

**ANALYZING DIFFERENT READINGS OF THE WORD *LĀMASTUM*
AND INVESTIGATING ITS IMPACT ON INTERPRETATIVE PERCEPTIONS
AND ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS**

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DOI 10.32505/at-tibyan.v9i1.8187		
Submitted: 11-03-2024	Revised: 03-06-2024	Accepted: 24-06-2024

Abstract

This article discusses the difference in the reading of the word *Lāmastum* QS. Al-Nisā': verse 43. It has resulted in the formation of two meanings; Shafi'i chose the recitation of *Lamastum* and stated that touching women invalidates ablution, Hanafi accepted the recitation of *Lāmastum* and declared that touching women does not invalidate ablution. Others have opinions for and against these two views. This research, which has been carried out in an analytic-descriptive method, has examined the difference in the readings of the word *Lāmastum* in this verse. The results of this study show that the difference in the reading of *Lāmastum-Lamastum* does not lead to a difference in meaning, but what causes different jurisprudential views of this verse is paying no attention to the ironical meaning and misunderstanding of the interpretation, which ultimately caused some translators suffice for the literal meaning and did not consider the ironic meaning of the word, and therefore, some English translators of the Holy Qur'an are not immune to this mistake.

Keywords: *Lāmastum, Interpretative Perceptions, Translation*

Abstrak

Artikel ini membahas tentang perbedaan pembacaan kata *lāmastum* pada QS. Al-Nisā': ayat 43. Perbedaan tersebut menghasilkan dua makna; Syafi'i memilih bacaan *Lamastum* dan menyatakan bahwa menyentuh perempuan membatalkan wudhu, sedangkan Hanafi menerima bacaan *Lāmastum* dan menyatakan bahwa menyentuh perempuan tidak membatalkan wudhu. Sedangkan ulama lain memiliki pendapat yang mendukung dan menentang kedua pandangan ini. Penelitian yang dilakukan dengan metode analitik-deskriptif ini mengkaji perbedaan pembacaan kata *Lāmastum* dalam ayat tersebut. Hasil dari penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa perbedaan bacaan *Lāmastum*-*Lamastum* tidak menyebabkan perbedaan makna, namun yang menyebabkan perbedaan pandangan mufassir terhadap ayat ini dikarenakan tidak memperhatikan makna ironi dan kesalahpahaman penafsiran yang pada akhirnya menyebabkan sebagian penerjemah mencukupkan diri pada makna harfiahnya saja tanpa mempertimbangkan makna ironi dari kata tersebut. Oleh karena itu, sebagian penerjemah al-Qur'an dalam bahasa Inggris pun tak luput juga dari kesalahan ini.

Kata Kunci: *Lāmastum, Persepsi Interpretatif, Terjemahan*

Introduction

During the Caliphate of Uthman Ibn Affan, in the war between Muslims and Armenians, the difference in recitations in the Muslim camp caused Huzaifah bin Al-Yamān to inform Uthman on his return to Madinah that the different recitations of Basri, Kufi, Hejazi and Shami had caused division among Muslims. "These differences caused Uthman to order a single Mushaf, Tawhid al-Masahif, and then prepare several uniform copies from it and send them to the important centres of the Islamic State. Of course, some differences were found among these versions, which should be completely unified, which later became the cause of some differences in readings."¹ The most significant difference is about the Mushaf of Shām and Iraq with only forty letters (cases) and the least difference is about the Mushaf of Kufa and Basra with only five differences!"²

Some believe that the different readings of the reciters have caused different interpretations of the verses. For example, the author of *Majma' al-Bayan* commentary writes: "In verse 222 of Surah Al-Baqarah, "يَطْهَرْنَ" has two readings with different meanings and jurisprudential verdicts; That is, the duty of women is of two types. "In reciting the word "يَطْهَرْنَ" some people have read it with emphasis (تشديد), and some have read it without it. The meaning is different in two ways. If it is without emphasis (تشديد), it means purity and the end of blood (a woman's menstruation), and

¹ Mohamad Hadi Marifat, *The history of the Quran*, (Tehran: Samt publication, 1382), 141.

² Abdul Hadi Al-Fazli, *Al-qir'at al-Quraniyah*, (Beirut: Dar al-Qalam publication, 1405H), 100.

she can have sexual intercourse, but if it is read with emphasis (تشديد), it means ghusl, it means that after ghusl she can have sexual intercourse." ³

But what is examined in this research is Surah Al-Nisa, verse 43:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا لَا تَقْرُبُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَ أَنْتُمْ سُكَارَىٰ حَتَّىٰ تَعْلَمُوا مَا تَقُولُونَ وَلَا جُنُبًا إِلَّا عَابِرِي سَبِيلٍ حَتَّىٰ تَغْتَسِلُوا وَإِنْ كُنْتُمْ مَّرْضَىٰ أَوْ عَلَىٰ سَفَرٍ أَوْ جَاءَ أَحَدٌ مِنْكُم مِّنَ الْغَائِطِ أَوْ لَامَسْتُمُ النِّسَاءَ فَلَمْ تَجِدُوا مَاءً فَتَيَمَّمُوا صَعِيدًا طَيِّبًا فَامْسَحُوا بِرُءُوسِكُمْ وَأَيْدِيكُمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ عَفُورًا *

Some people read the word لامستم النساء in the verse as لَمَسْتُمُ النساء, and inferred that there is a difference in meaning between the words Lamasa and Lāmasa, and the former means just touching and the latter means sexual intercourse. Muhammad al-Habash writes: "Shafi'i recited لامستم النساء, and stated that merely touching invalidates ablution." ⁴ Allama al-Hilli also writes about Shafi'i's verdict: Shafi'i says: Touching a woman, willingly or unwillingly, anywhere on a man's body and anywhere on a woman's body, except for the hair, requires ablution, and this was said by Ibn Masoud, Ibn Umar, Zuhri, Rabi'ah, Maḥḥool, and al-Awza'i.⁵ Malik also agrees with Shafi'i with the stipulation of lust in the verdict. The late Majlisi narrates from Malik: "Malik expresses lustful touch."⁶

In Jafari jurisprudence, according to a narration from Imam Jafar ibn Mohamad al-Sadiq (a.s.), they believe that God spoke ironically here. The meaning of touch is sexual intercourse, Sheikh Kulayni narrates: Halabi says: I asked Imam Sadiq (a.s) about the verse; *O lamastomu al-Nissaa* "(what is meant by touching women)? He said: "It means sexual intercourse, but since God is very veiled, He did not describe this act as you call it." ⁷

Many books and articles have been written on this topic. For example, Mr. Muhammad Roy Purwanto in an article titled "Different qirāat and its implication in different opinions of Islamic Jurisprudence", says: "According to Zamahsyari, different readings of holy Qur'an carries big implication in different opinion in Islamic jurisprudence. For example, many scholars have different opinions on the problem of breaking abolution. Syafi'i said that touching women caused breaking ablution, and Hanafi and Maliki said that touching women does not cause breaking abolution. The source of the problem is because of different readings in the Qur'an, surah al-Nisa, verse 43; the word Lamastumun nisā. Syafi'i has read that verse by Lamastumun nisā,

³ Fazl ibn Hasan Tabrasi, *Majma al-Bayan fi Tafsir al-Qur'an*, vol: 2 (Tehran: Farahani publication Research: Reza Sotudeh, 1360), 360.

⁴ Mohamad Al-Habash, *Al-qirāat al-Mutawatirah wa Atharaha fi al-rasm al-Qur'ani wal ahkam al-shar'i*, vol: 3 (Damascus: Dar al-fikr, 1419H), 257.

⁵ Hasan ibn Yosuf Hilli, *Tazkirah al-Foghahā*, vol: 1 (Qum: Alolbayt Institute, Al-Hadithah publication, 1414H), 111.

⁶ Mohamad Bagher Majlisi, *Bihar al-Anvar al-Jami'a*, vol: 78 (Beirut: al-Tab wa al-Nashr Institute, 1410H), 36.

⁷ Mohamad Ibn Yaghub Kulayni, *Al-Kafi*, vol: 7 (Tehran: Dar al-Kotob al-Islamiyyah, 1407H), 555.

it means touching women, while Hanafi and Maliki have read that verse by *Lāmastumun nisā*, it means coitus, not touching women." ⁸ Or in another article entitled "Analysis of the effect of the difference in reciting *Aw Lāmastumun nisā* on Qarḏawi jurisprudence discourse", the authors wrote: "With an analytical view, it is shown that the diversity of judgmental perceptions of this verse refers to the difference in the reciting of the verse, and paying attention to the readings has created different interpretations and fatwas." ⁹

Also, in the book *أثر القراءات القرآنية في الصناعة المعجمية تاج العروس نموذجاً* the author mentioned the effect of the difference in the reciting of the word *لمستم* : "Here, the difference in reading has resulted in a moral and jurisprudential difference. The mere touch of men with women requires ablution, according to the reading of *"المستم"* 'I touched', As for reading *"لامستم"* "I touched you," which they refer to as intercourse, it requires ablution."¹⁰

In the examples mentioned above, the researchers did not present a correct understanding of the meaning associated with the word *Lāmastum*, with the reasons that will be shown in this research, the difference in the reading of the word *Lāmastum* does not cause a difference in the meaning, but a mistake in the interpretation causes a difference in the meaning of the word. Therefore, the purpose of this article is to find the answers to the following questions by examining the words *Lamasa* and *Lāmasa* as well as the statements made about the interpretation of the verse; 1- What is the lexical difference between the two words *Lamastum* and *Lāmastum*? 2- To clarify whether the difference in reciting these two words causes a difference in meaning. 3- Has the difference in the reading of the word *Lāmastum* caused a difference in interpretations? And 4- What are the exact and complete English translations of this verse?

Examining the lexical meaning of *Lamasa-Lāmasa*

Ibn Manzoor writes about the meaning of the word *Lamasa-Lāmasa* in *Lisān al-Arab*: Touch: palpation, and it was said: touching with the hand, touching him. Touching: a metaphor for sexual intercourse. He touched her.¹¹ Raghīb al-Isfahānī's viewpoint is: Touch is the sense of the surface of the skin, like contact... and is recited

⁸ Muhammad Roy Purwanto, "Different Qiraat and its implication in different opinions of Islamic Jurisprudence". Jurnal Al-Mawarid, Vol. 8, (Sep 2013) 1. URL, <http://hdl.handle.net/123456789/4295>

⁹ Mohamad Reza Sotudehnia and Fateme Taebi Esfahani, "Analysis of the effect of the difference in reciting «أَوَلَمْ تَسْتُمُّ النِّسَاءَ» on Qarḏawi jurisprudence discourse", Journal of the Holy Quran and Islamic Texts, no. 39 (1398), 39.

¹⁰ Abd al-Razzaq bin Hamouda al-Qadusi, *The impact of Qurānic readings on the lexical industry, Taj al-Aroos, As a model*, Vol. 1(1431H), 177.

¹¹ Muhammad ibn Mukarram ibn Alī ibn Ahmad ibn Manzūr, *Lisan al-Arab*, vol. 6 (Beirut: Dar al-Fikr, 1414 H), 209.

Lāmastum and *Lamas-tumunnisāā*, {Al-Ma'idah:6} taken as touch and having sexual intercourse.¹²

Also, the author of *Kitāb Maqāyīs al-lughā* composed about this word: *La-ma-sa*; The *Lām*, *Mīm*, and *Sīn* are all of the exact origin, indicating the demand for something and touching nature as well. You say: I touched something if you reach for it with your hand. Abu Bakr bin Dura'id said: The origin of touching is with the hand to know how to touch something. Then this increased until every claimer became a toucher... And Allah subhanahu wa ta'āla said: "aw-lamāstumunnisā". Some people said: It means intercourse with it. Some people thought that it was touching and that touching and touching occurred without intercourse.¹³ And the author of *Taj al-Lughā wa Sihah al-Arabiya* writes: Touch: touching with the hand. And *Lamassahu Yalmusuhu wa yalmesuhu*. It also refers to sexual intercourse. And so is *Mulammasah*.¹⁴ Firuzābādī writes about his opinion in *Qamus al-Muhit*: *Lamassahu Yalmusuhu wa yalmesuhu*: he touched it with his hand, and the slave girl: he had intercourse with her.¹⁵ Also Famous lexicographer Zabidi in *Tajal-Arus Min Jawahir al-Qamus* states: "(Touch): *Lamasahu Yalmesuhu Yalmusuhu*, He touched him, from the limit of *Zaraba* and *Nasara*, He touched it with his hand, this is how others restricted it, and Al-Layth interpreted it, saying: Touching with the hand: To ask for something here and there, ... and it was said: *al-Lamsu* and *al-massu* are close, and *Lamasahu* Like *Lamasahu*. As a metaphor: He touched the maiden: He had intercourse with her, like touching her".¹⁶

As it is understood from the lexicographers viewpoints, the word "*Lamasa*" means touching, and that is an allusion to sexual intercourse. The word "*Lāmasa*" has the same meaning as touch, and the only difference between them is that *Lāmasa*, (in *Mufq̃ ālah*) shows the action is reciprocal (mutual). So, the difference in the reciting of two words does not create a difference in their meaning according to Arab linguists, and this difference is caused by another factor that we will discuss later.

Opinions raised in the interpretation of the word *Lāmastum*

In two verses of the Holy Qur'an, the word *Lāmastumunnis* is mentioned. Respectively, first QS. Ma'idah, Verse 6:

¹² Hussein bin Muhammad Raghīb Isfahani, *Al-Mufradat fi Gharib al-Quran*, (Beirut: Dar al-Ma'rifah, 1404H), 585.

¹³ Ahmad ibn Fāris ibn Zakariyyā al-Rāzī, *Mujam Maqāyīs al-Lughā*, vol. 5 (Qum: Tablighat al-Islamiyyah publication, 1404H), 210.

¹⁴ Isma'il ibn Hammad al-Jawhari, *Taj al-Lughā wa Sihah al-Arabiya*, (Beirut: dar al-Ilm, 1399H), 975.

¹⁵ Muḥammad ibn Ya'qūb al-Shīrāzī al-Fīrūzābādī, *Qamus al-Muhit*, (Beirut: al-resalah publication, 1426H), 573.

¹⁶ Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad Murtaḍā al-Zabīdī, *Taj Al-'Arus min Jawahir Al-Qamus*, vol. 8 (Beirut: Dar al-Fikr, 1414H), 464.

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا إِذَا قُمْتُمْ إِلَى الصَّلَاةِ فَاغْسِلُوا وُجُوهَكُمْ وَأَيْدِيَكُمْ إِلَى الْمَرَافِقِ وَامْسَحُوا بِرُءُوسِكُمْ وَأَرْجُلَكُمْ إِلَى الْكَعْبَيْنِ وَإِنْ كُنْتُمْ جُنُبًا فَاطَّهَّرُوا وَإِنْ كُنْتُمْ مَرْضَىٰ أَوْ عَلَىٰ سَفَرٍ أَوْ جَاءَ أَحَدٌ مِنْكُمْ مِنَ الْغَائِطِ أَوْ لَامَسْتُمُ النِّسَاءَ فَلَمْ يَجِدُوا مَاءً فَتَيَمَّمُوا صَعِيدًا طَيِّبًا فَامْسَحُوا بِوُجُوهِكُمْ وَأَيْدِيكُمْ مِنْهُ مَا يُرِيدُ اللَّهُ لِيَجْعَلَ عَلَيْكُمْ مِنْ حَرَجٍ وَلَكِنْ يُرِيدُ لِيُطَهِّرَكُمْ وَلِيُبَيِّنَ نِعْمَتَهُ عَلَيْكُمْ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَشْكُرُونَ*

Second: QS. al-Nisa, Verse 43:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا لَا تَقْرَبُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَأَنْتُمْ سُكَارَىٰ حَتَّىٰ تَعْلَمُوا مَا تَقُولُونَ وَلَا جُنُبًا إِلَّا عَابِرِي سَبِيلٍ حَتَّىٰ تَغْتَسِلُوا وَإِنْ كُنْتُمْ مَرْضَىٰ أَوْ عَلَىٰ سَفَرٍ أَوْ جَاءَ أَحَدٌ مِنْكُمْ مِنَ الْغَائِطِ أَوْ لَامَسْتُمُ النِّسَاءَ فَلَمْ يَجِدُوا مَاءً فَتَيَمَّمُوا صَعِيدًا طَيِّبًا فَامْسَحُوا بِوُجُوهِكُمْ وَأَيْدِيكُمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ عَفُوًّا غَفُورًا*

The jurists of the Five Schools of Islamic Thought have given different opinions about the interpretation of these verses. Some believe that touching women in any way (with lust or without lust) invalidates ablution, on the other hand, some consider mere touching with lust invalidates ablution. Another group of jurists does not believe touching a *Mahram* (unmarriageable person) invalidates ablution and only considers touching a *non-Mahram* to invalidate ablution. Another group, contrary to this view, considers touching a *Mahram* to invalidate ablution. Finally, some people believe that mere contact with a *Mahram* or *non-Mahram* with or without lust does not invalidate ablution, but what invalidates ablution is sexual intercourse. In general, there are three interpretative views among Islamic scholars regarding the word *Lāmastum* in verse 43 of Surah al-Nisa.

First: Touching women in any way invalidates ablution, which is the view of Shafi'i jurisprudence. "All touching of women invalidates ablution, whether she is *Mahram* (unmarriageable person) or not, and whether he experiences lust or does not experience lust."¹⁷

Second: "Only touching with lust invalidates ablution, which is Maliki's view." Some scholars combined the two opinions and said: Touching women necessitates invalidating ablution if one finds lust or intends it, but it does not necessitate invalidating ablution if one does not find lust, and this is what is stronger.¹⁸

Third: Touching women in any way does not invalidate ablution, which is the view of Jāfari jurisprudence. A group of scholars said: Touching a woman does not invalidate ablution at all.¹⁹

¹⁷ Muhamad ibn Muhamad al-Mukhtār al-shanqiti, Sharh of Zad al-Mustaqni, vol. 16 (Masdar al-Kitab, No date), 6. Durus al-Sawtyyah, URL: <http://www.islamweb.net>

¹⁸ Muhamad ibn Muhamad al-Mukhtār al-shanqiti, Sharh of Zad al-Mustaqni, vol. 16 (Masdar al-Kitab, No date), 8. Durus al-Sawtyyah, URL: <http://www.islamweb.net>

¹⁹ Muhamad ibn Muhamad al-Mukhtār al-shanqiti, Sharh of Zad al-Mustaqni, vol. 16 (Masdar al-Kitab, No date), 8. Durus al-Sawtyyah, URL: <http://www.islamweb.net>

Evidence of Three Interpretive Views

The evidence of the first group

By checking the dictionaries, jurisprudential, and commentary books, the authors found only one reason for those who hold the first opinion, which is the same opinion of Shafi'i (i.e. touching women in general invalidates ablution). The reason is that they used the superficial appearance of the verse as proof and accepted the philologists' sayings in the meaning of the words *Lamastum-Lāmastum*.

"And the author of this statement invoked the apparent meaning of the Almighty's saying: Or have you touched women [An-Nisa: 43]. They said: God Almighty has ruled that ablution is invalidated by touching women. [An-Nisa: 43]"²⁰ Some of those who make touching and kissing obligatory for ablution have argued that it is based on the meaning of the Almighty's saying {أَوْ لَامَسْتُمُ النِّسَاءَ} [An-Nisa: 43].²¹ Ibn 'Arabī said: This is what is apparent from the meaning of the verse.²² Touching invalidates in every case. It is the doctrine of Al-Shafi'i, due to the generality of the Almighty's saying: {أَوْ لَامَسْتُمُ النِّسَاءَ}, and the reality of touching is the contact of two skins.²³

The evidence of the second group

The second claim is related to Mālik, that is, touching with lust leads to the invalidation of ablution. It seems that there is no reason for his opinion and because the appearance of the verse shows touching, and it is clear that it cannot be said that mere touching invalidates ablution, those who hold this opinion stated that touching with the condition of lust invalidates ablution, with this explanation that they took touching with lust as sexual intercourse. Shanqiti wrote about this: If he touches a woman and finds lust, his ablution is invalidated, and if he touches a woman and does not find lust, his ablution is not invalidated. Based on that, they said: The presence of lust and the feeling of it is suspected of impurity, so he is given the status of impurity.²⁴

The Evidence of the Third Group

The first reason is that the advocates of this group have adhered to narrations from Shiā and Sunni. Those who hold this opinion are Shiites and some Sunnis. The late Tabarsi writes: What is meant by *لَامَسْتُمُ النِّسَاءَ* is intercourse, as narrated by Ali(a.s),

²⁰ Muḥamad ibn Muḥamad al-Mukhtār al-shanqiti, *Sharh of Zad al-Mustaqni*, vol. 16 (Masdar al-Kitab, No date), 8. Durus al-Sawtyyah, URL: <http://www.islamweb.net>

²¹ Muḥamad Ibn Al-Mundhir Al-Naysaburi, *Al-Awsat fi Sunan, Consensus, and Differences*, vol. 1 (Riyadh, Dar Al-tayyebah, 1405H), 118.

²² Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad ibn Abī Bakr al-Qurṭubī, *Al-Jami' li Ahkam al-Qur'an*, vol. 5 (Cairo, Dar al-kotob al-Mesriyyah, 1384H), 224.

²³ 'Abd al-Raḥmān ibn 'Alī ibn Muḥammad ibn al-Jawzī, *Zaad al-Maseer fi Ilm at-Tafsir*, vol. 1 (Beirut, Dar al-kotob Arabi, 1422H), 411.

²⁴ Muḥamad ibn Muḥamad al-Mukhtār al-shanqiti, *Sharh of Zad al-Mustaqni*, vol. 16 (Masdar al-Kitab, No date), 8. Durus al-Sawtyyah, URL: <http://www.islamweb.net>

Ibn Abbas, Mujahid, Al-Suddi, and Qatādah, and Abu Hanifah and al-Jaba'i chose it, and it was said that what is meant is touching with the hand and others, on the authority of Omar ibn Al-Khattab, Ibn Masoud, Al-Sha'bi, and Atta. It was chosen by Al-Shafi'i and the first viewpoint is correct. It was narrated that there was a disagreement between Arab and non-Arab Muslims. The non-Arab Muslims said: It means sexual intercourse. The Arabs said: It means women's touching. Their dispute reached Ibn Abbas. He declared: The truth is with *Mawali*, and it means sexual intercourse.²⁵ Sheikh Kulayni cited a hadith by Ali Ibn Ibrahim from Imam Sadiq(a.s), who wrote that *لَامَسْتُمُ النِّسَاءَ* is an allusion to sexual intercourse: From Abi Abdillah Imam Sadiq (a.s) - Halabi says: I asked Imam Sadiq (a.s) about the verse: *Aw Lāmastumun nisā* [what is meant by touching women]? He said: "It means sexual intercourse, but since God is very veiled and loves concealment, He did not describe this act as you call it."²⁶ In another narration in *Tahzib al-Ahkam*, Abi Maryam Ansari quotes from Imam Mohamad Ibn Ali al-Baqir(a.s): The meaning of this (*أَوْ لَامَسْتُمُ النِّسَاءَ*) is nothing but sexual intercourse: "on the authority of Abi Maryam, he said: I said to Abu Jafar what you say Concerning a man who performs ablution and then calls his maid and she takes him by the hand until he goes to the mosque. Those among us claim that it is touching, so He said: "No, by God, there is nothing wrong with that, What is meant by this is "or have you touched women except intercourse without the private parts."²⁷ It is also stated in a narration of Imam Jafar Ibn Mohamad al-Sadiq (a.s): From Imam Bagher (a.s), He said: "There is no ablution in kissing, touching the vagina, or touching the private parts."²⁸

It is also stated in the book of Lawāmi' Ṣaḥibqarānī (known as *Sharḥ-i faqīh*): "In *Sahih Zurāra* Ibn A'yan, the Prophet(PBUH) said that It doesn't need to take ablution when kissing, touching a woman's body, and rubbing her vulva with hand, and most of the Sunnis consider ablution as obligatory in these cases because Allah *subhanahu wa ta'ala* has said that *أَوْ لَامَسْتُمُ النِّسَاءَ*, and authentic hadiths have been entered through the Ahl al-Bayt that these are not contradictory and the meaning of touching in this verse is sexual intercourse, and Ahl al-Bayt are aware of what is said in this verse."²⁹ In addition to the above-mentioned hadiths, there are other hadiths from the Shiites in this regard. There are many hadiths from Sunnis in support of this view too. For example, it is narrated from Aisha that the Prophet (PBUH) went to the mosque for prayer after kissing his wife without performing ablution: Waki' told us, on the

²⁵ Fazl ibn Hasan Tabrasi, *Majma al-Bayan fi Tafsir al-Quran*, vol. 3(Tehran: Farahani publication, 1360), 82.

²⁶ Mohamad Ibn Yaghub Kulayni, *Al-Kafi*, vol 5(Tehran: Dar al-Kotob al-Islamiyyah, 1407H), 555.

²⁷ Muhammad ibn al-Hasan al-Tusi, *Tahdhib Al-Ahkam*, vol. 1 (Tehran: Dar al-kotob al-Islamiyyah, 1407 H), 22.

²⁸ Mohamad Ibn Yaghub Kulayni, *Al-Kafi*, vol 5 (Tehran: Dar al-Kotob al-Islamiyyah, 1407H), 117.

²⁹ Mohamad Taghi Majlisi, *Lawāmi' Ṣaḥibqarānī*.vol. 1(Qum: Ismaeelian Institute, 1414H), 512.

authority of Al-Amash, on the authority of Habib bin Abi Thabit, on the authority of Urwa, on the authority of Aisha, that the Prophet, peace be upon him, kissed some of his wives and then went out. He went to prayer and did not perform ablution. Urwa told her, "Who is it but you?", "So she laughed."

Also, another narration with the same theme but a different chain of narrators has been stated: Ismail bin Musa Al-Sadi told me about that. He said: Abu Bakr bin Ayyash told us on the authority of Al-Amash, on the authority of Habib bin Abi Thabit, on the authority of Urwa, on the authority of Aisha, that the Prophet, used to perform ablution, then kiss, then pray without performing ablution.³⁰

The second reason for this group is the *context of the verse* (سياق). If we pay attention to the words before and after of *Lāmastum*, we will come to this point that the discussion is about two events; Al-Hadath al-Asghar³¹ (minor hadath) and al-Hadath al-akbar (major hadath). When there is water, ablution or ghusl should be performed, and when there is no water, tayammum³² should be performed. If we mean the word *لَمَسَ* as touching by hand and not having sexual intercourse, tayammum in exchange for ghusl will not be proved.

The author of the *Qamus al-Qur'an* writes:

... إِذَا قُمْتُمْ إِلَى الصَّلَاةِ فَاغْسِلُوا وُجُوهَكُمْ وَأَيْدِيَكُمْ إِلَى الْمَرَافِقِ وَامْسَحُوا بِرُءُوسِكُمْ وَأَرْجُلَكُمْ إِلَى الْكَعْبَيْنِ وَإِنْ كُنْتُمْ جُنُبًا فَاطَّهَّرُوا وَإِنْ كُنْتُمْ مَرْضَى أَوْ عَلَى سَفَرٍ أَوْ جَاءَ أَحَدٌ مِنْكُمْ مِنَ الْغَائِطِ أَوْ لَامَسْتُمُ النِّسَاءَ فَلَمْ يَجِدُوا مَاءً فَتَيَمَّمُوا صَعِيدًا طَيِّبًا

At the beginning of the verse, the verdict of minor and major hadath in the case of water finding is mentioned, and thereunder, the verdicts of both in the case of lack of water and if the meaning of *لَامَسْتُمْ* is simply touching, the verdict of the major hadath in the case of lack of water is not mentioned. Therefore, it is sexual intercourse.³³

And also in the book *Sharh Umda al-fihh* is written:" As for their reasoning with the verse: {أَوْ لَامَسْتُمُ} [An-Nisa: 43], the correct view is that (*لَامَسْتُمْ*) means intercourse, and likewise (*أَوْ لَامَسْتُمْ*) this is a metaphor for intercourse; Because God the Almighty mentioned the purity of the two minor and major impurities in verse, Glory be to Him, the Most High, said; And if you are sick or on a journey, or one of you has defecated [An-Nisa: 43], then this is the minor impurity, or if you have touched women

³⁰ Muhamad ibn Jarir Tabari, *Jāmi' al-bayān 'an ta'wīl āy al-Qur'ān*, vol 8 (al_risalah publication, 1420H), 396.

³¹ Minor ritual impurity which necessitates partial ablution.

³² Tayammum (Arabic: تيمم) is the Islamic act of dry ritual purification using purified (clean) sand, stone, or mud, which may be performed in place of ritual washing (Wudu or Ghusl) if no clean water is ready or if one is suffering from moisture-induced skin inflammation or illness or hardship.

³³ Ali Akbar Ghorashi, *Qamus al-Qur'an*, vol. 6 (Tehran: Dar al-Kotob al-Islamiyyah, 1412H), 207.

[An-Nisa: 43], This is the major impurity; So perform tayammum [An-Nisa: 43], so the verse mentions the minor and major impurity.³⁴

The third reason stated in support of this view is **أصل** (principle). The principle is that purity remains unless we are sure that it has been lost. In our opinion, this certainty is not achieved, so we rule on the existence of purity even after touching. In the book *Majmy Fatawa wa Rasā'il* written by Muhammad Ibn Salih Al-Uthaymin, he confirms this point of view: "The correct view is that touching a woman does not invalidate ablution at all unless something comes out of it, and the evidence for this is what was authenticated on the authority of the Prophet(PBUH), that he kissed some of his wives and went out to pray and did not perform ablution. And because the principle is not to annul it until there is clear and valid evidence to annul it, and because the man has completed his purity according to Sharia evidence, and what has been proven according to Sharia evidence cannot be lifted except with Sharia evidence.³⁵ As well, Sheikh Abd al Aziz Ibn Abdullah Ibn Baz writes: Then the principle is not to veto, this is the principle.³⁶

The fourth reason that the adherents of this point of view cling to is **the rule of hardship**. If we believe that just touching invalidates purity, it will cause great hardship for Muslims. Disruption occurs in the Islamic government. Muslims cannot even fulfill their duty obligations in some cases; For example, during Hajj rituals and circumambulation of the Kaaba with this crowd, physical contact with women cannot be avoided. The authors of the Journal of the Islamic University of Madinah Al-Nabawiyyah wrote on the subject of **عُسْر و حَرَج**: "If we were required to perform ablution with it, this would be discomfort and difficulty".³⁷

Also Ahl al-Sunnah Mufti writes: Many of our brothers in circumambulation feel difficulty if his hand touches a woman's hand or his leg touches a woman's leg, so he goes to perform ablution, following the words of those who said: It is absolutely invalidated. This entails great difficulties without evidence or proof.³⁸

Examination of the evidence

The first reason for the Third group; that is the narrations presented by the Fariqayn are *Sahiha* or *Mashhorah* on the chain of transmission, and the majority of Islamic scholars (All Imami scholars and many Sunni scholars) have cited them.

³⁴ Abdul Aziz Ibn Abdullah Al-Rajihi, Sharh Umda al-fighh, vol. 7, 2024 , 4. Accessed March 10, 2024. <https://www.islamweb.net>

³⁵ Mohamad Ibn Salih Ibn al-Uthaymin, *Majmō'a fatawa wa Rasā'il*. Vol. 13(Dar al-Watan Publication. 1413H), 231.

³⁶ Abdel Aziz Ibn Abdullah Ibn Baz, Fatawa Noor Ala al-Darb, vol. 5 , 220. Collected: Mohamad Ibn sād al-Shouyar. Accessed March 1, 2024. <https://lib.efatwa.ir/44349/1/1>

³⁷ A group of Authors , Journal of the Islamic University of the Prophets City, vol. 44 (Medina: University website, 1423H), 492.

³⁸ Abdel Aziz Ibn Abdullah Ibn Baz, Fatawa Noor Ala al-Darb, vol. 5 , 220. Collected: Mohamad Ibn sād al-Shouyar. Accessed March 1, 2024. <https://lib.efatwa.ir/44349/1/1>

The second reason of the followers of this group; that is, the context (سياق) of the words also seems correct. At the beginning of the verse, the verdict of minor and major hadath was mentioned in the case of finding water, and below it, the rule of both in the case of lack of water. Therefore, if what is meant by *Lāmastum* is touching, then the verdict of hadath Akbar in the case of lack of water has not been mentioned, so the sexual intercourse is the goal certainly.

The third reason, the principle (أصل), is also accepted if the first two reasons are not accepted.

The last reason, which is hardship and inconvenience, is a rule accepted by *the Wise* and it is valid in our opinion, because due to the large number of people in the cities and especially in performing divine duties such as Hajj, which includes circumambulation of the Kaaba and *Sa'y al-Safā wal-Marwa*, Physical contact with others is inevitable. It is not conceivable for the obligee to perform ablution as a result of any skin contact with a *Mahram* or a *non-Mahram*, let alone apply this ruling in the current affairs of the obligees. As a result, we will observe many of the current affairs of Muslims being stopped, and it will lead to a kind of escape from fulfilling the Shariā ruling.

Based on accepting the reasons of the supporters of the Third Group, only the reason of the First Group (Shafi's opinion), which is based on the appearance of the verse, is distorted. Also, for the second group (Maliḳs opinion), no specific reason was given in the dictionaries and exegesis books. According to the authors, the opponents of the third group did not pay any attention to the ironic meaning of this word in the verse. All the Imami jurists in interpreting and discovering the meaning of the word *Lāmastum* in verse 43 of Surah al-Nisa chose only the opinion of "sexual intercourse".

English translations of the word *Lāmastum*: Surah al-Nisa verse 43

Each translator should try to present the exact meaning of the original text in the target language, taking into account the style of the source language. What is vital in translation is the transfer of meaning; But in some cases, especially in the translation of Qur'anic verses, the style of the original text is also of particular importance, and sometimes ignoring it may cause the meaning presented in the translation to be inaccurate.³⁹ Religious Translation is one of the most problematic types of translation because it deals with certain texts that have their status. These texts are very sacred and sensitive because they are the words of the Almighty God. Therefore, a major problem lies in translating them into a target language. The Qur'an translator does not only need sound linguistic competence in both Arabic and English but also advanced knowledge in Arabic syntax and rhetoric to appreciate the complex linguistic and rhetorical patterns of the Qur'anic structures. Most importantly, he/she needs to compare and refer to major Qur'an exegeses to derive and provide the accurate

³⁹ Salar Manafi Anari, Study of Islamic Texts in English Translation, vol. I (Qum, 1372), 14.

underlying meaning of a given Qur'anic expression, a simple particle, or even a preposition.⁴⁰

Surah al-Nisa Verse 43:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا لَا تَقْرَبُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَأَنتُمْ سُكَارَىٰ حَتَّىٰ تَعْلَمُوا مَا تَقُولُونَ وَلَا جُنُبًا إِلَّا عَابِرِي سَبِيلٍ حَتَّىٰ تَغْتَسِلُوا وَإِن كُنتُمْ مَّرْضَىٰ أَوْ عَلَىٰ سَفَرٍ أَوْ جَاءَ أَحَدٌ مِّنْكُم مِّنَ الْغَائِطِ أَوْ لَامَسْتُمُ النِّسَاءَ فَلَمْ تَجِدُوا مَاءً فَتَيَمَّمُوا صَعِيدًا طَيِّبًا فَامْسَحُوا بِوُجُوهِكُمْ وَأَيْدِيكُمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ عَفُورًا*

The author of *Tafsir Majma al-Bayan* writes: Among the differences in the readings is verse 43 of Surah al-Nisa', where the word *Lāmastum* was also recited in the form of *Lamastum*. Hamza and Kasa'i recited without Alif (أو لمستم النساء), and others (لامستم) recited with Alif.⁴¹ Also, Abu Ali mentions in the book *Al-Hujjah Lil qurrā Al-Sabah* that they disagreed about inserting the letter Alif and removing it.⁴²

According to Fariqayn commentators, the translators adopted different meanings of this word from verse 43 of Surah al-Nisa and translated the verse into English. Now, apart from the structural analysis of the translation of the verse, we will only analyze the meaning of the English translation of *أَوْ لَامَسْتُمُ النِّسَاءَ* and examine it in some examples of English translations of the Holy Qur'an by Shiā and Sunni translators.

One of the methods of translating a language into another language is the literal translation method. A "word-for-word" translation that closely follows the form of the source language is called a literal translation. A literal translation is useful if one is studying the structure of the source text as in an interlinear translation, but a literal translation does not communicate the meaning of the source language.⁴³ Some translators of the Holy Quran translated the word *لامستم* simply as "touching" and "physical contact". For example, in the following translations, the method of translating the word *Lāmastum* in this verse was "literal".

Qarai translation

But if you are sick or on a journey, or any of you has come from the toilet, or you have touched women, and you cannot find water, then make your ablution on clean ground and wipe a part of your face and your hands.⁴⁴

Shakir translation

⁴⁰ Hussein Abdul-Raof, *Quran Translation Discourse, Texture and Exegesis*, (Routledge, 2001), 2.

⁴¹ Fazl ibn Hasan Tabrasi, *Majma al-Bayan fi Tafsir al-Quran*, vol. 5(Tehran: Farahani publication, 1360), 82.

⁴² Hasan Ibn Ahmad Al-Farsi, *Al-Hujja lil Qurra al-saba*. Vol. 3(Damascus: Dar al-Mamun lil Torath, 1413H), 163.

⁴³ Mildred Larson, *Meaning-based Translation: A guide to cross-language equivalence*. (USA: University Press of America, 1984), 10.

⁴⁴ Ali Quli Qarai, *The Quran with a Phrase-by-Phrase English Translation*. Vol. 1(Qum: Quran Translation Center, 2004), 85.

And if you are sick, or on a journey, or one of you come from the privy or you have touched the women, and you cannot find water, betake yourselves to pure earth, then wipe your faces and your hands.⁴⁵

Pickthall translation

And if ye be ill, or on a journey, or one of you cometh from the closet, or ye have touched women, and ye find not water, then go to high clean soil and rub your faces and your hands(therewith). Lo! Allah is Benign and forgiving. ⁴⁶

Irving translation(Haj Taalim Ali)

If you are ill or on a journey, or one of you has come from the toilet or has had contact with any women, and you do not find any water, then pick up some wholesome soil and wipe your faces and your hands with it. ⁴⁷

Arberry translation

If you are sick, or on a journey, or if any of you comes from the privy, or you have touched women, and you can find no water, then have recourse to wholesome dust and wipe your faces and your hands. ⁴⁸In the above English translations, the two words Touch / Contact with were used in the literal sense. **Touch** /tʌtʃ/ V 1. To be or come so close together that there is no space between.⁴⁹ **Contact** /'kɒn.tækt/n 1[U](with sb/sth) The state of touching. ⁵⁰ According to the Oxford Dictionary, the two words used in the above-mentioned translations only mean *to touch*.

Another method of translation is interpretative translation. In this method, the translator explains and expands the content, leading to a language other than the original language, such as Persian or other language interpretations of the Holy Qur'an.⁵¹ In other words, Interpretative translation, if one can use the term, requires a semantic method of translation combined with high explanatory power, mainly in terms of the Source Language culture, with only a side glance at the Target Language reader. In fact, the greater the explanatory power, the more the reader is likely to understand, but the translation must not "compromise" in his direction.⁵²

Some other translators of the Qur'an paid attention to the meaning of irony taken from the narrations of the Prophet(S) and Companions and provided a translation with an Ironical meaning or with an exegetical explanation for the readers. In the

⁴⁵ M.H. Shakir, *The Holy Koran*. Vol. 1(Qum: Ansarian publication, 1992), 85.

⁴⁶ Muhammed Marmadoke Pickthall, *The Meaning of The Glorious Qur'an(Text and Explanatory)*, vol. 1(Tehran: Salehi Publication, No date), 81.

⁴⁷ Thomas Irving (AL- Hajj Ta'alim Ali) *The Qur'an(The Noble Reading)*, vol. 1(Tehran: International publishing co, 2005), 85.

⁴⁸ Arthur John Arberry, *The Koran Interpreted*, vol. 1 (London: Unwind Brothers LTD, 1955), 106.

⁴⁹ A.S Hornby, *Oxford Advanced Learners Dictionary*,(Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), 1263.

⁵⁰ A.S Hornby, *Oxford Advanced Learners Dictionary*,(Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), 248.

⁵¹ Mohamad Hadi Mārifat, *The history of the Qur'an*. (Tehran: Samt publication, 1382), 185.

⁵² Peter Newmark, *Approaches to Translation*,(UK: Prentice Hall International English Language Teachingm 1988), 35.

following translations, the word *Lāmastum* was translated into English with the additional explanation of the translators.

Mrs Saffarzadeh translation

If you are ill or on a Journey or have come from the privy Or you have been in contact with Women[by sexual relation]and you find no water, then[in such cases]take For yourselves some clean and pure Soil and rub therewith your face and Hands.⁵³

Mohamad and Samira Ahmad translation

If you were sick/ diseased or on a long-distance travel, or any of you came from the safe and hidden depression in ground used for human discharge(toilet)or you touched repeatedly/ touched and felt repeatedly(could mean: had intercourse with)the women, so you did not find water, so wipe your hands and face with dust, pure/ good dust, so wipe with your faces and your hands.⁵⁴

Mohsen Khan-Hilali translation

O you who believe! Approach, not *As-Salat* (the prayer) when you are in a drunken state until you know (the meaning) of what you utter, nor when you are in a state of *Janaba*, (i.e. in a state of sexual impurity and have not yet taken a bath) except when traveling on the road (without enough water, or just passing through a mosque), till you wash your whole body. And if you are ill, or on a journey, or one of you comes after answering the call of nature, or you have been in contact with women (by sexual relations) and you find no water, perform *Tayammum* with clean earth and rub therewith your faces and hands (*Tayammum*). Truly, Allah is Ever Oft-Pardoning, Oft-Forgiving.⁵⁵

Abdel Haleem translation

You who believe, do not come anywhere near the prayer if you are intoxicated, not until you know what you are saying; nor if you are in a state of major ritual impurity- though you may pass through the mosque- not until you have bathed; if you are ill, on a journey, have relieved yourselves, or had intercourse, and cannot find any water, then find some clean sand and wipe your faces and hands with it. God is always ready to pardon and forgive. ⁵⁶

As it can be seen, the translations of Mrs. Saffarzadeh, Mr. Mohammad Ahmed and his daughter Samira, Mr. Mohsen Khan-Hilali and finally the translation of Mr. Abdel Halim with the explanation of the word *لامستم* or according to the ironical

⁵³ Tahereh Saffarzadeh, *The Holy Koran, English & Persian translation with commentary* (Tehran: Honare Bidari publication, 2001), 173.

⁵⁴ Muhammed and Samira Ahmed, *The Quran*. Vancouver, (Canada: World Copyright in Canada, 1994), 55.

⁵⁵ Muhammad Taqi-ud-Din Al-Hilali & Muhammad Muhsin Khan, *Interpretation of the meaning of Quran in the English Language (The Noble Quran)*, (Darussalam, 2020), 48.

⁵⁶ - Mohamed Abdel Haleem, *The Quran: A new Translation*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 55.

meaning derived from the narrations, They translated the correct meaning of *أَوْ لَامَسْتُمُ النِّسَاءَ* which means sexual intercourse with women into English.

Conclusion

The difference in the reading of the word Lamasa- Lāmasa in verse 43 of Surah al-Nisa does not cause a difference in meaning, but what is seen as a difference in the words of commentators and jurists is due to the lack of attention to Ironical meaning and the narrations of the infallible in the word Lāmastum. Many Islamic scholars, according to the interpretation of the word Lāmastum by Ali Ibn Abi Talib (a.s) and his prominent student, Ibn Abbas(r.a), took the ironic meaning of the word in this verse, which is sexual intercourse, not just touching with hands. In the Holy Qur'an, in many cases, good and desirable words were used for an undesirable subject or word (Euphemism), as a psychological and moral principle was also used in this verse. The use of some expressions in this verse, such as *أَوْ جَاءَ أَحَدٌ مِّنَ الْغَائِطِ* which means coming out of the toilet and *أَوْ لَامَسْتُمُ النِّسَاءَ* which is an allusion to sexual intercourse, were entered for Euphemism (good interpretation) in the Qur'an. Just as in response to a question about the word Lāmastum in this verse, Imam Jafar Ibn Mohamad al-Sadiq (a.s.) said that the meaning of contact with women is the same as intercourse, but God is the Coverer and loves cover. So He did not mention the name (intercourse), as you mentioned. Therefore, in some English translations of the word Lāmastum, some translators have only paid attention to the lexical meaning and have considered the meaning of touching with fingers and organs, and their translation is correct. Some other translators translated the ironical meaning of the word into English, or they used the interpretative method with more explanations of this word in English about the narrations of the infallible (PBUT), which are more accurate translations.

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