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## Investigating the Difference between the Conditionals (*In*) and (*Itha*) as Mentioned in the Holy Qur'an with Reference to Translation: Selected Verses

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### Abstract

According to grammarians In (إن) and Itha (إِذَا) are conditionals and sometimes they may be used interchangeably. However, when they are mentioned in the Holy Qur'an, they have their own specific use. This paper attempts to investigate their meanings in the source language as well as investigate their translations and find out any differences or similarities. The translations that are adopted in this research are as follows: Pickthall, Al-Hilali & Khan, and Shakir.

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**Keywords:** Linguistic analysis, إن (In) and إذا (Itha), sacred text translation, conditional sentences.

استقصاء الاختلاف مابين اداتي الشرط "إن" و "إذا" المذكورة في القرآن الكريم

بالإشارة الى ترجمة آيات مختارة

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### المستخلص

حسب النحويين (إن) و (إذا) شرطيتان، وفي بعض الاحيان يمكن استخدامهما بالتبادل. ولكن عندما تذكر في القرآن الكريم فإن لها استخداماتها الخاصة. يحاول هذا البحث استقصاء معانيها كمل وردت في القرآن الكريم وكذلك التحقق من ترجماتها ومعرفة اوجه الاختلاف والشبه. والترجمات المعتمدة في هذا البحث هي كما يلي: بكتل، والهلال، وخان، وشاكر.

**الكلمات الدالة:** (إن) و (إذا) شرطيتان، القرآن الكريم .

## 1. Introduction

A condition is the conjunction of one matter with another so that the second cannot be achieved without the first being achieved, with the presence of a conditional tool. So, the conditional sentence refers to connecting two parts by a conditional tool. There is no conditional response (جواب الشرط) without the conditional verb (فعل الشرط). In other words, a conditional sentence consists of the conditional tool, conditional verb, and conditional

response. The method of the condition is based on two sentences, which the conditional tool made as one sentence, with no meaning except for them together. The principle in the relationship between the condition and the penalty is that the second follows from the first exists by its presence such as (Fuda, 2018).:

(ان زرتني زرتك) (If you visit me, I will visit you.)

(اذا سافرت اسافر معك) (If you travel, I will travel with you.)

There are three pillars to state conditional sentence:

1. Conditional tool (اداة الشرط)
2. Conditional verb (فعل الشرط)
3. Response verb (جواب الشرط)

In Arabic language, we have many conditional tools which can be divided into assertive tools such as: in, min, ama, mahma, and haythma (ان / من / اما / مهما / ) and non-assertive tools such as itha, lawla, lawma, lama, and kulama (اذا / لولا / / ... حيثما) and (لوما / لما / كلما ...). The use of conditionals enriches the language and legislates for it a method of rhetoric and miraculousness (Cited in Fuda, 2018).

However, these tools are not of the same degree of use, as some of them are more important in the field of condition than others. This research takes the conditional tools (ان) and (اذا) in the light of Quranic use of them.

## **2. Conditional In (ان)**

As for (ان), it is an assertive tool, it enters into verbs, one of them (فعل الشرط) and the other is a response verb (جواب الشرط) such as

(ان تدرس تنجح) (if you study, you will succeed.)

(ان تطلب العلم ترتقي) (if you seek knowledge, you will rise)

## 2.1 Meanings of In (ان)

According to Ibin – Husham (ان) comes through four faces:

1.(ان) is used to show potential as in Allah saying:

"ان تستفتحوا فقد جاءكم الفتح وان تنتهوا فهو خير لكم وان تعودوا نعد ولن تغني عنكم فنتكم شيئا ولو كثرت وان الله مع المؤمنين "

:19 (Al- Anfal) الانفال

"If you ask for judgment, now has the judgment come into you and if you cease (to do wrong), it will be better for you and if you return, so shall we return and your forces will be of no a vail to you, however numerous they be and verily, Allah is with believers" (Al-Hilali and Khan 2020).

2. (ان) Al-Nafia enters on the nominal sentence, for example:

"امن هذا الذي هو جند لكم ينصركم من دون الرحمن ان الكافرون الا في غرور"

:20 (Al-Mulk) الملك

"Who is he besides the most Gracious that can be an army to you to help you? The disbelievers are in nothing but delusion" (Al-Hilali and Khan 2020).

3. (ان) which is light enter on nominal and verbal sentences. For example:

(Yaseen): 23 وان كل لما جميع محضرون" يس"

"And surly, all – every one of them will be brought before us" (Al-Hilali & Khan 2020).

4. (ان) which is redundant. The grammarians say this redundant normally comes after (ما) Al-Nafia, if it enters on the verbal or nominal sentence.

Ibin \_Husham adds other meanings to these four faces. The first one if (ان) comes as the meaning of (قد) as in:

9 ((Al-Aalla) فذكر ان نفعت الذكرى " الاعلى "

"There remind (men) in case the reminder profit (them)" (Al-Hilali & Khan, 2020).

And the second meaning, if (ان) comes carrying the meaning of (اذا). It is called the conditional (ان) (Al-Heti, 2010)

"لقد صدق الله رسوله الرؤيا بالحق لتدخلن المسجد الحرام ان شاء الله امنين محلقين رؤوسكم ومقصرين لا تخافون  
فعلم ما لم تعلموا فجعل من دون ذلك فتحا قريبا"

27 (Al-Fateh) الفتح

"Indeed, Allah shall fulfill the true vision which he showed to his messenger {The prophet saw a dream that he has entered Makkah along with his companions having their (head) hair shaved and cut short} in very truth. Certainly, you shall enter Al-Masjed al-Haram. If Allah wills, secure, (some) having your head hair cut short, having no fear. He knew what you know not, and he granted besides that a near victory" (Al-Hilali and Khan, 2020).

### **3. Conditional Itha (اذا)**

It is a non-assertive tool. It is considered a "noun" that refers to the future. It can be used to show the causes as well as it can be used to show the conditional meaning. The conditional (ان) can refer to "doubt" such as in (ان قامت القيامة كان كذا) refer to "doubt" and (اذا) cannot refer to "doubt" such as when you say (اذا قامت القيامة) here (اذا) do not give the meaning of "doubt" (Al-Heti, 2010).

### **4. In (ان) vs. Itha (اذا)**

Grammarians explain that in (إن), as the conditional, is a definite preposition that is jussive of two verbs: the first is the protasis and the second is the apodosis. While they assert that Itha (إذا) is an adverb of time usually for the future or sometimes for the past

with the presence of evidence. It includes the meaning of condition but it is not jussive (Cited in Iskandar, 2018). People do not differentiate in their conversations and writings, poetry and prose, ancient and modern, between the meaning of In (إِنْ) and Itha (إِذَا) ; in fact, they are used interchangeably (Cited in Iskandar, 2018).

But the case is different in the Holy Qur'an because God Almighty uses every word and every sentence in its place and in a specific context and structure in which it appears (Cited in Fuda, 2018).

So In (إِنْ) is used in the Holy Qur'an when the matter is subject to doubt, doubt that it will happen like in the following noble verses (Cited in Fuda, 2018).

(Al-Baqara):278 "فَإِذَا أَفَضْتُمْ مِنْ عَرَفَاتٍ فَاذْكُرُوا اللَّهَ" البقرة

“Then when you leave Arafat, remember Allah (by glorifying His Praises, i.e. prayers and invocations, etc.) at the Mashar-il-Haram. And remember Him (by invoking Allah for all good, etc.) as He has guided you, and verily, you were, before, of those who were astray.” (Al-Hilali and Khan, 2020)

"حتى إذا جاء أحدكم الموت توفته رسلنا وهم لا يفرطون"

(Al-An'aam): 61 الانعام

"واذكر ربك إذا نسيت"

الكهف (Al-Kahf):24

The verses above show certainty by the use of Itha ( إِذَا ) .

Now read the following verses:

"وَإِنْ خِفْتُمْ أَلَّا تُفْسِدُوا فِي الْيَمَامَى فَانكِسُوا مَا طَابَ لَكُمْ مِنَ النِّسَاءِ مَنًى وَثَلَاثَ وَرُبَاعَ خِفْتُمْ أَلَّا تَعْدِلُوا فَوَاجِدَةٌ أَوْ

مَا مَلَكَتْ أَيْمَانُكُمْ ۚ ذَلِكَ أَدْنَىٰ أَلَّا تَعُولُوا "

(An-Nisaa):3 النساء

"وَقَالُوا لَنْ يَدْخُلَ الْجَنَّةَ إِلَّا مَنْ كَانَ هُودًا أَوْ نَصَارَى تِلْكَ أَمَانِيُّهُمْ قُلْ هَاتُوا بُرْهَانَكُمْ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ "

البقرة ( Al-Baqarah):111

"And they say, "None shall enter Paradise unless he be a Jew or a Christian." These are their own desires. Say (O Muhammad Peace be upon him), 'Produce your proof if you are truthful.'"

"يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِنْ جَاءَكُمْ فَاسِقٌ بِنَبَأٍ فَتَبَيَّنُوا"

الحجرات (Al-Hujraat) :6

The verses above show uncertainty through the use of In (إن).

### **5. Translation**

Larson (1984, p. 4) comes to a definition of translation in which the meaning of the text in the source language can be discovered by finding the appropriate equivalent and re-expressing that meaning in a text of the target language which is based on linguistic knowledge of source language and target language. As noted by Thomas (1995, p. 22) "Meaning is not something that is inherent in the words alone, nor is it produced by speaker alone or the hearer alone. Making meaning is a dynamic process, involving the negotiation of meaning between speaker and hearer, the context of utterance (physical, social and linguistic) and the meaning potential of utterance". So, to translate conditional sentences, you must have linguistic knowledge of conditional sentences in English.

### **6. Condition in English**

A condition describes a hypothetical scenario and the possible consequences of this scenario. In other words, it is represented by a hypothetical situation and its consequences. It occurs when something is true or happens only if something else is true

or happens. A conditional sentence consists of two parts to create one sentence. So, to state a conditional sentence, there are three pillars are used:

First: A subordinate clause is used to refer to the condition

Second: The main clause is used to refer to the result of the hypothetical scenario

Third: the conditional tool, the subordinate clause always starts with a conditional tool, it can be used at the beginning of a sentence or in the middle of the sentence.

## **7. When and If**

When and if are easy to confuse you because they are interchangeable sometimes. Both words can be used with repeated action and both can express a condition. (If) is used as a conditional word to introduce a conditional clause. (When) is used as a conditional conjunction. They are interchangeable when we are talking about general things. The key differences between them. (when) refers to certain condition in the future and (if) refers to something unlikely, uncertain, or hypothetical.

**7.1.** (when) is used to connect two parts of a sentence. For example:

(I'll phone you when I get home from work) (سأُتصل بك اذا عدت للبيت من العمل)

**7.2.** We use (when) for things that are sure to happen. For example:

(I am going shopping this afternoon.) (for sure) / (سأذهب للتسوق بعد ظهر اليوم)

When I go shopping, I'll buy some food. (اذا ذهبت للتسوق سأشتري بعض الطعام)

In other words, (when) is used to express certain events in the future, these events surely will occur. So, the time reference is in the future.

**7.3.** We use (if) not (when) for things that will possibly happen for example:

If it is raining this evening, I'll not go out. (not when it is raining) (Murphy,1994, P. 50)



## 8. Data Analysis

This section presents the translations of the selected verses and their commentaries. Our aim is to analyze and objectively examine the use of the Arabic conditionals 'إن' (In) and 'إذا' (Itha) within the Holy Qur'an and their subsequent English translations. By using rigorous analysis, we aim to clarify the inherent differences between these conditionals. This data analysis enables us to objectively and empirically present our findings, and shed light on the differences underlying the translations of the sacred texts of the Holy Qur'an.

"حَتَّىٰ إِذَا جَاءَ أَمْرُنَا وَفَارَ التَّنُّورُ فَذُنُوبًا أُولَٰئِكَ نَجِّنَا اللَّهُمَّتْ فِي الْكُفْرَانِ لَمَّا سَأَلْنَا الْمَلَائِكَةَ أَيُّكُمْ أَرَادَ بِرَبِّهِ الْيَوْمَ إِذْ فَارَقْتُمُوهُمْ فَذُنُوبَهُمْ بَيْنَهُمْ ذُنُوبًا مَّا كَانَتْ أَجْرًا يُكْفَرُ أُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْمُكَذِّبِينَ  
مَعَهُ إِلَّا قَلِيلٌ"

40: (Hud) هود

### Pickthall

"(Thus it was) till, **when** Our commandment came to pass and the oven gushed forth water, We said: Load therein two of every kind, a pair (the male and female), and thy household, save him against whom the word hath gone forth already, and those who believe. And but a few were they who believed with him."

### Al-Hilali & Khan

"(So it was) till **then** there came Our Command and the oven gushed forth (water like fountains from the earth). We said: "Embark therein, of each kind two (male and female), and your family, except him against whom the Word has already gone forth, and those who believe. And none believed with him, except a few."

### Shakir

"Until **when** Our command came and water came forth from the valley, We said: Carry in it two of all things, a pair, and your own family-- except those against whom the word has already gone forth, and those who believe. And there believed not with him but a few."

"إِذَا السَّمَاءُ انْفَطَرَتْ"

(الانفطار 1: Al-Infitar)

### **Pickthall**

"**When** the heaven is cleft asunder,"

### **Al-Hilali & Khan**

"**When** the heaven is cleft asunder."

### **Shakir**

"**When** the heaven becomes cleft asunder,"

"فَإِذَا لَفِئَتُهُمُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا فَصَرَبَ الرَّقَابِ حَتَّى إِذَا أَتَخَنُّمُوهُمْ فَشُدُّوا الْوَتَاقَ فَإِمَّا مَنَّا بَعْدُ وَإِمَّا فِدَاءً حَتَّى تَضَعَ الْحَرْبُ أُوْرَارَهَا ذَلِكَ وَلَوْ يَشَاءُ اللَّهُ لَآتَيْنَا مِنْهُمْ وَلَكِنْ لِيُنَبِّئُوَ بَعْضَكُمْ بِبَعْضٍ وَالَّذِينَ قُتِلُوا فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ فَلَنْ يُضِلَّ أَعْمَالَهُمْ"

(Muhammad) : 4

### **Pickthall**

"Now **when** ye meet in battle those who disbelieve, then it is smiting of the necks until, **when** ye have routed them, then making fast of bonds; and afterward either grace or ransom till the war lay down its burdens. That (is the ordinance). And if Allah willed He could have punished them (without you) but (thus it is ordained) that He may try some of you by means of others. And those who are slain in the way of Allah, He rendereth not their actions vain."

### **Al-Hilali & Khan**

“So, **when** you meet (in fight Jihad in Allahs Cause), those who disbelieve smite at their necks till **when** you have killed and wounded many of them, then bind a bond firmly (on them, i.e. take them as captives). Thereafter (is the time) either for generosity (i.e. free them without ransom), or ransom (according to what benefits Islam), until the war lays down its burden. Thus (you are ordered by Allah to continue in carrying out Jihad against the disbelievers till they embrace Islam (i.e. are saved from the punishment in the Hell-fire) or at least come under your protection), but if it had been Allahs Will, He Himself could certainly have punished them (without you). But (He lets you fight), in order to test you”

**Shakir**

“So, **when** you meet in battle those who disbelieve, then smite the necks until when you have overcome them, then make [them] prisoners, and afterwards either set them free as a favor or let them ransom [themselves] until the war terminates. That [shall be so]; and if Allah had pleased He would certainly have exacted what is due from them, but that He may try some of you by means of others; and [as for] those who are slain.”

"وَإِذَا رَأَوْكَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا إِذَا يَتَّخِذُونَكَ إِلَّا هُزُؤًا أَهْذَاءَ الَّذِي يَذُكُرُ ٱلْهَيْكَلُ وَهُمْ يَذُكُرُ ٱلرَّحْمٰنِ هُمْ كٰفِرُونَ"

الانبياء (Al-Anbiyaa) : 36

**Pickthall**

"And **when** those who disbelieve behold thee, they but choose thee out for mockery, (saying): Is this he who maketh mention of your gods? And they would deny all mention of the Beneficent."

**Al-Hilali & Khan**

“And **when** those who disbelieve (in the Oneness of Allah) see you (O Muhammad SAW), they take you not except for mockery (saying): "Is this the one who talks (badly) about your gods?" While they disbelieve at the mention of the Most Beneficent (Allah).” (Tafsir. Al-Qurtubee).”

**Shakir**

“And **when** those who disbelieve see you, they do not take you but for one to be scoffed at: Is this he who speaks of your gods? And they are deniers at the mention of the Beneficent Allah.”

”ثُمَّ إِذَا كَشَفَ الضُّرَّ عَنْكُمْ إِذَا فَرِيقٌ مِّنْكُمْ بِرَبِّهِمْ يُشْرِكُونَ“

النحل (An-Nahl) : 54

**Pickthall**

"And afterward, **when** He hath rid you of the misfortune, behold! a set of you attribute partners to their Lord,"

**Al-Hilali & Khan**

"Then, **when** He has removed the harm from you, behold! Some of you associate others in worship with their Lord (Allah)."

**Shakir**

"Yet **when** He removes the evil from you, lo! a party of you associate others with their Lord;"

Sura	Ayah	Pickthall	Al-Hilali & Khan	Shakir
Hud	40	when	then	when
Al-Infitar	1	when	when	when

Muhammad	4	when	when	when
Al-Anbiyaa	36	when	when	when
An-Nahl	54	when	when	when

**Table 1: Translation of Itha (إِذَا) into English**

In all the translations mentioned above for ***Itha*** (إِذَا), (with the exception of Al-Hilali & Khan translation in Sura: Hud / Ayah:40 where it is translated into *then*) the translators are more committed to the word ***when***.

﴿ يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَذَرُوا مَا بَقِيَ مِنَ الرِّبَا إِن كُنْتُمْ مُؤْمِنِينَ \* فَإِن لَّمْ تَفْعَلُوا فَأْذَنُوا بِحَرْبٍ مِنَ اللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ وَإِن تُبُنُّوا فَلَئِمَّ رُؤُوسُ أَمْوَالِكُمْ لَا تَظْلِمُونَ وَلَا تُظْلَمُونَ ﴾

(Al-Baqara): 278

**Pickthall**

"O ye who believe! Observe your duty to Allah, and give up what remaineth (due to you) from usury, ***if*** ye are (in truth) believers."

**Al-Hilali & Khan**

"O you who believe! Be afraid of Allah and give up what remains (due to you) from Riba (usury) (from now onward), ***if*** you are (really) believers."

**Shakir**

"O you who believe! Be careful of [your duty to] Allah and relinquish what remains [due] from usury, ***if*** you are believers."

We notice that the three texts translate In (إِن) into (if).

"إن تقرضوا الله قرضا حسنا يضاعفه لكم و يغفر لكم و الله شكور حلیم"

(At-Tagabun): 17

**Pickthall**

“***If*** ye lend unto Allah a goodly loan, He will double it for you and will forgive you, for Allah is Responsive, Clement.”

**Al-Hilali & Khan**

“***If*** you lend to Allah a goodly loan (i.e. spend in Allahs Cause) He will double it for you, and will forgive you. And Allah is Most Ready to appreciate and to reward, Most Forbearing,

**Shakir**

“***If*** you set apart for Allah a goodly portion, He will double it for you and forgive you; and Allah is the Multiplier [of rewards], Forbearing,”

We notice that the three texts translate In (إن) into (if).

“إِنْ تُعَذِّبْهُمْ فَإِنَّهُمْ عِبَادُكَ وَإِن تَغْفِرْ لَهُمْ فَإِنَّكَ أَنْتَ الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ”

المائدة (Al-Maeda): 118

**Pickthall**

“***If*** Thou punish them, lo! they are Thy slaves, and ***if*** Thou forgive them (lo! they are Thy slaves). Lo! Thou, only Thou art the Mighty, the Wise.”

**Al-Hilali & Khan**

“***If*** You punish them, they are Your slaves, and ***if*** You forgive them, verily You, only You are the AllMighty, the AllWise.”

**Shakir**

“***If*** You punish them, they are Your servants: ***If*** You forgive them, You are the Exalted, the Wise.”

The three texts translate In (إن) into (if).

"إِنَّكَ إِن تَذَرَهُمْ يُضِلُّوا عِبَادَكَ وَلَا يَلِدُوا إِلَّا فَاجِرًا كَفَّارًا"

نوح (Nuh): 27

**Pickthall**

"***If*** Thou shouldst leave them, they will mislead Thy slaves and will beget none save lewd ingrates."

**Al-Hilali & Khan**

"***If*** You leave them, they will mislead Your slaves, and they will beget none but wicked disbelievers."

**Shakir**

"For surely ***if*** Thou leave them they will lead astray Thy servants, and will not beget any but immoral, ungrateful (children)"

We notice that the three texts translate In (إن) into (if).

"وَيَقُولُونَ مَتَى هَذَا الْوَعْدُ إِن كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ"

الملك (Al-Mulk): 25

**Pickthall**

"And they say: When (will) this promise (be fulfilled), ***if*** ye are truthful?"

**Al-Hilali & Khan**

"They say: "When will this promise (i.e. the Day of Resurrection) come to pass? ***If*** you are telling the truth."

**Shakir**

"And they say: When shall this threat be (executed) ***if*** you are truthful?"

We notice that the three texts translate In (إن) into (if).

Sura	Ayah	Pickthall	Al-Hilali & Khan	Shakir
Al-Baqara	278	If	If	if
At-Tagabun	17	If	If	if
Al-Maeda	118	If	If	if
Nuh	27	If	If	If
Al-Mulk	25	If	If	If

**Table 2: Translation of In (إِنْ) into English**

The translators are all committed to translating In (إِنْ) into if in all the verses above.

In English, ‘*when*’ can also be used as conditional just like *if*, but there is a difference in meaning between them. ‘*When*’ is used for things that are sure to happen while ‘*if*’ is used for things that will possibly happen (Murphy, 2004, p. 50).

## 9. Discussion

Reflecting on the analysis of the selected translated verses from the Holy Qur'an, we can see that there is a regular pattern in the translations of the conditional Arabic words "إِذَا" (Itha) and "إِنْ" (In). This study reveals the following noteworthy findings.

Translators typically render "إِذَا" (Itha) as the English word "when". This word choice emphasizes the idea that "إِذَا" is usually used to indicate a certain future event.

On the other hand, translators consistently use the English word “if” for the translation of the Arabic word "إِنْ" (In). This word choice indicates that "إِنْ" is used to convey an ambiguous or hypothetical circumstance. It stresses the notion that the events portrayed



in the verses are determined by a particular set of conditions, so it requires the reader to contemplate outcomes based on certain conditions being met.

It is obvious that the meanings intended by the translations of "إِذَا" and "إِنْ" in the selected passages from the Holy Qur'an are remarkably similar. The translators' use of "when" for "إِذَا" and "if" for "إِنْ" successfully captures the hypothetical and conditional character of these terms in the context of the Qur'an. These English conditionals were consistently used by the translators in accordance with the Arabic original meanings. This consistency in translation is essential for preserving the specific nuances and implications of the original text.

Our research sheds light on the precision with which the Holy Qur'an employs these conditionals. It's not merely about conveying information but also about evoking specific emotions and thoughts in the reader. "إِذَا" assures, while "إِنْ" prompts reflection.

## **10. Conclusion**

The purpose of this research was to clarify the subtle differences between the Arabic conditionals "إِنْ" (In) and "إِذَا" (Itha) as they are found in the Holy Qur'an and the subsequent English translations.

The analysis of a selected number of translated verses shows the meticulous precision with which these conditionals are used in the text.

Our findings reveal that "إِذَا" consistently translates to "when", emphasizing the certainty of future vents. In contrast, "إِنْ" is consistently rendered as "if", indicating a sense of conditionality and ambiguity.

It is evident that the fidelity of translation is of utmost importance, as even subtle variations can lead to different interpretations and perceptions of meaning.

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