

EARLYPOLEMICAL SCHOLARSHIP ON QUR'ĀN (CASE STUDY OF JOHM OF DAMECUS)

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In the history of Europe, first time a formal living interaction among Muslims, Jews and Christians originated in Muslim Spain during the period of 711-1492. This period has known as the *Andalusian Period* in which Islamic rule introduced new venues of knowledge, culture and a peaceful co-existence among the people of different school of thoughts. The importance of this period is due to its appropriate environment for the promotion of Arabic language and literature in Jewish and Christian literary circles. In the same period, John of Damascus started a polemical criticism on Qur'ān, Muhammad and Islam formally in his work *On Heresies*, where he specified only a chapter of his larger work, *The Fountain of Knowledge*. John did not consider Islam as a constant religion, rather a Christian heresy and Qur'ān as a derived discourse from Judo-Christian sources. In this regard an overview of Muslim-Christian polemical discussions is necessary to know the evolutionary developments in the Western views of Qur'ānic textual history. To fulfill the same purpose, this article has been prepared to make the correct calculations in order to evaluate the recent orientalist's approach to the fundamental sources of Islam.

Criticism on Islam has its existence since Islam's formative stages. Early written criticism came from Christians, prior to 1000 AD, many of whom viewed Islam as a radical Christian heresy.¹ The significance of this period has been established as considering it a starting point for religious debates and other related substantial issues came into common discussions. According to Adullah Saeed:

This period of largely peaceful co-existence began to decline in 1031 when the Cordoba Caliphate ended. Muslim rule gradually came to an end in the fifteenth century, when the whole of Spain came under the control of Christian rulers, and Muslim and Jewish inhabitants were either forced to leave or convert to Christianity.²

Among the most discussed aspects of early polemicists, the morality of the Holy Prophet Muḥammad (PBUH) and the

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54. Pickthall, *Islamic Culture*, July (1931), p.433
55. *Kihwai*, A.R., *Muslim World Book Review*, 7, No. 4, (1987), p.30
56. *Mujtahid*, *Allama Syed Muhammad Razi* was a prominent *Shia* scholar in the mid of 1980s.
57. Dawn, daily, Friday, April, 09, (1982)
58. *Zia-ul-Haq*, General *Muhammad* (1924-1988) was born in *Jullundur*, east *Punjab*, became Pakistan Chief of Army Staff in 1976, Chief Martial Law Administrator in 1977 and president of Pakistan in 1978. He died in an air crash on August 17, 1988 near *Bhawalpur*. (The New Encyclopedia Britannica, (1986) vol.12^p:914)
59. Dr. *Abdul Wahid Halepota* was the son of *Gul Muhammad Halepota*. He was born in 1917 in *Hyderabad Sindh*. He wrote both in Urdu and English. Some of his works are, *Shah Wali Allah Ke Usule-Hikmat, Sa Akhlaq-Fadhelah, Wahdat-e-Din* *Tasawwur, Islam Aur Markaziyyat*. (Urdu Jame' Encyclopedia Shaikh *Niaz Ahmad, Lahore*, 1991), p.981
60. Peter Clark, Marmaduke Pickthall: *British Muslim*, (1986), p.67
61. Peter Clark, Marmaduke Pickthall: *British Muslim*, (1986), p.67
62. *Ibid*^{p.67}
63. *Ahmad Ali*, *Al-Qur'an*, (Akrash Publishing, Karachi, ed II, 1986)
64. Three of them resided in Karchi after the partition of sub-continent in 1947. Before this they were the citizen of the State of Hyderabad Deccan (Daily Dawn, Monday April 19, 1982).
65. Daily Dawn, Monday, April 19, (1982)
66. Daily Dawn, Monday, April 19, (1982)
67. *Ibid*
68. *Maryam Jameelah*, (b.1934) was born in a Jew family in New York as Margaret Marcus; embraced Islam in 1961. She migrated to Pakistan in 1962 and married to *Muhammad Yusuf Khan*. She has wrote more than 25 books on different aspects of Islam. Some of his works are: *Ahmad Khalil*, *Islam and Orientalism*, *Western Civilization*. (Correspondence Between *Maulana Maudoodi* and *Maryam Jameelah*, (*Muhammad Yusuf Khan & Sons, Sunnat Nagar, Lahore*, 1986)^{pp.33,36,77, 81,} and back page
69. *Mariam Jameelah's* Letter to researcher, February 13th (2005)
70. Pickthall, The Meaning of Glorious Qur'an, Translator's foreword To The Original Edition p^{XIX}
71. Pickthall, The Meaning of Glorious Qur'an, Translator's Note, p.31
72. Her letter to researcher, July 9th 2004
73. *Hafiz*, A Rendering of the Qur'an, (Book Review), *Islamic Culture*, vol. 4, No. 2 April (1930), pp.324-328 and Pickthall, Mr. *Yusuf Ali's* Translation of the *Qur'an*, *Islamic Culture*, vol. 9 No. 3 July (1935), pp.519-521
74. Peter Clark, Marmaduke Pickthall: *British Muslim*, p.148
75. *Ibid*, p.148
76. *Intisharat Jajarmi, Khayaban Danishgah, Tehran*
77. *Arafat.El-Ashi*, *Amana* Beltsville, USA (1996)
78. Pickthall, The Meaning of the Glorious *Qur'an*, Urdu translation *Fateh Muhammad Jullendhri*, *Kitab Bhavan*, (1996), ed-4, New Dehli

- Prophet'. He is one of the most popular Arab poets of all times. (The Encyclopedia of Islam, Leiden, (1993), vol.VII,pp.769-771)
27. J.E. Hanauer was a Chaplain of Damascus and a scholar of Arabic literature, botanist antiquarian and folk-lorist, (Anne Fremantle, Loyal Enemy,p.37)
28. Pickthall, The Black Crusade V, The New Age Weekly, London, Vol. XII, No. 5 December 5, (1912),p.103
29. Anne Fremantle, Loyal Enemy, p.81
30. *M. Haneef Shahid*, Writings of M. M. W. Pickthall, *Sh. M. Ashraf, Lahore, Pakistan*, (n.d.),p.5
31. Ibid,pp.5-6
32. Pickthall, Islam and Modernism, Islamic Review & Muslim India, January (1918),p.8
33. Notes (Editorial) Islamic Review & Muslim India, January (1918),p.3
34. Ibid, Islamic Review & Muslim India, January (1918),p.4
35. Ibid,p.4
36. *Khalid Shaldrake* (1888-1947) embraced Islam in early years of twentieth century. In 1904 he was the only Englishman in Islamic Society London. He was Assistant Secretary and Vice President of the society. (Islamic Review & Muslim India, January (1914),pp.31-32)
37. Islamic Review & Muslim India, January (1918),p. 4
38. Pickthall, Translator's foreword, The Meaning of the Glorious *Qur'an*, Islamic Propagation Services, *Lahore*, (n.d.),p.vii
39. *Muhammad Ali, Maulana*, The Holy *Qur'an*, Publisher's Note, (*Ahmadiyya Anjuman Isha'at-e-Islam, Lahore*, Inc. U.S.A., Ohio, U.S.A. 2002),pp.5-6
40. The Holy *Qur'an*, Preface to the Revised Edition, (*Ahmadiyyah Anjuman Isha'at-e-Islam, Lahore, Pakistan*, 1973),pp.vii-viii
41. The Holy *Qur'an*, Preface to the Revised Edition, (*Ahmadiyyah Anjuman Isha'at-e-Islam, Lahore, Pakistan*, 1973),.p.ix
42. Pickthall, The *Qur'an*, Islamic Review & Muslim India, January (1919),p.19
43. Pickthall, Islamic Review & Muslim India, January, (1919), The *Qur'an*,pp.17-24
44. Ibid¹,p.19
45. Ibid¹,pp.23-24
46. Ibid¹ Pickthall, Islamic Review & Muslim India, January, (1919), The *Qur'an*,p.24
47. Ibid,p.24
48. Pickthall, The Meaning of Glorious *Qur'an*, Translators Foreword,p.1
49. The Meaning of the Glorious *Qur'an*, Islamic Propagation Services, *Lahore*, (n.d.), Translator's Foreword, p.vii
50. Pickthall, Arabs and Non-Arabs, and the Question of Translating the *Qur'an*, Islamic Culture, vol. 5, No.3 July (1931),p.433
51. *Sheikh Rashid Rida* (1865-1935) was an Egyptian scholar who is famous for his *Tafsir al-Manar*.
52. Pickthall, Arabs and Non-Arabs, and the Question of Translating the *Qur'an*, Islamic Culture, vol. 5, No.3 July (1931),p.433
53. Idem¹ The Meaning of the Glorious *Qur'an*, Translator's Note,p.31

- Winston Churchill, and the first Indian Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru were old Harrovians. (Wikipedia)
- 7- Sir Winston Leonard Spencer Churchill (1874-1965) British Prime Minister for two terms, 1940-1945 and 1951 to 1955. He won the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1953 for his historical writings. (Wikipedia)
 - 8- Welsh is a member of Brythonic branch of Celtic language spoken natively in Wales. Webster's New Twentieth Century Dictionary of the English language, unabridged, (n.d.),p.2078
 - 9- Spanish or Castilian is a romance language, originally from the northern area of Spain. It is the official language of Spain. Webster's New Twentieth Century Dictionary of the English language, unabridged, (n.d.),p.1738
 - 10- Peter Clark, Marmaduke Pickthall: British Muslim,p.9
 11. *Kidwai*, A.R., Translations of the *Qur'an*, Translating the Untranslatable, A Survey of English Translations of the *Qur'an*, The Muslim World Book Review, vol. 7, No. 4, Summer (1987),p.70
 12. A chaplain of king Charles I (r.1625 – 1649). He translated the Holy Qur'an from French translation of Sieur DuRyer into English (1649).
 13. *Yusuf Ali, Abdulkah*, An English Interpretation of the Holy *Qur'an*, *Sh. Muhammad Ashraf, Lahore*, (n.d.),p.xi
 14. *Ghulam Sarwar, Al-Haj, Hafiz*, Translation of the Holy *Qur'an*, Woking, England, (1929),p.xi
 15. *Yusuf Ali*, op. cit.,p.xi
 16. *Ibid*,p.xi
 17. *Ibid*,p.xi
 18. *Kidwai*, Translations of the *Qur'an*, The Muslim World Book Review, Summer 1987,p.67
 19. *Abu'l Fadl, Mirza*, The *Qur'an*, (G.A. Asghar & Co. Allahabad, 1911)
 20. *Kidwai*, op. cit.,p.67
 21. *Muhammad Ali, Maulvi*, The Holy *Qur'an*, Woking, Surrey, England, (1917).
 22. *Ghulam Sarwar*, Translation of the Holy *Qur'an*, Introduction,p.xlvii
 23. Some Secondary Sources as *Akhtar Rahi* in Monthly *Fikr-o-Nazar* (May 1981) declared his birth place Suffalk, *Abdul Ghani Farooqi*, In *Tahzib-Al Akhlaq* 'Aligarh (December 1993) wrote Near Suffalk, both are wrong.
 24. Arabian Nights: The Book of One Thousand and One Nights is a collection of stories compiled over thousands of years by various authors; everything in this book revolves around the ruler Shahryar and his wife Sheherazad. Well known stories of this are, "Aladdin", "Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves" and "The Seven Voyages of Sinbad the Sailor". (Wikipedia)
 25. *Abu Nuwas*: (750-810) was a renowned classical Arabic poet. His wine songs (*Khamriyyat*) are very popular. (Wikipedia)
 26. *Al-Mutanabbi* (915-955) *abu'l-Tayyib Ahmad bin al-Husayn al-Djufi* was an Arab poet. He proclaimed more than once that he was a Prophet, so he got the name '*Al-Mutanabbi*' which means 'a false

This literary way of Qur'ānic interpretation is followed by every translator according to his merit. Those interpreters of the Holy Qur'ān who establish some literary merit, following Pickthall are, Abdullah Yusuf Ali, Arthur. J. Arberry and Muhammad Asad.

Muhammad Ali Lahori benefited from the reviews published in Islamic Culture edited by Marmaduke Pickthall during his revision of 1946-1951.⁷³

Translations of "The Meaning of the Glorious Qur'ān":

Pickthall's translation itself has been translated.

1. In 1958 extracts were put into Turkish by Inasi Siber in Ankara. Other extracts were published by M.Cevki Alay and Ali Kitabo in Istanbul the same year.⁷⁴
2. In 1964 it was rendered into Portuguese in Mozambique.⁷⁵
3. Jajarmi Publications published the Meaning of the Glorious Qur'ān's Persian Translation in Tehran.⁷⁶
4. Arafat.El-Ashi has revised and edited the Pickthall's translation in Modern English. It was published in 1996 by Amana Beltsville. USA.⁷⁷
5. In 1960 a trilingual edition - English, Arabic and Urdu appeared in Delhi. Urdu translation was of *Fateh Muham Jullendhri*.⁷⁸

NOTES & REFERENCES

1. All sources in English language agreed upon this date of birth except Arafat-EL-Ashi who in "why we embrace Islam, Book five, p. 59, mentioned Pickthall's date of birth as 7th April 1878.
- 2- A clergyman is a member of the clergy, ordained Minister one in holy Orders (ed.) David B. Barrett, World, Christian Encyclopedia, (Oxford University Press, Nairobi, 1982),p.818
- 3- Measles is a disease caused by a virus (ed.) Paul Singleton and Diana Sainsbury, Dictionary of Microbiology, (John Wiley & Sons, New York, 1981),p.237
- 4- Bronchitis is inflammation of the bronchi (medium size airways) in the lungs. It is caused by virus or bacteria persistent cough is the main symptom. op. cit.p.61
- 5- Circumcision is a surgery that removes some or the entire foreskin (prepuce) from the penis. (Webster's New Twentieth Century Dictionary of the English language, unabridged, (Simon and Schuster, USA, n.d.),p.328
- 6- Harrow School (Originally: The Free Grammar School of John Lyon, generally Harrow) is one of the world's most famous schools. It is located in Harrow on the Hill in the London Borough of Harrow. It was founded in 1572. Seven former British Prime Ministers, most notably

It was the Pickthall translation of Qur'an Majeed... which converted me to Islam. Pickthall's translation is still preferred by me to all other versions.⁶⁹

Following effects of Pickthall over his prominent successors can be observed: (i) The Title (ii) Retaining the word Allah in translation (iii) Literary touch.

- i. Before Pickthall, scholars tried to translate the Holy Qur'an. But Pickthall was the first scholar who set a new trend in the field of interpreting the Holy Qur'an into non Arab languages, and said:

The Qur'an cannot be translated. That is the belief of old-fashioned Sheykh's and the view of the present writer.⁷⁰

According to above mentioned viewpoint Pickthall chose the title of his magnum opus as: "The Meaning of the Glorious Qur'an". Under this influence, Abdullah Yusuf Ali chose the title for his rendering of the Holy Qur'an as: "An English Interpretation of the Holy Qur'an".

- ii. The word 'Allah' has been translated as GOD, god, or God. Pickthall was the first Muslim scholar who retained the personal name of Almighty in his translation of the Holy Qur'an. He said in this regard:

I have retained the word Allah throughout, because there is no corresponding word in English. The word Allah (The stress is on the last syllable) has neither feminine nor plural, and has never been applied to anything other than the unimaginable Supreme Being. I use the word "God" only where the corresponding word '*ilah*' is found in the Arabic.⁷¹

This trend is also followed by most of the Pickthall's successors.

iii) **Literary Touch:**

Pickthall was a man of letters. He not only knew all major western languages but major eastern languages i.e., Arabic, Turkish, Persian and Urdu as well. He established his magnum opus using his innate literary gifts. He just not only translated the Holy Qur'an but also produced a piece of literature. As Maryam Jameelah (b.1934) Said:

...the crowning achievement of his literary career was his translation of Qur'an Majeed in the most dignified noble and regal English, a literary work of art in its own right. Some object to the antique English but this only lends it the appropriate atmosphere.⁷²

Ahmad Ali's work was published in 1984, but without any remark or even a hint towards Pickthall's translation of the Holy Qur'an.⁶³

Conclusively it can be stated that none of the three – Razi Mujtahid, Asad and Prof. Ahmad Ali – could prove anything negative about Pickthall. But there is a positive statement from three of Pickthall's students Ghaziuddin Ahmad, Hameeduddin Ahmad and Mehdi Ali Sidiqi⁶⁴. This statement recorded in response to Razi Mujtahid's objections, as:

These remarks, charging our guardian and tutor, Hazrat Muhammad Marmaduke Pickthall R. A., with poor knowledge of the Arabic language and idioms, are highly slanderous and their defamatory character is aggravated by their publicity before the findings of the requested scrutiny. We are writing this letter to reassure the readers of Mr. Pickthall's translation about his thorough knowledge of the Arabic language..: Each of the signatories during our terms as probationers of the Hyderabad Civil Service had the honour of living with Mr. Pickthall and each day furnished evidence to us of the depth of his piety, his knowledge of the Qur'an and his mastery of the Arabic language and Islamic learning. This knowledge and mastery he acquired during his stay in what is now called the middle East and among Arabs at well known seats of Islamic learning as well as with tribes of Arabian deserts and the Fertile Crescent. He had access to all original Arabic sources at these places and also in all the famous libraries of England and Europe. According to himself, and of this we are witness, he had set himself two aims in his translation. These were accuracy and conformity with orthodox, majority interpretations and renderings. An unimpeachable proof of his concern was the fact that he personally took his manuscript to the Al-Azhar University for scrutiny.⁶⁵

The pupils of Pickthall called 'The Meaning of the Glorious Qur'an' as exceptional translation:

This is perhaps the only example of an English translation being scrutinized and approved by the highest seat of Arabic learning.⁶⁶

About the credibility of Pickthall's translation three of them wrote:

A translation so minutely scrutinized at Al-Azhar and generally accepted as correct all over the world for half a century is suddenly found to be "full of mistakes" by Allama Razi Mujtahid.⁶⁷

The statement of Maryam Jameelah⁶⁸ about Pickthall's translation of the Holy Qur'an is also thought provoking:

President General Muhammad Zia-ul-Haq⁵⁸ (1924-1988) took due interest into the matter and directed Dr. Abdul Wahid Halepota⁵⁹ (b.1917), member of the Islamic Ideology Council, to look into the matter. Dr. Halepota took the task and found that Pickthall's work was up to the mark. As far as the mistakes are concerned, these are due to misprints in the copy of translation, used. Some mistakes arose due to Mujtahid's poor understanding of English. So, Mujtahid after this decision⁶⁰ felt awfully humiliated.

Pickthall's skillfulness in Arabic language and literature is often questioned by the scholars of recent times, particularly after 1980s. Almost all critics take shelter of Muhammad Asad (1900-1992) and Professor Ahmad Ali. Looking at the "Foreword" of "The Message of the Qur'ān", in these eight pages, one cannot find a single word in Pickthall's criticism. It is discussed earlier that, on all criteria set by Asad, Pickthall is the only translator of the Holy Qur'ān who is up to the mark before Asad. In the whole history of Qur'ānic translation Pickthall and Asad are only two scholars who were, well known English writers, excellent Arabic scholars, well versed in Islamic learning and above all converted Muslims. But still, Asad was not himself an Englishman, like Pickthall.

Professor Ahmad Ali's version, too, does not contain any criticism on Pickthall or his translation. All objections about Pickthall's defective Arabic is due to this statement of Peter Clark:

The authority of his Arabic has not gone unchallenged. In 1980 a successor of Pickthall as editor of Islamic Culture, Muhammad Asad, produced a new translation. He had not been satisfied with Pickthall's work feeling that his knowledge of Arabic was limited.⁶¹

Asad's opinion was not published in his translation or any where else but Peter Clark got this opinion through a letter from Asad, written on 08th August 1984. Asad gave this statement – if given – four years after the publication of his work, which does not look realistic and does not make any sense.

About Professor Ahmad Ali, Peter Clark's statement runs as:

In the same year [1980] Professor Ahmad Ali in Pakistan announced that he planned a translation of the Qur'ān because of inaccuracies in Pickthall's work.⁶²

The analysis of above statement shows that it was just an 'announcement' and a 'plan' which never materialized. Prof.

9. "Translation of the Holy Qur'ān" (1929) by Al-Haj Hafiz, Ghulam Sarwar
10. "The Meaning of the Glorious Qur'ān" (1930) by Muhammad Marmaduke William Pickthall
11. "An English Interpretation of the Holy Qur'ān" (1934) by Abdullah Yusuf Ali
12. "The Koran Interpreted" (1955) by Arthur J. Arberry
13. "The Koran" (1956) by N. J. Dawood
14. *Tafsir-ul-Qur'ān* (1991) by Maulana Abdul Majid Daryabadi
15. "The Message of The Qur'ān" (1980) by Muhammad Asad
16. "Translation of the Meanings of the Noble Qur'ān" (1997) by Dr. Muhammad Muhsin Khan's and Dr. Muhammad Taqi-ud-Din Al-Hilali

It is evident from the above list that prior to Pickthall the title of the English version of the sublime Qur'ān was "The Koran" by orientalist and "The Holy Qur'ān" by Muslims and Ahmadi scholars.

Pickthall was the first translator of the Holy Qur'ān who showed a novelty in choosing the title of his work, i.e., "The Meaning of the Glorious Qur'ān". After the appearance of Pickthall's work, there seems to be a growing trend towards understanding the view that "Qur'ān is the word of Allah and it can't be translated". Just four years after Pickthall's rendering Abdullah Yusuf Ali published his work with the title "**An English Interpretation of the Holy Qur'ān**" then A. J. Arberry's *The Koran Interpreted*, Abdul Majid Daryabadi's "*Tafsir-ul-Qur'ān*" and M. Asad's "**The Message of the Qur'ān**". It is Pickthall's contribution in Qur'ānic studies that he introduced a new title and a new trend in its translation.

Criticisms on Pickthall, remain unsuccessful:

The greatest merit that Pickthall's work achieved was in 1982. A hue and cry was raised by Allama Syed Muhammad Razi Mujtahid⁵⁶ who said:

Pickthall being an English man wrote good English but his translation of the Holy Qur'ān was full of mistakes because he was not fully conversant with the Arabic language and idioms.⁵⁷

5.1 *Merits of Pickthall's Translation:*

1. Pickthall's translation is considered among the finest English translations of the Holy Qur'an.
2. He has provided an introduction that satisfies the questions of a semi-causal reader which he has in mind about the origin of Islam.
3. The more important chapters "*surahs*" also have additional notes that explain their historical context, which is appreciated.
4. Pickthall's translation became an introduction to Islam in the west and it is a clear and concise translation.
5. His rendering of the Glorious Qur'an came with the bold proclamation that the Qur'anic concept of 'Allah' cannot be translated as God, for Allah means much more than what God conveys.⁵³
6. Even the rector of Al-Azhar, who was a staunch opponent of any translation of the Holy Qur'an in any language gave his opinion about Pickthall's rendering of the Holy Qur'an as:

Though the best of all translations", unfit to be authorized in Egypt.⁵⁴

A.R. Kidwai recorded his opinion about Pickthall's translation of the Holy Qur'an as:

It was great literary achievement of Pickthall, because he avoided the Jacobean archaisms of Sale. Pickthall's name is synonymous with the Glorious Qur'an, because he was the first English Muslim to render the Holy Qur'an into English.⁵⁵

a) *Title of the English Translations of the Holy Qur'an:*

The titles of the prominent English translations of the Holy Qur'an before and after Pickthall, are as follows:

1. "The Alcoran of Mahomet" (1649) by Alexander Ross.
2. "The Koran: Commonly called" The Alcoran of Mohammed". (1734) by George Sale.
3. "The Koran" (1861) by John Medows Rodwell.
4. "The Koran" (1880) by Edward Henry Palmer.
5. "The Holy Qur'an" (1905) by Mohammad Abdul Hakim Khan.
6. "The Qur'an" (1911) by Mirza Abu'l-Fadl.
7. "The Koran Prepared" (1912) by Hairat Dehlawi (ed)
8. "The Holy Qur'an" (1917) by Maulvi Muhammad Ali

the Holy Qur'an by a Muslim who is English by birth and Muslim by choice.

5. ***Critical Study of "The Meaning of the Glorious Qur'an":***

"The meaning of the Glorious Qur'an" was published for the first time in December 1930. The orthodox Arab Shaikhs did not allow any translation of the Holy Qur'an in any other language. They were of the view that Qur'an being the word of Allah cannot be translated. Pickthall being a continual visitor of Egypt, Syria, Lebanon and Palestine knew this conception, rather misconception of the Shaikhs of Egypt. So, after completion of his sacred work, he went to Cairo for the final consultation of Shaikhs in the mid of second last month of 1929. A dominant minority of old fashioned Shaikhs stood against Pickthall and an English translation of the Holy Qur'an. Pickthall fought bravely with the opponents as he wrote in the papers and addressed a gathering of learned people to convince them of the legitimacy and need of the English translation of the Holy Qur'an. Following is a significant statement in the history of the translation of the Holy Qur'an, given by Pickthall:

The Qur'an cannot be translated. That is the belief of old-fashioned Sheykh and the view of the present writer.⁴⁸

The title of his work "The Meaning of the Glorious Qur'an" is also meaningful in this regard. Because it refers the stance of Pickthall taken in the "Foreword".

The Book is here rendered almost literally and every effort has been made to choose befitting language. But the result is not the Glorious Qur'an,....It is only an attempt to present the meaning of the Qur'an....It can never take the place of the Qur'an in Arabic, nor is it meant to do so.⁴⁹

He came back to Hyderabad Deccan in March 1930 with the following recommendation from the Rector of Al-Azhar:

Though the best of all translations", unfit to be authorized in Egypt.⁵⁰

Others who supported Pickthall in Egypt were a former rector of Al-Azhar Shaikh Mustafa Al-Maraghi and a well known Egyptian scholar Sheykh Rashid Rida⁵¹ (1865-1935).

The matter was settled in Pickthall's favour, as he said:

The position that all translations of the Qur'an are sinful has been quite abandoned. A translation of the Qur'an by a Muslim has been examined and a literary reason has been given for its condemnation. That is a great step forward.⁵²