

***A Comparative Study of the Qur'ānic Translations and
Footnotes by A.M. Daryābādī And M.A. Lahorī's***

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Abstract

This paper highlights a comparative study of two translations of the Holy Qur'ān. Muhammad 'Alī Lahorī's "The Holy Qur'ān" and 'Abdul Mājid Daryābādī's "Tafsir Ul Qur'ān". It deals with the biographies of both translators and general characteristics of these two translations.

Many translators interpreted the Holy Qur'ān in different languages. Though they translated the text with specific objectives, these translations helped spread the message of the Qur'ān in the west and helped to refute the fabrications laid down by the west against Islam. Both translators Abdul Mājid Daryābādī and Muhammad 'Alī Lahorī are Indian writers, editors and interpreters. Both translated the Holy Qur'ān into English for western readers and in Urdu for the readers of subcontinent. Most interestingly, Muḥammad 'Alī Lahorī is the person who inspired Daryābādī in his period of atheism. According to many scholars, Daryābādī admired the work of Lahorī just timely. But in the reality one can find that 'Abdul Mājid Daryābādī imitated few aspects of Muḥammad 'Alī's life and copied his work as well.

Keywords: *Qur'ānic Translations, Muhammad 'Alī Lahorī,
Abdul Mājid Daryābādī',*

Muhammad 'Alī Lahorī (1874-1951) was born in state Kapurthala. His father Hafiz Fateh Din was a religious person. He got his early education at home and passed his matriculation in 1890. His family was well cultured and educated. He got admission in Government College Lahore in 1890 and graduated from here in 1894. He got admission in M.A English in the same institution. After passing B.A, he started teaching at Islamia College Lahore. Here, the history was connecting the dots as Khawaja Kamal ud Din, famous Qadiyani was also doing job at Islamia College Lahore. Muhammad 'Alī started L.L.B. and got job in Oriental College Lahore. It is strange how a religiously educated Muhammad 'Alī Lahorī became a true follower of Mirza Qadiyani, when he heard about Qadiyani movement from his class fellow, Munshi 'Abdul Aziz Dehlavi. In 1891, he studied Mirza's book entitled "Azala-e-Oham" which convinced him towards Mirza's faith. This publication by Mirza Qadiyani changed the approach of his father and brother as well. All of them accepted that Mirza Qadiyani is right about his claims. Mirza Ghulam Ahmad Qadiyani got the fame in surrounding villages of Qadiyan. As it is written in Yad-e-Riftega:

*"Muhammad 'Alī's father and brother were convinced. After we studied Mirza's Azala-e-Oham all points were clear to us and we took decision. We are convinced on the truthfulness of Mirza. After we studied the logics by Mirza we without any doubts accepted Mirza Sahib. But none of us came in any sort of pledge."*¹

According to Muhammad 'Alī, Mirza Ghulam Ahmad used the claim of Prophet in the literal sense. He was interpreter of the messenger of Allah. Although he started writing in the esteem of Mirza Qadiyani in different papers but he met him in 1898. He was completely inspired by his religious and social stature. Although he and his family members were intentionally ready for pledge but they did not formally took pledge at the hands of Mirza Qadiyani. Muhammad 'Alī worked as a Professor at the Oriental College. During this period, Mirza Sahib used to send his different writings to him for translation. He translated his writings in English very well. He used to visit Mirza every weekend and liked to spend summer holidays in Qadiyan."² While in 1899, Muhammad 'Alī Lahorī began to live at the place of Mirza Qadiyani. During this period, Mirza Sahib started to publish monthly journal. In 1902, the magazine "Review of Religion"

was published which got fame in the Europe as well. The “Calcutta Review”, states that Muḥammad ‘Alī Lahorī worked as an editor of this magazine for some time.

Mirza Ghulam gave place to Muḥammad ‘Alī Lahorī at his home. He took his great care. Here, Muḥammad ‘Alī was over sighting many of his projects. He got his religious education from Mirza Ghulam Ahmad and Ḥakīm Noor ud Din.”³ In fact, he had two phases of faith regarding the acceptance of logic of Mirza Qadiyani. Before 1914, he accepted Mirza Sahib as the Prophet. He wrote a number of articles in different magazines for him. Mirza Qadiyani wrote a treatise in 1905 entitled “al-Wasiyat”. In his magazine, Mirza Qadiyani mentioned the role of successor and duties for rest of the followers. After the publication, an organization “Sadr-e-Anjuman-e-Ahmadiya” was established. Muḥammad ‘Alī Lahorī was the secretary of Mirza Qadiyani. The Qadiyani movement was working with unity. But Mirza Qadiyani’s son distorted the organization due to his lust of power. Ḥakīm Mahmood Ahmad Zafar in his article, “A Critical Study of Mirza Bashir-ud-Din Mahmood Ahmad and Maulana Muḥammad ‘Alī Qadiyani’s translation of the Holy Qur’ān” wrote about ‘Alī’s change of faith. He remarks:

“In 1914, Muḥammad ‘Alī Lahorī accepted Mirza Qadiyani as Prophet of Allah. Like the rest of members of movement he accepted Mirza Sahib as Prophet. But in 1914, Ḥakīm Noor-ud-Din died. Then there were two options for the successor of Mirza Bashir-ud-Din Mahmood Ahmad and Muḥammad ‘Alī Lahorī both were the strong candidates. Although Muḥammad ‘Alī Lahorī was educated, religious person and a translator the Holy Qur’ān into English. But Mirza Bashir-ud-Din was capable because he was son of Mirza Qadiyani. According to him, Allah gave symbol by giving birth to him and that’s why his name is Mirza Bashir-ud-Din whereas his real name was Mahmood Ahmad. So members selected Mirza Bashir-ud-Din as new successor instead of Muḥammad ‘Alī Lahorī. So he left Qadiyan and came to Lahore. He established Anjuman-e-Ahmadiyah Ishaat Islam in Lahore.”⁴

So from this point onwards, there started a new controversy in the Qadiyani Movement. Māulānā Abu’l Kalām Āzād stated:

“In Qadiyani Movement one group held the point that non-Ahmadi is also a Muslim either he accepted Mirza Ghulam’s

faith or not accepted while according to other group if a person didn't accept Mirza Qadiyani he is not a Muslim. The second group accepted Mirza Bashir-ud-Din Mahmood Ahmad as the successor. Whereas Muḥammad 'Alī Lahorī defined this concept in strange connotations.”⁵

Most interestingly, Muḥammad 'Alī Lahorī and his family members never took a formal pledge from Mirza Ghulam Ahmad Qadiyani. He gave three services for the Qadiyani Movement till his death. He raised the message of unity among Muslims and elevated the slogan that no one is non-Muslim if he is believer of Allah and his messenger is Hazrat Muḥammad (peace be upon him). He translated the Qur'ān and gave teachings of Islam. He published a number of writings on Islam. He wrote almost fifty seven books and translated the Holy Qur'ān into Urdu and English as well. He worked for almost eighty seven magazines. While The Holy Qur'ān, The Early Caliphate, The Religion of Humanity, The Religion of Islam and The Living Thoughts of the Holy Prophets are few prominent work by him. He started to translate the Holy Qur'ān in English in 1909 and published it in 1917 by the title “The Holy Qur'ān”⁶. This translation has gone through 10 editions. 'Alī's translation with supplemented exegetical notes express Qadiyani beliefs. According to Muḥammad Yakub Khān:

“The English translation of the Holy Qur'ān alone took him seven long years (1909-16). The amount of original research that went into tracing the meanings of the words and verses, the underlying sense of sections and chapters and linking it up with the proceeding and succeeding sections and chapters. So that the whole of the Qur'ān was shown to have the thread of continuous theme... it was a pioneer venture breaking altogether new ground, and the pattern set was followed by all subsequent translations of the Qur'ān by Muslims. It meets every criticism that has been leveled against the Qur'ān. The introduction is a whole mine of research, which throws light on all the salient features of the truly divine religion. There is no attempt at pedantry or literary flourishes. Nor is there any pandering to preconceived popular notions or a bid for cheap popularity. It is loyal service to the word of God aiming at scrupulously honest faithful rendering.”⁷

In the biography of Muḥammad ‘Alī Lahorī his contribution as translator of the Holy Qur’ān is described with examples. H. Amir ‘Alī observed:

“Māulānā Muḥammad ‘Alī’s translation marks a definite epoch in the understanding of Islam. Among the Muslim intelligentsia, it positively arrested the creeping decay of faith as a result of the western materialistic influences and the skeptical trends of western philosophic thought. Typical of this reaction of the Muslim mind was the fulsome acknowledgment by a well-known devout Muslim thinker and writer, referred to by the author in the preface, who ascribes his own rescue from the wilderness of atheism to this translation.”⁸

That’s true it was through ‘Alī’s translation many non-Muslims and rationalist accepted the light of Islam. Marmaduke Pickthall and Muḥammad Asad also admired his contributions. Māulānā ‘Abdul Mājid Daryābādī was the person who embraced Islam after reading the Muḥammad ‘Alī’ English translation of the Holy Qur’ān. In his autobiography, at many times he quoted the role of ‘Alī’s translation in changing his faith. As he writes in his journal “Sach”:

“Māulānā Muḥammad ‘Alī did a great job in the field of English translations. No one can deny his contributions. Due to his translation of the Holy Qur’ān, many non-Muslims accepted Islam. In fact, many Muslims became religious personalities due to reading of this translation. While I am happy to accept that reading of this translation changed my atheism. I embraced Islam and entered in the light of Islam due to this translation. While Muḥammad ‘Alī (comrade) was also fond of this translation.”⁹

Māulānā Muḥammad ‘Alī Lahorī died in 1951 in Lahore. On his life a biography titled “Mujahid-i-Kabir” was published. He denied prophetic miracles and expressed the approach of Qadiyani leaders in his exegetical notes of the Holy Qur’ān. It can be said that ‘Alī was the foremost Qadiyani translator of the Holy Qur’ān in English language among Qadiyani community.

No doubt, Muḥammad ‘Alī Lahorī and Māulānā ‘Abdul Mājid Daryābādī were directly and indirectly linked with each other.

‘Abdul Mājīd Daryābādī (16th March 1892 – 6th January 1977) was an Indian scholar, researcher, journalist, commentator, translator, editor, novelist, critic and exegete of the Holy Qur’ān. His family members were Muslim scholars of North India. He was a descendant of Qazi Muiz al-Din. Maulwi ‘Abdul Qadir (848-1912) was his father. He was a civil servant and famous in town due to his piety, honesty and religious conduct. He performed Hajj in 1922 and passed away at Mina. Nasirun Nisa (1853-1943) was his mother. She was devoted to Islamic rituals. In his autobiography, Daryābādī wrote about her religious practices.”¹⁰

From childhood, this religious lady inculcated Islamic ethics in Daryābādī. He had one sister and one brother. Both of them were elder to him. He acquired his early religious education at home. Apart from the teachings of the Holy Qur’ān, he read Sa‘dī’s Gulistan, Bostan and Pand Nama and Ismail Meeruti’s series of Urdu readers as well. In childhood, he got education from leading mentors of that era. As Riaz Khair Abadi, Abul Fazl Ishanullah and Maulwi Subhān Allah Khān left everlasting impression on the mind of young Daryābādī. In 1908, he got admission in the Canning College. He graduated from there in 1912. The course of the College turned the mind of Daryābādī. In 1909, a person like Daryābādī with religious family background became atheist. As in the book, “Journey of Faith” it is mentioned:

*“Western writings first shook Daryābādī’s moral and ethical assumptions. Rationalism presented before him a new world, which challenged and rejected the old order. He realized for the first time that things could be viewed from a totally different angle. This newly found sense of power thrilled and eventually undid him.”*¹¹

‘Abdul Mājīd Daryābādī critically studied the approaches of Hume, Mill, Spencer, Bradley and Maudsley. While alongwith all readings, he was interested in the political matters of subcontinent as well. He wrote letters to the government against anti-Urdu and pro-Hindi stance. He read the multivolume “International Library of Famous Literature”. This multivolume book attacked on Daryābādī’s faith directly. He changed his self from traditional Muslim setup. But till 1911, he didn’t announced his religious approach openly. He states in his autobiography:

“In 1911, one of the famous Orientalist and missionary Zuemer came Lucknow. He was very popular in his realm. I

was student of B.A and rationalist on that period. I went to meet him with my friend Maulvī 'Abdul Barī Nadvī started to answer his objections in Arabic and I answered him in English. Although missionary Zuemer was unable to judge I am basically atheist.”¹²

Daryābādī's rationalism came in light when he started to write article against Shiblī's al Kalām. He wrote many notes, essays and article in multiple journals for expressing his rationalism. In 1915, he wrote, “The Psychology of Leadership”¹³ this book got fame as first book on psychology by a person of subcontinent. In this book, he remarked:

“All great leaders of mankind – Buddha, Christ and Mohammad have been full of enthusiasm for their teachings; they have been, so to speak the embodiments of their own doctrines. Second class leaders, Rousseau for instance not half so great as the former ones, had on the other hand... Another method so universally employed by a successful leader is the dogmatism of their tone and language, arguments and reasoned statements can appeal to the minds of highly cultured individuals and to them alone. When addressed to a crowd they defeat their purpose. Very frequently they lead to doubt and skepticism and even when they produce a conviction they do so only in an indirect way; whereas the peculiar mental structure of masses demands that opinions and beliefs must be imbued in them as directly as the occasion permits by means of bare assertions or suggestions.”¹⁴ This book got fame in the west due to philosophical approach of author. Then, Daryābādī wrote “Falsafa-i-Ijtima”¹⁵ and “Falsafa-i-Jazbat”¹⁶.

Actually, this is one book with two titles. Basically, this is Urdu translation of the book, the ‘Psychology of Leadership’. One questions always raised by the readers that why Daryābādī was not guided by his followers? As in the period of rationalism, he was in the company of prominent religious writers, scholars, journalist and religious persons. In his book “Ḥakīm ul Ummat”¹⁷, he mentioned the role of Māulānā Ashraf ‘Alī Thānawī in his period of rationalism.

While Akbar Allabadi, Muḥammad ‘Alī Johar, Sayid Sulemān Nadvī, Ferahi Hameed-ud-Din, ‘Abdul Barī Nadvī and Abid Hussain Fateh Pori played dominant role in the darkest period of Daryābādī's

life. In his book “Khuṭuṭ-i-Mashāhīr”¹⁸, he expressed the presences of his fellows, friends and family members in his life. While he met with Dr. Bhagwan Das who proved as a spiritual leader for Daryābādī who was missing the role of a spiritual personality in his life. So, Daryābādī's atheism was shaken by his logical answering. Then Daryābādī started to study Sufism of different religions but he didn't find answers of his questions and queries. He studied Hinduism, Buddhism, Christianity and then turned towards Rūmī. He studied Shiblī's Sirat al-Nabi for critical evaluation. For critical analysis, he approached the English translation of the Holy Qur'ān. He studied Muḥammad 'Alī's “The Holy Qur'ān”¹⁹ and finally accepted the Islam. As he mentioned in his autobiography.

“Gradually I was coming towards the light of Islam. Although it will be right to say I was fifty percent Muslim. In October, 1920, I visited my friend in Deccan. I was sitting in his library, it saw Muḥammad 'Alī (Qadiyani)'s translation of the Holy Qur'ān. I picked the translation and felt change in spirit and accepted Islam as my religion.”²⁰

'Abdul Mājīd Daryābādī as a religious person was associated with Khilafat Movement, Royal Asiatic Society, Nadwatul Ulema Lucknow, Shiblī Academy and many leading Islamic and literary organizations of the subcontinent. He wrote more than fifty books on Islam. While Maulvī Sirajul Haq was the person who admired the ups and downs of Daryābādī's contributions and encouraged him for rendering the Holy Qur'ān in English. Daryābādī was the editor of Sach, Ṣidq and Ṣidq-i-Jadīd. He started to render the Holy Qur'ān in English in 1933 and completed it in 1940 but unfortunately it published in 1957. The amazing thing is when Daryābādī was rationalist, his writings got fame and were published by leading publishers of that period. But being a devoted Muslim translator of the Holy Qur'ān, he struggled almost ten years for publishing his commentary. In that period, he published his commentary weekly. Finally, Daryābādī's “The Holy Qur'ān”²¹ published in 1957 in one volume. In 1971, it was published in two volumes. But in 1981, Daryābādī's commentary with a new title, “Tafsīr-ul-Qur'ān”²² was published in four volumes in 1991, 2007 and 2014 respectively in Pakistan. Daryābādī's translation is also published by Islamic Foundation with a new title, “The Glorious Qur'ān.”²³

Certain features of both translations are common and few aspects are different. For instance:

1. Titles of the Translations:

Muḥammad ‘Alī Lahorī named his translation:

“The Holy Qur’ān: Arabic Text, English Translation and Commentary”²⁴

Māulānā ‘Abdul Mājīd Daryābādī entitled his translation:

*“The Holy Qur’ān: Translated from the Original Arabic with Lexical, Grammatical, Historical, Geographical and Eschatological Comments and explanations and side-lights on Comparative Religion.”*²⁵

Daryābādī’s English translation is published by different publishers. In 1971, Daryābādī’s “The Holy Qur’ān”²⁶ was published in two volumes. He revised his work as he mentioned in the autobiography. In 1981, a change came in the title of the translation. His English translation with a new title “Tafsīr-ul-Qur’ān”²⁷ was published in four volumes. His English translation without exegetical notes had published from Lahore, he named it “Qur’ān-i-Hakeem”²⁸. It is true Daryābādī is among those translators who got fame due to the comparative religions approach. Later, his “Tafsīr-ul-Qur’ān”²⁹ was published from Pakistan as well. It is possible that he changed the title from “The Holy Qur’ān” to “Tafsīr-ul-Qur’ān”. Later, his translation was published by Islamic Foundation with a new title “The Glorious Qur’ān”³⁰. Daryābādī’s translation was published in Pakistan in 2007 and 2014 as well with same titles.

2. Preface to the Translations:

Both translators wrote well defined preface in their translations. But the preface of Muḥammad ‘Alī’s translation is more expressive and informative than the Daryābādī’s. As Muḥammad ‘Alī added preface in the revised edition and wrote the need of English translation. Moreover, he also mentioned the effects of his translation on latter translators of the Holy Qur’ān. Muḥammad ‘Alī Lahorī wrote:

“As regards the translation I need not say much. That a need was felt for a translation of the Holy Book of Islam with full explanatory notes from the pen of a Muslim in spite of the existing translations is universally admitted. Whether this

translation satisfies that need, only time will decide I may, however say that I have tried to be more faithful to the Arabic Text than all existing English translations... Whenever a departure has been made from the ordinary or primary significance of a word, reason for this departure has been given in a footnote and authorities have been amply quoted."³¹

Muḥammad 'Alī Lahorī mentioned few journals and newspapers who admitted the work of Lahorī. He mentioned that Hafiz Sarwar and Pickthall reproduced his work according to many scholars. In the preface, he remarked:

*"Even in the matter of interpretation most of the views adopted by me we have found acceptance with them. The following quotations from The Moslem World, July, 1931, Revd. Zwemer's quarterly, would furnish interesting reading in this connection: A careful comparison of Mr. Pickthall's translation with that of the Ahmadiyya translator, Maulvī Muḥammad 'Alī, shows conclusively, that Mr. Pickthall's work is not every much more than a revision of the Ahmadiyyah version (p.289)... Similar views have been expressed by others writers. Thus the author of Islam in its True Light calls this Translation a leading start for subsequent similar Muslim works (p.69) and mention both Mr. Sarwar and Mr. Pickthall as following closely this Translation. The reason is not for to seek. My work was a work of labour."*³²

Lahorī's translation affected the English translators of the Holy Qur'ān. Daryābādī was also one of those translators who accepted the spell of 'Alī's work. In spite of the fact 'Abdul Mājid Daryābādī also wrote a constructive preface to his translation. He mentioned six rules for the translators, defined his labour of seven years, elaborated the methods, and defined whom he followed during the translation of the Holy Qur'ān. In the preface, he writes that why there is not any successful translation of the Holy Qur'ān. He wrote:

"The difficulty is increased hundredfold when one has to render into English with any degree of accuracy and precision a work so rich in meaning, so pithy in expression, so vigorous in style and so subtle in the implications as the Holy Qur'ān. To reproduce even partially its exotic beauty,

wonderful grandeur and magical vivacity without sacrificing the requirements of English idiom and usage, is the despair of the translator and an ideal impossible of attainment. The result is that every fresh attempt at translating the Holy write brings home, in varying degrees, the truth of the saying that nothing is so unlike an original as its copy.”³³

Muḥammad ‘Alī Lahorī in the preface admired his work and mentioned that few translators copied him. Although Pickthall has mentioned that Muḥammad ‘Alī’s work is not up to the mark. ‘Abdul Mājid Daryābādī in his preface highlights whom he followed in his translation. In fact, Daryābādī reproduced the work of those translators and many other translators as well whose names are not mentioned in the preface of his commentary.

3. Introduction of the Translation:

Muḥammad ‘Alī Lahorī’s translation has a well-defined introduction. The introduction is divided in subparts. Its subheadings are as follows:

- i) The Holy Qur’ān and its Divisions
- ii) World’s Greatest Spiritual Force
- iii) Relation to Earlier Scriptures
- iv) Liberal view of other Religions
- v) Life After Death
- vi) The Position of Woman
- vii) Purity of the Qur’ānic Text
 - a. Every portion of the Holy Qur’ān was written as it was revealed.
 - b. All revelation was committed to memory.
 - c. Arrangement of verses and chapters was the prophets own work
 - d. Abu Bakr collected original written manuscripts of the Qur’ān.
 - e. Uthman ordered further copies from Abu Bakr’s original collection.
 - f. Differences of Readings

Hafiz Ghulam Sarwar remarks:

“The most elaborate and scholarly exposition on the arrangement and collection of the Holy Qur’ān, which forms a complete answer to the criticisms of western writings on the

Qur'ān. No lover of truth and no student of the Holy Qur'ān can do without this authoritative and masterly essay on the subjects treated therein, viz: the evidence as, to the writing of the Holy Qur'ān; how it was committed to memory; how the verse and chapters were arranged, how the Holy Book was authoritatively copied out and published by the companions of the Holy Prophet (peace be with him); what is the meaning of the so-called different readings; and finally a complete refutation of the grossly dishonest allegations of Christian writers as to there being other readings than those which are known to the world of Islam. Even since this translation was published in 1917 the preface thereof has become the vade mecum of Muslim students, writers and lectures and there is no doubt as time goes on its value will increase."³⁴

Muḥammad 'Alī Lahorī raised questions in the introduction and answered them in detail. He stated:

*"The important question before us, therefore, is whether the verses and chapters in an order different from that of their revelation and if so whether the present arrangement is the work of the Holy Prophet?... the arrangement of the verses and chapters of the Holy Qur'ān was effected by the Holy Prophet under the guidance of Divine revelation is shown in the first place by the Holy Qur'ān itself. There we read: "Surely on us (rests) the collecting of it and the reciting of it. So when we have recited it, follow its recitation (75:17,18). This is one of the very earliest revelations showing that the collection of the Holy Qur'ān, that is, its gathering into one, whole, with an arrangement of its various parts, was according to the Divine scheme to be brought about by the guidance of Divine revelation."*³⁵

In 1981, Daryābādī's translation was published with a new title "Tafsīr-ul-Qur'ān" in four volumes. In this edition, Abul Ḥasan 'Alī Nadwī wrote an introduction to Daryābādī's translation. Nadwī wrote:

"The need of another English translation of the Holy Qur'ān. Complete with the explanatory notes, which could be recommended with confidence to the Muslims and non-Muslims whose mother tongue was English or who found it easy, owing to their cultural background or educational upbringing to understand it better in English language. The

author of such an exegesis had to expound the Qur'ān text in terms acceptable to the scholars of Ahl-Sunnat wal-Jamāat: to avoid putting forward his own views and ideas in the exegesis; to be fully conversant with Arabic lexicon and rules of grammar; to avoid the apologetic approach in expounding the Qur'ānic injunctions and institution... taking all these factors into account the translations and commentary of the 'Abdul Mājid Daryābādī is undoubtedly unique and most acceptable among all the exegetical renderings of the Holy Qur'ān attempted so far in the English language."³⁶

The introduction of both translations are totally different from each others. Muḥammad 'Alī's translation contained detailed introduction which expressed the information and features about the Holy Qur'ān while introduction to "Tafsīr-ul-Qur'ān" depicted the features of Daryābādī's English translation of the Holy Qur'ān.

4. Sources of the Translation:

Both translators of the Holy Qur'ān gave references from many books in the exegetical notes of the Holy Qur'ān. Muḥammad 'Alī Lahorī quoted from Lane's lexicon most of the times whenever he defined literal meaning of any Arabic word. He gave references from the Bible as well. He has quoted numerous ahadith as well. While 'Abdul Mājid Daryābādī gave abbreviations of different books which he used in the exegetical notes of the Holy Qur'ān. In the 4th volume, he gave bibliography of the commentary. He divided the bibliography in six parts and the second part is divided in further subparts. Although few books are not mentioned in the bibliography because those books are mentioned in the preface of the translation. In fact, 'Abdul Mājid Daryābādī embraced Islam after reading the translation of Muḥammad 'Alī Lahorī and many people accepted Islam after reading Daryābādī's commentary of the Holy Qur'ān. As Maryam Jameelah in her book admired Daryābādī's approach regarding comparative religions."³⁷

Although in the commentary Daryābādī used secondary sources for the interpretation of the verses. He didn't give reference from primary sources.

5. Introduction to the Sūrahs:

Many translators wrote introduction to the Sūrahs. For instance, Muḥammad 'Alī Lahorī, 'Abdullah Yūsuf 'Alī and Muḥammad Asad. But 'Abdul Mājid Daryābādī wrote introduction to few Sūrahs only.

He wrote even the introduction of Sūrah in the exegetical notes. While Muḥammad ‘Alī Lahorī has an introduction to the Sūrah showing its connection with previous chapter and verses. Muḥammad ‘Alī Lahorī introduced chapter No. 57, Al-Hadid in these words:

“This chapter is entitled iron this word occurs in v.25 in reference to the punishment of the opponents... From this, the 57th chapter, to the 66th, there is again a group of Madinan chapters, which all seem to have been revealed from about the 4th to the 7th year of the Hijrah with the exception of ch. 63 which seems to have been revealed in the 2nd year of the Hijrah, and ch. 62 and ch. 64 which in all probability were revealed in the first. This is the last group of Madinan revelation and it complements the subject matter of the Madinan group of chapters with which the Holy Qur’ān opens. It may be noted that five out of the ten chapters of the glorification of the Divine Being, which shows that this period was marked by the onward march of Islam.”³⁸

Daryābādī copied the introduction to some Sūrah from ‘Abdullah Yūsuf ‘Alī’s “The Holy Qur’ān”. But he wrote introduction to few Sūrah about which he didn’t give any reference. For instance: E. M. Wherry wrote introduction to Sūrah al-Fil as follows:

“This chapter is remarkable for its allusion to an incident in the history of Makkah, as an example of how God deals with His enemies.”³⁹

As Daryābādī reproduced the work with little change. He copied as:

“This chapter is remarkable for its allusion to an incident in the history of Makka, as an example of how God deals with those who oppose His will.”⁴⁰

Although Daryābādī pointed out that the introduction to surahs have been copied from ‘Abdullah Yūsuf ‘Alī’s The Holy Qur’ān but he didn’t mention the name of Wherry because he imitated him in many notes.

6. Literal Meanings of Arabic Words:

Both translators have defined literal meanings of the Arabic words from Lane’s lexicon. While Muḥammad ‘Alī Lahorī gave literal

interpretation of the verses due to which readers feel confused too. For instance, Lahorī interpreted verse 6:35 as under:

“And if there running away is hard on thee, then, if thou canst, seek an opening into the earth or a ladder to heaven to bring them a sign! And if Allah pleased He would certainly have gathered them all to guidance, so be not of the ignorant.”⁴¹

Muḥammad ‘Alī Lahorī rendered many verses in literal style, which confused the readers about the exact contents of the Qur’ānic message. For instance, 2:240, 3:174, 5:1, 5:33, 6:35, 6:69, 8:56 and 11:17.

While Hafiz Ghulam Sarwar remarks:

“Maulvī Muḥammad ‘Alī is not literal in his translation, he gives the literal meaning in the margin.”⁴²

‘Abdul Mājid Daryābādī also gave literal meanings of the Arabic words from Lane’s lexicon. He also gave literal rendering of Qur’ānic verses. He stated in the preface:

“My constant endeavour has been to give as literal and as faithful a rendering of the Holy Qur’ān as is consistent with tolerable English.”⁴³

Although he did literal translation of the verses, but few interpretations of the verses are idiomatic as well. For example, Daryābādī interpreted Sūrah al-Fath verse No. 11 as follows:

“Those of the desert Arabs who lagged behind will presently say to thee: our properties and our families kept us occupied, so ask thou forgiveness for us, They say with their tongues what is not in their heart. Say thou: who can avail you in aught against Allah. If He intended you hurt or intended you benefit? Yea! Allah is ever Aware of what you do.”⁴⁴

In fact, Daryābādī’s translations is a blend of literal and idiomatic style.

7. Interpretation of Prophetic Miracles:

Both translators defined miracles with distinctive style. Muḥammad ‘Alī Lahorī in the exegetical notes of verse 105:1 denied the miracle. He translated, the verse:

أَلَمْ تَرَ كَيْفَ فَعَلَ رَبُّكَ بِأَصْحَابِ الْفِيلِ^٥

“Has thou not seen how thy Lord dealt with the possessors of the elephant.”⁴⁶

Daryābādī reproduced the interpretation of this verse with little change. He copied Muḥammad ‘Alī Lahorī as:

“Has thou not seen how thy Lord dealt with the fellows of the elephant.”⁴⁷

In the exegetical notes to this verse Muḥammad ‘Alī Lahorī commented:

“There is no authentic hadith as to how Abrahah’s army was destroyed. According to Ikrimah, everyone at whom a stone was flung was affected with small pox (RM). A report from Ya‘qub to the same effect is narrated by Ibn Khathir. Thus it was a virulent small pox that broke out in the invading army while yet a little distance from Makkah and the result was the Abrahah himself being affected with the pestilence, the whole army fled in a state of confusion, leaving the corpses of the dead for the birds to feast on.”⁴⁸

Daryābādī in the exegetical note to verse 105:1 stated:

“About fifty days before the birth of the Prophet, Abraha the Abyssinian viceroy of Yemen, Christian by religion, proceeded against Makka, at the head of a large army, with the object of destroying the K‘aba. He had with him, one or more elephants and the invading army was deemed invincible. The Makkans in their despondency retired to the neighbouring hills, leaving the Lord of the Ka‘ba to protect it. Suddenly a large flock of birds like swallows, came flying from the sea coast and pelted the invading army with stones. Panic-stricken they made a hasty retreat in disorder and dismay, and there was an outbreak of small pox in the camp. Scattered among the valleys, and forsaken by their guides, every one of these perished including Abraha himself, and the Holy Ka‘ba was miraculously saved from destruction.”⁴⁹

Both translators have different approach as regarding the miracles, which are mentioned in the Holy Qur’ān. S. Habibul Haq

Nadvī pointed out his pseudo rationalism in his book review. He remarks:

“He first projected and amplified the death of Jesus in order to justify the claim of Mirza Ghulam Ahmad to the Prophethood. The existence of angels and jinns was denied by him. They, according to him, symbolize the forces of good (khair), (or the will of God) and the force of evil (sharr) respectively paradise is not real; it signifies the pleasure of God and Hell His wrath... Muḥammad ‘Alī, like Asad, rejected the miracles and strained Arabic grammar to justify his point.”⁵⁰

Well Neal Robinson reviewed on ‘Alī’s The Holy Qur’ān as:

“Muḥammad ‘Alī retains the reference to the armies of jinn and birds but explains in his notes that the former were mountain tribesmen whom Solomon had subjugated, whereas: the latter were probably his cavalry who were called birds because of their swiftness, Solomon’s knowledge of the speech of bird is explained as a metaphor for his use of birds for conveying message. His ability to communicating ‘Alī’s translation because the words the valley of ants and “and” in the verses 19 are rendered as valley of the Naml and a Namlite respectively and there is a note suggesting that the reference is to a tribe. Similarly the Arabic word for “hoopoe” is simply transliterated as Hudhud and treated as the name of a person. Finally, there is a note arguing that the ifrit of the jinn was probably one of the Amalekites who were men of large stature.”⁵¹

Māulānā ‘Abdul Mājīd Daryābādī defined the circumstances of miracles in the exegetical notes as well. Lahorī didn’t accept the miracles but Daryābādī elaborated them. Lahori has done this due to his Qadiani affiliations.

8. Description of Disjointed Letters

Many translators of the Holy Qur’ān didn’t translate disjointed letters. But Muḥammad ‘Alī Lahorī is among those commentators of the Holy Qur’ān who interpreted the disjointed letters. Lahorī translated verse 2:1 as follows:



“I, Allah, am the best Knower.”

In the exegetical notes Muḥammad ‘Alī Lahorī wrote:

“‘Alīf, lam, mīm, occurring here as well as at the commencement of the 3rd, 29th, 30th, 31st and 32nd chapters of the Holy Qur’ān as meaning I, Allah am the best Knower, ‘Alīf standing for ana, lām for Allah, and mīm for a‘lam (AH, IJ) being respectively the first, the middle and the last letters of the words for which they stand. Other regard them as contractions for some Divine attribute. That they may also serve as the names of chapters is no ground for supposing that they carry no significance.”⁵³

Muḥammad ‘Alī Lahorī translated the disjointed letters according to his own rules of Arabic grammar. He even pointed out that many translators prior to him mistranslated disjointed letters. As he translated “يٰٓسَ”⁵⁴ as “O man” and in the exegetical notes he wrote:

“The meaning of Yā Sīn in the dialect of Tayy is ya insānu, i.e., O man or O perfect man. Thus Yā meaning O, is retained in full, while the word Insān (man) is represented by sin. There is almost a consensus of opinion that the reference in this abbreviation is to the Holy Prophet himself.”⁵⁵

Māulānā ‘Abdul Mājīd Daryābādī abstained from writing on disjointed letters. He only explained them in the exegetical notes of Sūrah al-Baqarah verse 2:1 as follows:

“Three letters of the Arabic alphabet generally held to be symbolic some profound and sublime mystic verities. God knows best what He means with these letters (Th). Some, however, on the authority of IA. Consider the letters be an abbreviation of some such phrase as انا الله اعلم which means ‘I am Allah, best Knower’. The Arabic orators sometimes used to open their discourses with similar vocables. Also compare Ps. 119 in the OT, where the Psalmist has arranged his meditations in an elaborate alphabetical form. It has been called the alphabet of Divine Love.”⁵⁶

In the whole commentary, Daryābādī gave reference to this note for the description of disjointed letters.

9. Originality of Work

Hafiz Ghulam Sarwar wrote about Muḥammad ‘Alī’s “The Holy Qur’ān” in the start of his commentary. He observed:

“The translation is supplemented by very copious notes and commentaries, which deal both with the meanings of the words used in the original text and form short essays on the subjects treated in the original. A mass of learning and research has been accumulated in these notes and comments which any man might be proud of.”⁵⁷

In the preface Muḥammad ‘Alī Lahorī mentioned that many translators copied his work. He mentioned the names of ‘Abdullah Yūsuf ‘Alī and Pickthall as well, whereas both translators have outstanding style of interpretation and both of them deny the ‘Alī’s allegation. Hafiz Ghulam Sarwar pointed out almost twenty three examples of his loose phrases. His literal translation with mistakes of idioms confused the readers. Hafiz stated:

“Moulvi Mohammad ‘Alī has with commendable zeal aimed at correctness rather than at nicety in the choice of expressions, and this translation is professedly literal,

“I have tried to be more faithful to the words of the Holy writ than all existing translations in the English language, among which Palmer has remained nearest to the word.”

This may account to some extent for its prosaic character while the factor that the translator is working at two languages (Arabic and English), neither of which is his own, accounts excusably for a somewhat extraordinary use of English and occasional obscurity.”⁵⁸

Although Māulānā ‘Abdul Mājīd Daryābādī in the preface of his commentary acknowledged the translations of few commentators. But, he reproduced the work of only few translators in his commentary. Mofakhar Hussain Khān in his article wrote:

“In Daryābādī’s commentary of lexical, grammatical, historical, geographical and general exegetical interest are given in the footnotes. While preparing his own translation Daryābādī consulted Bell, Sale, Lane, Pickthall and Bilgrami (unpublished). But he drew materials from Thanvi (Urdu), Wherry and Yūsuf ‘Alī for his commentary.”⁵⁹

In fact, Daryābādī not only reproduced the work of above mentioned translators, but he also copied Mirza Abul Fazl, Muḥammad ‘Alī Lahorī, ‘Abdullah Yūsuf ‘Alī and Pickthall. For instance, Mirza Abul Fazl translated verse 113:2 as follows:

“From the evil of what he has created.”⁶⁰

Daryābādī reproduced as:

“From the evil of what he has created.”⁶¹

Daryābādī reproduced the work of ‘Abdullah Yūsuf ‘Alī as well.

‘Abdullah Yūsuf ‘Alī translated verse 15:30 as:

“So the angels prostrated themselves, All of the together.”⁶²

Daryābādī imitated the translation of verse 15:30 as:

“So the angels prostrated themselves all of them together.”⁶³

‘Abdul Mājīd Daryābādī copied the work of Muḥammad ‘Alī Lahorī at many places. He writes in his autobiography:

“May Allah give highest rank of Jannah to Muḥammad ‘Alī Lahorī. His faith towards Mirza Ghulam Ahmad Qadiyani was right or not? I have no concern with that approach. According to my observation, it was Muḥammad ‘Alī Lahorī’s English translation of the Holy Qur’ān which turned me towards the light of Islam.”⁶⁴

Māulānā ‘Abdul Mājīd Daryābādī copied Muḥammad ‘Alī Lahorī with exact words and sometimes with little change as well. Although in his autobiography, he mentioned that after reading the Holy Qur’ān with faith he abstained from Lahorī’s translation. But in the fact, he copied the work of Muḥammad ‘Alī Lahorī. However, he didn’t repeat mistakes of Lahorī. For instance, he didn’t deny miracles nor he described disjointed letters. A.R. Kidwā’ī remarks:

“Daryābādī’s outstanding contribution to the Qur’ānic studies has remained largely unacknowledged. He is the first scholar to contribute a commentary in English, which is in total accord with the consensus view of the Ummah. Moreover, far from being a loose or lax paraphrase, his translation is faithful to the original to the extent possible.”⁶⁵

Conclusion

Both translators translated the Holy Qur'ān into English with certain goals. Muḥammad 'Alī Lahorī interpreted the Holy Qur'ān for supporting the approach of Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, whereas Māulānā 'Abdul Mājīd Daryābādī translated the Holy Qur'ān for answering the objections of the west on Islam. Moreover, both translators rendered the Holy Qur'ān into Urdu as well. Daryābādī studied western literature and refuted western objections through his work, whereas Muḥammad 'Alī Lahorī rendered the Holy Qur'ān into English to spread the message of Mirza Ghulam Ahmad Qadiyani. Although Māulānā 'Abdul Mājīd Daryābādī has no concern with Mirza Sahib, but he followed the style of Muḥammad 'Alī Lahorī and after the independence of Pakistan he showed soft corner for Ahamdiyyah Lahore group as well. Muhammad 'Ali Lahori is found guilty of mistranslation of many verses of the Holy Qur'an, especially the verses related to miracles, promised Messiah and those verses which support the view of Qadiyanis. In fact, Daryabadi reproduced the work of Wherry, Mirza Abdul Fadl, Muhammad Ali Lahori, Bell, Sale and Yusuf Ali. Both translations with their distinctive features remain outstanding among English translations of the Holy Qur'an in the subcontinent.

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