

Paying Off Debt or Forgiving Debt? Semantic and Intertextual Analysis on Lord's Prayer in Smith-Van Dyck Arabic Bible Translation

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Abstract

The Smith and Van Dyck Arabic Bible Translation, which first appeared in 1865, is the most widely used translation in the Christian Arab community. The expressions that appear in the translation have some quite striking differences with other Arabic translations of the Bible. This research will focus on one of the messages in Lord's Prayer, specifically Matthew 6:12 about prayer for forgiveness and forgiveness to others which has different diction from the Jesuit Arabic Bible of 1881. This study will use a post-colonialism perspective in Bible studies through semantic and intertextual analysis. This research concluded two main things. First, the quality of the SVD Bible translation from English to Arabic, as seen in Matthew 6:12 has a low level of accuracy and legibility. This can be seen from the choice of words "نغفر" as well as the use of verbs in the future form for source language texts that use the past tense. Second, the results of the SVD Bible translation also provide an overview of Western Christian

ideology, which is quite dominant. The representation of this is the choice of the word "sin" rather than "debt", because debt is not a problem in a capitalist lifestyle. In fact, this mindset normalizes the existence of debt to meet the needs of human life. This shows that the translation movement carried out in the 19th century AD became one of the media for spreading the ideas of capitalism and colonialism to various colonial areas.

Keywords: *Arabic Bible Translation, Lord's Prayer, Post-Colonialism, Smith-Van Dyck*

Abstrak

Terjemahan Alkitab Bahasa Arab Smith dan Van Dyck yang pertama kali terbit pada tahun 1865 merupakan terjemahan yang paling banyak digunakan dalam masyarakat Arab Kristen. Ungkapan-ungkapan yang muncul dalam terjemahan tersebut memiliki beberapa perbedaan yang cukup mencolok dengan terjemahan Alkitab Bahasa Arab lainnya. Penelitian ini akan difokuskan pada salah satu ayat dalam Doa Bapa Kami, khususnya Matius 6:12 tentang doa memohon pengampunan dan pengampunan kepada sesama yang memiliki diksi berbeda dengan Alkitab Bahasa Arab Jesuit tahun 1881. Penelitian ini akan menggunakan perspektif pasca-kolonialisme dalam studi Biblikal melalui analisis semantik dan intertekstual. Penelitian ini menyimpulkan dua hal utama. Pertama, kualitas terjemahan Alkitab SVD dari Bahasa Inggris ke Bahasa Arab, seperti yang terlihat pada Matius 6:12 memiliki tingkat akurasi dan keterbacaan yang rendah. Hal ini terlihat dari pemilihan kata "تغفر" serta penggunaan kata kerja bentuk masa depan untuk teks bahasa sumber yang menggunakan bentuk lampau. Kedua, hasil terjemahan Alkitab SVD ini juga memberikan gambaran ideologi Kristen Barat yang cukup dominan. Representasi dari hal tersebut adalah pemilihan kata "dosa" daripada "utang", karena utang bukanlah masalah dalam gaya hidup kapitalis. Bahkan, pola pikir ini menormalisasi keberadaan utang untuk memenuhi kebutuhan hidup manusia. Hal ini menunjukkan bahwa gerakan penerjemahan yang dilakukan pada abad ke-19 M menjadi salah satu media penyebaran paham kapitalisme dan kolonialisme ke berbagai wilayah jajahan.

Kata Kunci: *Terjemahan Alkitab Berbahasa Arab, Doa Bapa Kami, Post-Kolonialisme, Smith-Van Dyck*

Introduction

The Lord's Prayer is one of the most important prayers in the history of Christianity.¹ This prayer is known as the ideal patron prayer because it was the crystallization of the overall teachings of the Bible and was taught by Jesus himself.² It was also considered to be the prayer with the most perfect structure³ and the greatest⁴ because it contained messages of the church's spirituality, theology, and ecclesiology.⁵ Consequently, it was positively called a "pearl of great value".⁶ In the Calvinist tradition, it became the central pillar of every activity and the starting point for teaching the church's fundamental doctrines.⁷ As John Calvin and Martin Luther believed, Christians should listen to sermons, read the Bible, sing hymns, and also pray in their language.⁸ In addition, it was the most commented-

¹Roy Hammerling, *The Lord's Prayer in The Early Church: The Pearl of Great Price*, (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), <https://doi.org/10.1057/9780230113084>.

²C. Clifton Black, *The Lord's Prayer, Interpretation Resources for the Use of Scripture in the Church*, (Kentucky: Westminster John Knox Press, 2018).

³John Calvin, *Of Prayer — A Perpetual Exercise of Faith . The Daily Benefits Derived from It*, E-Book Edi, (Michigan: Christian Classics Ethereal Library, 1845).

⁴John Dominic Crossan, *The Greatest Prayer*, (New York: HarperCollins Publishers Ltd, 2010). Nicu Dumitrașcu, "The Lord's Prayer in Eastern Spirituality," *Wiley Periodicals and Dialog* 52, no. 4 (2013): 349–56, <https://doi.org/10.1111/dial.12071>.

⁵Freddy Gunawan, "Interpretasi Doa Bapa Kami Cyprian: Relasi Eklesiologi Yang Sakramentalis," *Jurnal Amanat Agung* 11 (2015): 380–97.

⁶Roy Hammerling, *The Lord's Prayer in The Early Church: The Pearl of Great Price...*,

⁷David J Bosch, *The Lord ' s Prayer: Paradigm for a Christian Lifestyle*, (Bellville: The Christian Medical Fellowship, 2011). Yudha Thianto, "Doa Bapa Kami Dalam Dua Terjemahan Bahasa Melayu Pada Awal Abad Ke-Tujuh Belas," *Veritas: Jurnal Teologi Dan Pelayanan* 12, no. 2 (2011): 279–300, <https://doi.org/10.36421/veritas.v12i2.245>.

⁸Yudha Thianto, "Doa Bapa Kami Dalam Dua Terjemahan Bahasa Melayu Pada Awal Abad Ke-Tujuh Belas" ...,

on Bible text in the Christian literature history.⁹ Therefore, to portray the theological development of Arab Christian society, the author chose this prayer as a reflection of the translation of the Bible into Arabic.

The Lord's Prayer as written in the Gospel of Matthew 6: 10-13, was also found in many Arabic-language media, including one of the official websites of the Coptic denomination in Egypt¹⁰, on the Jesusfilm.org video in Arabic (modern standard Arabic),¹¹ as well as videos on the YouTube channel.¹² All three medias refer to the Van Dyck 1865 version of the translation. The translation of Matthew 6:12 is as follows:

١٢) واغفر لنا ذنوبنا كما نغفر نحن أيضا للمذنبين إلينا

As a comparison, the translation of *al-Kitab al-Muqaddas al-Tib'ah al-Yasu'iyah* in 1881 is written as follows:

١٢) واعفنا مما علينا، فقد أعفينا نحن أيضا من لنا عليه

It shows how the translation produced in the Van Dyck version in 1865 has a different sentence structure from other translations. In the context of Bible translation, the AVD version uses a formal equivalence approach or focuses on word-by-word translation into Arabic. Meanwhile, the JAB version uses a functional equivalence approach that is adjusted to Arabic language rules.¹³ In addition to choosing equivalent vocabulary, the use of verbs in the translation of Matthew 6: 12 also shows the need for structural

⁹G. W. H. Lampe, "Our Father' in the Fathers," in *Christian Spirituality: Essays in Honour of Gordon Rupp*, ed. P Brooks, (London: SCM Press, 1975), 11–31.

¹⁰st-takla, "Ṣalāt Abānā Alladzā fī al-Samawāt," st-takla.org, n.d.

¹¹Jesus Film Project, "The Lord's Prayer," Jesus Film Project, accessed September 17, 2022, <https://www.jesusfilm.org/watch/jesus.html/the-lord-prayer/arabic-modern-standard.html>.

¹²St Luke's Kentish Town, "The Lord's Prayer | Arabic," YouTube, 2017, <https://youtu.be/ATASRRWIqsU>.

¹³Christopher Luthy, *Sejarah Penyalinan Kitab Suci Perjanjian Baru*, (Yogyakarta: PBMR ANDI, 2021).

adjustment as mentioned by Nida and Taber, especially in word structure, which in this context is the verb structure in Arabic.¹⁴

One of the differences that is visible is in verse 12. The Van Dyck translation (Smith-Van Dyck/SVD) uses future verb' in the expression of verse 12, namely "كما نغفر نحن أيضا" 'like we will forgive too'. Meanwhile, the translation in the Jesuit Arabic Bible/JAB uses the past verb, namely "فقد أعفينا نحن" 'as we have forgiven'. The difference in choosing the words possibly gives implications in understanding the concepts of apology and forgiveness. Asking for God's forgiveness is made after forgiving, while in Smith-Van Dyck Bible, it is a requirement for giving forgiveness to others. Abu Hilal al-'Askary provided a striking difference between the two terms. According to him, "غفر" demands the elimination of punishment for sins and the awarding of rewards to the perpetrators. Therefore, he specialized in the use of the word in vertical relations, especially in the relationship between God and His servant or master and servant.

He placed this term as one of the attributes possessed by God. While "عفا" shows the elimination and forgiveness of mistakes and does not require the provision of rewards. Therefore, this word can be used in horizontal relations between humans. Both of these words have a synonymous relationship when the subject is God. When God forgives in the context of "عفا", then at the same time God also performs forgiveness in the context of "غفر".¹⁵ Regarding word choice, research conducted by Yahya, et al in the perspective of Nida and Taber's semantic adjustments, found that it was clear that the semantic adjustment and grammatical adjustment

¹⁴Eugene A Nida and Charles R Taber, *The Theory and Practice of Translation*, (Leiden: BRILL, 1982).

¹⁵Abu Hilal Al'Askary, *al-Furūq al-Lughawiyah*, ed. Muhammad Ibrahim Salim Commentary, (Cairo: Dār al-Ilm wa al-Tsaqāfah, 1997).

in the translation did not run on the grammatical structure of the Arabic language. The translation into Arabic also did not comply with the original source of the text, but it was accentuated by the interpretation of 'debts' into 'sins'.¹⁶ Based on that finding, this research tries to highlight the impact of the word choice and its mean in post-colonial perspective.

In addition, the Smith-Van Dyck, published in 1865, was where the mission of the European church reached a golden point. Translation was not just a transfer of knowledge and religious teachings but also a tool for colonisation and the spread of ideology in colonial countries.¹⁷ It reflected that the widespread ideology in the Middle East did not often show affinity with Semitic culture but had a Western church style, so it was known that the gospel was preached in "Western clothes".¹⁸ Similarly, Mitri Raheb, a priest from Palestine, said that the cultural context was closely related to the mindset of the people in that area, including understanding the Bible.¹⁹ Therefore, this research also used a post-colonial approach in addition to analysing translation quality. According to Sugirtharajah, the post-colonial approach to Bible studies aimed to construct a reading of the Bible according to the perspective of the culture of its adherents,²⁰ especially for Arab

¹⁶Yuangga K. Yahya, Zamzam Afandi, and Ibnu Burdah, "Semantic Adjustment in Matthew 6:12 in the Smith-Van Dyck Arabic Bible," *HTS Teologiese Studies / Theological Studies* 79, no. 2 (2023): 1–7, <https://doi.org/10.4102/hts.v79i2.8693>.

¹⁷Klaus Zimmermann, "Translation For Colonization And Christianization: The Practice Of Bilingual Edition Of Bernardino De Sahagún," *Missionary Linguistics* V (2014): 85–111.

¹⁸Anne Ruck, *Sejarah Gereja Asia*, (Jakarta: BPK Gunung Mulia, 2011).

¹⁹Mitri Raheb, "Land, People, and Empire: The Bible Through Palestinian Christian Eyes," in *A New Critical Approach to the History of Palestine; Palestine History and Heritage Project 1*, ed. Ingrid Hjelm et al., (Oxon: Routledge, 2019), 317–25.

²⁰Fernando F Segovia and R. S. Sugirtharajah, *A Postcolonial Commentary on the New Testament Writings*, ed. Fernando F Segovia and

Christian communities that have ideological and cultural affinities with the context of the Bible. The author expected this approach to help break away from cultural hegemony in church doctrine and cultural bias in understanding the Bible.²¹

Post-Colonial Reading on Matthew 6:12

As mentioned above, these two Arabic Bibles have different expressions in the choice of words and sentence structure in the translation of Matthew 6: 12 which is the fifth petition in the structure of the Lord's Prayer.²² In this section, the author will compare the semantic and structural adjustments between the two translations according to the original language into the target language. In the SVD, the word "forgive" is translated as "اغفر" and "نغفر", while in the JAB, the word is translated as "اعف" and "أعفينا". In the al-Mawrid dictionary, Ba'albaki wrote that "forgive" has an equivalent word in Arabic with the words "عفا" and "غفر".²³ As for lexically, Ibn Mandzur said that "غفر" means "covering sins and mistakes that have been made". For the word "عفا" he gives the meaning of "erasing sins and mistakes and freeing them". However, the interesting thing is that Ibn Mandzur

R. S. Sugirtharajah, *The Bible and Postcolonialism Series*, (London: T&T Clark, 2009), <https://doi.org/10.2307/26423708>.

²¹Edward W Said, *Orientalism*, (New York: Vintage Books, 1978). Mitri Raheb, *Faith in The Face of Empire; The Bible Through Palestinian Eyes*, (New York: Orbis Books, 2014). E. Randolph Richards and Brandon J O'Brien, *Misreading Scripture with Western Eyes: Removing Cultural Blinders to Better Understand the Bible*, (Illinois: InterVarsity Press, 2012).

²²Thomas Watson, *The Lord 's Prayer*, (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 1960). C. Clifton Black, *The Lord's Prayer...*,

²³Munir Baalbaki and Ramzi Munir Baalbaki, *al-Mawrid al-Ḥadīts*, (Beirut: Dār al-'Ilm li al-malayin, 2008).

also wrote the meaning of the word with “برأه” which means “freeing them”.²⁴

Louis Ma'luf Al-Yasu'i, from the Jesuit school, in his dictionary *al-Munjid* gave his opinion on the two words. He wrote that in some contexts, the two have a synonymous relationship. However, there are some contexts that differentiate between the two.

Al-Yasu'i gave the meaning of “عفا” as “erasing sins and leaving punishment for them”. In another form “أعفى” also has the meaning of “leaving and freeing them”.²⁵ Regarding the word “غفر”, al-Yasu'i gave the meaning of “covering (sins) and forgiving them”.²⁶ The results of this translation show the translation ideology resulting from the selection of the translation method and technique.²⁷

During the heyday of the church's mission in the nineteenth century AD, the movement for translating the Bible into various languages was massive. In the first half of that century, the Bible had been translated into 106 different languages and dialects. This movement was intended to introduce and teach the word of God to all people worldwide.²⁸ In the translation process, translators often have difficulty translating God's holy word into various local languages. Few believed that the local and regional languages could

²⁴Muhammad ibn Mukarram Ibn Mandzur, *Lisān al-'Arab*, (Cairo: Dār al-Ma'ārif, n.d.).

²⁵Louis Ma'luf Al-Yasū'I, *al-Munjid fi al-Lughah wa al-Adab wa al-'Ulūm*, (Beirut: al-Mathba'ah al-Kātsūlīkiyyah, 2015).

²⁶Louis Ma'luf Al-Yasū'I, *al-Munjid fi al-Lughah wa al-Adab wa al-'Ulūm...*,

²⁷Jeremy Munday, “Translation and Ideology: A Textual Approach,” *Translator* 13, no. 2 (2007): 195–217, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13556509.2007.10799238>.

²⁸R. S. Sugirtharajah, *The Bible and the Third World: Precolonial, Colonial and Postcolonial Encounters*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), <https://doi.org/10.2307/3268076>.

not accurately convey God's messages in the holy book. The "accuracy" means the suitability of the translation and its interpretation following the criteria and rules compiled by the Western academic paradigm.²⁹ However, these translators often failed to find the right verbal counterparts in the local language, thus showing that the local language vocabulary was inadequate for expressing Christian messages.³⁰

Sugirtharajah provided several signs of Western Christian hermeneutical construction in the translation of the Bible. One of the signs was using holy books to spread European thought and behaviour. In this context, the behaviour and mindset used in understanding Christianity were not the local people's because they are considered barbaric and backward. Consequently, Western missionaries brought Western ways considered "more Christian" and "more civilised". Moreover, local culture should be reborn, baptized, and rechristened to receive God's word.³¹ This also removed the historical closeness between the local culture of the Middle East and the culture where Jesus was sent, as detected by Mitri Raheb, a Christian priest from Palestine.³² He noticed that in the hermeneutical realm of Bible interpretation, narratives originating from the Palestinian people were considered foreign in their own homes. In understanding the Bible, it is necessary to understand the interconnections and interrelationships between the Biblical triangle, the country or place (land), and society (people). Country and society in the context of the Bible are essential parts that are separated, so he called them the fifth and sixth gospels.³³

This then leads to a mistake in understanding the Bible. Western theologians who translate the Bible into Arabic were close to biases about the relationship between Jewish culture and Arab

²⁹Sugirtharajah R. S. Sugirtharajah, *The Bible and the Third World: Precolonial, Colonial and Postcolonial Encounters...*,

³⁰*Ibid.*

³¹*Ibid.*

³²Mitri Raheb, "Land, People, and Empire: The Bible Through Palestinian Christian Eyes" ...,

³³*Ibid.*

culture when viewing God's messages.³⁴ The biases and veils of Western culture were inseparable from the fact that their culture and history gave rise to a mindset that taught their reading of the Bible and understanding it in a way that was different from the cultural and historical context of the Bible itself.³⁵ One of the constructions was the growing stereotype that Eastern people are synonymous with irrational, weak, and feminine things, so they need explanations from rational, strong, and masculine Western groups. The assumption was that everything from the Eastern world needs corrective studies from the West,³⁶ including understanding of the Scriptures and the Word of God.

Therefore, a post-colonial reading is needed to open the veils of culture and colonialism in understanding the Bible. Post-colonial reading in this research used a cultural approach in the Middle East, both Jewish and Arab, to understand the context of the verse. The post-colonial perspective dealt with removing the mask and showing various forms of control from the ruler (imperial) in its interpretation. Another important thing was to recover the self-focus and representation of rulers by rearranging cultural history and experience. In this context, the Hebrew Bible and the life tradition of Jesus need to be revived to present a comprehensive and cultural understanding.³⁷

The Gospel of Matthew is centric and not written by Westerners. However, it photographed and recorded various interactions between the ruling (Roman) and the local (Jewish)

³⁴Mitri Raheb, *Faith in The Face of Empire; The Bible Through Palestinian Eyes...*,

³⁵Richards and O'Brien, *Misreading Scripture with Western Eyes: Removing Cultural Blinders to Better Understand the Bible...*,

³⁶Edward Said, *Orientalism...*,

³⁷Segovia and Sugirtharajah, *A Postcolonial Commentary on the New Testament Writings...*,

culture.³⁸ In that period, people lived in harsh socio-economic conditions where a large gap was created between the elite and the lower classes regarding economy, power, and social status. This gap began with the absence of a middle-class society. The elite lived by utilising the results of taxes and rents, while the lower classes lived below the poverty line. Only 4-8% of the population could meet their daily primary needs (clothing, food, and shelter). Another 20% are in a situation of permanent economic crisis, and another 30-40% lived below the poverty line for some time. The population's hardships at this time revolved around food production, distribution, consumption, and the imposition of high taxes and rents.³⁹ This made debt an easy way out for most people at that time to survive every day.⁴⁰

In ancient Jewish and Israelite traditions, the principle of debt was that the borrower expects the debtor to repay. This was similar to the Greco-Roman tradition. However, the law in the Jewish tradition did not focus on the debtor but on his protection. From a historical standpoint, Jews were encouraged to quickly help their brothers and sisters who were in trouble, including economic difficulties. This was inspired by their story of being refugees and enslaved people in Egypt, as mentioned in Deuteronomy 24:17 and Leviticus 19:34. Another thing is the rule in the Sabbath Year that every seven years, all debts are written off, freeing the poor from debts endless (Deuteronomy 15:1-18, Exodus 21:2-16, 23:10-11, Leviticus 25:2-7).⁴¹

In the teachings of the Torah, they called for lending money and food to people in need so they can escape poverty and lead to a more stable economy. In addition, Jewish tradition also prohibited

³⁸*Ibid.*

³⁹*Ibid.*

⁴⁰C. Clifton Black, *The Lord's Prayer...*,

⁴¹*Ibid.*

interest and usury from these loans. The loan was not considered a business transaction but a benevolent act, as mentioned in Psalm 37:21. In the first centuries AD, debt was a severe problem for many Jewish communities. In this context, the request for debt forgiveness and the willingness to write off debts is a very evocative metaphor because debt relief is one of the East Mediterranean ruler's prerogatives to ensure their colonies' welfare and sovereignty.⁴²

Forgiveness and forgiveness of debts, as mentioned in the verse, seemed easy for small things. However, granting forgiveness becomes a great thing related to great mistakes and debts. Debts could not be forgiven, even if the debtor had forgotten them. In the debt was too large, it was not easy for the debtor to forget and ignore it. In the most profound expression, the forgiveness of debts is an attempt to free debtors and wrongdoers from the consequences of their punishment, no matter how much they deserve to suffer.⁴³ Both of these words (أَعْفَ and غَفَرَ) come from the same word in Aramaic, namely *khoba*. When it translated into Greek, it becomes a problem due to limited vocabulary, but there were no errors in translation. The Calvinist group, for example, preferred the word "debt" rather than "sin". The Episcopal church groups preferred the word "sin" because they were the majority of landlords.⁴⁴ However, in Arab Christian communities, who lived as a minority and were also limited, the word "debt" was closer to their context. During the period of Islamic expansion in the Middle East, Arab Christian communities living in Syam felt that they had to pay high and

⁴²*Ibid.*

⁴³*Ibid.*

⁴⁴Kenneth E Bailey, *Jesus Through Middle Eastern Eyes: Cultural Studies In The Gospels*, (Illinois: InterVarsity Press, 2008).

burdensome taxes to maintain their status as *ahl al-dzimmah* in the ruling government.⁴⁵

This translation also shows the ideology of European missionaries who come from countries that are economically prosperous, politically free, and live in social peace. That ideology was then disseminated to their colonial countries in the East, which in fact were under persecution and economic difficulties.⁴⁶ In addition, when it comes to wealth, money, and prosperity, the Western mindset has a different view than non-Western traditions. Westerners think that wealth comes from unlimited sources. They also believe that anyone can become rich if they try hard enough. This also makes them have a special understanding of 2 Thessalonians 3:10, namely "If someone cannot eat, it is because he is not working". Poverty and economic difficulties are absolutely the fault of the people themselves.⁴⁷

Therefore, debt relief is not a solution to increase economic stability, as happened in the Jewish tradition, but rather a legitimacy for their laziness, which leads to economic difficulties. In addition, Western capitalist ideology also has a positive view of debt. According to them, one of the derivations of a capitalist economy is that humans always live in debt (being in debt).⁴⁸ Western capitalism

⁴⁵George Rahmah and Suhayl Qasa, *al-Suryan A'midat al-Ḥaḍārah al-Islāmiyah*, (Jdeideh: Dār Sayr al-Masyrīq, 2018). Albert Habib Hourani, *Minorities In The Arab World*, (London: Oxford University Press, 1947).

⁴⁶R. S. Sugirtharajah, *The Bible and Empire: Postcolonial Explorations*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005). M Kharis Majid and Salamah Noorhidayati, "Kolonialisme Vis a Vis Nasionalisme Perspektif Hadis," *Kalimah: Jurnal Studi Agama-Agama Dan Pemikiran Islam* 21, no. 2 (2023): 185–98.

⁴⁷Richards and O'Brien, *Misreading Scripture with Western Eyes: Removing Cultural Blinders to Better Understand the Bible...*,

⁴⁸Eletra Stimilli, Roberto Esposito, and Arianna Bove, *The Debt of the Living: Asceticism and Capitalism*, (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2016).

spread along with the spread of debt and credit activities⁴⁹ and at a later date, normalize debt.⁵⁰ The influence of capitalism has spread widely in the Arab world since the nineteenth century AD and has influenced the political, economic, and religious aspects of the modern Arab world.⁵¹

Western Christian ideology can also be seen in the translation "كما نغفر نحن أيضا للمذنبين إلينا". As mentioned above, this clause is a condition for obtaining God's forgiveness. However, the use of *fi'il muḍā'iri'* (future tense) in the translation "as we also have forgiven" gives a different impression. From the translation of the SVD Bible, it can be understood that divine forgiveness is a condition for forgiving fellow human beings, so that divine forgiveness is number two. This can be understood from the use of the verb to denote work that is due in the future, after the first work is done (God's pardon).

Tefllah (eighteen prayers) in the Jewish tradition also contains a request for forgiveness to God. However, this forgiveness does not correlate with the forgiveness that humans give to each other. So, Jesus gave the relationship between the two in the Lord's Prayer.⁵² Another interesting thing is that, in general, the party asked to

⁴⁹Julien-Francois Gerber, "Debt, Law and Discipline: How the Capitalist Cocktail Is Becoming Molotovian," *The ISRF Bulletin*, 2018.

⁵⁰Lisa Peñaloza and Michelle Barnhart, "Living U.S. Capitalism: The Normalization of Credit/Debt," *Journal of Consumer Research* 38, no. 4 (2011): 743–62, <https://doi.org/10.1086/660116>.

⁵¹Loredana Cornelia Bosca, "Traditionalism and Modernism in Modern Arab Thought," *Multidisciplinary Research Journal* VI, no. 4 (2014): 57–63.

⁵²Kenneth E Bailey, *Jesus Through Middle Eastern Eyes: Cultural Studies In The Gospels...*,

apologize is the guilty party.⁵³ However, in this prayer, Jesus taught the believers to forgive even though there was no confession or plea from the guilty party. In addition, the placement of this prayer right after asking for sufficient bread shows that apologizing and forgiving others is not an occasional job but a daily necessity for Christians.⁵⁴ The analogy of human forgiveness as a condition for God's forgiveness can also be found in the Book of Sirach 28:2-4 where God commands man to forgive the mistakes of his neighbors before he asks God for forgiveness.⁵⁵

In order to understand the prayer in Matthew 6:12, it is necessary to look into some Jewish traditions. The Didache community stated that the verse contains a form of confession of sin and humility in asking God for forgiveness of various sins. In fact, confession is a condition for participating in communal prayer and the Eucharist. Confession of sins and forgiveness have a central role in social life. Therefore, in communal prayer, whether in public, in small groups, or alone, this part requires sufficient time to confess sins, ask for forgiveness, and declare forgiveness to fellow human beings. This is in order to present a "pure sacrifice" to God.⁵⁶ This concept is also found in Tertullian teaching.⁵⁷

Therefore, the use of *fi'l mudlari'* in translation is unacceptable in the context of the prayer. Moreover, in the SVD Bible translation, there is a first-person plural pronoun "نغفر" which gives the meaning of emphasis to the subject. This gives an

⁵³M Kharis Majid, Siti Maulida, and Nur Azizah, "Penebusan Dosa Dalam Kekristenan : Analisis Teks Suci," *JCSR: Journal of Comparative Study of Religions* 4, no. 1 (2023): 1–26.

⁵⁴Kenneth E Bailey, *Jesus Through Middle Eastern Eyes: Cultural Studies In The Gospels...*

⁵⁵C. Clifton Black, *The Lord's Prayer...*

⁵⁶David Clark, *The Lord's Prayer: Origins and Early Interpretations*, (Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols Publishers, 2016).

⁵⁷*Ibid.*

understanding that our subject is emphasized more than the subject of God, as the party that gives forgiveness. This is one of the Western ideologies that is reflected in the SVD translation of the Bible. One characteristic of Western society is self-centered thinking, or in this case, human thinking.⁵⁸ This view later gave birth to an anthropocentric perspective.⁵⁹ This perspective does not create a society that is ready and obedient to do God's will;⁶⁰ instead, it considers God to exist to meet human needs. In other languages, this perspective is based on "anthropocentric stewardship",⁶¹ not "theocentric servanthood".⁶²

Even further, everything in this world exists and was created to serve humans and meet their needs. According to this perspective, religion is a means to achieve subjective well-being and is centered on feelings of happiness, security, peace, and comfort. This is known as moralistic therapeutic deism.⁶³ Therefore, according to Lynn White Jr., it is no exaggeration to say that Christianity is the most anthropocentric religion in the world.⁶⁴ This is based on the wrong

⁵⁸Richards and O'Brien, *Misreading Scripture with Western Eyes: Removing Cultural Blinders to Better Understand the Bible...*,

⁵⁹Dennis Hiebert, "Climate Change and Christian Anthropocentrism," *Journal of Sociology and Christianity* 7, no. 2 (2017): 57–63.

⁶⁰Yuangga Kurnia Yahya and Mohammad Rafdi Ilahi, "The Doctrine of Predestination According To The Old Testament," *JCSR: Journal of Comparative Study of Religions* 1, no. 2 (2021): 143–58, <https://doi.org/10.21111/jcsr.v1i2.6381>.

⁶¹Kurniawan Dwi Saputra and Septiana Dwiputri Maharani, "Makna Peran Manusia Sebagai Khalifah Dan Paradigma Teosentrisme Dalam Etika Lingkungan Islam," *Kalimah: Jurnal Studi Agama-Agama Dan Pemikiran Islam* 21, no. 1 (2023): 1–23.

⁶²Dennis Hiebert, "Climate Change and Christian Anthropocentrism," ...,

⁶³Smith and Denton, *Soul Searching...*, 163–164

⁶⁴Lynn White Jr, "The Historical Roots of Our Ecologic Crisis," in *This Sacred Earth*, (London: Routledge, 2003), 192–201.

reading pattern and is influenced by the Western capitalistic mindset when reading the Bible. For example, in Genesis 1:26 and 28, Western Christian communities read it as "so that they may rule" and "reign", so that it becomes legitimacy for the exploitation of nature.⁶⁵ Exploitation of everything and subduing everything under human feet is a legacy of the Western capitalist mindset, which is consumptive and exploitative.⁶⁶

This is contrary to the nature of Middle Eastern society. They are accustomed to living and worshipping various powers above human strength, be they the sun, moon, stars, certain animals, or idols. Worship of these various sacred entities is ingrained in their cultures, both the Bedouin culture and the culture of the farmers.⁶⁷ Because of this, the SVD translation created a perspective that was totally different from the habits of Middle Eastern people in glorifying and exalting God and their gods. From these words, the ideology of translators originating from Western Christianity is drawn and transformed into the ideology of Arab Christian communities, as stated by Robert D. Lee, who stated that religion is a variable that is easily influenced by politics and ideology.⁶⁸ In other hand, language has the power to shape power, identity, and history.⁶⁹ Although only a few words, the biblical text has a significant impact on the souls of its readers compared to secular

⁶⁵Lynn White Jr, "The Historical Roots of Our Ecologic Crisis...",

⁶⁶Dipesh Chakrabarty, "The Human Sciences and Climate Change: A Crisis of Anthropocentrism," *Science and Culture* 86 (2020): 46–48,

https://doi.org/10.36094/sc.v86.2020.climate_change.chakrabarty.46.

⁶⁷Jawwad Ali, *al-Mufaṣṣal fī Tārīkh al-'Arab Qabl al-Islām*, Vol. VI, (Baghdad: Baghdad University Press, 1993).

⁶⁸Robert D. Lee, *Religion and Politics in The Middle East: Identity, Ideology, Institutions, and Attitudes*, Second, (Colorado: Westview Press, 2014).

⁶⁹Fred Halliday, *The Middle East in International Relations: Power, Politics, and Ideology*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005).

literature. The same applies to religious texts that are used as part of the worship of other believers, such as the Koran. This is because these holy texts have a high authority value, and their followers believe them to be the word of God.⁷⁰ Whereas in order to present a thorough understanding, both in the original language and the target language, translators need to look at the proximity of Semitic languages and culture to other languages, including Arabic, in order to present an understanding and interpretation that is more accurate, acceptable, legible, comprehensive, and free from cultural and ideological bias. This is inseparable from the Western mindset, which considers their interpretation to be a universal narrative and in line with any culture.⁷¹

Conclusion

From the discussion above, two things can be concluded. *First*, the quality of the SVD Bible translation from English to Arabic, as seen in Matthew 6:12 has a low level of accuracy and legibility. This is because the semantic and grammatical adjustments in the translation do not comply the rules and grammatical structure of the Arabic language. The translation into Arabic also does not comply the text from the original source but is followed by the interpretation of "debts" to become "sins". In addition, this can be seen from the choice of words "نغفر" as well as the use of verbs in the future form for source language texts that use the past tense. *Second*, the results of the SVD Bible translation also provide an overview of Western Christian ideology, which is quite dominant. The representation of this is the choice of the word "sin" rather than "debt", because debt is not a problem in a capitalist lifestyle. In fact, this mindset normalizes the existence of debt to meet the needs of human life. In addition, the emphasis on human subjects gives the impression of anthropocentric

⁷⁰Michael Prior, *The Bible and Colonialism: A Moral Critique*, (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997).

⁷¹Magi Abdul-Masih, "Orientalism in Christian Theology," in *Christian and The Middle East Conflict*, ed. Paul S Rowe, John H. A. Dyck, and Jens Zimmermann, (Oxon: Routledge, 2014), 44–52.

stewardship in the relationship between humans and God. This shows that the translation movement carried out in the 19th century AD became one of the media for spreading the ideas of capitalism and colonialism to various colonial areas.

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