggested translation is: (on that Day no one <u>will be tortured(or</u> <u>punished)</u> as he will be)
٣٤	وَلَا يُوثِقُ وَتَأْفَهُ أَحَدٌ (الفجر: ٢٦)	And his bonds will be such as none (other) can bind	And no one shall bind will (anything like) His binding.	And no one binds as His binding.	In all the translations there is no passive verb. The suggested translation is: (and no one will be bound like him)
٤٤	وَسَيُجَنَّبُهَا الْأَتْقَى (الليل: ١٧)	But those most devoted to Allah shall <u>be removed</u> far from it,	And away from it <u>shall be kept</u> the one who guards most (against evil),	And whosoever is more guardful shall <u>avert it</u> ,	Only Al-Shirazi translation is not passive

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٥٤	وَمَا لِأَحَدٍ عِنْدَهُ مِنْ نِعْمَةٍ تُجْزَى (الليل : ١٩)	And have in their minds so favour from anyone for which a reward <u>is expected</u> in return,	And no one has with him any boon for which <u>should be rewarded</u> ,	While no one has with him any favour to <u>be recompensed</u> ,	All are passive
٦٤	وَمَا تَفَرَّقَ الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْكِتَابَ إِلَّا مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا جَاءَتْهُمْ الْبَيِّنَةُ (البينة : ٤)	Nor did the People of the Book make schisms, until after there came to them Clear Evidence.	And those who <u>were given</u> the Book did not become divided except after clear evidence had come to them.	And those <u>granted</u> the Book did not become divided until after there came to them the clarification.	Only in the translation of Ali there is no passive and there is no verb at all substituted for the verb أوتوا While the other two translations are passive (granted = are granted)
٧٤	وَمَا أُمِرُوا إِلَّا لِيَعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ مُخْلِصِينَ لَهُ الدِّينَ حُنَفَاءَ وَيُقِيمُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَيُؤْتُوا الزَّكَاةَ وَذَلِكَ دِينُ الْقَيِّمَةِ (البينة : ٥)	And they <u>have been commanded</u> no more than this: To worship Allah, offering Him sincere devotion, being true (in faith); to establish regular prayer; and to practice regular charity; and that is the Religion Right and Straight.	And they <u>were not enjoined</u> anything except that they should serve Allah, being sincere to Him in obedience, upright, and keep up prayer and pay the poor-rate, and that is the right religion.	They <u>were not commanded</u> save to worship Allah, dedicating to Him the religion, as true believers, and to establish the prayer and give the zakat; and that is the religion the valuable,	All are passive
٨٤	إِذَا زُلْزِلَتِ الْأَرْضُ زُلْزَالَهَا (الزلزلة : ١)	When the earth <u>is shaken</u> to her (utmost) convulsion,	When the earth <u>is shaken</u> with her (violent) shaking,	When the earth <u>is shaken</u> with its shaking,	All are passive
٤٩	أَفَلَا يَعْلَمُ إِذَا بُعْثِرَ مَا فِي الْقُبُورِ (العاديات : ٩)	Does he not know, - when that which is in the graves <u>is scattered</u> abroad,	Does he not then know when what is in the graves <u>is raised</u> ,	Does he not know; when what in the tombs <u>is scattered</u> around?	All are passive

٥٥	وَخَصِلَ مَا فِي الصُّدُورِ (العاديات : ١٠)	And that which is (locked up) in (human) breasts <u>is made manifest</u> -	And what is in the breasts <u>is made apparent</u> ?	And what in the breasts <u>is made manifest</u> ?	All are passive
١٥	ثُمَّ لَنَسْأَلَنَّ يَوْمَئِذٍ عَنِ النَّعِيمِ (التكاثر : ٨)	Then, <u>shall ye be questioned</u> that Day about the joy (ye indulged in!).	Then on that day you <u>shall</u> most certainly <u>be questioned</u> about the boons	They ye <u>shall</u> surely <u>be questioned</u> that day as to the blessings.	All are passive
٢٥	كَأَلَّا لَيُبَدَنَّ فِي الْأُخْتَمَةِ (الهمزة : ٤)	By no means! He will be sure to <u>be thrown</u> into That which Breaks to Pieces,	Nay! He shall most certainly <u>be buried</u> into the crushing disaster,	Nay, indeed he shall <u>be hurled</u> into the shatter,	All are passive

Note:

* All the suggested translations are built upon the interpretations of Al Shirazi (٢٠٠٩) and Shubber (١٩٩٩)

A deep examination of table (٢) above shows that the majority of the passive sentences are translated into passive in the three translations: ٤٠ passive sentences are translated into passive forming ٧٧% of the passive sentences. On the other hand only ٤ passive sentences are not kept passive by all the three translations forming ٧.٧%. While ٨ forming ١٥.٣٨٤% verbs show disagreement between the translators; i.e. some had kept the passive form and other had not. See table (٣) below:

Table (٣) occurrence and percentage of the verbs which are kept passive and those which are not.

Verbs kept passive in the three translations	Percentage	Verbs that are not kept passive	Percentage	Verbs kept passive in some of the translations	percentage
٤٠	٧٧,٩٢٣%	٤	٧.٦٩٢%	٨	١٥.٣٨٤%

Examining the translations of the passive verbs that are not kept passive in the three translations, it is noticed that:

* **Row ٣:** The verb is kept passive in the translation of Shakir and Tawhidi while that of Yusuf Ali is

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active; but it is important to note that an intransitive verb is used *vanish* .

* **Row ٥**: In Ali's and Shakir's translations, the verb is changed into adjectives.

* **Row ٧**: The verb in Ali's translation is changed into intransitive verb.

While the other two translations keep the passive form of the verb.

is كُتِبَتْ ***Row ١٥**: In the translation of Shakir, the verb is changed into a causative verb the verb translated into *has its covering removed*.

***Rows ٢٤ and ٢٦**: the suggested translation is built upon the interpretation of Al Shirazi (٢٠٠٩: ٣٤) وحق لها ان تنقاد لامر ربها means حُقَّتْ in which the word

* **Row ٢٦**: In Tawhidi translation, the verb is not even translated as a verb; *so rightly so* is used as a حُقَّتْ translation of

* **Rows ٤٢ and ٤٣**: the suggested translation is built upon the interpretation of Al Shirazi (٢٠٠٩: ١٢٣) and also a similar interpretation is presented by Abdullah Shubber (١٩٩٩: ٥٩٤).

***Row ٤٦**: Only in the translation of Yusuf Ali the passive is not kept and there is no verb at all, a preposition phrase *the People of the Book* substituted for the passive verb أوتوا.

٤-٣ Conclusions

After close examination to the translations of the passive sentences in part ٣٠ of the Qur'an in three translations presented in ٤.١. above the following conclusions are arrived at:

١-It is not always the case that transitive sentences are translated into passive in the target language. Although the majority were translated into passive: ٤٨ out of ٥٢ sentences are kept passive in the translated form.

٢-The sentences that are not translated into passive are totally changed, the following alternatives are used:

“For, - verb *to be* is used as a main verb, for example the verse in row ٤٦ in table (٢) above:

لَا يُعَذِّبُ عَذَابَهُ أَحَدٌ (الفجر: ٢٥). *that Day, His Chastisement will be such as none (else) can inflict*” as a translation of (see row ٤٢ and ٤٣ in the table above).

into “*When the (١) sun is rolled*” - verb *to be* plus and adjective: in the translation of *sun is rolled*”. Note here that *is rolled* here is ambiguous, it could be a transitive form of the verb *roll* or verb *to be* + adjective. (for a the overlap between passive and adjectives see section ٢.٣.٢)

وَإِذَا الْجِبَالُ سُيِّرَتْ (التكوير: ٣) - An intransitive verb is used in some sentences as in the translation of into “*When the mountains vanish*” (see row ٧ in table (٢) above)

into الَّذِينَ أَوْثُوا الْكِتَابَ - A prepositional phrase is used in some sentences as in the translation of “*the People of the Book*” (See row ٤٦ in table (٢) above).

- Expressions like “*woe to*” (see row ٣٠ in table (٢) above).

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