

SHOULD THE QUR'AN BE TRANSLATED? (AN ANALYSIS OF CONFLICTING VIEWS)

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ABSTRACT: *I have chosen the article of AL Qur'an and last aspect of this article about the translation of the holy Qur'an for review critically the conflicting views written by J.D. Pearson, which had been published in Encyclopedia of Islam from Holland in 1986. There was no need to translate the Holy Qur'an during the life of Holy Prophet Muhammad (SAW) in other languages. With the conquest of other lands having different languages, the demand of translating Qur'an in other languages so that non Arabic speaker can comprehend the real meaning and message of divine Qur'an, appeared a big issue. In this way, the matter of translation of the Qur'an appeared as a complete solution for this problem. If there is any flaw in the translation the understanding will have the same flaw. All the real meaning and aim remain same in the translation. It is the demand of translating that the translator should copy the real text aims and meanings should be appropriately translated. According to J.D. Pearson, the Muslim Jurists and scholars have adopted firm and harsh attitude about the divine order of recitation of the Holy Qur'an translation. According to Imam Shafi, Imam Malik, Imam Ahmed bin Hambal and Imam Abu Dawood are of the opinion that the Qur'an should be recited in Arabic language only whether the person knows Arabic or not, Prayer cannot be performed with the translation of Qur'an whether the recitation is good or worse. Jamhur Scholars have forbidden to translate Qur'an in any other language. J.D. Pearson objects that the reciter could not understand the meanings and aims of the Qur'an. A.J. Arberry says that it is hard to translate Qur'an because it has beauty of poetry and in other languages, the miracles of Qur'anic literature and grammar are missed which is a peculiar quality of Arabic language. In this article, I will discuss the issue in the light of Orientalist's and Muslim scholar's analysis about Qur'anic Translation in other languages.*

KEYWORDS: *Qur'an, translation of Qur'an, Qur'anic translation.*

First of all, I will explain the conflicting point of views about the orthodox doctrine concerning translations: According to J.D. Pearson, the author of Al Qur'an article in Encyclopedia of Islam it was impossible in the life of Hazrat Muhammad (PBUH) to think about the translation of the Qur'an because all the Muslims were Arab but later on, a lot of non-Arabic people embraced Islam due to conquests. They could not read and communicate in Arabic language, they not only wanted to recite the Qur'an in Arabic language but also wanted to understand the meaning of the Al- Qur'an. In this way, the matter of translation of the Qur'an appeared as a complete solution for this problem.¹

Oxford Dictionary writer defines, the "translation" means to describe the meaning of any book word and sentence literally,² and these meanings become substitute for the real text. In this way, the Tafsir of the message is a different thing, which explains the meaning and theme. Tafsir is intensity interconnected with the real text and the

message would become fake if the Tafsir is separated from it.

There is no change in the Translation. If there is any flaw in the text, the translation will have the same flaw. All the real meanings and aim remain same in the translation. It is the demand of translating that the translator should copy the real text and aims and meaning should be appropriately translated whereas in Tafsir, the explanation, criticism and analysis are made. It is up to Mufasir'in to agree or disagree with the aims and views of the text and most Mufasir'in express their ignorance about the Mysterious words.³

J.D. Pearson quoted in his article that the Muslim Jurists and scholars have adopted firm and harsh attitude about the Shari order of recitation of the Qur'an translation.⁴ There are sayings of different Jurists" about this matter:

Shaf'ie point of view is that " the Qur'an should be recited in Arabic language only whether the person knows Arabic or not, the prayer cannot be performed with the translation of the Qur'an whether the reader recitation is good or worse.⁵ Imam Malik⁶, Imam Ahmed bin Hanmbal⁷ and Imam Abu Dawūd⁸ belong to the same opinion. "Jamhūr" Scholars have the same view⁹ rather they forbid from translating the Qur'an in any language. Whereas J.D. Pearson objects whether the recitor's understand the meaning of not except the concept of miracle of the Qur'an.¹⁰ Whereas the famous orientalist A.J. Arberry concedes that it is very hard to translate the Qur'an because it has beauty of poetry which most Christian researchers appreciate.¹¹

In other languages, the miracle of Qur'anic literature and grammar are missed which is a peculiar quality of Arabic language.¹²

Allah has described in the Qur'a n that...

Qur'an is revealed specifically in Arabic Language so we may understand it.¹³

It is proved that no translation can be equal to the Qur'an itself and neither non-Arabic nor Arabic text is equal to the Qur'an. Recitation of the Qur'an is a way of worshipping which any translation cannot provide.¹⁴ According to Imam Syūtti, it is not allow to recite the translation of the Qur'an as Hazrat Gabriel conveyed the Qur'an in specific Arabic language to the Prophet (PBUH).¹⁵

According to Malikiya sect, no person can say prayer in other language even the Takbir. If he does not know how to recite, he would follow the recitor of the Qur'an. In Al-Maduna, what is Fatwa of Imam Mālīk about the person who performs prayer in non-Arabic language?¹⁶ Imam Mālīk disliked this act.¹⁷ According to Hanabala, except Arabic language, the recitation in any language is not allowed and all people should say prayer in Arabic, if they do not know, they should learn it.¹⁸ According to Zahiri sect, the person is hypocrite who recite sur'ah Fatiha or its some part in other language, his prayer will be fake.¹⁹

According to Hanafi sect, the recitation of the Qur'an in other languages is never allowed and forbidden. Imam Abu Hanifa regarded the prayer in other language lawful but later he changed his view.²⁰ Nūh bin Mariyam, Ali bin Al-Ja'd and Abu Bakar Razi have referred the event of changing view of Imam Abu Hanifa.²¹ According to Imam Ghazali, it is amicable to explain the meaning and aims of the

Qur'an in the native languages of the people which all the Scholar's have agreed upon but the recitation of the Qur'an in Arabic is worship which cannot be denied.²²

According to Hanafi scholar, Imam Maraghi, if a person cannot recite the Qur'anic script, it is necessary to translate it. Translation should expose the Qur'anic meaning which can be called Kalam of Allah, anyhow it cannot be equal to the Qur'an literally and grammatically.²³ In this way, Imam Ghazali never allows to perform prayer in other languages because translation is not a substitute of sur'ah Fatiha.²⁴ In another place, he says that it not lawful to say Qur'anic words in other languages except Arabic.²⁵

All the Scholars have unanimously agreed to the reason of translating the in other languages in the present time,²⁶ but this work needs much more care and pure intention because the translations of the Qur'an are began to do on the enmity of Islam and the translators are not fully familiar with Arabic language.

Secondly, I will explain the translation of the Qur'an in to Specific Languages. The Qur'an had been revealed in Arabic language and its addressee was the Arab. Later on, the Qur'an asserted its language among those people who were not Arab but they learnt Arabic language more accurately than their native language. With the passage of time, the translation of the Qur'an had been felt in different languages so that people could comprehend it easily. Now the Qur'an has been translated in various different languages of Asia, Europe and Africa. It is said that Hazrat Suleman Farsi translated Sūr'ah Fatiha in Persian.²⁷ There are evidences of translating the Qur'an in the Barber language,²⁸ and in Sindhi language also in 270 A.H.

Translation is of two kinds i.e., literally and explanatory and Tafsiri but translation is not equal to the real message of Allah whether the translation may be much attractive and beautiful. The aim of translation that it should be easy, simple, understandable and decent. The two schools of thought are prominent in the regard of translating the Qur'an, e.g. the Muslim Scholars who translated the Qur'an for the convenience of common Muslims and other is Non-Muslim Religious Scholars who translated the Qur'an just to misguide their people through false propaganda. There is a list of different translations of the Qur'an in different languages of the world:

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| 1. Urdu 92 | 2. Argunain: 01 |
| 3. Armini 04 | 4. Austrian: 02 |
| 5. Italian 19 | 6. Indo-China 01 |
| 7. English 26 | 8. Al-Baniya 01 |
| 9. Burmi 02 | 10. Bulgarian 01 |
| 11. Bangālī 06 | 12. Bohemian 02 |
| 13. Portugees 04 | 14. Pashtu 14 |
| 15. Polish 04 | 16. Punjābi 06 |
| 17. Tamil 01 | 18. Turkish 07 |
| 19. Talgu 03 | 20. Japani 03 |
| 21. Javi 01 | 22. German 16 |
| 23. Chinese 05 | 24. African 01 |

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| 25. Russian 06 | 26. Romanian 01 |
| 27. Sindhi 67 | 28. Sanskrit 02 |
| 29. Sawahili 06 | 30. Swedish 03 |
| 31. Persian 52 | 32. Philippines 01 |
| 33. Cantry 01 | 34. Gujratī 09 |
| 35. Gormukhi 01 | 36. Lalintin 15 |
| 37. Maltian 01 | 38. Marbiya 02 |
| 39. Marhati 01 | 40. Malayalam 03 |
| 41. Spanish 06 | 42. Hindi 18 |
| 43. Dutch 05 | 44. Hungry 02 |
| 45. Greek 02 | |

Anyhow it is a brief survey of the translations of the Qur'an and it is not the end, may be, I have missed someone but it is fact that in most languages the Qur'an has been translated.

The first translation in European language had been done by an English scholar Roberts Retenensis in 1143 A.D, in Latin language due to the wish of the chief of priest Peter Abbot of Cluny and this translation had been in fashion till 4 centuries and a person, Theodor of Switzerland published it in Basel in 1543. According to Prof. Arberry, this translation is the embodiment of mistakes, illusions and prejudice, but it worked as a basis of translation of the Qur'an in European languages. The Priest of Damascus published his translation in Latin in 1698 A.D.

The French translation of the Qur'an published in 1647 A.D. by Andre du Ryer, which was again translated in English by Alexander Ross after two years. Both of these translations were not satisfactory. In the modern time, the French translation of Dr. Hammed Allah is appreciable. A lawyer George Sale published a considerable translation in England in 1734 A.D and Sale had the idea of priest Maraca's Latin translation. Prof. Arberry has no good opinion about the translation of Sale, which is full of prejudices, illusions and flaws in spite of the fact that Sale had many facilities but he worked with bad intentions. Sale's translation had been in fashion till 150 years even the scholars Lilre Gibbon and Carlyle formed their views about Islam, Qur'an and Hazrat Muhammad (PBUH). In 1861 A.D. priest J.M. Rodwell published his English translation, which was according to the revelation arrangement of the sūrahs and Margoliouth declared it much better than the previous one. In 1880 A.D., Edward Henry Palmer published his translation, which became popular among Christian circles. It was a better one but according to Islamic point of view no translation was equal to and according to the standard the reality of the Qur'an. In English only Muhammad Marmaduke Pickthal, the new Muslim, translated the Qur'an accurately, which became famous. During 1937 to 1939 A.D., Richard Bell translated the Qur'an into two volumes and in 1955 A.D., A.J. Arberry translated the Qur'an into two volumes.

The Muslim translated the Qur'an into English also and among them, Mirza Abu Al-Fazal (Allah bad, 1900 A.d.), Dr. Abdul Hakim (1905 A.D.), Muhammad Ali (1971

A.D.), Mirza Dehlvi (1991), Hafiz Ghulam Sarwar (1930 A.D.), Abdullah Yusuf Ali (1935 A.D.) and Abdul Majid Daryā Abadi.²⁹

In the Translation of the Qur'an of Hafiz Ghulam Sarwar, the translations of Rodwell, Palmer and Muhammad Ali Lahori have been criticized. In this way, Prof. Arberry has written some good things in his preface, The Qur'an Interpreted.

At that time, those people who translated the Qur'an were ignorant of the Arabic language or had very little knowledge, how they translated the real meaning of the Qur'an or some people translated the translation done in other language. Moreover, all the English translations were based on Tafsir of the Qur'an not the language and Tafsir is basically the view of a person so that's why, these translations were remote from the real message of the Qur'an. Due to all these flaws, such translation of the Qur'an is need for non-Arabic people, which should be the embodiment of the efforts of experts of Arabic language and should be based upon Arabic language and grammar.³⁰

Yaqūb bin Israel translated the Qur'an for the first time, secondly, Harson Rekendrof (1927 A.D.), thirdly, Falleen (1932 A.D.) translated.

The translation of Haeen (1947 A.D.), Kazo's translation (1847 A.d.) Baniar's translation (1886 A.D.), Faraju's translation (1928 A.D.), Botli (1929, A.D.) are included.

Spanish Translations

De Rolass (Madrid 1844 A.D.), Berjundo (Madrid 1875 A.D.), Artarz (Barsalona 1876 A.D.) and the five version of 20th century are also included.

There are more than 4 translations of the Qur'an in Japanese, Chinese, Armani and Dutch languages. In this way, the languages like Bohemian, Jawi, Hindi, Polish, Portugees Dutch, and Russian contain many translations. Turkish and Persian languages have translations. Tafsir Tabri had been translated by Mansoor bin Naser in Persian language. In Turkish, also, the translation of Tafsir Tabri the base of first translation. Among Persian translations, the translation of Shah Wali-ul Allah became famous. There are translations of Punjabi, Sindhi, Pashtu and Bengali and the translation of Hafiz Muhammad Lakhvi is a famous Punjabi translation.

The translations of Shah Abdul Qadir (1205 A.D.) and Shah Rafi-ud-Din have the authentic position. After them, the translations of Nazir Ahmed Dehlvi, Fateh Muhammad Jālandhri, Mehmood Hassan and Ashraf Ali Thanvi became famous. Among modern translations, Abu al-Kalam Azad (Tarjuman-ul-Qur'an) the translation of Abdul Mājīd Darya Abādi and Tafhim-ul-Qur'an of Syed Abu Al-Aala Mududi are important.

Conclusion: -

Lastly, The overall findings of this article is related to the translations of the Holy Qur'an including the views of puritans whether it is right to translate Holy Qur'an or wrong. J.D. Pearson is the author of this portion in Al Kur'an article published from Holland in Encyclopedia of Islam which has the ninth and last aspect of this article. The ancient theologians and jurists emphasized to read Arabic text of the Holy

Qur'ān. They were of the view that translation can never be word of Allah. But the latter scholars encouraged the translation of the Holy Qur'ān. The western translations, till up to date, have been based on a single translation in Italian language. That is why an unending series of error have started. The Holy Qur'ān has been a target of criticism of the orientalist i.e., Noldeke, Schwally, Richard Bell, John Wansbrough, Margoliouth, Alphonse Mangeana, Aurther Jeffery and John Burton are the most prominent among them. Presently, What Qur'ān Really Says of Ibn u'l Waraq and The Perfect Qur'ān of Brother mark are available on 'net', where in all the objections of the orientalist are tried to cover.

Recommendations: -

1. The westerns and orientalist are suggested to keep into their minds the difference of primary and secondary sources and also they must learn Arabic language.
2. Presently it is necessary to help seminars and other activities to reply the question and objections of the westerns after minute study of their research work by the theologians and scholars.
3. The Qur'ānic explanations and annotations are required to be harmonized with the requirement and research methodology of the present era.
4. If some (Muslim) theologians have given their opinion based upon some discontinued traditions, the other scholars must explain and annotate them.
5. It is essential to introduce Istishraq' orientalism as a subject in Muslim schools and universities.

¹ J.D. Pearson, (1986). *Encyclopedia of Islam*, 1986, Lieden, "Al -Kur"ān", Vol. 5, p. 429

² Oxford Dictionary "T"

60. Urdu Daīra Mū'arāf Islamiya, Punjab University, "نَا", Vol. 16, p. 541

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⁵ Al-Nawwi, Abi Zikriya Muhi-ud-Din, *Al-Majmu Sharah Al-Muhazib*, N.D, Vol. 3, p. 379

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